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WORKING IN CONFLICT: HOW BUREAUCRATS NAVIGATE ACCOUNTABILITY

PRESSURES

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT:

Bureaucrats make policy. So, understanding their motivations behind discretionary choices, or ultimate decisions about their role and agency are pivotal toward examining policy outcomes. This dissertation attempts to expand our understanding of state bureaucrats, possibly working under conflict, to grapple with nuance much of the literature neglects. The research undertakes existing frameworks like Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect to understand how state bureaucrats react to agency or policy changes, and how these behaviors can be results of accountability pressures between the state and federal levels of government. The results suggest bureaucrats navigate their complicated landscapes through a number of adaptations to the environment such as network building and community capacity, as well as exercising Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. Finally, the research concludes with considerations of existing theoretical developments to adjust to the ever-growing complexity of policy implementation in a time of increasingly compound policy problems.

KEY WORDS: bureaucrats, Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect, community capacity, role conflict

Introduction

The nature of government, and governance, requires scholarly focus. This project attempts to identify and examine bureaucrats' accountability pressures. At a 30,0000-foot view, we, traditionally, view administrators as implementers of the work of elected officials – a traditional principal-agent relationship.

Public administration research details the inherent tension between politics and administration, the canonical roles of the respective fields, and the implications of the fields on governance. As governance and reality become more interconnected and complex, so does the role of the bureaucrat. While it is likely that bureaucrats throughout American history struggled between the law and the public interest, and potential harms to the public, and attempts by the legislature and executive to curtail the ability of bureaucrats to 'make good,' this conflict is increasingly overt. This tension is the source of much research and interest and a pivotal place where bureaucrats often navigate and are key players.

Bureaucrats assume an integral role in implementing policy. Our current understanding of bureaucrats' role as policymakers using discretion and procedures makes their jobs more comfortable, safer, and less impossible (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000). The dynamic role bureaucrats play requires attention to their motivations and behaviors (Golden 2000). Because of the presidents, and other political elites, actions, amongst other political players, bureaucrats often find themselves navigating complicated, often vague, policies to deliver public services or to broadly implement the state's goals of a policy (Golden 2000; Ringquist 1995; Wood 1988). This conflict may arise from state employees implementing federal programs. The tension between the employer and the preferences of your work location may provide cross-pressures for specified behaviors.

As policies become more complex and problems become more complex, a bureaucrat's work requires adjustments to her working routine. The 'wicked problems' afflicting the public require further collaboration between levels of government, as well as non-government partners, for the implementation of policies. The intersection of wicked problems and bureaucrat work is a unique place to study the changes we have yet to understand comprehensively.

My attention to this intersection came from a close read of Marissa Martino Golden's What Motivates Bureaucrats. Golden (2000) focuses on federal administrators' experiences during the Reagan administration or a managerial presidency and their behaviors. She underscores the importance of agency culture, a bureaucrat's ties to the mission, an agency's history of successful implementation, and the situations that elicit instances of Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. Her account of the bureaucrat's experience was the first of its kind. Golden (2000) highlighted the more nuanced and complicated role the bureaucrats play and the tension that may play with a less-than-friendly principal working against their roles and goals in their respective agencies.

Golden's work identifies the experiences of the federal government and its bureaucrats. We know that much policy takes place in the federal government. Nevertheless, there is equal, if not more, policy occurring at the state- and local level as well as federal policy implementation at the state- and local level. The missing variable in prior work is the role and behavior of state-side bureaucrats. Much politics occurs away from the locus of attention in D.C. State administrators administer many programs. Specifically, administrators working in the state implement federal policies. These federal policies could, and often do, pose an ideological conflict with the governors, and may put their working routines into better focus.

This is the place where a scholar's attention should focus. Several scenarios draw on existing work, for instance, the places of accountability pressures between the federal principal (the president) and accountability pressures coinciding with the state principal (the governor). We know that similar forces operate at the state level, and I suggest interacting with the forces at the federal level (the forces at the federal level we know exist thanks to work by Golden). This interaction between state and federal governments, their working environments, agendas, principals, and bureaucrats face a nearly insurmountable task of balancing their role as implementers of their respective principals, yet implementing the policy as intended.

My interest in this work lies in the decision-making practices and routines of the administrators implementing federal policy. The impetus for this work stems from the growing number of states implementing Medicaid Expansion provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). More recently, more conservative states like Oklahoma and Missouri implemented Medicaid Expansion. Oklahoma began receiving applications in June 2021. Nearly 11 years after the passage of the ACA, Oklahoma must implement the policies' objectives and goals, with the wriggle room for state-based requirements. The federal government requires certain aspects of the law, and the state must comply. In this place of federal government oversight and enforceable state compliance, a bureaucrat must create routines to do just that. From research focusing on federal employees, we know that the push and pull of their role professionalization, congruence with their respective agency's mission. So, I ask: How does who the bureaucrat works for and where they work influence and motivate behavior?

While the narrative that bureaucrats run amuck is pervasive, many do not know that more than the majority (nearly 90%) of federal bureaucrats work at the state level. Fewer federal bureaucrats are working in Washington, D.C. than in California to show how few bureaucrats

truly do work in D.C. Bureaucrats may run amuck in the states. However, we do not have evidence to suggest whether any narrative alleges a similar picture of state-side administrators. We know very little about differences, if any, between state and federal bureaucrats. It is possible that administrators working in the states do not view their roles as similar to their counterparts in D.C., or their work environment necessitates a different view of their roles and the 'right' behaviors. There is no evidence to suggest administrators view or practice their roles differently. However, no evidence suggests that state-side bureaucrats view their roles and work similarly.

Why Medicaid Expansion?

As we near a decade after the first states expanded Medicaid, we still know very little about the experiences of state-level bureaucrats implementing the federal policy. During this time, conservatives have come out more strongly against expansion and Obamacare. In most conservative-leaning states, expansion has been slow, if at all a conversation between legislators and other levels of the state government.

The ballot initiative in Oklahoma passed with just enough 'yes' votes. As a political insider told me, the legislature immediately began finding ways to ensure program failure rather than begin implementation. Before the ballot initiative, the state legislature introduced a bill to implement a managed care system, specifically state Representative Marcus McEntire and state Senator Greg McCartney. The bill passed out of committee; at the time, the first bill involving Medicaid Expansion was to be heard outside the committee. After nearly a decade of attempts by trade organizations and associations to introduce bills – it was a big moment for the Oklahoma Hospital Association. The bill was not heard on the floor and died after the committee hearing. The bill attempted to control as much of the expansion process as possible. The bill would have curbed the associated 'panic' that ensued after the ballot initiative passed and the state had to

implement Medicaid Expansion. The political conflict between parties, namely the attempts to ensure the failure of expansion, could create conflict between the state government and state-level employees. I suggest the conflict may create tension between the state and state employees when the state employees must implement the will of the people. As interviews suggest, many former and current employees of the Stitt administration attempted to curb expansion. After curbing implementation did not happen, the governor began using his newly minted hiring and firing power to continue molding the state government and its employees.

The conflict is less overt than theoretical development in the following chapter would suggest. While whistleblowers do exist and took a front seat during the Trump administration for their accounts of wrongdoing, less so at the state level, as my interviews suggest. Those willing to speak to me from the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority (OHCA) cited fear of retribution. Those unwilling to speak to me sent a form email I received several times.

Although unanticipated, the governor's reach on the implementation, the agency, and other agencies created insurmountable barriers. Recent bureaucracy literature suggests the principal-agent model be outdated, as bureaucrats work in a position of information supremacy (Workman 2015). Canonical models suggest bureaucrats work at the 'pleasure' of the political principal. We now acknowledge that bureaucrats are not only subject matter experts but also the source of information for politicians. So, what the bureaucrat shares can not only steer the policy but also identify the bureaucrat's position and the policymaking process.

In this instance, the traditional principal-agent model is working in Oklahoma. While it changes the direct nature of this research, it identifies real-world experiences of bureaucrats and the working routines they must use to operate under this system. The generalizability of this case is limited. The changing dynamic of gubernatorial power, and the unique narrative of a managed

care implementation of Medicaid Expansion limits whether these findings will translate to other states. Each Medicaid program, regardless of the choice to expand, is unique following minimum federal requirements, "each state Medicaid program is unique, reflecting states' use of existing program flexibility and waiver authority to design their programs to meet their specific needs and priorities"[1]. Therefore, limiting whether the findings in the case of Oklahoma will translate to other states with unique policies.

Emergency Rental Assistance

Another look at bureaucratic work identifies Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds disbursed from the CARES and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to aid the anticipated eviction crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic associated job loss. ERA, like Medicaid, is a federal policy, and the state (and local government) government implements the funds for eligible citizens.

Unlike Medicaid Expansion, ERA did not find overt political dissension from state legislatures as impending evictions were an emergency for renters and later homeowners struggling to pay mortgages. However, these administrators battle accountability pressures similarly to bureaucrats implementing Medicaid Expansion. The bureaucrats circumvent the accountability pressures through the existence of substantial levels of community capacity. This community capacity serves as a means to solve insurmountable problems and disburse all Emergency Rental Assistance funds by various community capacity.

Instead, states scrambled to find a solution to the possible eviction crisis on the horizon. The initial implementation of the ERA under the Trump administration required income

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[1] Artiga, S., Hinton, E., Rudowitz, R., and M. Musumeci. 2017. "Current Flexibility in Medicaid: An Overview of Federal Standards and State Options". Accessed July 21, 2022. https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/current-flexibility-in-medicaid-an-overview-of-federal-standards-and-state-options/

verification. At the beginning of the Biden administration, in January 2021, the new president eliminated income verification but left cities and states waiting five months for new guidance. During this time, cities waited for new guidance and could not process applications or provide assistance, creating a backlog of applications.

This required cities and states to find different ways to implement ERA because of the backlog of applications and the immediate need for many facing evictions. Louisville, KY, is one of the best-performing cities concerning disbursing ERA dollars. As Louisville disbursed nearly 100% of its initial funding, other cities like Kansas City, MO or St. Louis, MO disbursed less than 30% (Department of the Treasury 2022). The focus on Louisville presents an example of the working routines of bureaucrats and sometimes working in conflict with the rules of the ERA requirements to ensure people receive their assistance. Similarly, to Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2003), bureaucrats work to help clients rather than always following the rules or procedures and work in the interest of clients.

Overview

Chapter One focuses on the theoretical development and methodology for this project. The theoretical development focuses on the role of the bureaucrat, intergovernmental relations, and any accountability pressures state employees face when implementing a federal policy at the state level. Data collection for this project was solely interviewing.

Chapter Two focuses on Oklahoma Medicaid Expansion and the experience of crucial actors in the process. As many programs become a coordinated effort between government and non-government organizations, this chapter will highlight the role of both government and non-governmental employees and the current environment for state employees. Many Oklahoma Healthcare Authorities declined to speak to me. While rejection may not be noteworthy, others

who did speak to me, under the unlimited condition of confidentiality, said the environment and the power of the governor to hire and fire, as well as no employee protection, creates an environment of fear in Oklahoma state agencies, and particularly the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority who implements Medicaid and Medicare policy.

      Chapter Three focuses on Emergency Rental Assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike Medicaid expansion, ERA is less politicized and less partisan but further expands on bureaucrats' routines and the non-governmental organizations required to implement such a policy. While it is less political, ERA requires multi-actor coordination and faces impediments by the government throughout the process. Administrators go above and beyond to help clients when the process does not formally allow such behavior.

      Chapter Four served as a place to reflect on the contradictory findings and thought about theoretical development for future and continued insight.

Chapter One: Exploring Bureaucratic Motivations and Behaviors During Medicaid Expansion

What motivates bureaucrats? Marissa Golden (2000) asked a question about federal bureaucrats working in various policy domains and agency contexts. She suggests motivation and works output result from the agency culture, structure, a bureaucrat's ties to the agency mission, and the relationship between career bureaucrats and appointees. These bureaucrats were asked about their self-perceptions of their roles and agency relations with political figures (both elected and appointed) and allowed for reflection about personal experiences via open-ended questions. Bureaucrats across various agencies (EPA, NHTSA, Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, and Food and Nutrition Service) experience different factors that lead to their behaviors and motivations because of the agency structure and culture, role perception, relationship between career and appointees, and elected officials.

This dissertation will identify the significance of intergovernmental relations in daily bureaucratic routines and how administrators deal with competing pressures to attain the preferences of their principals. This dynamic may seem uncommon, but the complex ties between the federal and state governments impact and influence the policies implemented and requires further investigation. Existing literature identifies the experiences of federal and state administrators working at the federal and state levels. While we typically think federal bureaucrats reside in Washington, D.C., more than 90% of administrators work in states while employed by the federal government (Office of Personnel Management 2017). Therefore, the experiences, work environment, and possible accountability cross-pressures identify a pivotal place to investigate further. Broadly, I ask: how does the bureaucrat works, and where do they work to influence and motivate behavior?

The framework Golden uses provides the opportunity to identify the influences of organizational structure, agency culture, ties to agency mission, and the relationship between career bureaucrats and appointees. This research services to begin closing a gap in the literature. The culture, or the spirit of an agency (Meier 1990, 1992; Rourke 1983), is the ties to the agency mission and cohesion of bureaucrats (Meier 1993) can be applied as the reactions to gubernatorial control (Golden 2000). In the case of Oklahoma, the original structure lessened direct gubernatorial and career bureaucrats' interactions. An existing framework identifies potential behaviors because of a bureaucrat's feelings snout their role, agency actions, and the agency's direction.

Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect

The Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect (EVLN) framework outlines the rationale for behavior types. Bureaucrats exercise these forms of action to communicate dissatisfaction or satisfaction with the workplace environment or actions. The use of EVLN in political science explains aa bureaucrats' behavior in instances of agency change. In this case, EVLN provides a framework to understand a bureaucrat's behaviors when politics or policies change. The framework enables a discussion about the conditions that permit or expedite leaving the government, voicing concerns, exercising loyalty, or neglecting their post.

For example, Golden (2000) describes the use of EVLN in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice and the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration to identify the different contexts in which bureaucrats use these actions to express various beliefs. She finds the attorneys' commitment to the division's mission in the Civil Rights Division and uses voice because the political appointee's behaviors do not mirror the mission. On the other hand, she finds that bureaucrats at the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration do

not share the same level of commitment as the attorneys at the Civil Rights Division and do not exercise these actions because of lower dissatisfaction. This critical finding suggests the importance of context, work environment, and mission commitment. The context, work environment, and mission commitment exist at the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA).

In the bureaucracy, administrator turnover equals or outpaces private sector organizations (Lee and Whitford 2007). This suggests a ripe area for studying the context in which bureaucrats leave or transfer from one agency to another. In this paper's context, the exit, voice, and loyalty (and later neglect) framework will identify the particular context of the individual's perception of organization satisfaction (Lee and Whitford 2007). Moreover, to explain employee experience "of the organization itself" (Daley 1992, 234).

Exit

Exit signals a customer's (or employees') dissatisfaction with a product.
In its initial conception, exit served to identify the consumer's choice: "to buy or not buy" (Daley 1992, 234). In the context of an organization, exit expresses "dissatisfaction with the organization by leaving it" (234). Other aspects of exit like "retirements, quits, transfers, reductions in force, death and termination after temporary employment" occur (Lee and Whitford 2007, 647).

In the political context, exit happens when a bureaucrat leaves her job (Golden 2000). In the context of this argument, the rationale for exiting must be related to the direction of the agency or other instances of goal or role conflict. Leaving her job must be related to "dissatisfaction with or in response to control efforts, policy changes, turf threats" (Golden 1992, 32). Golden studies the response to presidential management tools. In this case, I will study the effect of gubernatorial management tools.

Exit is a last resort (Golden 1992; Lee and Whitford 2007). The chance to change the system exists only when on the inside. Without being on the inside, the types of change administrators seek are likely impossible. Exit occurs when the use of their voice is no longer helpful. This suggests that exit occurs after expressing dissatisfaction with the agency by voice; voice is explained next.

Voice

In its initial conception, "voice is the articulation of discontent with a product, service, or policy position under conditions when an exit is not considered a viable option" (Witt 2011, 240). To exercise voice successfully, or at least in an attempt to change the "state of affairs," the individual must buy from the organization or the employee belongs to an organization. The use of voice enables "attempts to change the organization" (Lee and Whitford 2007, 651). There are times the voice is more effective. For instance, if a customer, or employee, choices to use voice rather than exit, the "effective of voice will increase, to a certain point, with its volume" (Hirschman 1970, 31). Voice is the preferred method for communicating attempts of political change (Dowding et al. 2000).

Loyalty

Loyalty is suffering in silence because a customer or employee is "confident that things will soon get better" (Lee and Whitford 2007, 650, see Hirschman 1970). The definition of loyalty under Hirschman's model is murky (Golden 2000; Withey and Cooper 1989). Therefore, many scholars identify definitions that suit the traditional use of the word loyalty rather than a passive form of commitment. Loyalty, in this context, "keeps one from leaving an organization going in the 'wrong direction'" (Whitford and Lee 2014, 373). Here, loyalty is 'responsive' rather than 'resistant' (Golden 2000). Using the traditional sense of loyalty, loyalty explains why exit is

'virtually ruled out' in specific contexts (Dowding et al. 2000, 476) and 'suppresses' voice use (Witt 2011, 241).

Neglect

Neglect was added to the framework later (Rusbult, Zembrodt, and Gunn 1982; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, and Mainous 1988). It differs from loyalty because it does not attempt to 'recover' the relationship (Withey and Cooper 1989). The original conception of neglect suggests "passively allowing conditions to deteriorate through reduced interest or effort, chronic lateness or absences, company time for personal business, or increased error rate" (Rusbult et al. 1988, 601).

There are different causes of neglect (Golden 2000). A bureaucrat may feel policy ambivalence, and policy ambivalence lacks a strong policy position or ideological commitment to the policy. Second, cooperative behavior could be "from the constraints and incentives imposed on civil servants by political appointees" (Golden 2000, 19). Neglect does not assume policy agreement and is not a form of resistance. Instead, it suggests that bureaucrats follow the least resistance path and avoid conflict and confrontation (Golden 2000).

Role Conflict

While ELVN provides the rationale for these behaviors, it does not entirely explain why these behaviors exist. The missing causal mechanism could be instances of role or goal conflict. I suggest using role conflict to explain better the reasons for exercising exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. Role conflicts are related to job-level indicators like "stress, burnout, poor life satisfaction, difficulty in decision-making, and poor job performance" (Tummers et al. 2012). Role conflict exists when an employee's competing expectations "make compliance… more difficult" (Tummers et al. 2012, 5).

Using role conflict to explain ELVN motivations better is because bureaucrats may experience conflicting demands that "stress different values and norms" (Tummers et al. 2009, 6). Conflict occurs when bureaucrats see the demands as "incompatible" (6) with the conceptions of their role and their attachment to the agency's goals and mission.

There are three types of role conflicts: a policy-professional role conflict, policy-client role conflict, and an organizational-professional role conflict. A policy-professional role conflict occurs when a policy conflicts with professional values. These values, or a set of 'rules,' are what one would follow when acting professionally. The conflict happens when the policy contents' requirements are incongruent with their professional attitudes, values, and behaviors" (Tummers et al. 2012, 7). This type of conflict increases when policies are implemented top-down (Hill and Hupe 2009).

In this case, the policy-level and organizational-professional effects will be most suitable relative to job-level indicators of role conflicts. The policy-level effects will enable "looking at professionals' willingness to implement a policy" (Tummers et al. 2012, 5). Using the role conflicts, the policy-professional role conflict suits this argument because it focuses on the policy's content rather than the means the organization implements the policy. When there are 'situational changes,' like a policy change, it can influence or change people's attitudes about the workplace (Shaubroeck, Judge, and Taylor 1998, 556). An organizational-professional role conflict exists when the agency's behavior asks of a bureaucrat does not make the bureaucrat's professional attitude. While it may seem similar to the policy-professional role conflict, it looks at how the organization implements a policy rather than its content. A combination of policy-level and organizational-professional effects will influence behaviors.

Creating more evidence that motivational and behavioral changes are more likely because of the 'situational' changes implementing Medicaid Expansion and changes to agency oversight. The long-term employment and exceptional leadership stability, coupled with the first-term governor changing his relationship with the agency, created substantial variation and possibly the best look at the conditions and the changes in behaviors.

Organizational Structure and Conflict

The course of including organizational characteristics requires some explanation. While it may seem that all agencies are different – it is not the argument Golden (2000) suggests. Instead, "because of a confluence of characteristics, some agencies are more likely to resist presidential control efforts, whereas other agencies – lacking these characteristics – are more susceptible to presidential control." The initial Oklahoma Health Care Authority structure did not create the conditions for compliance or resistance – rather a neutral, unclassified organization that would not bend to political winds. While the structure and the initial organizational chart would not provide the type of environment Golden (2000) describes the changes to gubernatorial power and now direct ties to the executive office in Oklahoma – it is possible to see new evidence of this in the state as the governor brings more agencies under his thumb.

Accountability Pressures

Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) in a federalism system creates incentives for the federal government to coerce lower levels of government to implement policies. The federal government provides funds or grants to implement or comply with policies. For instance, a state must comply with state-federal requirements to receive funding for Medicaid Expansion.

Prior policies like Medicare and Medicaid programs require similar programmatic compliance to receive from the federal government. In the case of Oklahoma, the state must

comply with guidance and operate within the bounds of the law. Initial disagreement on whether to expand and the ideological conflict present the opportunity to study how bureaucrats navigate. The state may want to pursue particular aspects of expansion ruled to be outside the bounds of the law, and I ask how a bureaucrat navigates this space.

Managerial Presidency as Managerial Governor

The governor's growing power can impact employees' behaviors in two ways. Golden suggests that the managerial tools of the administrative presidency would induce compliance and make resistance more difficult. Like President Reagan and Golden, Governor Kevin Stitt employed increased managerial tools to bring agencies under the executive branch's purview to increase compliance. Before the gubernatorial role change to the Oklahoma State Constitution, the governor of Oklahoma did not have a direct hand in the employment and actions of the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. While specific programs were only possible through legislative agreement to allocate budgetary resources, and programmatic creation was only possible with governor agreement, an agency head's appointment has changed the working environment and relationships between career and appointees.

Since the governor enjoys increased power, other dynamics may influence bureaucratic behaviors. For instance, the changing environment has led to concerns about job security because of the new power to ask employees to resign. It may impede the use of voice but increase neglect and exit. Employees transferred to other government agencies but declined to speak with me because of the uncertainty of sharing their experiences and fear of retribution. "Modern presidencies claimed responsibility over the administration, development administrative tools to enhance presidential capacities, and through reform, or reorganization, extended their influence

over the executive branch" (Arnold 1998, VII). I suggest the state executive can use the

managerial presidency's techniques to increase oversight and influence over agencies.

Methods/Research Design

Cases of Interest

      Bureaucrats' place of work and their role will provide variation in perspectives of the

workplace culture, mission, and working routines. The cases of interest will focus on players in

Medicaid Expansion (both governmental and non-government partners) and, particularly,

employees working for the agency before expansion to identify any changes and how those

changes impact implementation. Research about bureaucrats, their behavior, and motivations are

extensively studied. However, at this moment, identifying explicit conflict and the testimonials

of bureaucrats requires a renewed approach to understanding and examining the environment.

This dissertation will build on the previous work of studying bureaucrats in spaces of conflict

and attempts of control (Golden 2000).

Sampling/Selecting Administrators

The bureaucrats of interest are state employees charged with policy implementation of a federal

policy. It provides a variation that will identify the possible different characteristics that

influence agencies and administrators, or lack thereof, and the cross-pressures of accountability.

The frame of this study, defined at length, defines the sample (Weiss 1994). This dissertation

will identify the advantages of previous work studying the same phenomenon at the federal level

(see Golden 2000), particularly the research design and interview questions, while identifying the

administrators employed by the state government and working on state or federal policies,

respectively.

Selecting appropriate respondents and identifying the appropriate individuals will be tricky given the gravity of the scenarios I suggest may occur at the state level of government. While snowball sampling was the preferred means of identification, only two participants provided another potential respondent. Both former and current employees seemed hesitant to recommend other potential interviewees. It is likely related to identifying yourself as a project participant to not draw attention to sharing their experiences and the fear of retribution from principals. Ultimately, random sampling of interviewees by reading organizational charts or searching LinkedIn for current and former Oklahoma Heath Care Authority employees.

I searched for as many different perspectives as possible. Many respondents work (or worked) in various functions at the OHCA to provide different vantage points of their working environment based on their sole responsibility and, ultimately, their role perception as, possibly, members of different departments. While less than ideal, it was the only choice to provide comprehensive data collection for this research.

Of course, this method comes with tradeoffs. First, without snowball sampling, the individuals selected may present biases because of my choices. I searched through LinkedIn for current or former OHCA employees, reaching out to nearly 100 employees; the respondents are more likely to respond, which may lead to unresolved biases that cannot be identified. The bias of individuals willing to speak may be more willing to share their positive or negative experiences. To find different perspectives, former and current employees were recruited. As mentioned in the history section, Oklahoma previously attempted expansion in three "waves." Employees from each wave were recruited to include varying perspectives, and individuals working across Expansion attempts were highly sought. The results of such biases may reflect in the ultimate findings of this research. Additionally, overall hesitancy to speak with me about

their experiences may bias in a negative direction from former employees. These considerations are explained when describing results.

<u>Data Collection</u>

<u>Interviews</u>

Interviews will serve to identify if actors see their tasks and roles differently. Interviews are preferred because "we can learn about places we have not been and could not go and about settings in which we have not lived" (Weiss 1994). Furthermore, we learn "what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions." A survey captures fragments of information but fails to identify descriptive aspects of experiences. However, interviews enable "multiple perspectives" and insight into the process (in this case, the process that motivates their behaviors) (Weiss 1994). The interviews will be "fixed-question-open-response" (Weiss 1994). "Fixed-question-open-response" identifies that I will ask existing questions and allow for free-response from respondents.

Organizational settings recognize the importance of routinized behaviors. The sampling of respondents will consist of public employees working directly with the implementation of Medicaid expansion, as well as insights from non-government employees to identify the broader environmental context. It is not easy to draw the boundaries of those involved in the process. Therefore, it is simpler to identify those most closely associated with the state agency involved in ADA expansion. I draw boundaries out of convenience (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003).

A total of 20 interviews were conducted. Of 20, 12 respondents are current or former state employees working at the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. Current supervisors of the OHCA severely impeded my ability to interview management and career staff, which will be

discussed later. The interviews discuss the political barriers, the relationship between career and appointee staff, agency culture and mission, and the role professionalization felt in the agency.

<u>Exploring the Data</u>

The interviews proved fruitful. Individuals spoke about their role in socialization, their working environment, the agency's mission, culture, and relationships with appointed and elected officials. To begin exploring the data, I deductively identified codes: mission, disagreement (conflict): culture, work experience, and politics/governor. Based on the questions and the variables of interest Golden (2000) identified, these codes describe the primary constructs of interest.

After beginning coding, inductive codes of interest became the organizational structure and role. In their individual provided words, they joined their place within the organizational structure and their relationships with elected and appointed officials. The sense of their role was discussed as well. Furthermore lastly, their rationale for joining the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. These variables provide more context to the interviewee's narrative (or experience) and may provide later theoretical value when political scientists attempt to understand the motivations for behaviors better.

The data exploration requires identifying themes and propositions for later theory building in the case analysis conducted in Oklahoma about Medicaid Expansion. I suggest the agency culture, mission, history with policy successes, and mission-driven employees present the opportunity for bureaucrats to exercise Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. An agency culture that protects an employee's ability to share dissenting opinions or concerns allows bureaucrats to collaborate with others to work through those differences. While one current supervisor said he disagrees with some policies, he shared that it has to do with your role and responsibility in the

agency. "So, some people are for sure put in the position to say 'hey, this is not a good use of public funds, or it is not in line with medical standards or best practices;" but it depends on your role and such disagreement may be better suited for those who can voice those disagreements. Others said prior CEOs welcome differing opinions disagreement is not a welcome activity, but as the governor has more power and the CEO position is nome activity. This change may elicit more uses of voice.

Exit can be expected when a bureaucrat can no longer work under agency conditions related to direction or policy actions. I assume exit will likely be more likely after exercising voice or loyalty and a bureaucrat responds to the agency's changes. I suggest exit is more likely after voice or loyalty because the OHCA bureaucrat, as all 18 respondents told me, is a passionate, mission-driven employee to help as many Oklahomans as possible.

I suggest the agency's culture, mission, policy successes, and mission-orientated bureaucrats allow for the use of Exit, Voice, and Loyalty, and because the culture once allowed for the expression of opinions, a mission to help Oklahoma's most vulnerable, the success of Medicaid programs before expansion and the short-term success of Medicaid Expansion, and employees working to provide healthcare to low-income Oklahomans. Conditions that conflict with providing care to those eligible or broader agency goals will lead to using Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect.

The following propositions provide summaries of "a… number of individual analytic observations" (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014, 100). The propositions "are like 'bullet points' of major patterns, themes, and trends and findings that [I] feel [I] can confidently put forth about [my] study" (100). In this study, I use propositions as "emerging hypotheses." I will

identify support for each proposition as: strong, qualified, neutral, or contradictory (Miles et al. 100).

The organizational structure shapes their work and is present in their choices about what to do. Bureaucrats can be law-abiding, following the rules, or culturally abiding, focusing on the client. There is tension between the two which describes the work bureaucrats do (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). This tension is present in Medicaid expansion implementation. In this tension, bureaucrats can work as state agents or a citizen-agent. The state-agent focuses on discretion, "or workers' adaptations of laws, rules, and circumstances of cases" 10. The citizen-agent narrative focuses on "the judgments that street-level workers made about the identities and moral character of how these people react during encounters" 9.

While this research focuses on bureaucrats, not directly client-facing, the theoretical value of a dichotomy possibly identifies individuals more likely to behave in specific ways. For instance, an individual identifying themselves as mission-orientated, and the importance of providing care to Oklahomans, will likely behave in culturally abiding ways and work in a citizen-agent way rather than focusing on law abidance state-agent role professionalization. It will further describe a bureaucrat's orientation toward their roles and serves as another causal mechanism to explain Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect behaviors.

Proposition One

I suggest state bureaucrats react to demonstrations of partisanship and political narratives by continuing their role as bureaucrats. In light of the initial organizational structure, the agency operated insulated from the political landscape in Oklahoma. Therefore, the agency's mission and culture do not overtly react to administration changes. While each administration may view

the role of the agency differently, whether to provide healthcare or maximize costs, it is unlikely to change the role perception of bureaucrats. Themes that support this proposition are: I work to implement policy regardless of my personal feelings; My role requires responsiveness to the policy.

Proposition Two

I suggest that the changes to the role of the governor and the shift toward direct oversight over the agency will change the behavior of bureaucrats. Unlike previous administrations, the current administration enjoys direct influence on the agency's goals and likely its mission and culture. Themes that support this proposition are fear of retribution for consenting to an interview or fear of identification.

Proposition Three

I suggest the career bureaucrat is mission orientated. Bureaucrats are often described as agents to the principal. As the literature discovers the working routines and administrative discretion available to many bureaucrats, bureaucrats tend to self-select into agencies because of their values. For instance, bureaucrats who join the Environmental Protection Agency likely have a solid connection to environmental protection (Rourke 1984). Themes that support this proposition are working to help provide healthcare to low-income Oklahomans.

Proposition Four

Existing literature does not describe the causal mechanism leading to the use of Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. I suggest bureaucrats who use Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect

experience role or goal conflict. The combination of the agency's mission and role professionalization can contribute to instances of conflict that lead to behaviors such as Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. Conflict, although negative, can be cast aside if one's role professionalization, and associated values, do not allow for destructive behaviors like exit and voice. It is possible for career bureaucrats to experience conflict but exercise loyalty or neglect because of their socialization. The themes that confirm this proposition identify whether they feel ethical considerations when deciding to act.

Proposition Five

I suggest that bureaucrats working at the state level may face pressure from the federal government to ensure programmatic requirement compliance. A federal program like Medicaid, and the associated expansion, requires the state to comply with conditions to receive programmatic funding and remain within the law's boundaries. In Oklahoma, the governor's preference to introduce a managed care operation to expand Medicaid did not comport with the law. Themes that confirm this proposition identify pressures from the state to act against the federal programs or vice versa.

Conclusion

This chapter sets up the following chapter examining Medicaid Expansion in Oklahoma. I suggest agency employees may experience role conflict, and such conflict, both policy and organizational conflict, may result in using Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect motivated by role or goal conflict. I leverage previous research and the framework used to build on the initial

findings. It provides a new context but similar conditions to previous research to further build on the initial research.

The framework best explains any behavior related to agency policy or direction changes. The case of Medicaid Expansion in Oklahoma provides a first look at accountability pressures at the state level when implementing a federal policy. It uses existing research to situate a new case using a previously used framework.

Chapter Two: Medicaid Expansion in Oklahoma

Bureaucrats assume an integral role in implementing policy. Our current understanding of bureaucrats' role as policymakers using discretion and procedures makes their jobs more comfortable, safer, and less impossible (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000). Because of the presidents, and other political elites, actions, amongst other political players, bureaucrats often find themselves navigating complicated, often vague, policies to deliver public services or broadly implement a policy's goals (Golden 2000; Ringquist 1995; Wood 1988). These conflicts come from several places. First, many federal employees work at the state level. Second, state employees may implement federal programs. The tension federalism provides between the employer, and the preferences of the location of one's work may provide cross-pressures to induce specific behaviors[2].

The story of bureaucrats, the use of discretion, motivations, and perceptions of their role necessitate attention. Under competing accountability pressures by state and federal principals, how do bureaucrats navigate this tension, and what is the outcome? This question highlights the opportunity to understand bureaucratic behavior further. While much of the bureaucracy literature identifies the bureaucrat as a budget or utility maximizer, and a rational actor fulfilling the will of the people, there is evidence to suggest bureaucrats act in ways to "implement the law to the best of their ability," which could mean "looking past agency policies" (Guyer 2013, 78).

Additionally, it is essential to identify the work environment of state bureaucrats administering federal policies; and if there are behaviors that occur behind closed doors. The behavior of administrators and the motivations of said behavior can be understood through the

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[2] The Oklahoma State Lead Navigator at Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma said "it is not just a federal state tension. It also, you know, serving the underserved and vulnerable population is the direction that I look to, as opposed to say, state health officials who tend to look upwards. What are their political bosses saying? What are the provider groups saying? What are the hospital groups saying? And my role was always to work downward, but outward, to the actual members for the services".

expanded use of Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. The framework enables a discussion about the conditions that permit or expedite leaving the government, voicing concerns, exercising loyalty, or neglecting their post.

History of the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority

The Oklahoma Healthcare Authority is a newer state agency. In 1993, then Governor Frank Keating recognized the need to dismantle the Department of Human Services. It was the most significant state department and housed all social services such as health, mental health, and assistance programs. The plan's purpose was to reduce the agency's budget cuts and mitigate any harm to eligible populations (Oklahoma Healthcare Authority 2005).

During this time, "Oklahoma's leadership formed two broad-based citizens' committees, the Task Force on Medicaid and Welfare Reform and the Commission on Oklahoma Healthcare" (2005, 2-3). The groups were tasked with studying "access and cost-containment problems." The recommendations by these groups led to the "transition of its traditional fee-for-service Medicaid program to a coordinated system or managed care" (2005, 3). Former Governor Keating enjoyed a Democratic-majority state legislature that approved plans to separate the Medicaid, known as SoonerCare, and Medicare programs from the Department of Human Services and create the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority (OHCA). Now, the Healthcare Authority was born.

OHCA was created to "purchase Medicaid benefits and state and education employees' health care benefits; study all state-purchased and state-subsidized health care systems; make recommendations and changes aimed at minimizing the financial burden on the state, while providing the most comprehensive health care possible; and become the designated single state Medicaid agency effective January 1, 1995" (3).

Organization Structure

At its inception, the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority was created to insulate the agency from political swings and the governor's direct wishes and policy goals. This was possible by several agency characteristics. The organization is unlike many other state agencies in Oklahoma. The agency was created as a 'stand-alone agency' with its pay and personnel system[3], exceptional leadership stability, and flexibility with the governor and the legislature. Although short, nearly 29 years, the agency's existence has had 5 CEOs and only one gubernatorial appointment. The longest-running CEO, Mike Fogarty, retired from the CEO position after 13 years. The two subsequent agency leaders worked under Fogarty as his Deputy CEO and State Medicaid Director[4].

First, the agency did not have governor appointments; instead, agency executives were hired alongside all other employees. For example, the CEO of the OHCA at the time, until 2019, was a hired position. Second, the CEO and other executives did not directly respond or work for the governor. There was not a department secretary appointment to the agency. Instead, the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority CEO and other executives directly answer the OHCA board.

The OHCA board was designed to serve as oversight for the agency. The board comprises nine members[5], all appointed by Oklahoma officials; the governor appoints five members, the Senate Pro Tempore, and the Speaker of the House appoints two members. The board "directs the actions and oversees the operation of the Health Care Authority agency.[6]" The board is responsible for "establish[ing] the Oklahoma Health Care Authority; adopt and

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[3] Vardier, J., Colby, M., Lipson, D., Simon, S., Stone, C., Bell, T., Byrd, V., Lipson, M., and V. Perez. 2009. "SoonerCare 1115 Waiver Evluation: Final Report". Mathematica Policy Research.
[4] This continuation of leadership is unusual across government agencies and was noted by participants as a vital characteristic of the agency and its culture.
[5] Vardier, J., Colby, M., Lipson, D., Simon, S., Stone, C., Bell, T., Byrd, V., Lipson, M., and V. Perez. 2009. "SoonerCare 1115 Waiver Evluation: Final Report". Mathematica Policy Research.
[6] *OHCA board*. Welcome To The Oklahoma Health Care Authority. (n.d.). Retrieved July 6, 2022, from https://oklahoma.gov/ohca/about/boards-and-committees/ohca-board.html

promulgate rules as necessary and appropriate to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Authority. The board shall be the rulemaking body for the Authority; and adopt, publish and submit by January 1 of each year the appropriate administrative policies and the business plan for that year. In an independent audit, all actions governed by the administrative policies and business plan shall be examined annually"[7].

Each appointment spans six years, and there is no term limit to the number of appointments an individual can receive. The board members' work serves as the final decision on issues the agency faces. For example, the board can agree or disagree with the CEO and other executives of the agency and approve decisions the agency supports or does not.

In 2019, the OK State Legislature voted to give the governor more direct agency oversight, superseding the initial structure that the board oversaw the agency. In this bill, the terms of board membership and tenure changed. The OHCA CEO is an appointed position, and the board members now serve at the pleasure of the governor. Unlike before, these positions did not serve at the pleasure of the government and likely changed dynamics. The governor can dissolve any relationship without cause at any time.

Organizational Culture

An organization's culture influences many aspects of organizational life. Culture is a "social energy that moves people to act" (Shafritz and Ott 2001). It serves as an overarching idea to describe "the climate and practices that organizations develop around their handling of people or to refer to the espoused values and credo of an organization" (Shafritz and Ott 2001, 369; see Schein 1993). "Culture is to the organization what personality is to the individual"; therefore, it plays an integral role in the daily working routine of individuals at an organization (362). The

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[7] *OHCA board*. Welcome To The Oklahoma Health Care Authority. (n.d.). Retrieved July 6, 2022, from https://oklahoma.gov/ohca/about/boards-and-committees/ohca-board.html

culture works in a way that routinizes behavior – if it worked before, the same routine should

work now, "it assumes that many organizational behaviors and decisions are in effect

predetermined by the patterns of basic assumptions that are held by members of an organization

(Shafritz and Ott 2001, 361-362). It produces a feedback effect that is a set of 'assumptions' that

"continue to exist and to influence behaviors in an organization because they repeatedly have led

people to make decisions that 'worked in the past" (362).

Culture works to socialize individuals to general practices. It works to provide "meaning

(reality) is established by and among the people in organizations – by the organizational culture"

(364) or "provide useful insights into the mental processes new employees use as they struggle to

cope or 'make sense of their new environment" (365). Organizational culture is the "accumulated

shared learning of a group, covering behavioral, emotional, and cognitive elements of the group

members" (372). The possible stability in this 'reality,' established in a shared history, creates

"various shared elements to form into patterns that eventually can be called a culture" (373).

The organizational structure enabled stable managerial leadership because of hired

positions rather than appointed positions and created the opportunity for a shared history

between employees creating the organizational culture. The intertwining of these two and the

impacts on the agency's actions will be discussed further.

Expansion in Oklahoma

Medicaid Expansion in Oklahoma requires a history. In 2009, the Obama administration

passed the Affordable Care Act, known colloquially as Obamacare, which required several steps

at the state and the individual level. Initially, the state of Oklahoma agreed to implement the

ACA under Governor Brad Henry, and Governor Mary Fallin and her administration received

the funding associated with such implementation. After pushback from the state House and

Senate members, the state decided against implementation and returned the funding to the federal government. During this time, Oklahoma Health Care Authority members worked as $54 million remained to wait in the state for nearly three years. Ultimately, Oklahoma did not expand at the first chance.

This political opposition, namely Republicans and more conservative members of state government, remained for nearly ten years before Oklahoma voters sought to identify public support through a ballot initiative. When Governor Stitt learned of the ballot initiative, he began plans for SoonerCare 2.0 (discussed below), and members of the state legislature began working on plans to create a program before citizens could push for their own.

Oklahoma State Senator Greg McCartney and State Representative Marcus McEntire began pushing for the legislature to pass expansion through Senate Bill 605 nearly two years before the governor suggested a managed care approach. NonDoc, a local journalism organization, quoted McCartney saying, "I think if the state question passes, the legislature will look back with regret that they did not get something done earlier, "At the same time, the governor pursued his plan.

Gov. Kevin Stitt attempted to expand Medicaid services in Fall 2019 as SoonerCare 2.0

Initially, Governor Kevin Stitt created a bicameral committee in Oklahoma to "develop a plan to expand access to healthcare and increase coverage of uninsured Oklahomans ."The governor's initial plan was to institute a program called SoonerCare 2.0. SoonerCare 2.0 was a managed care plan, similar to a previous attempt at a managed care program in the state[8]. While the state legislature passed the governor's plan, he ultimately did not sign the bill.

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[8] The state requested an 1115 waiver[8] from CMS for the managed care system of delivery. The original waiver created two programs: SoonerCare Choice and SoonerCare Plus. A year after CMS approved the initial waiver, Oklahoma submitted a new waiver for a single program, SoonerCare Choice. The Choice program, as the name suggests, would allow Oklahomans the choice to switch providers. In 2003, a health maintenance organization

During this time, the pushback against the governor's managed care program came from the Oklahoma Health Care Authority board. Two members had questions about whether the federal requirements would allow for expansion to be privatized. Because of these questions and voicing their concerns, the board voted to table the rule. Governor Stitt asked the two members to resign from the board because they disagreed with his plans for privatization[9]. Ultimately, the governor did not sign his plan, which angered many associations because of the dismissal of the only two physicians on the OHCA board[10].

Using Medicaid Expansion to Study Bureaucrats

The long-term nature of Medicaid Expansion discussions in the state and country provides an opportunity to study bureaucrats' behavior and the resulting motivations for such behavior. The following research design identifies the protocol for data collection through interviews of bureaucrats and other non-governmental employees working through the Expansion process.

(HMO) withdrew its active status in the program eliminating an HMO provider to rural parts of Oklahoma. The agency opted to drop all HMO providers to ensure not only choice for those Oklahomans losing access to their initial choice and ensure programmatic efficiency. The agency then combined the Choice and Plus programs – ultimately ending with the Choice program for the state. After settling for a single program, because one managed care organization sought a rate increase that the agency countered for a lower rate hike, the state expanded the Choice program for more Oklahomans. In 2007, the state expanded its primary care case management[8] (PCCM) system, and to expand state coverage. Other programs care of this expansion including enrolling children (the federal government announced it would not cover children), a new program called Insure Oklahoma (would provide coverage to small business employees up to 200 percent FPL[8]), and move to a fee-for-service (FFS) reimbursement. A former employee[8] shared a unique perspective. Unlike many former employees or supervisors, her OHCA experience was negative. When describing dissenting opinions, she said OHCA employees who implemented the initial managed care system, "they worked at the agency when the agency did decide to go managed care. They saw how negatively [it] impacted Oklahomans. They saw how big of a failure managed care was for Oklahoma. So, when it came around again, where the state is talking about managed care, instead of alternative from the ACA, they greatly opposed managed care".

[9] Savage, T. 2021. "Stitt pitches sportsbook, cans OHCA board members, bids Ostrowe adieu." In Non Doc. Published September 7, 2021. Accessed June 29, 2022.
[10] Savage, T. 2021. "Stitt pitches sportsbook, cans OHCA board members, bids Ostrowe adieu." In Non Doc. Published September 7, 2021. Accessed June 29, 2022.

The OHCA was created to provide low-income Oklahomans healthcare. In Oklahoma, expansion plans did not come to fruition. It provides a case for studying bureaucrats working toward a mission conflicted with the principals' preferences. Ultimately, a citizen ballot initiative began expansion. The case provides tension that may elicit responses to any type of conflict or changes in the agency. In this small space, bureaucrats must find ways to work and comply with federal guidelines. It serves as a valuable space to study a case that political officials do not support but requires implementation.

Beginning Expansion

In 2019, the state legislature and the governor proposed competing expansion plans. The same year, nearly 300,000 Oklahomans signed an initiative petition to begin drafting a state question[11]. State Question 802 would expand Medicaid to cover adults earning up to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The state question, following federal guidelines for Medicaid Expansion, additionally included the following provision:

"No greater or additional burdens or restrictions on eligibility or enrollment shall be imposed on persons eligible for medical assistance pursuant to this article than on any other population eligible for medical assistance under Oklahoma's Medicaid program."

Expansion

I suggest the identity of an administrator (employed by the state government and the agency affiliation) creates cross-pressures between the levels of government and may create conflict. This conflict gives rise to motivations and behaviors that may be undesirable (in the eyes of the manager or superior), therefore, leading to the exercise of Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. I suggest this is the case because the cross-pressures for administrators employed by a

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[11] 11 Timeline in Appendix B. Supplied by the Oklahoma Hospital Association.

level of government while working for another may present different ideas of the role administrators play and the proper role during implementation. In the case of Medicaid expansion, we see the federal government attempt to incentivize widespread implementation of the extended program. However, some states remain hesitant to adopt the program (primarily for ideological conflict). Within this complex look at intergovernmental relations, this research will identify the nature of work and how bureaucrats navigate.

The Broader Context

The success, and failures, of citizen ballot initiatives taught Oklahoma advocacy groups and those interested in expanding Medicaid services. Members of a trade association shared that not only did they learn, but citizens interested in leading the ballot initiative learned too that the language in the ballot initiative codifying it in the state constitution would eliminate many obstacles other states faced. The addition to the state constitution would not allow the legislature to make changes, as Idaho, Nebraska, and Utah experienced. Notably, Idaho, Nebraska, and Utah's state legislatures changed the language and the overall policy. For instance, some states implemented 1115 waivers to institute work requirements or other health achievements to maintain care. The learning experience and partnering with The Fairness Project led to the ultimate ballot initiative that added Medicaid Expansion to the Oklahoma State Constitution.

Alongside this work, trade association members discussed the continued work after failing to expand the first time and the failed legislative attempts. The trade association members discussed the continued conversation to maintain education on the issue. "When I was hired in September 2013, we were still doing community meetings around accepting federal funds. We've called it many different things over the years to get the legislature to, you know, to take it on, pass it as a statute. In 2013, I attended community meetings in Enid and Norman… the hospital

CEOs primarily led those meetings. And then you would have liked the mayor… school superintendents… [attended] just to explain to them how much financial benefit it would bring back to the state of Oklahoma and how it would really improve the lives of those folks who were uninsured". The work continued.

"In 2014, we did another take on it, which was called Transforming Medicaid,". Her stories continued. "So, about 20… was it 2017 or 2018? We kept talking to legislators and kept trying, you know, trying to move the ball forward on accepting federal funds. So, in 2021, the legislative session, there was a bill passed last year. Senate Bill 1045, and what it does is it funds Medicaid expansion with our provider fee. And we had always because we had worked on Medicaid Expansion for more than ten years". Of all of their work, the same trade association lawyer and other colleagues of hers shared in individual interviews that elected officials were often upset or angry with their actions. These individuals worked hard to push the Expansion conversation. A trade association executive said, "The governor… I'm not his favorite person. And so [a relationship] has been… it has been difficult". She said it took so long to see expansion happen because "it is really about our legislators that just did not want to take it up because of all their fears of creating an entitlement program that the state could not afford."

Findings

The following section identifies interviewee responses to questions about organizational culture and role socialization of bureaucrats, explains the environment, and provides a foundation for explaining any instances of role or goal conflict a bureaucrat may face. The use of vague titles without specific department information or title protects interviewees' confidentiality.

Emerging Themes

Greatest travesty to Oklahomans Not Passing/Accepting $54M for Expansion in 2014

Many former employees, all different levels of staff, mentioned the effects of declining the initial funding from the federal government to implement Medicaid Expansion. The initial 'pot' of money allocated to expand Medicaid programs was allotted to Oklahoma and totaled $54 million. The state began working on the technology to build a Marketplace and assembled the necessary resources for such a task. As one former employee said, the program infrastructure built by the OHCA was such that the Obama administration let it be known that Oklahoma was an example. A former supervisor said, "It was a travesty to the state… the Obama administration was looking for Oklahoma to lead that".

Soon after building the necessary resources to expand the Medicaid programs, a new governor was elected. Now former Governor Mary Fallin did not initially voice opposition. A former supervisor said that first interactions with the former governor gave the illusion that the state would go ahead with expansion. He said it seemed to be going ahead until one of the governor's health staffers warned against such a move.

The former supervisor said, "[the governor] did not have much to say during that meeting I had with the governor. But what she did say led me to believe that she was not in agreement with where I want to go or where I read the governor willing to go. But what she brought to the conversation was driven by partisanship". Not long after the meeting, the former supervisor learned that the state would not move forward with expansion. Another former supervisor shared similar feelings, "we met with [Governor Fallin] and was asked if they should take it. We said yes!". The federal government did not forcibly withdraw the money. The former supervisor continued, "[the health staffer] was absolutely committed at the time to the fact that this was an

Obama proposal… I am to this day convinced that it was largely part of that, that one key staffer".

Instead, the $54M sat in Oklahoma for three years. Former employees wondered if the money sat possibly because the federal government thought the state of Oklahoma would go ahead with expansion. "The money sat for three years. Constituents and officials did a 360". She continued by saying it was a great opportunity "100% match for the first three years, and 90% after. It was ten cents on the dollar". "I think about the people not served and the rural hospitals."

The culture ensured an environment where careerists could voice their opposing opinions, and until it wasn't

Organizational Culture

State employees are passionate about serving Oklahomans. People who join the agency are "definitely people that [are] career bureaucrats; there were more people that care about helping others gain access to healthcare services, especially because we were very well aware of the intersection of all Health and Human Services." The same nonsupervisory former employee continued by saying "we had a very strong culture of cooperation and trying to figure out what we could do in terms of making sure that the processes that we were working on or the projects that we're working on, really advance the mission of the agency." A former supervisor-employee said, "my experience was motivated in large part by [members], others helping others." And another former supervisor echoed that sentiment, "to provide healthcare to low-income Oklahomans."

'I drank the Kool-Aid.'

Both former and current employees talk of the positive, collaborative agency culture. In the agency, its mission necessitated being responsive. The culture and the mission are

intrinsically tied together at OHCA. A former employee said the culture sought to make sure the

processes the agency undertook or undergoing projects advanced the agency's mission. A current

supervisor said the agency's mission is on the wall in the front lobby, "You walk in the front

lobby, [and] it's up on the wall. It is to provide healthcare to Oklahomans regardless of their

ability". A former nonsupervisory employee said, "it was providing affordable healthcare access

to all persons who needed it in that state."

All interviewees described the agency's mission: to provide healthcare to low-income

Oklahomans. I asked respondents to tell me their version of the agency's mission or vision, and

each touched on low-income or vulnerable Oklahomans. "It was to effectively administer

Oklahoma Medicaid programs, which, as you know, is very complex. It was also to advance the

program as needs of people in Oklahoma has been done through policy development, both

locally in the state and federally because of statute rules[12]". The interviewees' description of the

mission struck me as an essential portion of their working routine – as one former supervisory

employee said she 'drank the Kool-Aid. The feeling was to help as many people as possible,

"others helping others."[13]

Some stated that the OHCA was an attractive workplace for several reasons. Many

explained that since the OHCA is an unclassified agency. In this position, the agency can pay[14]

better. "The initial attraction was, it paid better than the old job was at… once I got in [the

agency], I fell in love with the mission. I fell in love with the mission of being able to help fellow

citizens and really try to help promote public health policies that were good for the state [and]

good for the people that we serve," one former supervisor said. While some did not begin their

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[12] Former supervisory employee.
[13] Former supervisory employee.
[14] The unclassified nature of the agency allowed for increased salaries. The federal government matched 50% of the salaries for agency employees.

employment energetic about the mission, those who started at OHCA for the pay said, over time, the mission and culture, employees' fell in love with the mission'. A former supervisor said he "fell in love with the mission of being able to help fellow citizens and try to help promote health policies that were good for the state and the people we serve."

The culture focused on members and was member-driven. A culture socializes individuals and creates "cultural norms, values, beliefs and assumption" (Shafrtiz and Ott 2011, 362). So, it is not surprising that all interviewees shared the same sentiment. The individuals drawn to the agency "were mission-driven people… who believed in the mission of improving the program"[15]. The member-driven culture was created by CEO Mike Fogarty, which highlighted the need for compassion for members. "You just have a compassion for people to work in an agency like that. You are helping people gain access to care[16]". A current supervisor, who joined OHCA after working in the private sector, said, "mission-driven people join the agency ." She said, "it took a lot for me to get used to ." She further elaborated by saying, "even the people who answer the phones, they do it for the mission ." A former government relations staffer said, "people who join are compassionate, mission-orientated, [and] passionate people ." A former finance supervisor said, "I knew what the mission was and worked strenuously to accomplish that ." Many employees in various roles shared the same mission and culture to serve Oklahomans.

It was, as many said, exemplified across the agency and in all choices. The agency focused on members; it was focused on employees. "Mike built a culture in [the] agency – a compassion for members. It was exemplified across the agency". Agency employees believed their mission was to cover every eligible Oklahoman and worked each day toward it and took it

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[15] Former non-supervisory employee.
[16] Former supervisory employee.

very seriously"[17]. Internal events were held for the employees, "internal events were done for the staff. Mike, and the third CEO Nico Gomez, [created a culture] that the agency felt more like a family rather than a work environment"[18]; "Mike knew every single employee's name, and he would talk to you by name. Nico followed in those footsteps"[19]. Rather than feeling like a work environment, the family-like environment eased communication between leadership and career staff. This culture likely made employment easier and created an environment to express opinions openly.

Interviewees under the second CEO, Mike Fogarty, said a box existed that allowed employees to 'drop' their views, opposing or differing opinions. "Oh, there were differences of opinion. It was more on how we should move in a certain direction. It was about the best way to [meet] the goal. For example, we had a weekly meeting of individuals, many divisions with the agency. The meeting was to solicit input on how things were going on, how things should be, and what we need to do to get there". The anonymous box was visited at weekly leadership meetings and would be a topic of conversation "in the policy division, there was a platform for their employees to voice whatever ."In this meeting, leadership would determine if the action could be taken. Alongside the box, former state employees recounted their time under Mike Fogarty and later Nico Gomez, the second and third CEOs. "You know, I think [disagreement] was minor… Even if there was dissent among staff, even if there was disagreement amongst staff, I approached it this way. There's always professional courtesy, the board gets to make final decisions on policy. From a policy perspective, that's what we executed".

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[17] Former supervisory employee.
[18] Former supervisory employee.
[19] Former supervisory employee.

A current supervisory employee shared a similar sentiment, "I think for sure [employees] had opposing views. Like whether or not there is a medium for those views in kind of a meaningful way. It's tricky having been [an employee and supervisor] to the extent it's possible, I think that [dissenting opinions] exist and that they are sometimes voiced. How effective is their voice in changing policy direction? I would say, not very. Some of it really had to do with the mood. It has to do with what your role or responsibility is in the agency. So, some people would be put into a position to say, 'hey, this is not a good use of public funds or 'it is not line with medical standards or best practices suggest this', you know? Those discussion happening all the time. So again, depending on your role, that feedback is more comfortable for some thanthan others".

This environment had an open-door policy where employees walked into the CEO's office (when Fogarty and Gomez served as CEOs) to discuss opinions. "I had a [personal] relationship with those two and felt comfortable having conservations with them… "employees enjoyed an open-door policy. You could go into [their] offices and have a seat and have a conversation"[20]. When Nico Gomez resigned, the State Medicaid Director Becky Pasternik-Ikard was hired to be the CEO. She assumed the role, and the agency began to change".
Unlike her predecessors, staff reported that the culture of openness ended. The culture was no longer a comfortable environment but replaced with a new detached office climate that did not invite the type of openness expressed by previous CEOs. "Becky was not that kind of CEO. She was disconnected from employees ."One former employee explained that the change may have been because Pasternak-Ikard was the first women Oklahoma Health Care Authority CEO, "she did not know how to engage with employees ."During her time, the political landscape became

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[20] Former supervisory employee.

more partisan, and the agency's focus because of politics at the end of the Fallin administration and the beginning of the Stitt administration, as well as the Trump administration in the national background, intensified defiance against Medicaid Expansion may have made her job more difficult. As the Pasternak-Ikard reign continued, a new governor was elected.

Structure Change, Relationships Change

In 2018, Governor Kevin Stitt won the gubernatorial election. At the beginning of his term, Governor Stitt signed legislation providing direct oversight over five state agencies. One of the state agencies was the OHCA. The legislation altered the organizational structure toward political oversight. Rather than a solely appointed board, the change made the CEO position appointed instead of hired. The legislation also brought the agency into the executive branch, granted the governor hiring and firing power, and changed the apolitical orientation toward political responsiveness.

A sweeping change to the governor's role, power, and authority shifted the OHCA president's role and likely led to the further changes employees reported. Pasternak-Ikard may have faced a different relationship between the agency, legislature, and governor. As noted above, she was the first woman to serve. Her previous role at OHCA was the State Medicaid Director, and she was promoted to the role when former CEO Nico Gomez resigned.

As a former supervisor said, Pasternak-Ikard was well-qualified for the position. In this prior OHCA role, the same former supervisor, who worked on the leadership team with Gomez and Pasternak-Ikard, said Pasternak-Ikard was more open or accessible. Second, the governor was granted more unilateral power related to agency employment – more roles 'served at the pleasure of the governor.' The OHCA CEO role was hired, not appointed before this gubernatorial power.

Becky Pasternik-Ikard was the first Oklahoma state employee asked to resign by the governor, and the second employee he asked to resign was Pasternak-Ikard's communications director. This shift changed the governor's constitutional power and shifted the posture of state employees. The shift from a personable State Medicaid Director to a detached CEO could have been more marked by hostility from the legislature and any retribution from the governor's new power.

The same former supervisory employee who said the environment and culture changed from Gomez to Pasternak-Ikard said she acted intimidated by the legislature. During this time, the legislature became more hostile toward the OHCA because of the ideological conflict, or narrative, surrounding the ACA and Medicaid Expansion. At the same time, the political stage continued to press a negative narrative about expansion and the conservative push to implement 1115 waivers[21] to allow the state to require work requirements. This narrative led to the continued posturing of state legislators. As a political insider said, the environment increased hostility and conflict between the OHCA and the agency's employees. Both former and current state employees reported increased partisanship related to OHCA issues and policy areas across state agencies. As two former employees said, the posture of the issues depended on the party in power and, more specifically, the governor. For instance, former Governor Brad Henry's framing of the agency was to serve low-income Oklahomans who need better access to affordable health care, to the current environment under Governor Kevin Stitt, where the agency focuses on cost rather than insuring more Oklahomans. When asked if employees saw career personnel resign over disagreements, a former employee said, "When I came back the second time, I did notice

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[21] An 1115 waiver provides a state to petition CMS for alternative requirements to qualify for Medicaid. For instance, Arkansas used a 1115 waiver to require work requirements.

there's a huge shift in the environment. I did notice that a lot of people in leadership were not there anymore".

In the same vein, she described the increased hesitancy to voice disagreements. She worked under the Fallin administration at OHCA, transferred to the Department of Corrections, and then returned to OHCA after Governor Stitt was elected. "They were afraid to express their views simply because they didn't want to be put in a position where they actually fired for, you know, their opposing viewpoints. This is after I left the second time. I remained in connected to people at the agency. I recall one of those people saying Kevin [Corbett] got really upset during one of his meetings because people were not expressing their viewpoints like he wanted them to… He basically said you know, 'I've tried to be open with you guys. I've tried to give you guys the space and opportunity to voice any disagreements that you have, but you're not doing so'. Why would they voice their opinions when they [saw] a lot of their colleagues fired or quit because of what happened when he first came to manage the agency".

She voiced her opinions to HR, "and HR did not adequately address my issues. I was left in a hostile working environment, which was clearly voiced, asked to be moved multiple times. They would not move me". In the environment she described, unlike the one shared by others, "his people are afraid. They're not going to voice their opinion. And so no, I don't think there was a really valid mechanism for people to voice their concerns". She tried speaking out "me speaking out did not help at all. It led to me being alienated".

As the political narrative became more divisive, the agency relationship between the executive and legislative branches changed. When Republicans are in office, it is an adversarial relationship. The environment changed, and a former employee said many left but may be asked to resign before they could resign first. While the Stitt administration began asking state

employees to resign and the lack of worker protections, many began working, fearing possible

retribution. Many did not want to 'risk' speaking with me about their experiences. Below are

some responses from OHCA employees responding to requests for interviews.

SP

Sandra Puebla <Sandra.Puebla@okhca.org>

To: Noble, Gloria E.   Wed 3/9/2022 9:36 AM

Cc: Sasha Teel <Sasha.Teel@okhca.org>; Kasie McCarty <Kasie.McCarty@okhca.org>

Good morning Gloria,

We respectfully decline to participate in your dissertation; at this time we have several competing priorities that take precedence. Additionally, as current state employees, we maintain apolitical in the work that we do to improve the health and lives of Oklahoma's most vulnerable populations; therefore, we would be unable to provide the content you seek.

We wish you the best of luck on your dissertation; I hope you have a wonderful day!

Best regards,

SANDRA PUEBLA, MSW
Sr. Director, Federal & State Authorities
Oklahoma Health Care Authority
Cell: (405) 227-3465 | E: sandra.puebla@okhca.org

· · ·

A similar email was sent from another Oklahoma Health Care Authority employee.

KB

Karen Beam <karen.beam@okhca.org>

To: Noble, Gloria E.   Wed 3/9/2022 4:43 PM

Hello! I am unable to participate at this time due to a heavy workload that takes precedence. As a state employee, I must maintain apolitical in the work that I do to improve the health and lives of Oklahoma's most vulnerable populations; therefore, I am unable to provide the content you seek. I wish you the best with your dissertation.

Respectfully,

KAREN BEAM BSN, RN, CPC, CPMA
Director, Medical Administrative Support Services
Oklahoma Health Care Authority
4345 N. Lincoln Blvd. | Oklahoma City, OK 73105
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After posting a Tweet requesting interviews from bureaucrats working at the OHCA, a current employee shared information with a current elected member of the House of Representatives that no one would speak with me because of their fear of retribution, mainly because of the lack of worker protections in Oklahoma. Because of the gubernatorial power changes, the newly instituted culture may alter some of the responses people provide. The accountability pressure from the governor is changing working routines. The changes also resulted in OHCA culture changes to accommodate the relationship between the Oklahoma Health Care Authority and the governor. For instance, a less family-like orientation toward a detached environment occurred before the changes in gubernatorial power. The new gubernatorial power created the first appointee to the OHCA, and the CEO position is now appointed rather than hired. The changes likely further divided the previous administrations from the current agency and agency leadership.

Many respondents provided glowing reviews of former CEOs Fogarty and Gomez. Not only did the leaders create an environment that welcomed a diversity of not only individuals but of opinions, agreeing or dissenting. The open employee, and client, centered atmosphere celebrated the work of the agency. Eventually, after Gomez resigned, a new CEO was hired[22]. Then CEO Becky Pasternik-Ikard was the next CEO. She worked under both CEOs, Fogarty and Gomez. The progression to the leadership role likely signaled a continuation of the agency culture. The employees, both current and former, voiced a change. When leadership, beyond just agency leadership but political officials, changed, there was a shift in Oklahoma politics occurring over eight years. "Immediately just a lot of shifts in the philosophy of Medicaid.

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[22] During this time, CEO positions were hired not appointed.

Medicaid was rapidly becoming, in terms of cost, one of the largest state-funded agencies. You

began to see that the cost began to really hit the state funding pretty hard. So, the conservation

began to switch". This switch "viewed it as healthcare, [and] not necessarily as a social service."

"When the administration switched, there was a lot of emphasis on curtailing cost rather than

providing services. The changing philosophy went from 'how do we market this and grow our

program to cover as many as possible, to how do we not cover lives".

The first female CEO seemed intimated by the legislature, compliant to political whims

(an influence the agency structure enjoyed was meant to be impervious), and generally changed

the culture from open to 'cold' as one former supervisor commented. "[The agency] began to

change drastically under her leadership. It was really different having [sic] a female CEO. She

was intimidated by the legislature. It was a rollercoaster". While her short tenure ultimately

ended with the governor dismissal, the next CEO was appointed by the governor. CEO Kevin

Corbett instituted a culture different of that of Pasternak-Ikard. Corbett served as a somewhat

intermediary between the governor and the agency.

Corbett did act as a messenger for the governor but did seem interested in the agency's

mission and actions. Employees mentioned that he does communicate the governor's wishes to

the staff. "I think Kevin (Corbett) had a lot of, of his own kind of flavor and direction... And it's

kind of something communicated by the governor. So, it's not really meant to be reflective of the

governor's priorities in that sense. But as far as like policy goals and priorities, that is clearly

stated. Especially to those who have explicitly programmed, that's for sure"[23]. A former

nonsupervisory employee said, "I feel like he honestly did communicate to the staff, [the]

governors wishes. I mean, I don't believe that he would have remained in office had he not been

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[23] [23] A current supervisory employee. He was previously appointed by the governor to a position in the OHCA. He
moved to a non-appointment position.

so closely aligned with it to be honest. Because a lot of people who were [sic] not aligned with Stitt were removed from office, either that, or they chose to quit when new legislation was passed against the Authority to choose the heads of agencies. So yeah, he always communicated when Kevin Stitt wanted, regardless of what was going on".

A former board member said communication with Corbett was accessible, and voicing dissenting opinions was acceptable, yet the same was not true of communicating with the governor and his team. "Between myself and Kevin Corbett, I felt like we had open communication. If I needed to say something I could. But, between me and the Stitt administration was very poor,"[24]. A former employee said. At the same time, it may be evident that the appointee works with the governor. She continued to say that she did not believe he would remain in the position if he was not closely aligned with the governor's ideological wishes.

A current supervisor described the 'uphill climb' because of Kevin Corbett's lack of Medicaid experience. "He didn't have any Medicaid experience coming in, and so a lot of people, I think, kind of obviously had doubts and so he's had to work fairly hard to get them on [board] ."The supervisor said Corbett's role was "merely pointing this agency in the direction, and you guys are responsible for [policies]."

The roles of the state employees color their agency experiences and feelings of conflict. Not all employees dealt with feelings of conflict similarly. While nearly all employees, both current and former, and supervisory or not, only supervisory employees acted on the reporting feelings of conflict. Supervisors provide a unique perspective when compared with nonsupervisory employees. Unlike the supervisory employees, nonsupervisory employees

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[24] A former OHCA board member asked to resign after a disagreement with the governor.

discussed differences of opinion but did not want to voice those opinions. The difference between managers and employees may result from individual autonomy in a role, possibly the influence of worries of job security, financial security, and other life factors involved – particularly with an administrative governor. This will be further explored later.

Exploring Themes

The themes demonstrate common threads in the interviews. First, the agency culture promotes mission-centric employees and a culture that once embraced open dialogue. After Pasternak-Ikard resigned, Corbett attempted to return to a culture of open dialogue. Lastly, only select supervisors voiced feelings of conflict. This last point is critical to existing research, as the literature does not suggest supervisors are more likely to experience conflict or exercise behaviors such as Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. The following section identifies similar findings in a relevant proposition and will be discussed later.

Findings

Propositions

One: State bureaucrats react to politics/partisanship by continuing their role as bureaucrats. If I am right, we should hear about partisan attempts but failures for it to change their behaviors. If we hear those bureaucrats respond to political requests or influences, the theory will be contradicted.

Bureaucrats react to the politics of Oklahoma and the partisanship in varying ways. Initially, as evidenced through interviews and the organizational structure, bureaucrats did not feel partisan pressure to behave in a specific way. Interestingly, both OHCA leadership and

bureaucrats reported disappointment toward political actions. However, only leadership responded to the disappointment through actions. Nonsupervisory employees reported disappointment and reacted with continued loyalty. This supports the first proposition. The example provides evidence of how a former supervisor reacted to calls to action by the legislature.

The disappointment by the leadership of political action led to exit, voice, and loyalty. One former supervisor contended with the idea that the agency leadership and political pressures wanted to promulgate rules outside the law's bounds. In essence, the former supervisor was asked to find loopholes to acquiesce to the partisanship of the state legislature and a CEO that felt intimidated by the members of the state legislature. She said she did not feel such pressure previously and changed her orientation toward her role and the agency. She felt pressured to act, in a sense, to promulgate rules that were not within the confines of the law. She did oppose policies and agency direction. She said 'things were so political. You either succumb to it and do it or stand up and are pushed out". She described standing up and how that changes things, and when you oppose certain things and voice that opposition, it is no longer smiled upon. She then voiced her opposition to the agency for such a request. She filed a complaint about things happening at the agency. The agency hired an external law firm. The external law firm sided with her, and those internal changes needed to happen.

Ultimately, she was correct that the agency did not have written authority to act in such a way. At this point, she described her role, and the environment, as not the same. When she began working for the agency, she was excited to go to work and loved her job – "the agency is no longer what we all remember ."After voicing her opposition, she said she could not continue in her role for the ethical considerations. In her last year, after voicing her opposition, she was

preparing herself to leave. She said, "it wasn't a choice of staying ."She continued to say that many people who began working at the agency at its creation began leaving, and she was herself preparing for her exit. She exited over the changes to the direction of the agency.

Two: Bureaucrats are mission orientated. If I am right, we should hear about their focus on providing healthcare to low-income Oklahomans. If we hear bureaucrats following management requests to work against the agency's mission to provide healthcare to low-income Oklahomans or hear bureaucrats solely responding to the management no matter the agency's mission, the theory will be contradicted. Themes that support this proposition are fear of retribution for consenting to an interview or fear of identification.

Every interviewee discussed their orientation toward the mission. The following examples support the proposition. Many employees mentioned joining the agency because of their work and the higher overall pay because of the agency's classification. If an interviewee did not join the agency because of its mission, all interviewees discussed their close ties to the agency and continued working there.

The client-focused nature of the agency comes through in each interviewee. Everyone interviewed mentioned the culture of working for the client and the care taken to ensure the mission's advancement. A former supervisor said the agency "advanced the [Medicaid] program to meet the needs of Oklahomans ."The previous sentiment was shared by many. A former nonsupervisory employee said, "we've had a strong very strong culture of cooperation and trying to figure out what we could do in terms of making sure that the processes that we were working on or the project that we're working on really advance the mission of the agency." The same

former employee said the people who join the agency were "definitely… mission-driven people", and his team, in particular when speaking about the people who joined the agency, worked to 'improve the program .'As one former supervisor said, she 'drank the Kool-Aid.' In comparison, no one else mentioned the feeling in those words, all described importance of the client in their daily working environment.

Three: Bureaucrats facing role or goal conflict will exercise ELVN. If I am right, we should hear about the nature of role or goal conflict and the resulting behaviors. We should expect the existence of role or goal conflict leads to individuals exercising Exit, Voice, Loyalty, or Neglect. Individual exercises multiple behaviors and equally possible can use one behavior. If we hear about the role or goal conflict but do not see responding behaviors of Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect, the theory will be contradicted. Themes that support this proposition are working to help provide healthcare to low-income Oklahomans.

Three former supervisors put their careers on the line for the mission of providing healthcare to as many eligible Oklahomans as possible. In no such order, the stories of putting forward plan to expand Medicaid or ensure the program follows the law is below. The following examples provide evidence of conflict and resulting behavior because of that conflict. While to mentioned in the proposition, only supervisors identified conflict that changed their behaviors. Non-supervisors described dissenting opinions but a lack of utility in sharing those opinions. Therefore, evidence somewhat supports the proposition. Literature suggests there is a benefit of voice "with its volume ."This possibly suggests that there are attempts of voice that are more

influential because of their role, leadership status, or other characteristics rendering their 'voice' more crucial to change.

Expanding Under Governor Mary Fallin

'I got beat.'

One former supervisor worked alongside the Fallin administration in the beginning conversations of expansion under a newly elected governor. The expansion plans began under a Democratic governor, former Governor Brad Henry. After the election of a Republican governor, former Governor Mary Fallin, she was initially on board with expansion, as the agency work was already underway. As Governor Fallin adjusted to her new position and introduced staff to agency members, as well as the political pressures from a Republican majority in the state legislature, she ultimately rejected the existing expansion plans.

A meeting between the former supervisor and the former governor led him to believe she would support expansion. The former supervisor described the moment by saying, 'I got beat .'" It was no secret; I was very disappointed that we were not able to take advantage of that opportunity. It was 100% federal money for three years". He ultimately decided to take retirement after the decision. "It was one of the major factors in deciding to take advantage of my eligibility for retirement, the month I turned 65. Because it was very disappointing, the state of Oklahoma was allowed to bring medical coverage to thousands of people". His choice to exit demonstrates the agency's culture intrinsically tied to providing healthcare and exiting when the agency cannot meet the mission.

One Last Legislative Push to Expand

A former supervisor, who worked under the previously mentioned former supervisor, wrestled with the same considerations: mission versus program offerings. He was at a crossroads

in understanding the Medicaid Expansion piece. "It felt like I had some responsibility to try to lay down a foundation or a framework… I felt the need to advance the Medicaid conversation, because there was pressure building. But from my perspective, there was also a need, we had battled… this issue of uninsured Oklahomans, working Oklahomans, for years of my career… Most of our bad health outcomes are derived from those who were covered by insurance. So it was always in my mind, if we really wanted to improve the health status of the people in our state. We had the provide them appropriate and adequate quality health care".

He used his position and voice to put forward somewhat of a middle ground between political ideologies and attempt to expand. While he admitted he views himself as a fiscal conservative, "I'll freely admit, as a fiscal conservative, I was not comfortable with Medicaid Expansion. I was comfortable with the state option. The state wanted to do it because it state dollars involved, and it was not 100% federal funded. I was cool to it. I was not promoting Medicaid Expansion. If it happened, it happened… great. But I'm also a states rights person. So, I think the state should have some decisions in services that we provide at the state…. So fast forward to 2015. And [sic] the pressure was on me to spend money wisely, but to still improved health outcomes in the state, and I felt for a lack of a better word, to make a proposal".

He provided an emotional explanation for his reason for the proposal. "Saying we were trying to figure out a way to get people on to better health [care] because we understood a couple of things. If we were investing in kids and making sure that they were having healthy habits in school that the more likely they were going to be able to have a baby and be healthy enough to be in the workforce, and then break some cycles of poverty that we were dealing with. And so, in my mind, if we can start to break those cycles, because health wasn't the issue, we actually had healthy people in the workforce, [but to be able to be a productive member of society that would

break some of those poverty-related barriers in and so we came up with this plan that said, 'okay, we need to address providers rates',".

As a self-identified fiscal conservative, he "was not comfortable with Medicaid expansion. I was comfortable with the state option". Behind the scenes, in which he remained silent on all details, he said key leaders knew they could get something done. The key players developed a plan. It was called the Medicaid Rebalancing Act of 2016. The policy tried to "provide coverage to more people and do it in a way that we are actually putting them in a commercial or managed care program. The policy sought to improve health outcomes. The goal was to break cycles to have a "healthy person in the workforce to be able to be a productive member of society that would be some of those poverty-related barriers. In February 2015, the work began. Ultimately it did not move forward. "I said, if it doesn't work, I will likely leave the agency. Just because I don't want that failure of that program to cause issues for the agency going forward". He felt it was "the perfect program because it was not either [political preference] ."People look back and say, well, that is millions of dollars that we left on the table. I don't look at it that way. I look at it as there were hundreds of thousands of lives that could have been impacted over… the years that we missed the opportunity impact".

At the time, "the reality of it was the legislature and the governor could not take a position on it, for political reasons I get it ."The agency maintained its original political insulation as well as providing it to the governor and the legislature. He proposed his idea, "so I didn't do it without acknowledgment of key leaders… But we developed a plan. And we called it the Medicaid Rebalancing Act of 2020. And it was designed to expand coverage, and then also limit coverage in other areas".

When asked if he regretted the action he took and its failure, "ultimately, I was at peace with the fact that I presented a solution. The people who were elected decided the fate of that solution… What I think I did is presented an option in the legislature and the governor chose not to exercise that option… So, no, I don't have any regret. I've been blessed to feel like I've served the state well for 20 years. And I did what I could do to make it better than when I found it"[25]. He could use his voice and later exited. "I felt like it was the right time to leave the agency. I felt like the agency was still in good hands. And it's still good, strong political position that I could, I could do that. And that way, anything that was attributed to [the proposal] to me, didn't get attached to the agency, got assigned to me, and then it that I'm no longer in the equation". He worked to ensure that whatever he did not negatively attach to the agency, he would leave if it wasn't adequate to maintain the excellent reputation of OHCA.

Voicing Concerns Led to Exit

The former supervisor who exited after her formal complaint against the agency identifies support for this proposition. The former supervisor faced both role and goal conflict. In her role, she did not believe the OHCA and role had the written authority to promulgate and enforce specific rules. Ultimately, the goal of the potentially promulgated rules sought to change the agency's direction in terms of cost and client services. She also described the perspectives of the board went from serving the interest of Oklahomans to using their position to best serve their role outside of the board. For instance, she said a now-former board member wanted to block Walmart and Target from providing optometry services. The former board member's rationale, as an optometrist, did not want to let the big box stores provide services because it would increase

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[25] He followed by mentioning the other places he believes he has helped, but in the interest of maintaining his anonymity it is not disclosed.

competition – mainly because Walmart and Target can provide frames and lenses at a lesser cost than the optometrist.

At that point, it became apparent that the board member wanted support from the agency. "It is not about what is best for the members, and it was about what is best for my bottom line with providers". Another instance signaled the type of push back by board members when the state legislature wanted to pursue nurses providing care to Medicaid recipients, rather than solely relying on doctors. The board members who are doctors disagreed. The switch toward allowing nurses would lessen the cost burden on clients.

Four: The competing accountability pressures between levels of government may lead to the use of ELVN. If I am right, we should hear that pressure from the federal and state government leads to Exit, Voice, Loyalty, or Neglect. If we hear the competing accountability pressures do not lead to Exit, Voice, Loyalty, or Neglect, the theory will be contradicted. The themes that confirm this proposition identify whether they feel ethical considerations when deciding to act.

The evidence suggests accountability pressures between levels of government and supports the proposition. Two former board members shared their experiences of working amidst a governor pursuing different preferences than the federal government. Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt shared his desire to privatize Medicaid Expansion through a managed care system. The initial managed care system failed in Oklahoma in the early 2000s after a provider wanted to increase their percentage of fees and the total fees. He campaigned on a similar structure to the previous program and attempted to do it. Members of the OHCA board inquired about the legality of privatizing expansion. Ultimately, rather than voting against the rule, the board voted

to table the rule to learn more information. Both former board members said it was not a motion against the governor. Instead, it was a chance to learn whether it was possible under the federal guidelines for Medicaid Expansion implementation. The governor asked for the resignation of the board members after 'failing' to show support for the governor's proposal\.

This is the only instance of bureaucrats identifying accountability pressures between the state and federal governments. The other interviewees focused on the state's role in the agency and, at times, the lack thereof. The individuals working directly alongside the federal government refused to comment.

Use of Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect

Contrary to initial beliefs, exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect were not widespread. Instead, the results suggest that the use of EVLN may depend on supervisory status. All but one nonsupervisory employee voiced loyalty, regardless of differences of opinion or overt conflict between the mission and the agency's actions. The nonsupervisory employee who exited filed complaints with Human Resources regarding a hostile work environment. This will be explored further. Employees expressed a few variable responses regarding whether they experienced conflict for various actions they believed to be inconsistent with the agency's mission to provide health care to low-income Oklahomans. First, it was common to express that while they may feel conflict or be disappointed with the agency's actions. Whether that be a disappointment because the state failed to expand the first time or internal conflict with management, employees expressed it was not 'their place' to take it further than share their disagreement in weekly meetings' or anonymously leave comments in the designated box.

The sense to 'take it further' was one that only supervisors described. Conflicts arose for two reasons: first, it was unlawful activity; second, it was not furthering the agency's mission. A

former supervisor voiced her concerns about the unlawful activity and ultimately exited after learning the requests made were not permitted. While the outside law firm investigation sided with her, she said not only was that request unusual from previous agency leaders, but after voicing her concerns, she felt she did not belong. The second set of former supervisors felt the agency was no longer fulfilling its mission. Both attempted to advocate for Medicaid Expansion and failed to see the fruits of their labor.

I suggest the results provide evidence that the EVLN framework should take context into account to discern the motivations of behaviors and explain whether the behavior is available. I suggest this requires framework adaptation to take certain conditions into account to explain the availability of said behavior better and why it may not be available to some based on supervisory status, financial and employment stability, sense of utility to exercise behaviors, or other agency characteristics/culture aspects that influence the ability to use ELVN. In the case of the single nonsupervisory employee who exited, she experienced non-policy or agency direction conflict. While she did exit, she did not do it for the framework's rationale. Instead, her experience points toward another critique of EVLN. If she exits for reasons other than anticipated, we can argue that exit is heterogeneous, and a single explanation does not grasp any nuance.

Additionally, the nature of the governor's new administrative tools (behaviors?) influenced behaviors in those individuals who did not participate and expressed concern about job stability and other management tactics to reign in dissension. Future state bureaucracy and bureaucrats research should consider the increasing reach of gubernatorial offices and other unilateral management tools to shape policy and policymaking structures. Additional focus should be given to state bureaucrats and their motivations, considering this movement by governors and policies that create conflict.

Conclusion

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority provides a unique snapshot of accountability pressures between federal and state government expectations and the instances that individuals choose to exercise Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. While we learn that state bureaucrats share a mission orientation similar to federal bureaucrats, and state bureaucrats do not change their behavior due to partisan influences, we learn that conflict plays out differently. Instead of conflict influencing the behaviors of all administrators, conflict influences a particular type of administrator: one who supervises others or departments.

Of the supervisory bureaucrats, two former supervisory bureaucrats responded to conflict by voicing their concerns. The third former supervisory bureaucrat responded to conflict against his idea of his mission as a leader and the agency's mission through an exit. The supervisory administrators who voiced their concerns exited after experiencing conflict. The use of conflict better identifies the motivation for using EVLN. In the case of the former nonsupervisory administrator who exited, HR failed to respond to her claims of a hostile working environment. Her exit identifies the homogenous nature of exit in the framework and the need to distinguish motivations when exercising EVLN.

We find that the conflictual nature of Medicaid Expansion has many vantage points: one of the bureaucrats, the supervisor, and the elected official. The bureaucrat and supervisor respond to such conflict in different ways. At the same time, each administrator may face conflict, whether about following federal requirements or passing the opportunity to expand Medicaid during the initial push by the federal government.

Appendix A: History of Medicare/Medicaid

History of Medicaid and Medicaid Expansion

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a bill creating Medicaid and Medicare in July 1965[26]. Over time, Medicaid and Medicare coverage and eligible groups have grown. Medicaid and Medicare are overseen by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and the legislation implementing the programs is a federal policy. While it is a federal policy and a federal program, the bill provides state discretion, within the parameters of the federal policy, to implement the policy, the benefits, and groups eligible, to suit their needs[27], and results "in variations in Medicaid coverage across the country[28]."

Expanding Medicaid Under the Affordable Care Act

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), formally known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (colloquially known as Obamacare), was introduced to the United States House of Representatives Floor by Speaker Nancy Pelosi in July 2009. After the introduction, Sen. Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts died in August, complicating the Democratic 60-vote filibuster-proof majority. Sen. Kennedy's interim member was appointed in September 2009. With 60 Democratic votes, the Senate passed the edited ACA, known as America's Healthy Future Act, in December 2009. In January 2010, a Republican was elected to fill the late Sen. Kennedy's seat – ultimately changing the path forward for the ACA. Democrats used Budget Reconciliation to pass the ACAA in March 2010, and later that month, the U.S. House passed the

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[26] *Program history*. Medicaid. (n.d.). Retrieved February 6, 2022, from https://www.medicaid.gov/about-us/program-history/index.html

[27] *Program history*. Medicaid. (n.d.). Retrieved February 6, 2022, from https://www.medicaid.gov/about-us/program-history/index.html

[28] *Program history*. Medicaid. (n.d.). Retrieved February 6, 2022, from https://www.medicaid.gov/about-us/program-history/index.html

Senate's version by a 219-212 vote. Later in March of 2010, former President Obama signed the

bill into law.

The ACA attempted to change the face of U.S. healthcare radically. '

Radically changing the industry came with many detractors, most Republicans and some

Democrats. After its passage, with many changes, the Supreme Court took up the question of the

constitutionality of the ACA. Later in the same year, the Supreme Court upheld the major

provisions of the Affordable Care Act.

Within the ACA, the bill included the option of Medicaid Expansion. Prior to the passage

of the ACA in 2010, states Medicaid provisions differed wildly. For example, a low-income

family with children would qualify at 185% of the FPL, unlike in states like Alabama. In

Alabama, low-income adults must earn less than 11% of the FPL (Prokop 2015). Medicaid

Expansion attempted to create more uniform requirements across states.

In 2014, 28 states and D.C. expanded Medicaid to qualifying individuals (Pines, Zocchi,

Moghtaderi, Blaack, Farmer, Hufstetler, Klauer, and Pilgram 2016). The Medicaid Expansion

provision allowed states to increase eligibility from 19% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to

138% FPL. In the same Supreme Court ruling that many of the ACA provisions were

constitutional, the Court ruled that states could reject Medicaid Expansion. So, many states did

reject Medicaid Expansion.

Appendix B: Expansion Timeline in OK

3.23.20
ACA IS ENANCTED

6.28.12
MEDICAID EXPANSION
OPTIONAL FOR STATES

1.1.14
STATES MAY EXPAND
MEDICAID

2015-2018
LEGISLATION TO EXPAND
FAILS

7.1.2016
MEDICAID REBALANCING
ACT OF 2020

2.18.19
SB 605

6.18.19
OKSC RULES IN FAVOR
OF SQ 802

10.24.19
YES ON 802

11.9.19
SQ 802 FINALIZED

10.20.19
SQ 802 SIGNATURES
VERIFIED

1.30.20
SOONERCARE 2.0

5.21.20
SQ 1046

5.28.20
OHCA WITHDRAWS 1115
WAIVER

6.30.20
SQ 802 PASSED

7.16.20
ENROLLMENT FOR
EXPANSION BEGINS

6.1.21
OKSC RULES VOIDING
MANAGED CARE

6.15.21
100,000 OKLAHOMANS
ENROLL

7.1.21
MEDICAID EXPANSION
SERVICES BEGIN

Chapter 3: Learning from Louisville

Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many issues boiled to new heights that required immediate attention. The CARES Act eviction moratorium prevented landlords for tacking on additional fees for nonpayment. The eviction moratorium prevented evictions based on "nonpayment of rent" (McCarty and Perl 2021). The moratorium began March 27, 2020. The moratoria served as a stopgap to provide cities and counties to pursue other forms of assistance to keep people in their homes to prevent the next expected 'pandemic' of housing instability, and ultimate sudden rise of homelessness for the most vulnerable populations. Congress passed legislation created the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Cities and counties began planning to disburse assistance. The focus of this chapter is the success of a city implementing ERAP and served as a case study of a best practice.

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) provides assistance for individuals experiencing income instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "The federal ERA Program allows local programs to cover rent, utilities, and home energy costs. This includes electricity, gas, fuel oil, water, and sewer, and trash removal". Emergency Rental Assistance eligibility are as such: "to be eligible for help covering your rent, you must have an agreement to pay rent for your home or mobile home lot. You don't necessarily need to have a signed lease, and your home could be an apartment, house, mobile home, or other place". Additionally, there were other eligibility statements that needed to be true.

The following needed to be accurate statements:
- Qualified for unemployment, or should quality
- Experienced financial hardship,
- Overall income below threshold determined by your local area,
- Experiencing housing instability.

From city employees and community-based organizations, preventing eviction, and preventing the use of loopholes by landlords to evict tenants, has been part of the experience disbursing Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) or Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funds. This chapter will focus on best practices, obstacles, and the networked orientation of ERA implementing fostering community capacity. During my time at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, I interviewed several community-based organizations employees, city employees, and others included in the implementation of the ERA funds.

Case Study

The case study approach is appropriate to describe best practices. A case study can introduce new concepts, best practices, and situations that may arise (CDC). The case study approach "allows for in-depth, multi-faceted explorations of complex issues in their real-life settings" (Crowe, Creswell, Roberston, Huby, Avery and Sheikh 2011, page number). It useful to "obtain an in-depth appreciated of an issue, event or phenomenon of interest, in its nature real-life context" (Crowe et al. 2011). A case study is the appropriate method to "explain, describe, and explore" the case of Louisville. Additionally, it provides a means to describe information in an explanatory form to ask (and possibly answer) how, what, and why questions. It will inform future policy choices, and design options to ensure the gaps in the existing policy do not reoccur. The case study will define, select, collect and analyze the case, interpret data, and report the ultimate findings. The Emergency Rental Assistance Programs are similar and provide identified boundaries and scope to serve as generalizable findings (Liu 2022).

Merits of Using a Case Study

The case study approach enables choice based on the unique research question. We utilize an intrinsic case study approach. An intrinsic case study approach provides the opportunity to select a unique case selection, and "select based on its own merits" (citation).

Limitations of a Case Study

It may be difficult with the volume of interview data and the time restrictions of producing a case study to identify best practices may lead to missing pieces of the case of interest. While a time restraint may impose an unwanted restriction, it enables the importance of collecting relevant data rather than to collect as much data as possible. The time constraint, and the method of collecting information lacks the traditional scientific rigor often positively regarded in social sciences.

Oftentimes, a case study also lacks generalizability. In this case, all states, and all cities reaching the 200,000-population threshold, share programmatic requirements. The process in question is the implementation of the policy. Each program is charged with the same process. And each program can utilize a variety of resources like community partnerships for implementation or using increased administrative support by hiring new employees for program implementation. Early Emergency Rental Assistance Program studies suggest generalizability because of the programmatic requirements (Liu 2022). "A study one this program's effectiveness and impacts would be informative for understanding the general ERA programs" (Liu 2022, 3).

Introducing Louisville

The U.S. Department of the Treasury highlights the success of Louisville, KY by focusing "on a multifaceted approach"[29]. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis' Institute for Economic Equity focused on Louisville not because of the Treasury's 'best practices', but because data identified that unlike many other cities, Louisville spent 100% of the initial disbursement from the federal government. At the time, many cities spent between 20-50% of their initial pot of ERA funds (called ERA1). The success prompted focus on Louisville's program, and if any of their practices would be transferable to other cities or states struggling to spend the money.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the city of Louisville began working on their eviction crisis. On average, an American city racks up nearly 8,000 evictions a year[30]. In Louisville, on average, nearly 16,000 evictions are filed in a year's time. City employees, organizations, and others involved in these initial conversations about the city's eviction problem began finding solutions to the problem.

Megan Duggan, a city employee described the initial interest in the policy problem, not only because of the looming eviction problem in Louisville, but because of a book. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond tells the story of Milwaukee, WI families during the financial crisis. The city employee said it highlighted the severity of the problem across the country, and at the time, made her change her job from property manager for

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[29] *Eviction diversion*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2021, November 5). Retrieved March 6, 2022, from
https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/emergency-rental-assistance-program/promising-practices/eviction-diversion

[30] Marilyn Harris provided this data based on the research shared by her office. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates 900,000 evictions each year across the country (https://nlihc.org/resource/new-research-finds-27-million-households-receive-eviction-filings-annually).

a private housing corporation, toward working for the Louisville Metro Government. In her new role, she works for Louisville Forward, the program started to study the eviction problem.

Alongside her, the city knew of the problem. In August 2019, Louisville was entuned to the eviction rate: nearly two times the national average. The Louisville Metro Government (LMG) had both external and internal partners. For example, a program called Second Chance Housing that ensured a prior eviction would not stop your ability to rent. The program would put an example of a good record back for the renter. Before this program, the LMG Office of Housing wasn't working on evictions prior. In conjunction with Second Chance Housing, Louisville Forward was charged to prevent eviction. Louisville Forward allowed for a tenant paid half of their rent, and the city would match that half; so, the tenant would have his/her rent paid. The program debuted March 3, 2020.

On March 4, 2020, the Public Health Emergency (PHE) was declared, and the city's first COVID-19 case was identified[31]. The existing infrastructure, or network, of individuals made implementation smoother. Marilyn Harris, Director of Develop Louisville program said the group had interpersonal trust between stakeholders, and that made implementation easier. Up to that point, neither the CARES Act nor CDC eviction moratorium was in place. LMG employees, and other stakeholders in this network, waited to hear about next steps to prevent widespread eviction.

At the time, the courts closed in many cities and states. The federal government, and the looming PHE, paused all activity. On August 24, 2020, Louisville courts reopened. By this time, CARES Act funding was allocated for rental assistance. Louisville employees, both current and now retired, took amazing steps to be part of the process, and make changes to ensure equity in

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[31] Marilyn Harris shared this detail.

the process. Cathy Hinko, former Executive Director of the Metropolitan Housing Coalition, reached out to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of Kentucky to grant two weeks for LMG, and other cities, to provide rental assistance to those needing it. As courts opened, the city needed to pull people to process applications nearly 7 days a week, and 12 hours a day. Community partners helped process applications.

The organizations and individuals involved in this program navigate their cross pressures through community capacity. The program follows the charge of the federal government through Congress and the U.S. Department of the Treasury. This chapter will highlight the work street-level bureaucrats using their community capacity to improve the system to make implementation easier and more equitable. As eviction data presents, and existing narratives around evictions, many facing housing instability are minority populations. Therefore, the charge of implementation required more collaboration and coordination across organizations to implement the program.

Theoretical Considerations

Street Level Bureaucrats

Street-level bureaucrats (SLB) and their decisionmaking based on their discretion are pivotal factors in the ultimate policy output we see. A street-level bureaucrat is an employee implementing client-facing policies such as public assistance programs. As programs move to less-client facing, and online forms, street-level bureaucrats continue work to enroll clients, provide programmatic assistance, or other program-centered routines. The position of in-person client work versus online interaction may change the experience for both the client and the SLB.

Street-level bureaucracy "describes the patterns of… judgments of front-line workers as tantamount to political decisions and policy-making" 11.

Working in this space creates pressures from their environment, such as: inadequate resources, growing demand for services, vague/conflicting organizational expectations and policy goals, difficulties in measuring performance and, clients who do not self-select into these programs". As government services require third-party organizations to deliver, expanding our understanding of a street-level bureaucrat may change. While the third-party organization may not be a direct government agency, the co-production and collaboration of service delivery creates a nuanced role between serving the purpose of the organization, and the policy goal of the government. We will note this person as a street-level bureaucrat too.

Policy Implementation

Policy implementation "encompasses those actions by public and private individuals (or groups) that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth in former policy decisions (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975, 447). Implementation is the "an action-orientated phenomenon that, within the context of public bureaucracies, unfolds over time" (Goggin 1986, 335).

This process is inherently dynamic in nature. It often includes multiple levels of government and actors. In this activity, implementation is the result of decisions of policy adoption and the behaviors of administrators. The behaviors we see are "impacted by environment, type of policy at stake, and characteristics of implementing organizations and people managing the program" (Goggin 1986). In this case, we use implementation as a theory to understand the *process* of administering the policy rather than the *outcome* of the policy.

Networks

Networks, or public management networks, involves officials in all levels of government (federal, state, local-metro, and local) and nongovernmental officials. A network is a structure 'of interdependent' "multiple organizations or parts thereof, where one unit is not merely the formal subordinate of the others in some larger hierarchical arrangement" (Agranoff 2007, 45; see O'Toole 1997). A network is suitable for forms of collaboration. As policies become more complex, or as literature poignantly describes 'wicked problems', there is a need for knowledge collaboration. The collaborative efforts come together for the exchange of knowledge, shared resources, coordinated strategies, tasks forces, and coalitions. Over the course of government programs, and the rise of the welfare state of the 21st century, managers working between levels of government, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) work to find solutions to these problems – also known as intergovernmental management.

These organizations usually come together to solve problems they cannot solve on their own. A network is a networked for of collaboration. A network is appealing "because it provides the flexibility and stability needed while partners' home organization, where they spend the majority of their time, remain largely intact and do most of the work" (Agranoff 2007, 45). These collaborative entities "bring together representatives from public agencies and NGOs to address problems of common concern that accrue value to the manager/specialists, their participating organizations, and their networks" (Agranoff 2007, 45).

A network has an intrinsic value. This intrinsic value is found in that the 'public undertaking' would not otherwise been possible. While we assume public organizations add value, a networked system adds a *different* type of values. This value comes from, as O'Toole (1997) suggests, from the network's initiative to "tackle the wicked policy problems, deal with

ambitious policy goals in contexts dispersed power, face political demands for inclusion and broader influence, and deal with second-order effects, and layers of mandates from federal and state governments" page number.

Within this network, network management occurs. Network management entails steering of the processes. Or put more simply: identifying players, framing their tasks, mobilizing a shared task, and 'synthesizing' the network to create positive conditions for the policy implementation, or task at hand (Agranoff and McGuire 2001). Network management enables steering the process. While further discussed later in the case study, the network collaborated with government institutions to alter existing processes to increase outreach attempts to increase the number of individuals aware of the program, as well as increase the number of people applying and receiving aid.

Community Capacity

Community capacity, defined, is "a set of attributes that help or enable an organization to fulfill its missions" (Eisinger 2002, 117). More specifically, community capacity includes "the existence of resources, networks of relationships, and leadership that 'impede or promote success" (see Chaskin 2001). We assume there is a set of organizational characteristics that promote community capacity. The characteristics of community capacity are "effective leadership, an external helping network, specialized skills to understand housing and development projects, and political resources" 117. Community capacity is the result of an "interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-

being of a community" (Chaskin 2001, 295). The organizational characteristics must be present

for an individual, organization, or network to perform their responsibility.

Chaskin (2001) defines organizational capacity through a relational model made up of

dimensions. There are six dimensions to community capacity (Chaskin 2001, 295). Three

dimensions relate to community capacity: fundamental characteristics, levels of social agency,

and its function. The remaining dimensions highlight the importance of strategies, conditioning

influences, and community-level outcomes. "The model suggests that community capacity is

exemplified by a set of core characteristics and operates through the agency of individuals,

organizations, and networks to perform particular functions" 295. Importantly, the environmental

factors influence community capacity and "community capacity may be built through strategic

intervention" (295). Each level is important: the individual, the organization, networks, and the

greater community. The outcome may be "increased community capacity and other, more

targeted community outcomes" (295).

These characteristics more specifically identify characteristics and dimensions rather than

simply assuming organizational effectiveness is an appropriate proxy for community capacity.

The existence of these characteristics and dimensions will be discussed later, and will identify

the importance of these characteristics toward policy and program successes.

Community capacity directly impacts policy (Huber and McCarty 2004, 2006; Lewis

2008). As problems become increasing complex, and the desired outcome from policies are

vague, effectiveness may be an ambiguous measure to identify whether an organization has

capacity. Additionally, capacity is not a dichotomous measure. An organization may have

varying degrees of capacity to achieve a variety of successes. The relational model presents the

most appropriate framework to understand degree of capacity and the outcomes from an

organization's degree of capacity. Community capacity is a result of organizational resources, a network orientation toward the problem and solution, a sense of community and a shared commitment among stakeholders.

Administrative Burden

Administrative burden is a concept that identifies the experience of citizens during the policy implementation process, and that process is 'onerous'. The root of administrative burdens are "hidden politics" and the associated consequences, lack of access to services (Burden, Canon, Mayer and Moynihan 2012; Herd, DeLire, Harvey, and Moynihan 2013; Monyihan, Herd, and Harvey 2015; Herd and Moynihan 2018). Rather than defund or eliminate programs, elected officials can make access more difficult through this compliance, learning and psychological costs (Bell, Ter-Mktchyan, Wehde and Smith 2020). The existence of costs creates administrative burdens that likely reduce the number of clients using a program.

Equity

Social equity "has to do with the fairness of the organization, its management, and its delivery of public services" (Frederickson 2010, 7). The goal of social equity is "to enhance the political and economic-wellbeing of those minorities" (Frederickson 2010, 7). The cornerstones of equity drive both the initial push by Louisville pre-pandemic, and the implementation the ERA funds.

The cornerstone of equity is involved in each step of the policy writing, adoption, and implementation process. Put simply, it is concerned with the "fairness in the provision of governmental policies and services" (Cepiku and Mastrodascio 2021, 1, see Gooden and Portillo 2011). Definitions, and operationalizations, of equity focus on differing perspectives of the concept. For instance, some focus on access to government programs, the output of the service,

or both access and program output. This case study will focus on both access and program output. Both access and program output identify not only need, but additionally the barriers impeding equity. The initial program guidelines, as the funding guidelines, focus on the spirit of *equality rather than equity.* Stakeholders discussed the need to focus on equity, particularly in the context of funding.

Accountability Pressures

In many programs, the federal government requires compliance to receive funding allocation.

The ties between levels of government are known as intergovernmental relations. Intergovernmental relations rely on the relationship between three levels of the U.S. government. The dependencies between and amongst the levels are of the utmost importance to understand and explain the outcomes born of the relationship between levels of government (Cameron 2001).

Intergovernmental relations (IGR) are the relationship between levels of government and is outlined by the Constitution. As issues become more complex, IGR becomes more important as the states aid the federal government in policy implementation, and vice versa. The relationship between levels of government is particularly important with Emergency Rental Assistance. ERAP requires compliance with federal requirements for eligibility, implementation, and auditing processes.

These cross-pressures could result in practices outside the boundaries of the programmatic requirements. For instance, delivering checks to individuals rather than mailing checks to ensure rapid assistance, or altering institutional practices to alleviate burdens to potential program professionals.

Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect

The Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect (EVLN) framework outlines the rationale for behavior types. Bureaucrats exercise these forms of action to communicate dissatisfaction or satisfaction with the workplace environment or actions. The use of EVLN in political science explains a bureaucrats' behavior in instances of policy changes. In this case, EVLN provides a framework to understand a bureaucrat's behaviors when politics or policies change. The framework enables a discussion about the conditions that permit or expedite leaving the government, voicing concerns, exercising loyalty, or neglecting their post.

In Louisville, there is no overt conflict between the state and the federal government implementing the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Instead, we assume such agreement will lead to more use of voice or loyalty, rather than behaviors such as exit or neglect.

Understanding the Theoretical Components to Explain This Case Study

The role of a street-level bureaucrat (SLB) identifies the multi-faceted requirements to complete their job. A street-level bureaucrat's job creates policies. This means that the action of a program will reflect in the policy outcome. So, a case study interviewing street-level bureaucrats about their experiences implementing the Emergency Rental Assistance Program provides a unique look at their experiences. In Louisville, the local government began program design for an eviction prevention program. It provides detailed context to the existing problem in Louisville and provides advantages to program implementation in comparison with other programs of similar size.

The community capacity provides ample explanatory power to understand Louisville and Emergency Rental Assistance Program implementation, as well as a solution to dealing with accountability pressures. The use, and existence of ample, of resources, networked orientation

toward identifying and solving a problem, a sense of community ("collectively held values, norms and vision"), and a shared level of commitment among stakeholders (Chaskin 2001, 296).

Resources

The Louisville Metro Government (LMG) and the stakeholders began planning an eviction prevention program *before* the pandemic. The stakeholder network, comprised of government, non-profit, and private organizations, enabled the program design. In August 2019, Louisville became aware of the eviction rate in their city. The eviction rate was nearly twice the national average (about 16,000 evictions a year). An external organization, Second Chance Housing, would provide housing to individual regardless of prior eviction. Second Chance Housing would provide the opportunity for individuals to put forward a good record for future rentals. The program outlined the requirements that the tenant pay half of the rent, and the city would match that contribution to the overall rental payment.

This demonstrates that both the city, and the network enjoy the resources for such a program. The Treasury disbursed the ERA1 and ERA2 funds and the city program would disburse funds based on their program eligibility. Discussing ERA with Louisville Metro Government employees, using all their resources was a concern. The funding equation determined by Treasury allocated money based on percentage of the total population. It strained resources for cities like Louisville. Since Louisville has an existing eviction problem, and likely a problem more severe than other cities – the city spent their resources more quickly than other cities.

After spending 100% of ERA2 funding, Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear[32] announced $27 million in additional funding to continue the program in Louisville. The KY governor announced additional funding for Lexington as well, $11.7 million[33] The Director of Develop Louisville Marilyn Harris said in an interview she was unsure whether the state would (or could) contribute additional funding to continue the program. At the time of the interview, nearly 24 hours before Gov. Beshear's announcement for additional funding, Harris voiced concerns for individuals waiting for assistance (applications could be process but not validated to receive funds), and risk eviction because the eviction moratoria expired. There was a "huge backlog of applications… if we don't get the relocation of funds the state, we will literally have to close our program without assisting the rest of the people". The city council did not want to allocate more towards the program.

ERAP allowed for a percentage of the funding to go toward administrative costs like hiring more employees to (10% for ERA1; 15% for ERA2). Louisville hired temps and welcomed anyone interested. Harris described it as a 'all hands-on deck' situation. And all service providers could be a ERAP service provider to process applications, and execute programmatic requirements (confirmation of eligibility, coordination between tenants and landlords, etc.) by serving as a third party. Louisville hired temps and interns. Harris described the additional administrative staff as helpful. Harris found more success with interns rather than temporary hires. She reported the 'key ingredient' to their success was people. Other community

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[32] Office of the Governor. (2022, March 8). *Gov. Beshear provides $38.7 million more in eviction ... - kentucky*. Kentucky.gov. Retrieved March 8, 2022, from https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=1230

[33] At the time of the announcement, $38.7 million was announced for Louisville and Lexington. The state had $55.9 million for rental and utility assistance. After disbursing the funds to Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky had $17.2 million to provide further assistance for other locations with fewer than 200,000 residents.

organizations, like South Louisville Community Ministries, and their Executive Director Clare Wallace, focused on the bottlenecks during the process by "hiring people to process those applications".

The Network Orientation of Initial Louisville Eviction Policy

As many government programs grow more complex, implementation requires more actors. Both government employees and private and nonprofit sectors employees implement many programs, and in this case, stakeholders came from all sectors to confront the eviction problem. Community based organizations like the Urban League of Louisville, Community Ministries of Louisville, Louisville Rapid Access, Coalition for the Homeless, amongst many others collaborated to implement ERA.

The group met regularly before the PHE. Marilyn Harris, ED of Develop Louisville, described the network as "one of the very biggest key instruments for us being able to do what we have done". This group shared a problem definition citing mass eviction rates as the core issue in the city to solve. In this group, stakeholders from many differing vantage points provided not only information but resources to bolster the city's response to the eviction rate. The value of such a collection of stakeholders centers around the inability of the local government to do work in such an expansive space without the inclusion of non-governmental employees.

The benefit of such an infrastructure was that the stakeholders had an existing program and had been working on it for six months. Additionally, the stakeholders benefitted by working on an existing program "so we knew where the lapses were. We knew where the missing linkes were. We knew we needed to do was pull everybody in the community who could process

application in to start taking applications because there wasn't enough bandwidth at the office of resilience and community services".

As noted earlier, LMG created a program to ease the city's eviction crisis. The initial program was paused to focus attention on the impending eviction wave during the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first day a COVID-19 case was detected in Louisville was the same day Marilyn and her fellow network members planned to present the program to the Louisville Metro Government.

The initial network was smaller than the 50 stakeholders that meet to implement and discuss the Emergency Rental Assistance program. The initial group "had been working together for months. It was so critical, and us being able to quickly get in and start something". The benefit of the existing group was that they "had already been working on it and had built trust, and relationships with each other that allowed us to when, when the courts open back up".

The initial infrastructure to wrangle such a problem worked to the city's program implementation effectiveness. While we cannot say that Louisville could implement the program as successfully without the initial policy, it is likely, and participants voiced this, the existing network promoted quick response.

In summer 2020, Natalie Harris, the Executive Director of the Coalition of the Homeless took "the initiative to bring all of us together… to start having conversations about the fact that we're in a pandemic, people are out of work, [and] what are we going to do as a city".

Sense of Community

The impetus for the pre-pandemic eviction prevention program was solely due to the commitment to their community. A LMG city employee, Meghan Duggan, working alongside

Harris in the Develop Louisville office, described the moment she understood eviction was a problem. She read Matthew Desmond's *Evicted*. She learned that there were other community stakeholders working in this space. She changed her career to help individuals facing eviction and found a network of individuals concerned with eviction in the Louisville-area.

She began talking with community members about eviction more broadly. She learned of the community effort to present solutions to Louisville's unique eviction problem. She became part of the larger network of community members committed to eviction in their area. The network identifies both the sense of community to help individuals gain housing stability, as well as the shared commitment among individuals. The network brings organizations and community members together to coordinate their effort. Prior to the pandemic, the individuals regularly met. The pandemic expediated their conversations and sidelined the initial project to attune to the looming eviction crisis because of financial disruptions to the economy, and possibly job loss.

Duggan with Natalie Harris and her team began community outreach. Duggan spend her time in Court each day, and Harris began "calling people going through [the] eviction court docket information to make sure that people are aware of the resource and have contact information for questions".

Shared Level of Commitment Among Stakeholders

The network of individuals worked long days in the initial days of the pandemic, and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Marilyn Harris said she worked seven days a week in the first days. She spent the early days of the pandemic sitting in court advocating for individuals facing eviction, "I sat in court every morning from 8 to noon every day". Marilyn and volunteers began responding to individuals telling the judge they lost their job because of COVID by saying

"Your Honor, this is Marilyn at the Office of Housing, and we may be able to assist this person. We immediately started saying it every time a case came up".

The larger network discussed the importance of outreach, and spending time in courts served as a direct means to communicate the program, their eligibility, and how to apply. While many faced evictions, a now-retired Louisville Metro Government employee, Cathy Hinko, personally reached out to a member of the Kentucky State Supreme Court to ensure longer periods between eviction filings and serving the eviction notice to vacate. The state Supreme Court order "said that all cases would be passed for two weeks so that people who were affected by COVID could get rental assistance". Hinko said it provided enough time to help individuals facing eviction. The two weeks provided a buffer to process applications, and time to ensure the assistance was in the hands of either the tenant or landlord.

Alongside pushes to alleviate constraints. Stakeholders created a formal process to distribute the funds. Stakeholders raised $400,000 from private foundations. The funds provided means to bring people together to distribute assistance. The money allowed the stakeholders to "find people who are at the community level, who understand the need, but who can also walk with a client in a really traumatic time to get to that assistance that's going to keep them in their homes".

To keep people in their homes, many behaved in ways contrary to the programmatic requirements. "Marilyn [Harris] ignored the rules, ignored what everyone said and lived in the courts, and drove all over the city herself delivering checks to landlords to keep people from being evicted. No one else did that at the city". Natalie Harris, no relation, the Executive Director of the Coalition of the Homeless said she also behaved in ways against guidance to ensure assistance.

Clare Wallace, the Executive Director of South Louisville Community Ministries and Chair of Community Ministries, in partnership with her organizations, launched stopmyeviction.org in July 2020. She explained that the focus was on paying attention "to bottlenecks and barriers to getting clients that rent assistance money". Community Ministries took on $3M to ensure that the rental assistance was spent. "We were able to write checks very quickly, because we couldn't do it in a way that we were essentially audited after instead of before we wrote the check". Their process did not last only for the burdensome reporting process but, at the time, it was taking 14 weeks to receive a check. The process attempted to speed up the process.

The network frequently said meeting people where they were was very important to not only learn about the program but working through the application process. In an effort to share information about the program but identify new methods to communicate with individuals facing eviction. Tina Ward-Pugh and volunteers went to the courthouse each day to manually enter information about pending eviction hearings into a spreadsheet, amongst the group called the coalition spreadsheet or spreadsheet, to share what was on the daily docket with "people's names [and] their addresses". The information gathered was used "so that the coalition's outreach workers can hit the streets, knock on doors… I think really knocking on doors has been [our] most effective ways of contacting people".

The group is advocating for the court to "simply add one more line on their form [so] when you file an eviction that says you have tenant name, tenant address, and we're asking for them to put a tenant phone number". This would provide a means to "have that communication with them to say, 'hey, did you know you're about to be evicted, and here is what you need to do'. We could actually reach every single person who is evicted. Right now, we are reaching

over half. But that means that many people are falling through the cracks just because we can't get the state to add one more line with a phone number".

Each independent office, or organization, working in the network was at capacity. The way to reaching not only community capacity but identifying solutions, or at least a stakeholder conversation of those problems, requires continuation of what they are already doing. "I think we just need to continue those conversations in the same way we met every week and focus so much energy on the core program. I think there has to be a… a buy in from it as far as the [Community Service Provider Program] more of a buy in to evaluate what are the barriers, what makes pre-eviction support so difficult. We have a lot of that information already".

Community Capacity

Community stakeholders provided the commitment, and sense of community toward helping residents apply and receive benefits. While resources impeded their ability for rapid implementation of the program, mostly due to regulatory setbacks and failure by the Biden administration to approve new rules, the network obtained their goals of not only providing housing stability to thousands of Louisvillians, but identifying several techniques that lead to their success, as well as burdens that crippled some aspects of their program implementation.

Community capacity in this case will not highlight whether ample resources were provided. We cannot identify whether ample resources were available to the community because of the funding formula created by Treasury, as well as the roadblocks that did not enable burden-less implementation. If the burdens, for example income eligibility requirements, did not impede the application process, some may have remained in their homes. Instead, the timing, and the red tape surrounding the program left some without the safety net the program sought to provide.

Community capacity in this case looks at the ability to shift processes to better suit programmatic goals, and the creation of a network of individuals to communicate and identify different institutions during process that could be improved to speed up or resolve little accessible information. The flexibility, and durability of the network to confront issues, identify solutions, and collaborate to ensure individuals received funds speaks to the community capacity of the network.

The existence of community capacity also thwarted cross pressures between levels of government. The network existed prior to program implementation allowed for stakeholders to go above and beyond, as the program requirements either created vague interpretations of the program, or did not identify the means to improve program implementation. Individuals worked in ways requirements or guidance would not allow. The existence of community capacity likely enabled such behavior because the stakeholders could and were committed to the program.

Community capacity enabled stakeholders to communicate with institutions to ease barriers like the court program. Tina Ward-Pugh and volunteers cold called individuals facing eviction to inform them of their impeding eviction, as well as provide information about resources like stopmyeviction.org. Cathy Hinko could call a sitting Kentucky State Supreme Court justice to implement emergency changes to ease the burdens of a quick eviction process. Hinko asked for a two-week buffer between the courts opening on August 24, 2020 and eviction filings to provide enough time for the program to begin assisting applicants and provide time to ease existing backlogs to provide enough aid to as many applicants as possible.

Marilyn Harris described the value of the weekly meetings in reference to the communications with local and state government, "I have always advocated that those 50 heads in the meeting… really was instrumental in that open communication and the fact that they were

willing to say 'hey city, you need to do this', or this is a program we're seeing on the street. And then the city was willing to say 'well, yeah let's just do [that]… why can't we just do that?' Let's just try that".

Additionally, the existence of community capacity enabled disbursement by allowing community organizations to aid applicants and disburse funds to applicants. And the existence of community capacity enabled the stakeholders to advocate for adding informational pages to the eviction notices. The 'green paper' was a single sheet, a green piece of paper, to provide information about existing resources, leading to stopmyeviction.org, and information about the process. Stakeholders asked the sheriff's office to include this green sheet: "hey, we need you to do this". This level of outreach and coordinated effort between government agencies from the local government to the sheriff's office, and state courts all the way to non-government non-profit organizations holding information meetings, outreach by knocking door-to-door, not only enables meeting people where they are, possibly facing eviction, but creates a reputation for other institutions to acknowledge their expertise, and knowledge of the situation.

The trust between organizations in Louisville and the actions taken to keep people in their homes, supply information, augment existing practices to fit the problem as well as the program, and ultimately, continually advocating for additional funds to continue aid in their community demonstrates a great example of the existence of community capacity, but the power that capacity.

Although the existence of community capacity could not correct or alleviate problems during implementation, Louisville demonstrates a best practice for future program implementation. Treasury, and Congress, announced certain guidance or requirements were

burdensome on the applicant, and likely led to bottlenecks, as well as uncertainties for applicants about application completeness.

Equity

Stakeholders discussed equity problems related to the amount allocated to each ERA program. The Treasury formula used Census population data to determine share of the population, and by association, the share of the total funding. For example, a city, with more than 200,000 people, would receive funding based on the number of people in the city. It is possible that of those 200,000 people only a portion would require rental assistance. It is equally possible that a program would require more assistance no matter the total population of an era. The calculation did not take into account critical statistics of people possibly at risk. This is because the funding formula did not allocate based on existing problem severity.

In Louisville, knowing that the city evicts nearly 16,000 tenants, twice the national average, many assumed the program would receive more because of the severity of existing eviction problems, not accounting for the associated problems caused by the pandemic. The reallocation process required a program to spend a predetermined ratio of at least 20% of their initial allocation. The stakeholders allocated nearly 100% of their initial allocation, and were, therefore, eligible for reallocation from the ERA1 program. ERA2 allocation, and eventual allocation by the state of Kentucky provided more funding for Louisville to continue their program.

In other cities, no matter problem severity without successful disbursement of funds, and what we would assume is a lack of process of network infrastructure to collaborate to implement the program, the Treasury determined the program failed. This would lead to program to experience forcible reallocation and would render the remaining applicants unable to receive

rental assistance. We assume these applicants would face eviction. Although the topic of this case study is not Arkansas, the failure of Arkansas[34] programs to spend lead to forcible reallocation. Arkansas stakeholders stated to local newspapers that the applicants would likely face eviction. Ultimately, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson rejected receiving all ERA2 program funds, opting to receive a percentage of the funds. Affordable housing advocates suggested that the governor did not understand the problem severity, and would continue the problem.

The state of Kentucky, and Louisville, may be pro-landlord but provided additional funding based on successful disbursement, and provided additional funding to Louisville to continue accepting and validating applications. Other places facing collaboration and coordination failures, or lack of a coordinated effort by community stakeholders likely led to program failure, and eventual forcible reallocation. This case may provide additional information for future program successes based on a network-based implementation.

Although the funding formula did not identify problem severity as the mechanism to determine the amount of funding allocated, guidance wanted programs to prioritize the most vulnerable. Prioritization requires applicants earning 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI), or individuals without employment for 90-days before submitting application[35]. The use of AMI identifies an equitable approach rather than use of a national earning average.

Burdens

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[34] Smith, B. (2022, April 24). *Gov. Hutchinson says Arkansas will cap federal rental assistance, launch new housing efforts*. KARK. Retrieved May 6, 2022, from https://www.kark.com/news/politics/gov-hutchinson-says-arkansas-will-cap-federal-rental-assistance-launch-new-housing-efforts/

[35] *Eviction diversion*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2021, November 5). Retrieved March 6, 2022, from https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/emergency-rental-assistance-program/promising-practices/eviction-diversion

Administrative burden, the perception and abundance of it, plays a critical role in the implementation of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). The most vulnerable populations were the most impacted to the possibly of eviction. Data demonstrates minority women as the most impacted populations, and administrative burden research suggests the most vulnerable populations are the ones most impacted by financial hardships during the pandemic (National Low Income Housing Coalition Presentation 2022).

The administrative burdens applied to the vulnerable populations likely impede program take-up because of the resource costs (time, money, etc.). Initially, the Department of the Treasury required matching documentation from both the tenant and the landlord. It made program take-up more burdensome in that either individual could be missing documentation, or which is noted in anecdotal evidence, landlords refusing to participate in the program. These onerous steps will be further explored later in the chapter.

The Biden administration paused the initial rule issued by the Trump administration because of onerous requirements. The pause caused implementation delays, and the original backlog of applications. While Louisville could accept applications, it could not validate or disburse funding. Harris estimates the backlog was 1,200 applicants at its highest, and 300 at its lowest.

The problem with the program, as Duggan states, was that "it took Congress until February 2021 to allocate money in and then there were like hands washed of it. They didn't do anything to try to address the fact that the Treasury regs made too complicated to get the money out. Treasury had all kinds of community hearings where they talked about how the local people should be moving this money fast and getting rid of rules. And here we are sitting, waiting for them to move money, which for some reason, it has taken a month to move money. That's the

honest truth about all of this funding, and how difficult it has been to allocate, and get out to the people who need it and who are still not able to get it".

To receive rental assistance, landlords needed to file an eviction. While the program did not explicitly state the requirement, it is the only eligibility trigger for individuals to apply for assistance, Duggan said "we're seeing landlords who are filing an eviction specifically so their resident is now eligible… I think [the] unintended side effect of evictions being filed, specifically, so people will be eligible for the core eviction program. I do get these questions fairly regularly, where a landlord will call… They're asking about the program… And they say so I have to file an eviction now, right? And I'm like, I don't have a great answer for that… They only way they are eligible is if they have an eviction pending. I can't bring myself to say, yes, you have to have to file an eviction".

While filing an eviction does not necessarily mean an individual will be evicted, because of the work of the network and individuals sitting in eviction court to share information about assistance, it remains on an individuals' record. By having an eviction filing, individuals may struggle to find rental opportunities in the future (citation). It will overwhelmingly impact minority individuals and continue to present obstacles for future housing stability.

Alongside the long-term burdens of filing an eviction, pre-pandemic eviction court was held in the middle of the day. It presented obstacles because if someone is facing eviction, they may have to take the entire day off work. Hinko said "before the pandemic, they would go through 90 cases in a half hour. And they would have no sworn testimony by the landlord. So, the whole eviction system is really discriminatory. And it's because it's a lot of people who are black". As the courts opened back up during the pandemic, eviction court moved remotely.

Hinko believe remote court would "really exclude low-income people… once we were doing remote, some people really did show up., which showed proof to me that people did not want to be able to come and defend their case. We just make it impossible for them". She, amongst others, believes remote court "opened up so much access". It provided a place for individuals to share their case. The network shared the hope for a state-wide right to counsel in eviction court.

Program requirements presented burdens; particularly, "the second round of the program had some real barriers with it. And quite frankly, a lot of them were income requirements that we had to overcome. And that caused a huge delay". Because programmatic requirements were updated with the beginning of the Biden administration, the program began accepting applications in January while awaiting new guidance "because we continue to leave our program open until we got the money in March. So, that two month build up, really, we've never overcome it".

This burden led to the pile up of applicants, and as the eviction moratoria expired applicants awaiting assistance were evicted. Treasury used a variety of eligibility verification techniques: self-attestation, categorial eligibility and fact-specific proxy[36]. Additionally, applicants required a matching landlord application to confirm a lease agreement, and recognition of rental arrears. While it presents itself as an obvious process to ensure eligibility, some landlords did not want to participate in the program. Marilyn Harris said "because landlords are refusing to participate, we pay the tenant directly. So. we starting doing that as soon as they told us to do it". Original guidance required both parties to participate and provide

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[36] *U.S. Department of the Treasury emergency rental assistance frequently ...* (August 25, 2021). Retrieved May 6, 2022, from https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/ERA-FAQ-8-25-2021.pdf

direct payment to the landlord. To ensure programmatic integrity checks to tenants are now received in the office with photo identification because checks were stolen.

The pile up of applications, and the associated backlog rendered some applications incomplete because of out-of-date documents. "So, for instance, I had a guy call me today, his application has come to the top of the list. So, one of our people reached out to him and said 'hey we needed an updated ledger. The one you gave us is for 2020, not 2021. He calls me and he's like 'I submitted that in November'. And I said, I realized you submitted it to the community service provider in August, but they didn't submit it to us until November. So, there's a four-month delay from the community service provider submitting it to us. [It ultimately is] no proof that the person who owns the property is who the landlords [that is listed and] the landlord may say its fake".

Some burdens were overcome through network collaboration and community capacity. The information asymmetry was solved through including another line on the eviction petition with an individual's phone number. Additionally, stakeholders provided outreach to individuals who may not have been aware of their pending eviction. To ease the time between filing and receiving the check, Community Ministries used $3M to front checks and side-step the auditing process.

Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect

As the case study suggests, the collaborative nature of ERAP implementation did not lead to destructive behaviors like exit. Instead, stakeholders used their community capacity to elevate their voice to see changes in the system that would ease burdens during the application, approval, and auditing processes. The use of voice led to changes at the local level, with the Louisville Metro Government, after stakeholders voiced concerns after existing processes impeding the

program implementation. The use of voice also led to changes at the state level through the Kentucky State Supreme Court acquiesced to requests to add a buffer between the courts reopening and the beginning of eviction hearings.

The use of voice was coupled with the exercise of loyalty. The sense of community and shared commitment between stakeholders led to continued use of loyalty to the network, policy implementation and long-term program success. It is likely continued loyalty to the program enabled community capacity, and both loyalty and community capacity serve as reinforcing mechanisms.

Best Practices

The case of Louisville demonstrates the influence community capacity plays in the implementation process, and the ability to make changes when necessary to improve the program. It additionally points towards program changes that can be made for other cities to improve their capacity for programs of similar magnitude. Stakeholders in Louisville discussed program sustainability, "so how do we start thinking about long term investment in sustainability… because the eviction crisis is not just going to go away the need for people to pay utility bills is not going to go away"[37]. Currently, as Clare Wallace, ED of Community Ministries said, "What we put together is a shed of two-by-fours and duct tape, and what we really need is a house with a foundation".

Program sustainability requires stakeholders "to determine what are the things we're going to do to try to maintain what we have gotten in place. We have gotten the local courts to do some things that they weren't doing, they are requiring a landlord to get on and verify

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[37] Tony Curtis, ED of Louisville Metropolitan Housing Corporation.

information, they are requiring the tenant to be contracted, if they can get in touch with them during court time. And that is all through advocacy. That was done locally".

The existence of community capacity in tandem with administrative burdens demonstrates that capacity can positively offset administrative burdens. The program infrastructure was possible because of their network, their communication, community capacity, and coordination between parties reaching toward the same goal.

Conclusion

The look at Louisville highlights the community capacity power as a networked system. A group of committed community members advocated for short-term practices to improve eviction conditions. For instance, the changes to the courts were two judges committing to "that practice that is not policy"[38].

Discussion

Community capacity may require discussion of the power of reputation to influence other institutions and organizations. A powerful or positive reputation may provide a level of trust between institutions and organizations to take guidance or advice to improve program implementation. Additionally, the existence of community capacity alleviates the existence of cross-pressures between levels of government. The network was able to change institutional practices, side-step program guidelines to ensure implementation and check delivery, and work in the interest of the population possibly facing eviction. The existence of a network approach that created community capacity through shared commitment to the program, resources, and sense of community allowed for easing of the burdens of auditing by non-profit organizations

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[38] Natalie Harris, ED of Develop Louisville

using their funds to ease reporting requirements, or to request the state court system to provide

additional time between the beginning of funding disbursement to the start of evictions.

Appendix C: Emergency Rental Assistance Program Requirements For Eligibility
Emergency Rental Assistance Program Funding: Round 1

- ERA1 required the bulk of funds to be spent on rental arrearages.
- The remaining funds could be spent on "housing stability services (case management and other supports to help families retain their housing) and administrative expenses".
- Individuals who are: "low-income, experiencing financial hardship, and at risk of homelessness or housing insecurity"[39].
- Local programs are 'directed' to prioritize the most vulnerable applicants.
  - The most vulnerable applicants are very low-income tenants. "Having income at or below 50% of local area median income by HUD; and applicants who are unemployed and have been unemployed for the prior 90 days".
- P.L. 116-260 outlines individuals cannot receive more than 12 months of assistance, and the possibility of a '3-month extension'.
- P.L. 116-260 allowed for payments to tenants if a landlord or utility company would not accept the payment.
- "Landlords are permitted to aid their tenants in applying for assistance, or they may apply directly. Landlords who apply directly must meet certain conditions (including obtaining tenant signatures, notifying tenants of the applications, and ensuring any funds received are applied to tenants' rental obligations)".
- Up to 10% of ERA funds could be spent on administrative costs.
- Applicants required to demonstrate income eligibility.
- Unspent, or 'excess', funds would be forcibly recaptured if not spent by September 31, 2021.

Emergency Rental Assistance Program: Round 2

- "These parameters were changed somewhat for the second round of ERA under P.L> 117-2".
- The changes (P.L. 117-2) allowed for more spending on administrative costs, and remaining funds, under a documented plan to Treasury, can be spent until October 1, 2022.
- The changes to ERA2 determined income eligibility.
- P.L. 117-2 outlined that individual cannot receive more than 18 months of rental assistance.
- P.L. 117-2 allowed for 15% of total ERA funds to be spent on administrative costs.
- Income determination was not included in ERA2.
- Funding is available until September 30, 2025.

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[39] Driessen, G. A., McCarty, M., & Perl, L. (2021). *Pandemic relief: The emergency rental assistance program - congress*. Retrieved July 6, 2022, from https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46688

- 'Unobligated funds' of 50% or more are reallocated to Treasury.
- "Grantees that have obligated at least 75% of their funds for eligible purposes as of October 1, 2022, may obligate remaining unobligated funds for a broader range of other affordable rental housing and eviction prevention purposes for very low-income families"[40]

The federal government created the program but allowed for local program requirements. The Jefferson County-Louisville program required the following[41]:

- "Tenants in any Kentucky county outside of Fayette County.
- Tenants in Jefferson County may apply for HHERF rent assistance but are not eligible for utility assistance.
- Experience income reduction/loss or other economic hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Depending on past due bills, tenant applicants may seek assistance with rent, utilities, or both.
- IF SEEKING RENTAL ASSISTANCE: At risk of eviction as evidenced by a past due letter from landlord, a pending court eviction, eviction notice or similar document.
- Gross household income before taxes cannot exceed 80% Area Median Income (AMI).
- Are requesting assistance for their primary residence (address where the applicant lives and sleeps).
- If a tenant received short-term assistance, this program cannot duplicate payment for a given month but can assistant with rent for other months.
- If a tenant received monthly rent subsidy (such as Section 8), they are eligible for HHERF assistance with past due tenant portions but are not eligible for current/future rent.
- Those living with family and paying rent informally are not eligible.
- Those who own a trailer home and owe rent for a lot are eligible.
- Tenants claiming, they are behind on rent but have no history of rent payments at a unit may not be eligible".

The type of assistance are as follows[42]:
- "Up to 12 months of past due rent owed since April 1, 2020 + 3 months future rent.
- Up to 12 months of past due utilities owed since April 1, 2020 + 3 months future utilities.
- Maximum past due rent and/or utility bills covered = 12 months
- Maximum future rent and/or utility bills covered = 3 months".

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[40] Driessen, G. A., McCarty, M., & Perl, L. (2021). *Pandemic relief: The emergency rental assistance program - congress*. Retrieved July 6, 2022, from https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46688
[41] "Overview of Healthy at Home Eviction Relief Fund". *Healthy at Home: Eviction Relief Fund Application.* https://teamkyhherf.ky.gov/Home.aspx
[42] "Overview of Healthy at Home Eviction Relief Fund". *Healthy at Home: Eviction Relief Fund Application.* https://teamkyhherf.ky.gov/Home.aspx

Recapture/Reallocation
- Threshold ratios determine whether a program must return funds.
- ERA1 Recapture/Reallocation Thresholds:
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- ERA2 Recapture/Reallocation Thresholds:
  - Insufficient expenditure ratio is defined using less than 20% as of March 31.
  - If a program spent less than 20%, it is determined to have 'excess funds'.
  - "A grantee with an expenditure ratio below 20% will be determined to have excess funds equal to the difference between its reported expenditures and the amount of expenditure needed to reach the 20% threshold".
  - If the program is determined to have excess funds, or 'inadequate obligations', there are ways to mitigate recapture.
    - "The grantee can avoid reallocation if, based on data submitted to Treasury reflecting expenditures as of April 30, it has achieved an expenditure ratio is it at least 20%. Otherwise, excess funds will be calculated based on the difference between its reported expenditures as a March 31 and the amount of expenditure needed to reach the 20% threshold".
  - Programs will eliminate the possibility of reallocation if the program voluntarily reallocated at least 25% of the ERA1 allocation.

Components of ERA Funding
- The Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2021 determined population data from the most recent year to establish population estimates.
- State and local government data was drawn from the 2020 Vintage for States and the District of Columbia, and from the 2019 Vintage to establish local government population estimates, respectively.
- Census data provided population estimates to determine the amount disbursed to each program.
- The share of the total population determined the absolute amount.
- A statutory requirement states no state/territory can receive less than $200,000,000.
- The statutory requirements establishes a local government population must exceed 200,000 to receive direct payments from the Treasury. If not, the location will receive payments from the state government program.

Chapter Four

The dissertation research results suggest the need for further theoretical development. At the outset of this project, I assumed not only would people speak to me about their experiences, but that the experiences of state and federal bureaucrats would be similar. Not only was it incredibly difficult to identify possible participants, but the participants also who agreed to speak describe a more dynamic and complicated bureaucrat. It offers a unique opportunity to provide refinement and further questions about existing theories and their assumptions. As state governments become more important policymakers, further theoretical considerations are necessary to better understand the assumptions of Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect (EVLN), the organizational environment. This chapter serves as a reflection of the findings, and how these findings can further develop existing theories.

Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect

Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect (EVLN) is an explanatory framework describing behaviors during the decline of a firm, or an organization. The initial orientation explained consumer behavior and provided explanations for the decline or the change of an organization. As it is, the framework does not identify *why* each behavior is chosen, or the *rationale* for choosing one behavior rather than another. This research suggests that the 'why' is due to role or goal conflict. I found this to be an appropriate mechanism to explain why employees decide to exercise EVLN. While the use of conflict explains why some exercise the behaviors, we do not know the reason for why individual use one behavior rather than others. For instance, why would an individual choose to use loyalty when they report conflict over agency decisions. Additionally, the findings suggest that only supervisors use exit or voice. This discrepancy

identifies another gap in the framework. It suggests there may be other explanatory factors that describe the reason for exercising exit or voice.

In the same vein, many use the framework as a set of behaviors available to all. The findings suggest that there may be other explanatory factors for the use of specific behaviors, but also that, theoretically, we should view each behavior as individual. Seeing each behavior an individual versus the choice to use other behaviors, and the context under which these behaviors occur is important for future theoretical development. And it serves to better develop the reason for the use of a behavior, as well as any conditions that may need to exist for an individual to find utility, or the opportunity, to exercise a behavior.

We should use EVLN as individual behaviors and not contingent on the utility of using the other options. I suggest this is more useful because the discrepancy between supervisors and non-supervisory employees was the use of the behaviors. Only supervisors used exit and voice, while only non-supervisory employees used loyalty[43]. These examples provide an interesting finding when the use of EVLN has not been discussed as more appropriate in some circumstances rather than all.

I suggest the following potential rationales for the supervisory use of exit and voice: possibly the influence of financial and employment stability, role socialization, and the expected utility of using exit or voice; as well as the critique of the homogeneity of our understanding of exit when the motivation to do so is heterogenous. The use of loyalty may be because of a lack of financial or employment stability, role socialization against exit and voice behaviors, and the expected utility of using exit and voice may lead to loyalty. Therefore, I suggest financial and employment stability, role socialization, and the expected utility of exit and voice all must be

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[43] Interviewees did not identify the use of neglect. Only one non-supervisory employee exited. Her overall experience was in stark contrast to other OHCA employees.

considered when identifying whether individuals *can* make these choices. I suggest there are considerations made before exercising behaviors like exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. Specifically, I suggest based on a supervisor's likely financial and employment stability, their supervisory role socialization, and their expected utility in using exit or voice influences their choices. In reverse, employees likely consider the same concepts and find that without financial and employment stability, their role socialization as a bureaucrat, and the likely small expected utility in using exit or voice instead leads to loyalty.

Financial and Employment Stability

We ask what contributes to this discrepancy between supervisory and non-supervisory employees to exercise exit and voice. Research suggests that the decisions to voice opinions, or act as a whistleblower in some cases, is the product of "their capacity to speak, depend on institutional supports, or in their absence, on personal networks" (Kenny and Fotaki 2021,). In the whistleblower literature, some critique the use of such a concept "without examining the specifics of these risks and what they mean for the individuals and their family" (Kenny and Fotaki 2021). The same gap exists in the literature using Exit, Voice, Loyalty, or Neglect. In the same theme, EVLN fails to identify the "tangible costs" to the individual.

I suggest the possibly financial and employment (in)stability impacts decisions individuals make each day. I suggest the existence of this stability enables behaviors like exit, or voice. Without financial and employment stability an individual may feel more restrictions when exercising behaviors. During the interview process, only supervisors described exit and voice behaviors in reference to role conflicts. Supervisory employees may be more financially comfortable and more stable in their role because of their expertise and specialization.

In their role, a supervisor may enjoy increased stability because of their expertise; therefore, increasing the utility of exit or voice. Two of the three former supervisors who exited first voiced their concerns. The literature suggests this is more likely as voice before exit provides an avenue to rectify, or change the environment because the employee is still on 'the inside'. By being a member of the organization, the individual can be part of a change they wish to see. This is view as more 'constructive'. The choice to exit is seen as a last resort (Golden 2000). In the case of the former supervisor who exited without voicing his opinion, his exit led to his retirement.

In the first case, the supervisors were not contemplating retirement; rather were committed to the organization and its mission. Another former supervisor exited after failing to receive legislative support to move a legislative bill supporting expansion with more provisions a conservative majority would support. He described his role, and the role of agency employees as "not elected, nor were we appointed, our job is to make sure that we execute the policies within the state and federal regulations to the best of our ability, as guided by those who were elected to make those policies". Yet he "felt like I needed to advance the Medicaid conversation, because there was pressure build. But from, my perspective, there was also a need. We had battled this issue of uninsured Oklahomans – the working Oklahomans for years of my career". He believed "if we really wanted to improve the health status of the people in our state. We had to provide them appropriate and adequate quality health care".

As a self-identified fiscal conservative, he "was not comfortable with Medicaid expansion. I was comfortable with the state option". The political sphere wanted to move on it because state dollars were involved, and it was *not* a 100% federally matched. Fast forward to 2015: "the pressure on me was to spend money wisely, but still improve health outcomes in the

states". He said neither the legislature nor the governor could take a political position on it. The former supervisor understood that. He believed the agency acted as it was structured, protected from political influence, and "provided political insulation for the governor and the legislature".

Behind the scenes, which he remained silent on all details, he said key leaders were aware they could get something done. The key players developed a plan. It was called the Medicaid Rebalancing Act of 2016. The policy tried to "provide coverage to more people and do it in a way that we are actually putting them in a commercial or managed care program. The policy sought to improve health outcomes. The goal was to break cycles to have a "healthy person in the workforce to be able to be a productive member of society that would be some of those poverty related barriers in. In February 2015, the work began. Ultimately it did not move forward. "I said, it it doesn't work, I will likely leave the agency. Just because I don't want that failure of that program to cause issues for the agency going forward".

Republicans believed it was expansion, no matter the form, while Democrats believed the program did not go far enough. He felt it was "the perfect program, because it was not either [political preference]". "People look back and say, well, that is millions of dollars that we left on the table. I don't look at it that way. I look it as there were hundreds of thousands of lives that could have been impacted over… the years that we missed the opportunity impact".

This supervisor moved on to a private health executive role. He said he was not looking for a new role, but instead keeping his eye out – "someone solicited me for another position". He considered his options and left the agency. Not only did he feel it was the 'right time' to leave the agency but "I felt like the agency was still in good hands". He could use his voice and later exited. His opportunity, and likely financial stability, possibly made his choices more likely. For instance, an individual fearing job loss or possible financial instability would not take such a

step; particularly when even if he did not personally believe in Medicaid Expansion as it stood as a federal program.

In the case of the other former employee who voiced before exiting, she was asked to promulgate rules she did not believe were within her authority. The former supervisor faced both role and goal conflict. In her role, she did not believe the OHCA, and her role, had the written authority to promulgate and enforce certain rules. Ultimately, the goal of the potentially promulgated rules sought to change the direction of the agency in terms of cost and client services. She felt pressured to act, in a sense, to promulgate rules that were not within the confines of the law. She did oppose policies, and agency direction. She said 'things were so political. You either succumb to it and do it or stand up and are pushed out". She described standing up, and how that changes thing; and when you oppose certain things, and voice that opposition, it is no longer smiled upon. She, then, voiced her opposition the agency for such a request. She filed a complaint about things happening at the agency. The agency hired an external law firm. The external law firm sided with her, and those internal changes needed to happen.

Ultimately, she was correct that the agency did not have written authority to act in such a way. At this point, she described her role, and the environment, as not the same. When she began working for the agency, she was excited to go to work, and loved her job – "the agency is no longer what we all remember". After voicing her opposition, she said she was unable to continue in her role for the ethical considerations. In her last year, after voicing her opposition, she was preparing herself to leave. She said, "it wasn't a choice of staying". She continued on to say that many people who began working at the agency at its creation began leaving and she was herself preparing for her exit. She exited over the changes to the direction of agency.

The last supervisor who exited after former Governor Mary Fallin did not expand Medicaid. He shared his disappointment for Oklahomans who could have become eligible and described it as a missed opportunity. One supervisor believed expanding Medicaid when Governor Mary Fallin was in office was the 'right' choice. Governor Mary Fallin's transition team, and the governor herself, voiced support for continuing forward with the state's plan for Medicaid Expansion. Not only had the state implemented technology to support the Marketplace infrastructure, but the Obama administration also recognized Oklahoma for its technological achievements and promoted its infrastructure as a best practice for other states to follow. Ultimately, Governor Fallin and her team decided not to expand Medicaid. The supervisor described his role, and the significance of expansion to accomplishing the mission of the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, in such a way that he felt he did not ultimately achieve what was required of him in his role. He decided to take advantage of his recent retirement eligibility.

"It was one of the major factors in deciding to take advantage of my eligibility for retirement, the month I turned 65. Because it was very disappointing, the state of Oklahoma was given the opportunity to bring medical coverage to thousands of people". The former supervisor worked for the state of Oklahoma for 42 years. He joined OHCA when it opened in 1995. Prior to that, he began working for the Department of Human Services in 1971.

The totality of his experience, expertise and supervisory level may provide context to his use of exit. He utilized his retirement eligibility (financial stability) and was not concerned with his employment stability (because of his retirement eligibility). In this instance, he had both financial and employment stability. He likely felt his action held utility too.

In total, these experiences display the actions of three former supervisors who choose to voice concerns before exit, or only use exit. The non-supervisory employees did not share

moments of ethical considerations, or of a role socialization that required such action. The individuals shared their sentiment of their role requiring such action, as well as the opportunity to do. Two supervisors are currently employment, and the last is retired. It is unlikely the supervisors feared long-term instability. One supervisor said soon after an organization reached out for potential employment before, he began looking for a. new role. The other supervisor moved into a role using her psychologist expertise. The totality of their experience, and expertise likely made next steps easier than someone with little experience or expertise like that of a non-supervisory employee.

Non-supervisory employees did not exercise exit or voice. Similar to Golden's findings, it was more common for bureaucrats to remain in their positions or remaining loyal. As some noted in Golden's work, remaining was a form of self-preservation. Like bureaucrats working under President Reagan and his administration, it was more common for non-supervisory employees to exercise loyalty. While loyalty may prompt individuals to believe administrators remain because they enjoy their role, loyalty can be several non-reactive behaviors. Loyalty can be a form of self-preservation, it can be because lack of other employment opportunities, financial instability or other personal characteristics that do not relate to their working experience. Additionally, supervisors may believe their actions have increased utility. Possibly the use of a supervisor's voice or exiting is more impactful than a non-supervisory employee exercising exit or voice.

A former employee said individuals remained silent, regardless of dissenting opinions, because of the possibility agency leadership, particularly appointed leadership, would dismiss the employee. In a discussion with a political insider, he shared that he believed bureaucrats are mostly cooperative and responsive to leadership, "I don't want to say that is how it's always

been, because I do think that previous administration had a greater respect to the career

bureaucrats. But I think, right now, it appears to me that out of fear, a lot of people are doing

what they're doing when they're told when the alternative might be that they've discovered a

batter way of doing something. Where out of fear people are doing what they're told".

He continued on to say "I think there's a health fear of retribution". After a current

OHCA employee saw a Tweet I posted requesting potential interviewees, the political insider

said the employee sent a Direct Message on Twitter to him and said that no one would speak to

me because of the lack of worker protections. So, loyalty may be a negative reaction to the job

environment.

Loyalty may be a positive or negative response to the broader environment. For instance,

non-supervisory employees in Oklahoma, both current and former, shared dissenting opinions

but acknowledged their inability to see change. Even a current supervisory employee said

individuals, of course, have dissenting opinions, but are not in a position to do so. "I mean, some

of it really has to do with the mood it really has to do with what your role or responsibility is in

the agency. So, some people are for sure… be put in the position to say, 'hey this is not a good

use of public funds' or 'it is not in line with medical standards or best practices… those types of

discussions happen all the time. So, again, depending on your role, that feedback is probably

more comfortable for some than others". This knowledge may point toward another form of

control, or accountability.

In Louisville, the shared commitment and sense of community felt by network

stakeholders led to the use of voice, and loyalty. While voice is often thought of as a negative

reaction to change, it was used here as an opportunity to better inform processes for

programmatic success and efficiency. It informed changes that eased burdens on potential

applicants, and limited the obstacles during the auditing processes. In the chapter, I suggest this voice was predicated on the network's community capacity to successfully change processes. Additionally, stakeholders exercised loyalty to the program's mission and goals. In the case of Oklahoma and Medicaid Expansion, loyalty is not a form of self-preservation, but instead should be viewed as a response to their successes, and long-term commitment to the eviction problem in Louisville.

If a current supervisor understands that individuals recognize their ability to voice opinions in certain contexts, it provides another means of control. A former employee said "Yeah… there was quite a bit of array of views. There [were] all sorts of opinions. I guess about policy implementation. To an extent, we had to discuss what the implications of implementation, the workflows or for the decision in terms of operation… There were a lot of discussion on different points of views on how to carry out these policies". When thinking about whether individuals were hesitant to express their views, the same former employee said "not necessarily with their immediate groups, [but] I don't think that anybody was volunteering to be an outspoken person". When asked if he *personally* held opposing views, he said "I guess you can say that".

He elaborated by describing that "passing on Medicaid…was a missed opportunity for the state as a whole. Because it prevented a lot of people that really needed access to health care". When asked about expressing his opinion he said, "Oh yeah, but I assumed that [my opinion] wouldn't affect anything". He finished by explaining that "I was not going to leave the program, just because there was a high-level decision that I didn't agree with". Yet, three former C-suite executive supervisory employees *did leave the agency* because of a high-level decision they didn't agree with. Why this discrepancy?

Golden (2000) suggests many stay for self-preservation. A lower-level bureaucrat likely shares a lack of utility in sharing those opinions, like the above example, or fear long-term effects of sharing dissenting opinions. The ultimate conclusion *not to voice* is likely a sum of consequences too great to bear.

In the case of neglect, it may be a response counterintuitive to a bureaucrat's role socialization, and commitment to their agency. It also may not be an available behavior because of the fear of retribution under new leadership, or be of little utility towards their career goals. Unlike loyalty, neglect cannot be a form of self-preservation. Instead, it may serve as cause to fire a bureaucrat, and lead to further employment impacts long after their time with the state government ends. Termination from a role leads to long-term effects for future employment, and may be financially costly.

Therefore, future EVLN theoretical development, and uses of the framework, should examine the availability of such choices, rationale for pursuing those choices, and ultimately, a better understanding of the motivations to use the behaviors. Additionally, future research should identify the behaviors individually, rather than described as a set of behaviors. The results suggest a calculus before exercising behaviors, and must be considered when examining Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect.

Administrative Leadership

Organizational executives use a variety of managerial tools to induce compliance and maintain control over outcomes. In the political space, presidents use the managerial presidency to prompt certain behaviors and result in expected outcomes. While presidents' executive tools have been widely studied, there is a lack of literature dealing with similar tools used by

governors. In Oklahoma, legislation brought five state agencies under the direct oversight of the governor. Previously, individuals were appointed to agency boards, and these boards oversaw agencies. These boards were made up of subject matter experts, and provided means for elected officials to appoint individuals that may have supported their policy positions or goals.

Since the governor enjoys increased power, there are other dynamics that may influence bureaucratic behaviors. A trade association executive said "there was a real dynamic shift that occurred under [the] administration whereby we went from a weak governor state to a strong governor state, and control of agency heads and boards. And that has been a brand new dynamic". When asked how it affected their work "We've been told by people on this board or other boards together makes it very clear that they are sitting at the pleasure. For instance, the changing environment had led to concerns of job security because of the new power to ask employees to resign. While interviewees said turnover was a normal facet of government employment, it was more expedient during this time. "You know, there, was a lot of turnover around the same time, actually… And, you know the other interesting wrinkle… the first big deal that happened after we gave the governor the hiring and firing power for agency directors and kind of brought the liaisons under his umbrella because before that… agency heads were hired and fired by their boards, and it wasn't a government thing. We typically feel [now] like we're getting a rosier version of the picture when we hear from them. So, getting to those lower rank and file career folks, I think is important in our ability to do our jobs and evaluate whether things area working the way they're supposed to", a political insider said.

Upon election, Becky Pasternik-Ikard served as the *hired* CEO of the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. She previously worked with Mike Fogarty and Nico Gomez, as the deputy CEO

and the State Medicaid Director. She 'retired' July 2019[44]. Pasternik-Ikard asked for her communications director, MaryAnn Martin, to write the announcement[45]. Martin was then asked to resign her position. In the press release, OHCA media contacts Jo Stainsby and Katelynn Burns wrote the announcement. The announcement noted that the governor appreciated her "her devotion and passion for leading Oklahoma's Medicaid program and look forweard to seeing the success she will have in her next chapter"[46]. Pasternik-Ikard now works as a lawyer for Phillips Murrah in Oklahoma City, OK[47]. Pasternik-Ikard is a lawyer, and a nurse with leadership experience as a State Medicaid Director, Deputy CEO, and CEO of OHCA.

Alongside Pasternik-Ikard and Martin's dismal, the governor asked for the resignation of two OHCA board members in September 2021– at the time, the only physicians serving on the Oklahoma Health Care Authority board. Drs. Laura Shamblin and Jean Hausheer were informed of their removal from the board by a governor staff following the doctors' disagreement to implement a managed care system to expand Medicaid[48]. An Associated Press article described that the doctors "were among seven members of the board who voted last week to delay implementing rules on Stitt's plan to outsource case management for some Medicaid recipients to private insurance companies. Stitt's managed care proposal has faced bipartisan opposition in the legislature and was ruled unconstitutional in June by the Oklahoma Supreme Court"[49]. An individual close to the situation said the doctors voted to table the rule in accordance with the Oklahoma Supreme Court decision, and they wished to learn more information about the legality

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[44] https://oklahoma.gov/ohca/about/newsroom/2019/july/23627-ohca-ceo-announces-retirement.html
[45] In a personal conversation with MaryAnn Martin.
[46] https://oklahoma.gov/ohca/about/newsroom/2019/july/23627-ohca-ceo-announces-retirement.html
[47] https://phillipsmurrah.com/mpdf/examples/attorneys.php?p_id=17607
[48] https://apnews.com/article/oklahoma-oklahoma-city-medicaid-71b615efeb283e12c0cdd79a230b7df5
[49] https://apnews.com/article/oklahoma-oklahoma-city-medicaid-71b615efeb283e12c0cdd79a230b7df5

of the rule. The choice to table the rule for more information ultimately led to Governor Stitt's request for their resignation.

Prior to the legislation enabling increased gubernatorial power, the governor or other elected officials, only held appointment powers. Each appointment had a specified term, according to a former OHCA supervisor. There was not board turnover, because each member "needed to serve their term". The changed rules enabled elected officials to "appoint and remove at any time". The former supervisor said, "the majority of her tenure – you did not see any turnover until that board member served their term". She continued by saying that the elected officials granted appointment power, the governor, state senator Pro Tem, and the state Speaker of the House, "did not have the right to change members". The official language about the Oklahoma Health Care Authority Board, on the OHCA's official website, reads:

Each member shall serve at the pleasure of his or her appointing authority and may be removed without case. Any member of the Board shall be prohibited from an issue in which the member has a direct financial interest. The Administrator of the Oklahoma Health Care Authority shall be an ex officio member of the Board, but shall be entitled to vote only in case of a tie vote[50]. The increased gubernatorial oversight likely leads to increased loyalty because of his managerial tools through new appointments to previously hired positions to oversee the agency.

Previous wording of the appointment process, and board member expectations could not be found. A former supervisor said individuals served their term, and usually did not resign. Oftentimes, no matter the political party of the initial elected official who appointed an

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[50] https://oklahoma.gov/ohca/about/boards-and-committees/ohca-board.html

individual, the board member would be reappointed to their board position. The same former

supervisor said this was no longer the case and is seen by the request of resignation from two

physicians from the board after disagreeing with the governor. A trade association lawyer said it

changed how board members behaved "I know it's contrary to what the governor wants. And

they were asked for their removal".

The administrative tools of the governor led to a fear of retribution by employees, and

likely shared feelings by members of the board concerned with their position. This change likely

leads to different behaviors, of course in accordance with the overall goal of administrative

leadership, and provides increased oversight over decisions. Future research should consider the

power of the governor, and how that power may motivate behaviors.

Lack of Transparency as a Function of Accountability

This research demonstrates administrative leadership may request little transparency as a

form of accountability. In the above section, I discussed the change to the executive office of the

governor of Oklahoma and his use of managerial tools to induce compliance and control. In

Chapter 2, I included email receipts from Oklahoma Health Care Authority individuals

describing their unwillingness to participate. While Governor Stitt campaigned on increased

transparency, like running government as a business, bureaucrats responded to his use of

administrative leadership by remaining accountable to his control. It provides the opportunity to

address the literature and its propensity to identify transparency as a form of accountability.

Oftentimes, the discussion describes transparency as a form of accountability,

"transparency is generally seen as a central element of accountability (Erkilla 2020, 9; see also

Etzioni 2014). The political narrative "assumes a strong relation between transparency and

accountability" (Meijer 2014, 508). President Barack Obama shared this narrative issuing the

Open Government Directive in 2009, "A democracy requires accountability, and accountability requires transparency"[51] (see in Meijer 2014, 510). So, when one is transparent, whether that be by sharing information or providing answers to questions, we assume the individual is accountable. "The development of accountability … increases the transparency of organizations. That is that it increases the number of things that are made visible, increases the number of ways in which things are made visible and in doing so encourages a greater openness. The inside of the organization becomes more transparent that is transparent" (Roberts 2009, 962; see also Power 1992, 415). This accountability could be to the organization or agency, to the voters, to elected officials or to their professionalized role, to name a few (Erkilla 2020).

The historical roots of accountability focus on "as a *process* of 'being called to account to some authority of one's actions,' or process of 'giving an account'," (Erkilla 2020, 9). Now, "accountability often serves as a conceptual umbrella that covers various other distinct concepts, such as transparency, equity, democracy, efficiency, responsibility and integrity" (Bovens 2007, 449). It is possible "the bureaucratic organization may not way to comply perfectly during implementation, having its own priorities and its own conceptions of what constitute good policies in its domain (Peters 2014, 211; see also Goodsell 2011). In the case of street-level bureaucrats, "civil servants face demands from their organizations and from the law implementing the law in a particular manner, but at the same time to confront clients who have needs and demands that may exceed the legal possibility" (Peters 2014, 214-215).

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[51] Remarks by the President on National Security [Excerpts on National Security]. (May 21, 2009). chttps://sgp.fas.org/obama/wh052109.html

In the case of Oklahoma, in 2019, Governor Kevin Stitt signed four Executive Orders "that focus on increasing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in state government". The focus of transparency highlighted an attempt for increased financial transparency. Ultimately, the governor did not sign the bill requiring appointees to provide financial documents for transparency[52]. Governor Stitt did not sign the legislation because "it didn't go far enough"[53]. In his official written veto statement, the governor wrote "Senate Bill 1695 would require gubernatorial appointees to agency director or cabinet secretary positions to file financial disclosure statements while facing to require disclosures for similar positions appointed by the Legislature, boards of commission… I would urge the Legislature to revisit this topic and pass legislation that subjects all state officers – whether elected, appointed, or subject to a retention election – to the same set of financial disclosure requirements"[54]. The Stitt administration wants transparency but does not have official tools to produce a desired financial transparency it sought.

More broadly, employees, both former and current, whether supervisory, voiced concerns with sharing their experiences. Many respondents described fear of retribution whether still working at the OHCA or other state agencies, and some did not want to ruin chances of returning to state government. A current OHCA employee told a political insider I spoke with that without worker protections in Oklahoma, no one would want to risk speaking with me. The most outspoken individuals were those who retired, pursued private sector careers, or believed in transparency. Of these outspoken individuals, the individual speaking for transparency said, "I

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[52] https://oklahomawatch.org/newsletter/democracy-watch-with-the-stroke-of-a-pen-stitt-vetoes-government-transparency-proposal/

[53] https://oklahomawatch.org/newsletter/democracy-watch-with-the-stroke-of-a-pen-stitt-vetoes-government-transparency-proposal/

[54] https://www.sos.ok.gov/documents/legislation/58th/2022/2R/SB/1695.pdf

will say what I want". Those retired or pursuing private sector careers openly shared their experiences and said their responses may give them away. When asked if a former supervisor wanted to add anything he said "no, because I just told you more than I would've ever told anybody else".

After many rejections, a lack of interest seemed to be a response. It lends itself toward thinking the administrative tools the governor and his administration used opted for lack of transparency as a form of accountability. By not sharing their experiences, the governor's increased managerial tools through appointments are working. Many acknowledged that if the OHCA CEO Corbett did not agree or did not share the same narratives and opinions of the governor, that it would be unlikely that he would still be in the position. So, the lack of transparency operates as a tool of accountability. Similar to Golden's assertion that the increased managerial tools of the president, and his strategic use of appointments to increase compliance, this research suggests we see the same thing in Oklahoma. The 'retirement' of former OHCA CEO Pasternik-Ikard demonstrates the power of his oversight, and his strategic use to remove her to appoint an individual sharing his opinions.

Golden (2000) presents aa similar situation in her reseraach. President Reagan appointed Anne Gorsuch as the EPA Administrator. The administrative "saw the career bureaucracy as an obstacle to achieving its other policy goals at the EPA" (Golden 2000, 116). She was a strategic appointment and shared the opinions and policy goals of President Reagan. Gorsuch sought to 'tame' civil servants through administrative techniques to limit high-ranking careerists' input and interaction with leadership (Golden 2000, 121-122). The administrative techniques 'attempted to remove discretion from, and keep close tabs on, career bureaucrats, and to centralize decisionmaking and work products so that they were consistently reviewed by appointments'

(123). After seeing increased turnover during Gorsuch's tenure, Reagan appointed William Rucklehaus, a previous EPA administrator under President Carter.

Rucklehaus sought to restore agency credibility, restore agency capacity, and include risk assessments in decision-making. His re-appointment ushered in publicly available information rather than the previous secrecy. He changed the atmosphere to allow for 'frank discussion', and careerists began attending meetings again. These changes were seen as 'overwhelmingly favorable'.

While Stitt asked for the resignation of Pasternik-Ikard because he likely did not know if she would operate as his voice in the agency, he appointed someone who worked to bring people together, allow for discussion of disagreement, and is seen as generally favorable among career staff. Similar to Gorsuch and President Reagan, Pasternk-Ikard likely did not share the same policy preferences of the newly elected governor and may not act in predictable ways as an administrative leader would request. So, he asked her to resign to opt for someone else who would respond to the governor's wishes.

Governor Stitt appointed Kevin Corbett. All interviewees suggested Corbett "is great, actually". The current supervisor expressed surprise of his attitude. A former and current supervisor believe "he genuinely cares about members and the teams". From the interviews, Corbett communicates regularly with the staff through emails or monthly meetings. A current supervisor mentioned that "sometimes he comes across a little scripted". She continued by saying that he "tells the truth… [she knows] there are some things he cannot say. The second he has the freedom to talk, he does". While knowing all of this, the current supervisor said "Kevin Corbett is mission focused, and wants to be honest and open. He does sing Stitt's praises, and he tries to find Stitt's messaging within the agency's mission. [I know] if not, he knows it would not

be pleasant [for him]. While sharing her perspective about Kevin Corbett and his position, she began by saying "I am anonymous".

The switch to appoint a new CEO rather than remain with Pasternik-Ikard follows President Reagan and his appointment of William Rucklehaus. Pasternik-Ikard was not well-liked by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority staff, similar to Gorsuch. Both struggled to galvanize their staff. President Reagan opted to appoint an individual to bring the agency 'back'. Rucklehaus was previously appointed, seen as an individual working with the mission of the EPA, and wanted to institute the initial culture of collaboration and inclusivity. Ultimately, Rucklehaus worked against the attempts of Gorsuch.

At OHCA, Pasternik-Ikard changed the OHCA culture away from openness, as a former supervisor said the culture "began to change drastically under her leadership". She did not work alongside the legislature, but instead "was intimidated by the legislature". Instead of a collaborative relationship that other leaders expressed, both previous supervisors who sought to provide insurance to Oklahomans through the initial Medicaid Expansion push and a legislative attempt to expand, Pasternik-Ikard, in the eyes of the governor, likely would not operate under the guidance of Stitt. So, he asked her to resign to opt for someone else who would respond to the governor's wishes.

Corbett, as is mentioned earlier, was open and invited staff collaboration with agency decisions. While he may 'sing the praises' of the governor, he works to reestablish the agency to its previous culture, as best he can to retain individuals and likely slow instances of exit, voice, or neglect.

Conclusion

While this research did not provide much profound empirical results, it provides questions of existing theoretical components that underpin much of public administration research. Renewing calls to reinvestigate the use of Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect without considering other contexts, the use of administrative leadership in a state to induce compliance, and the lack of transparency as a form of accountability provide continued thought about the utility of the theoretical concepts. Increased research to better identify executive managerial tools, and the use of Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect will provide more insight to day-to-day routines.

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