

The Local Government Policy-Administration Decision Making Interface -
Describing the Elephant: Slouching toward a Meta Study with Svava's S

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John Godfrey Saxe's (1816-1887) poem "The Blind Men and the Elephant" introduced an East Indian fable into western literature. This fable tells how each of a number of blind men "see" an elephant by feeling one of the various parts of the beast. One man feels the tail, another the tusks, the third the legs, the next the side and the final the trunk. Each of the men naturally arrives at a different conclusion as to how an elephant looks. This paper suggests that the literature discussing the decision making interface between elected officials and public administrators in local government, like the apocryphal blind men would benefit from applying an integrating process to the extant data. We explore whether operationalizing a modified version of Svava's "backward S" graph could provide the basis for a meta-analysis unifying these seemingly diverse descriptions into a useable picture of the elephant that is the local government decision-making interface. This paper describes our journey and reports on the extent to which it succeeds as well as identifying where it fails.

Introduction

The literature that reflects on the roles of and relationships between elected and administrative officials at the local level is extensive and persistent. While the theme is common, much of the extant work derives from surveys of one or the other or both of the interested parties that tend to be both idiosyncratic and regional in character. While as one might expect, a large fraction of the work is descriptive of current practice, it is not uncommonly empirically based. (See, for example, Cheong, et. al., 2009; Demir, 2009a; Morgan and Watson, 1992; Montjoy and Watson, 1995; Nalbandian, 2004; Svava, 1985, 1999 and 2006; Zhang and Feiock, 2010 and Zhang, 2014).

When we began to look at the character of the relationships between the municipal administrative and elected officials in Canada, we discovered an extensive qualitative literature considering such issues as the leadership role of municipal CAOs (c.f. Siegel, 2010). However, unlike the counterpart US literature, the Canadian data was virtually absent results detailing outcomes from survey data describing the Canadian municipal actors and the manner in which they interacted. As an initial step in adding Canadian data comparable to that found in the US

studies, we surveyed the mayors and the chief administrative officer in our regional district, initially in 2003 and then again in 2013. Because our region and indeed Canada as a whole has a large number of fairly small municipalities, we focused on the sorts of jobs that are common to most municipalities.

Given such depth and so much history, there are many ways to organize or sort the Canadian and US literature in order to set it inside the theoretical constructs of public administration. This literature offers a number of different approaches to such consolidations. For example, one might approach local governance relationships deductively, viewing local governments as a subset of government in general. Starting with this general description that clarify the varying relationships between managers and elected officials, one can then consider the specific issues that would present in the local government case. Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) considered what they termed three perspectives: old public administration, new public management and new public service. Based on the differences in the underlying assumptions of each, they offered a tabular description of the roles and amount of decision-making latitude of the public servant in specific and the role of the government in general. Bryson, et al. (2014) amended the Denhardts' chart, renaming the three perspectives as the traditional public administration, the new public management and the emerging approach. As well, Bryson's chart addressed (among other things) the alternative roles of the elected official and the public manager. While neither of these papers extended its discussion to the specific issues of local government, it would not be difficult to do so. More recently these authors (amongst others) see the developing public administration model focusing more widely and thus more inclusively. Denhardt and Denhardt suggest that the movement toward what they refer to as the new public service flows from the need for administrators to "view citizens as citizens (rather than merely as

voters, clients, or customers)', the need for communities to engage in building civil societies, and as a reaction to both the bureaucracy of the dichotomy and the positivism of the new public management." Bryson (2014) quotes Briggs in describing the "new approach" as:

"...broadly inclusive dialogue and deliberation. The conversation includes community members from multiple sectors because, as Jørgensen and Bozeman note, 'public values and public value are not the exclusive province of government, nor is government the only set of institutions having public value obligations'... (and) 'can engage many different kinds of people, including public-spirited managers from across sectors and citizens. Citizens thus move beyond their roles as voters, clients, constituents, customers, or poll responders to becoming problem solvers, co-creators, and governors actively engaged in producing what is valued by the public and good for the public' (Briggs 2008)." (p. 552-554)

Similarly, Demir (2009) framed his discussion of the literature as resolving the quite general question "of how public administration fits into the governance process of a democratic society on the other hand, which he views as a persistent issue since the emergence of public administration as a field of study in the late 1880s." Demir started from the literature dealing with the appropriate governance relationships between local elected official and administrators, summarized then grouped it into three broad schools based on the relationship between the elected and administrative official. The first of these is the dichotomous relationship which he called the separation school, characterized by efforts to distinguish public administration from politics. The expectation is that the elected official will engage in the political while the manager will promote the technical expertise to get the job done. His second school reflects the focus of working together (as if in a single company) of the new public management. Demir uses the term "political school" to represent this literature as its major arguments emphasize and support an extensive involvement for public administrators in all phases of the policy process. Finally, Demir's third school which he calls the interaction school, "represents a set of ideas that emphasize collaboration between elected and administrative officials while maintaining each

one's traditional roles and unique perspectives, yet allowing some overlaps”(2009, p. 514).

Demir observed that within the literature, there was much debate as to which might be correct, and suggested that in general each may be partly right.

In addition to categorizing the literature into these three similar groups, these three papers share a common view that the dominant school or public administrator's best practices change over time, in part as a backlash to the unfortunate consequences of the most recent perspective, whatever it may have been. Bryson (p. 445) made the point that “public administration thinking and practice have always responded to new challenges and the shortcomings of what came before.” Denhardt and Denhardt, while reviewing the literature on the new public management observed that “In making their case, proponents of New Public Management have often used the old public administration as a foil, against which the principles of entrepreneurship can be seen as clearly superior.” (p. 551) Demir commented that the separation school is characterized by efforts to distinguish public administration from politics, treating public administration as a world of its own with values, rules, and methods divorced from those of politics. He notes that “as a result of substantive critiques that followed World War II, however, the politics–administration dichotomy lost some of its theoretical and normative appeal and, consequently, gave rise to the development of alternative conceptualizations of the politics–administration relationship.” (p. 504). Thus one might expect the description of best local governance process to change over time.

While much understanding has no doubt been gained from categorizing the extant literature by approach (or school), there have been little or no consolidation of the data gathered in the empirical portions of the literature. We see this as a broad issue across the discipline. Asking questions about the success (or lack thereof) of performance management, Gerrish

(2016) made use of a meta-analysis to accomplish a consolidation that made use of the data. A meta-analysis combines qualitative and quantitative data from the results of many different yet similar studies in order to test for similarities and differences in them. Meta-analysis is rarely used in public administration, typically for the same difficulties to those noted above. However, he argued that “Perhaps the largest advantage of quantitative meta-analytic techniques is that they allow analysts to accumulate findings from the literature in a way that accounts for sample sizes (efficiency) and strengths of the original research.” (p. 50)

In practice, additional difficulties beset research about the interface between elected and administrative roles in local governance in general and limit our ability to perform such a consolidation and observe commonalities between our outcomes and those of the extant US studies. First cross cultural or even cross regional applications can be tricky. (Eglene & Dawes, 2006) Second, even with work based on a similar approach (say survey data that asks about the interactions between elected and administrative officials) it is not the custom in the public administration literature to either use common questions nor to disclose the instrument. In fact, it is often unclear exactly what questions were asked. Finally, the dimensions of this problem have worsened over time by the fact that the field itself has changed in ways that changed the emphasis of this research with the result that the relevant survey questions have changed depending upon whether the researcher worked from a dichotomized perspective (where clear chains of command really mattered), a new public management view (where cost reductions and efficiency mattered) or to what appears to be the current wave called the new public service (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000 and adopted by Bryson et al., 2014) (where the inclusion of citizens in the decision making process is mandatory).

The Whole Elephant:

Since in part our research goal was to allow us to compare these outcomes not only with one another but also to consolidate our results with the extensive U.S. literature, we decided to focus on the way in which elected and administrative leaders saw their roles and interactions. At the start of this project we expected it to be a fairly straightforward task. How wrong we were.

In large part our difficulties grew out of the desire to find a process that would let us at least slouch toward a meta-analysis of the extant data, thus enabling the integration of diverse pieces of information about this interface. In particular, we sought a process that would enable consolidation of previous and future data based survey data identifying the similarities while illuminating the differences.

To enable this integration we started with an approach similar to much of the literatureⁱ: we asked both administrators and elected officials to describe whether it should be the job of the elected officials or the administrators to complete a variety of municipal jobs falling along the decision-making frontier. Reviewing the current literature we noted that, like the blind men describing the elephant, while we may arguably be describing the same elephant, the specifics and techniques of each study that has looked at this decision making frontier varies. In particular the differences between the studies arise from variations in:

- 1) The questions asked
- 2) The parties who were consulting
- 3) The process used to gain information
- 4) The interpretations of the outcomes.

The variations appear to limit us when doing a typical meta-study. However, there are some areas of agreement and overlap in the data collected. These include

- 1) The jobs identified by researchers as performed by the parties in local government are at least overlapping sets

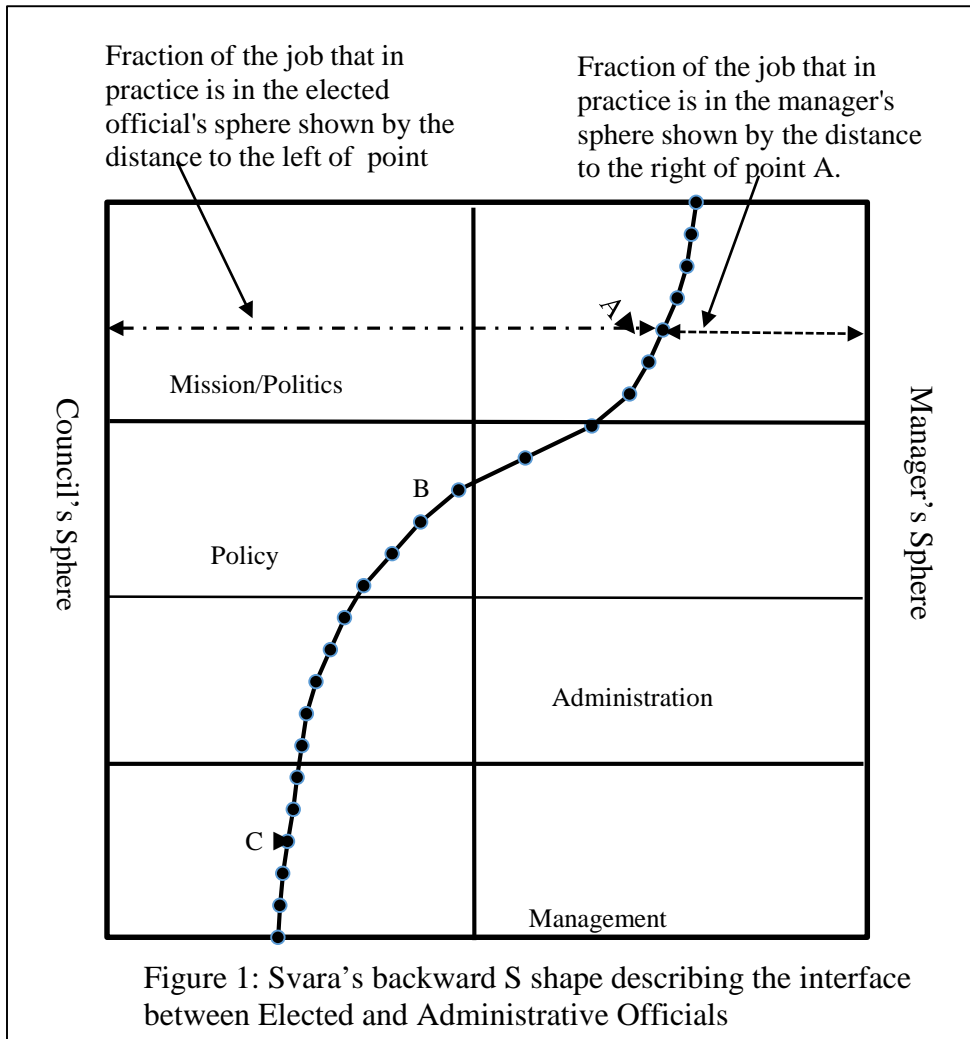
- 2) The conclusion that in general, different groups (such as elected officials and professional administrators) think they should do different things.
- 3) The areas about which folks were questioned could be fit into the Svarian (1985, p?) decision making classifications of mission/politics; policy; administration and management.

The Local Government Elephant – Svara’s backward S curve:

In his original description of what is now commonly termed the complementarity model Svara 1985, p. 228) utilized a graph that he purported represented both the typical and ideal allocation of the responsibilities for an array of municipal jobs along the elected-administrative decision. Further he indicated that it could serve as a benchmark by which “one can make relative distinctions and compare different jurisdictions or note shifts of responsibility in a single city over time.” that all other outcomes could and should be compared to it. Although this diagram is reprinted in Svara’s (2006) paper, it was not used to describe the changes he saw in the Council-Manager relationships he documented in several places and time periods.

We believed these graphs could be made operational, and if they were applied to extant data sets, we hoped these graphs could act as a lens to focus our picture of the whole elephant. To utilize these graphs, first consider how they work. Figure 1 shows a graph largely similar to that used by Svara. As we use it, the solid line plots the mean value of the answers to the question, whose responsibility is each of the following jobs (where the jobs described are those that must be done to operate a city or municipality)? The questions are grouped into mission (most likely to be seen as the responsibility of mayors and councils) then policy (more likely to at least involve administrators in the decisions) then administration (likely to be shared or only involve council for advice) and finally management (most likely involving only civil servants with the least involvement from council). Each point on the curve represents a task or job that must be completed by either the local elected officials, administrators or both.ⁱⁱ

How is this plot formed? The left hand axis is labeled the elected officials' sphere and the right hand axis is labeled the administrators' sphere. The vertical line marks the points that are half way between the two axes. Consider three points, A, B, and C shown on Figure 1. Point A (on the upper right hand side of the grid) describes a job that the respondents see in large part as the responsibility of elected officials, as shown by the fact that the fraction of the job in the elected official's sphere is larger than the fraction in the administrator's sphere. Point A falls in the area Svava (1985, 224-5) defines as mission which includes "the broad goals [the municipality] sets for itself and the things it chooses not to do." The allocation of these jobs to the elected officials flows from the fact the sorts of decisions are, as Lynn (1981, 147)) observed,



(albeit talking about the national level of his time), "played in the open rather than behind the scenes and entail a willing involvement in controversy and the power to persuade and dramatize". We

see decisions that are fundamentally political fall in this category. To reflect this choice, we renamed the mission category to mission/politics. As one moves down and toward the left along this line, there is an increase in managerial involvement.

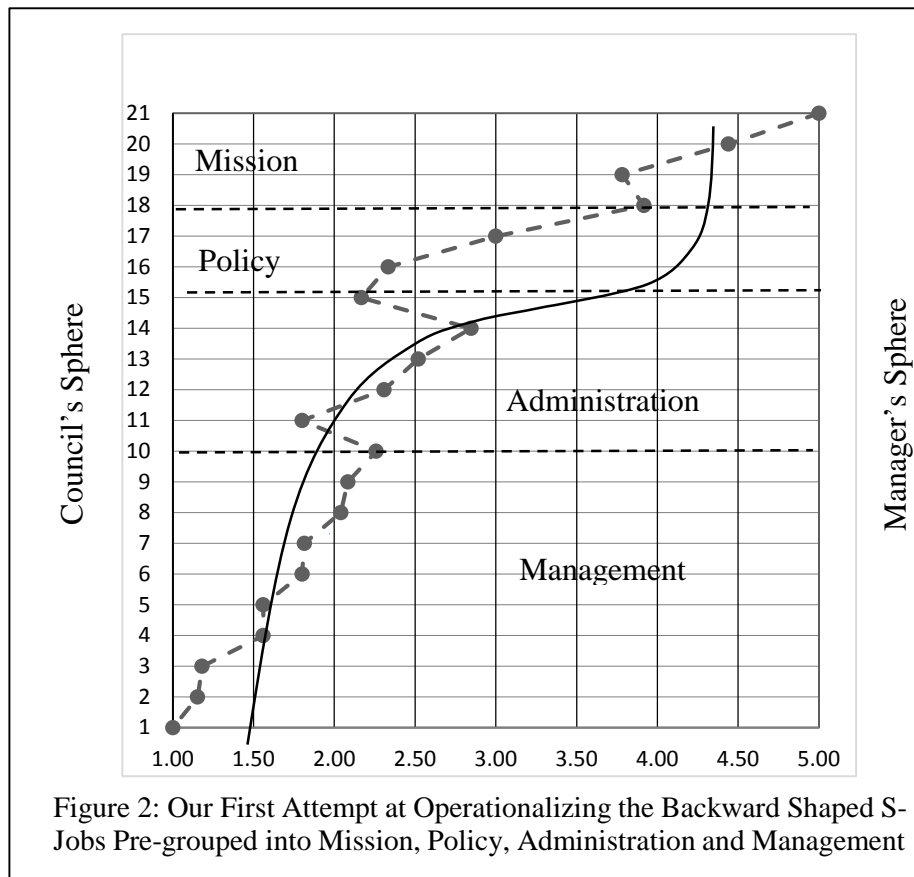
Point B, for example, refers to a task or job where the responsibility has moved from being more that of the elected officials toward one that is truly shared with the administrative officials. Point B falls in the area Svava calls policy and which he describes as “middle range decisions.” It is very close to the midpoint indicating a job that is shared (approximately equally) by administrators and elected officials.

Finally, point C refers to a job that is primarily in the administrator’s sphere of responsibility. These sorts of jobs include two categories: administration (jobs that Svava (1985, 226) defines as specific decisions, regulation and practices designed to achieve a given management (jobs that Svava describes as “largely devoid of policy”). The complementarity model predicts that while they are the responsibility of administrators. However, administration jobs will have at least some input from the elected officials. Jobs classified as management, such as point C, will have the least council involvement.

Our First Attempt:

Our initial attempt at operationalizing the backward S was documented in our recent publication (Rahman and Seldon, 2016) and utilized data collected in 2003 from the towns and municipalities in a fairly small, moderately isolated, geographical area defined as being in the British Columbia, Canada and in the Thompson Nicola Regional District.ⁱⁱⁱ Initially we identified twenty one municipal jobs and based on the extant literature, sorted them into the four categories of mission (3 jobs), policy (4 jobs), administration (4 jobs) and management (10 jobs). We asked local mayors and CAOs whose job it should be or who should do each of these jobs. The options

we gave them were the council or equivalent, the council and the manager should share the job or it was the manager’s job. To plot their responses, if the respondent answered it was an elected official job, we scored that as a 5. If the answer was shared, we scored that as a 3. Finally, if the answer was it was the manager’s job we scored it as a 1. We then determined the average score on each of the questions. Next we sorted the data within each group, ordering it from the largest to the smallest mean value with the group of jobs we classified as focused on mission. Then we did the same thing for each of the group of jobs in the policy area, then the group of jobs in the administrative area and finally in the management area. In order to plot these order groups of means, we then numbered each question from 21 to 1. The job numbered 21 was the job in the mission category with the largest average, 20 the next the job in the mission category with the next largest average and question mission question, 19 the next largest. Question number 18 was



the policy job with the largest average percentage of Council responsibility and so forth. As well, we used Svava’s placement of the “spheres of control.” This result is shown in Figure 2. The solid line is similar to Svava’s backward S

while the dotted line shows the respondent's pooled results. The area to the left of each line represents the fraction of that job the respondents believe to be council's responsibility, while the area to the right represents the fraction the respondents believe to be the manager's responsibility. Because we had only three jobs we classified as mission, four as policy, four as administration but ten as management, the areas representing each category are of unequal size.

Looking at our plot, while the general slope of the actual responses is consistent with the complementarity model, there are some differences from the hypothesized shape. First. While expected most of the jobs are arguably seen as shared, at least two are not: the evaluation of the city manager (council's job) and the management of human resources (city manager's job). Second, the shape exhibits a number of twists and bends. These bends occur because a job that was classified as, say, policy rather than mission (or administration rather than policy) is seen by the mayors and/or the CAOs as being more in the sphere of the elected officials than the job defined as mission.

Our Second Attempt:

Rather than attempting to squeeze the survey results into what seemed to be an ill-fitting suit, we decided to approach the problem inductively, letting the data speak. Much of the extant data reports results from the US, albeit from different states, so it is not clear that respondents in differing countries with differing overarching political structures would classify these jobs in identical ways. Indeed, even within the US data, no standardized order has emerged from this literature. Jobs that at a given time and in a given place might not be highly political it could become so at a different time or be so in a different place. So rather than sort the jobs first into the four categories and then rank ordering the data by mean value, we decided to first rank order the jobs by their mean values and then classify them into categories.

The expectation was that if we simply sorted data by the mean value, not only would it produce a smoother curve more easily able to be compared with Svava's hypothesized shape, but as well it would more accurately reflect what our "blind man" "saw" at that time and place. This approach was attractive as it seemed to best match the categories with the manner in which the respondents saw them. Our underlying assumption is that jobs with the highest political profile would likely be allocated to council while those with the least political or policy profile would fall entirely to the civil service. Of the jobs falling in between, we assumed they would be allocated to policy if the respondents see them as primarily the responsibility of council while those seen as primarily the job of management are allocated to administration.

The Jobs- 2003 TNRD:

Following this approach, the same twenty one jobs were sorted, but in this case we calculated the mean value of each job from the pooled responses and then ordered them from highest (Council's job alone) to lowest (Manager's job alone). The job with the highest mean value was numbered as twenty one, down to the job with the lowest mean value which was numbered one. In this new regime we then somewhat arbitrarily allocated those jobs into the category of mission if the mean value was 4.0 or greater, as we interpret this to mean the jobs were seen as more political than those with lower mean values. As the mean value fell, we anticipated the jobs would be less likely to be political in character and therefore less likely to be of interest to council. So if the value was 3.0 or greater, but less than 4.0 it was classified as policy; 2.0 or greater, but less than 3.0 the job was classified and administration; finally, if the mean value was equal to or greater than 1.0, but less than 2.0 it was classified as management.

The changes in order and groupings the resultant from these reclassifications are shown in Table 1. The arrows on the table mark jobs that changed from one grouping (such as policy) to

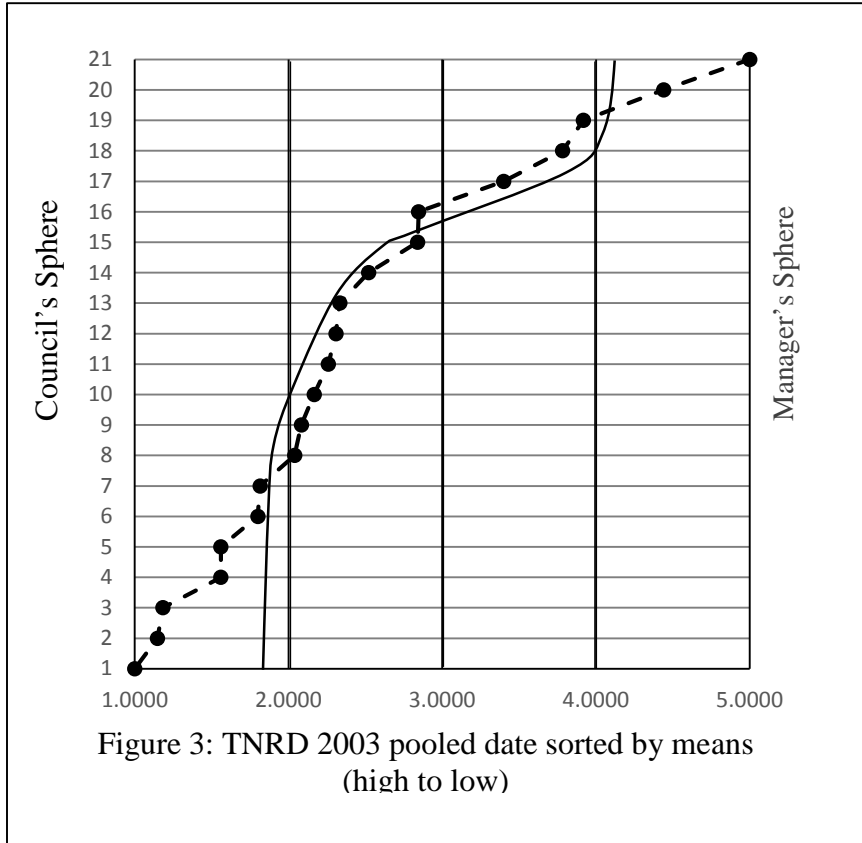
TABLE 1: JOB ORDER, TWO REGIMES			
PRE-DETERMINED GROUPS		ORDER IMPLIED BY THE DATA	
M	Evaluate the performance of the city manager	M	Evaluate the performance of the city manager
M	Determine the mission of the city	M	Determine the mission of the city or equivalent
M	Development of your organization's mission	P	Budget review and approval
P	Budget review and approval	P	Development of your organization's mission
P	Make middle range policy decisions	P	Make middle range policy decisions
P	Develop policy for internal management	A	Provide legislative oversight
P	Budget formulation	A	Develop policies for internal management
A	Provide legislative oversight	A	Determine techniques used to rank projects
A	Determine techniques used to rank projects	A	Develop policy for internal management
A	Intervene in service delivery	A	Intervene in service delivery
A	Service delivery	A	Staff reorganizations
Mt	Staff reorganizations	A	Budget formulation
Mt	Determine formula for allocating services	A	Determine the formula for allocating services
Mt	Handling of complaints from citizens	A	Handle complaints from citizens
Mt	Manage information	Mt	Manage information
Mt	Development of policies for internal management	Mt	Service delivery
Mt	Evaluate other city employees' performance	Mt	Evaluate other city employees' performance
Mt	Hire and/or promote staff	Mt	Hire and/or promote staff
Mt	Handle complaints from employees	Mt	Handle complaints from employees
Mt	Manage material resources	Mt	Manage material resources
Mt	Manage human resources	Mt	Manage human resources

another (such as either mission or administration). In our data, there were four such jobs: the development of the organization's mission (in contrast to that of the city) shifted from mission to policy (more civil service involvement); service delivery moved from administration to management (less council involvement); dealing with citizen complaints (more council involvement); and staff reorganizations (again, more council involvement).

As well, a number of jobs shifted up or down within their groupings. These represent relatively higher or lower mean values than would be otherwise be implied. was selected as best matching the categories to how the respondents views them. Jobs with the highest political profile are allocated to council while those with the least political or policy profile are allocated

to management. Those falling in-between are allocated to policy if seen as primarily the responsibility of council while those seen as primarily the job of management are allocated to administration.

Using the same technique as before to graph the data sorted in this manner produced figure 3. As expected, the curve is smoother and follows the shape predicted by Svara in the



middle portion of the diagram. However, in the area of mission and management, the 2003 TNRD respondents don't appear to be as likely to share responsibility with their counterpart. To investigate this further, we broke the admittedly small data set into those responses from the CAOs

and those from the mayors.

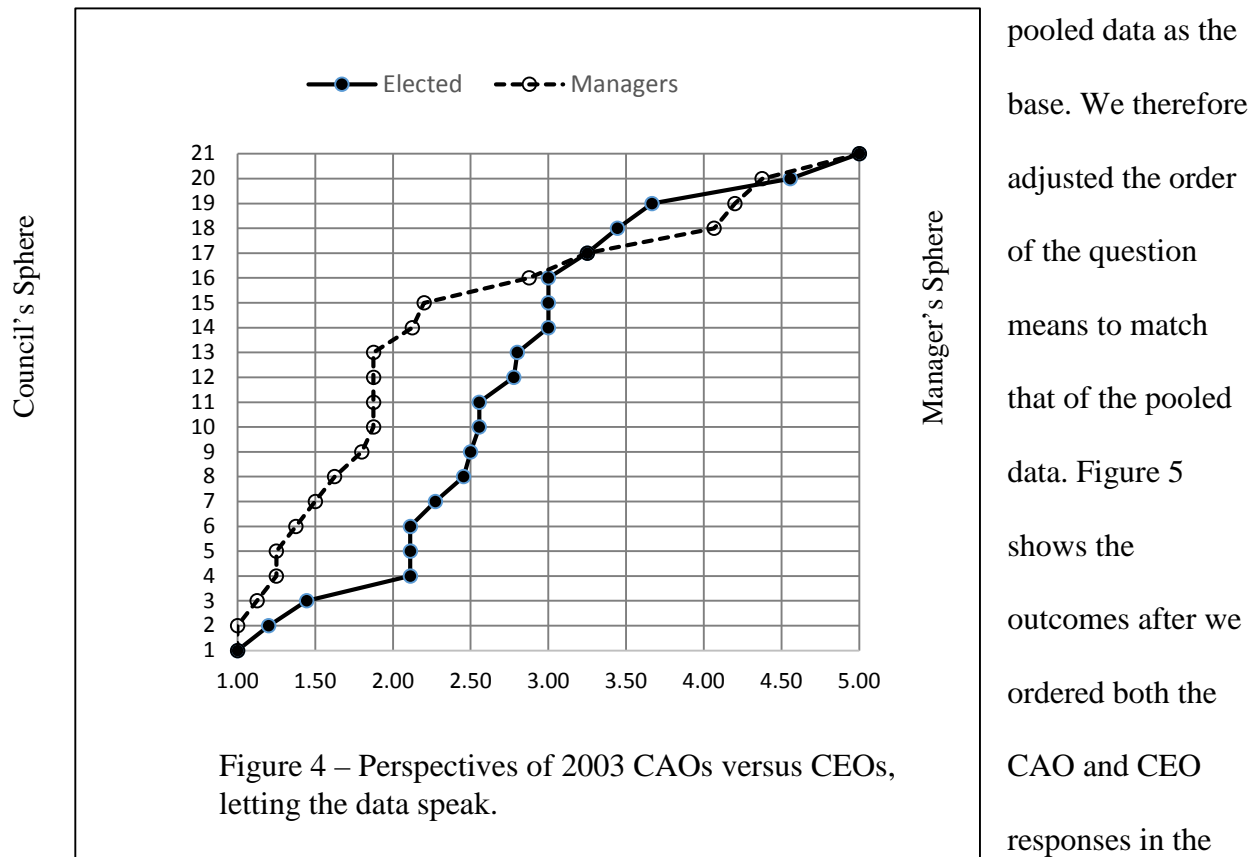
The Jobs-2003 TNRD by type of respondent:

Having compared the TNRD pooled data with Svara's ideal backward S, we next turned to a comparison of the CAO's and the CEO's views of these jobs, again allowing the data to speak.

Figure 4 shows the result of simply splitting the data into those two groups, allowing each set to

be ordered by highest mean. What seems to emerge from this picture is that both parties believe they are more responsible for the job than the other party sees them as being.

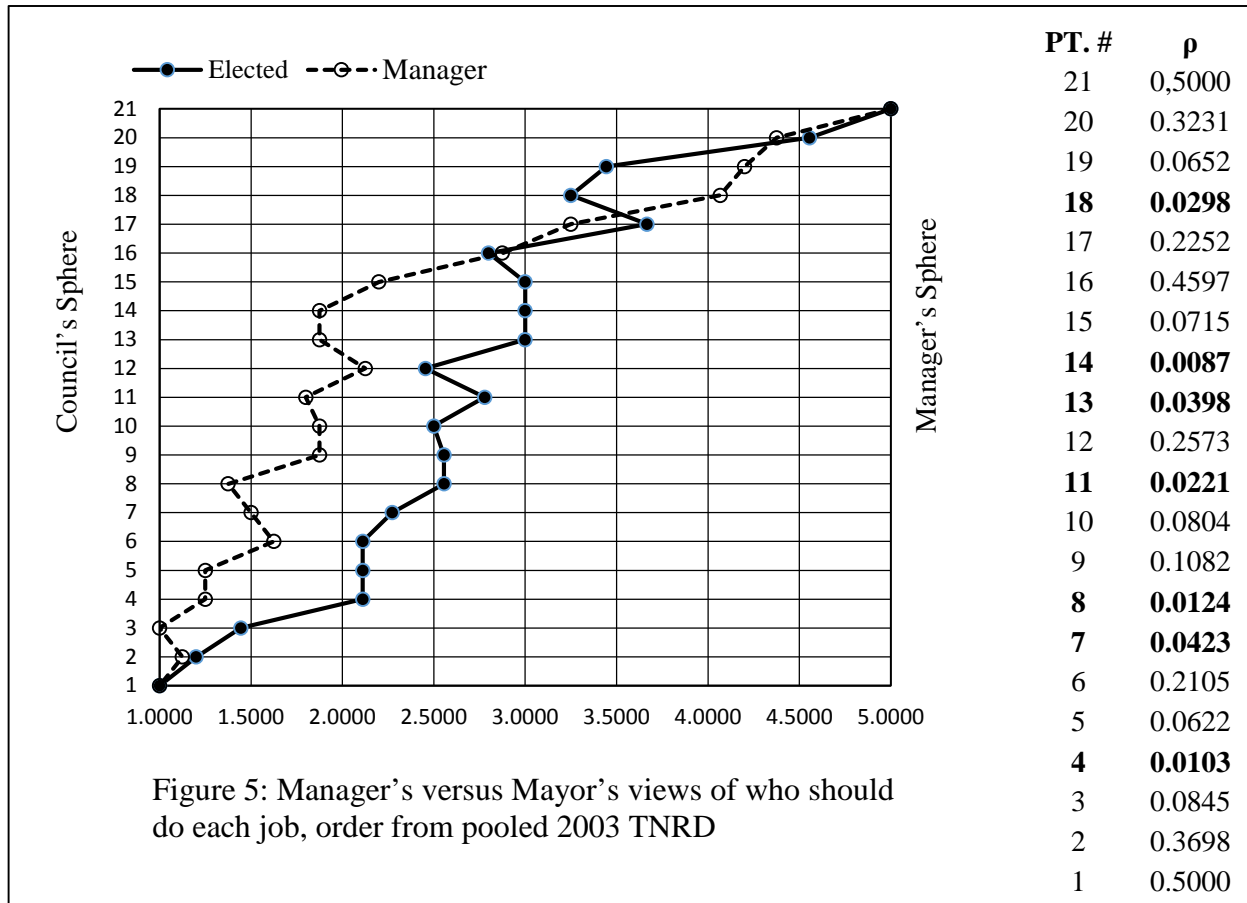
One needs to be careful, however, with the assumption that one can simply compare these outcomes. If the rankings of the two parties differ, and they do in this case to some extent, one needs to find some base rankings against which we can compare each data set. One could arbitrarily pick one of these groups as the base. Instead we compared these outcomes using the



same manner as the pooled data. An initial inspection of the two groups show differences in their perspectives. . Overall, the interpretation of these differences could be viewed at least three ways. Either managers thought they should have more control than the administrators thought they should have, or administrators thought they should have more responsibility than managers

thought they should have. Alternatively, these mayors and council want to share jobs more than these civil servants do, a result consistent with that of Svava (1999, 49).

After running F tests to determine whether the sample variances differed, we used t-test



for each point to determine whether the means of the mayors and managers were significantly different (at $p \leq .05$) which are identified in bold text. The jobs that emerged as significantly different between the two groups were:

STABLE 2: DIFFERENCES IN MEAN RESPONSES, MAYORS AND MANAGERS, 2003 TNRD		
GRAPH #	JOB	ρ
4	hiring and promotion of staff	.0103
7	managing human resources	.0423
8, 11, 14	various versions of developing policy for internal management	.0124..0221,.0087
13	intervening in service delivery	.0398
18	development of your organization's mission	.0298

Starting from the top of the graph (or the bottom of the table), one of the areas where the differences in perspective are significant are the development of their organizations mission. Since the Council and civil servant have differing organizations, it is not surprising that they would each feel they should have at least a significant input into their own mission.

A second area of significant differences between the elected and the managerial leadership has to do with who should be responsible when there is some perceived problem with service delivery. The mayors believe this job should be shared with the council while the managers thought this to be an area for which they were responsible but where there should be advice from the council. Since the management was responsible for initiating and running the delivery of services, their response is not surprising, particularly given the local council attitude that this should be shared.

The final area where there are significant differences dealt with the full range of the development of both policy and practice surrounding the way in which the civil service management related to its generally small staff. Clearly the manager does not welcome a council that feels it should share the responsibility of any part of human resource management including both the structure and practices of hiring and promotion.

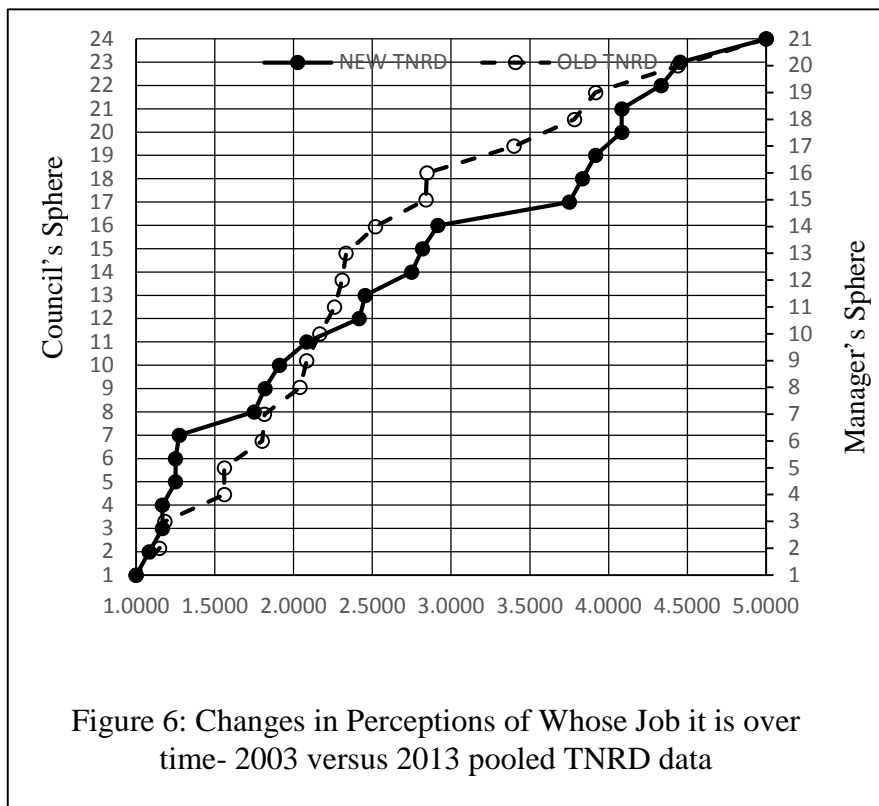
The Jobs- 2013 TNRD:

Perceptions can and do change over time. In 2013 we again surveyed the TNRD group. Unfortunately our response rate fell from 100% to 50%. As well, the 2003 survey had similar response rate from city managers and mayors, while in the 2013, we had responses from twice as many managers as mayors. As well, based on feedback from the 2003 run, we changed the survey, dropping four questions and adding seven for a total of twenty four questions. We also

changed the possible response to a five point scale, awarding the number of point inside the brackets for each answer:

1. Council Alone (5)
2. Council with Advice from the Manager (4)
3. A Shared Decision (50/50) (3)
4. Manager with Advice from Council (2)
5. Manager Alone (1)

The responses are shown as the solid line in Figure 6 and numbered on the left side, primary



axis. The old TNRD results are shown as the dashed line, with the responses numbers on the right hand side of the graph, on the secondary axis. While some apparent differences are obvious, one cannot directly compare these two outcomes until they

are adjusted for the fact that not only did the order in which the respondents ranked their jobs differ, there were differences in the jobs they were ranking. To be able to compare like with like, one must omit the questions that differ (comparing only identical jobs) and select a base order that will apply to both sets of data. This will force the data to appear in an order that allows one to evaluate the differences and similarities between the respondents from region W at time X and those from region Y at time Z.

In our sample, there were seventeen (17) common questions. To make the comparison between the two time periods, we first removed the questions that were not alike in both samples.

As before, we also defined a base data set that would serve to order the two data sets so

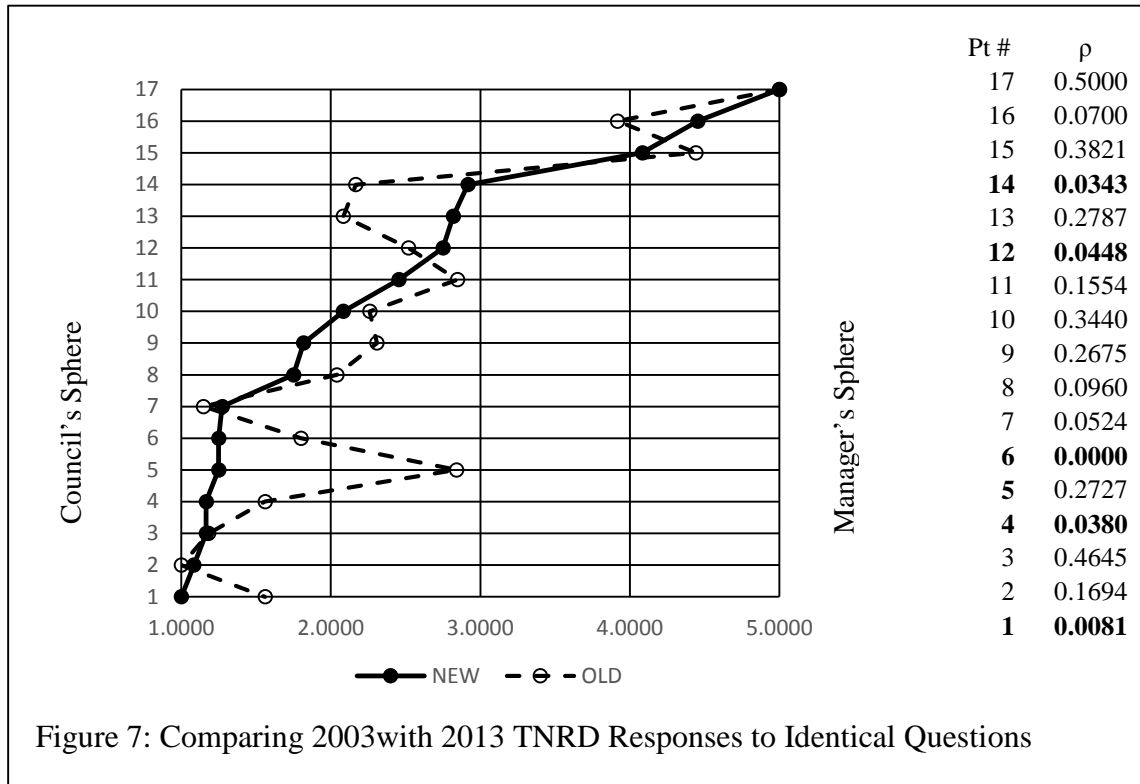


Figure 7: Comparing 2003 with 2013 TNRD Responses to Identical Questions

that question “j” would be the same question for both data sets. We chose to set the order of the means from the new TRND as the base, placing the responses from the old means in the same order as those from the new TRND. The results are shown in figure 7 and the differences appear much less systematic.

To determine which of these differences of means were significant, we followed the same

GRAPH #	JOBS:	ρ
1	Evaluate the performance of city employees other than the manager	.0081
4	Make decisions about the hiring and promotion of staff	.0337
5	Develop policies for internal management	.0000
13	Determine how to distribute services	.0440
14	Formulate the budget (in contrast with review and approve)	.0358

procedure of using an F test to compare variances, then used the appropriate T-test to determine

significance (at 5%). Table 3 show the five areas where these two time periods produced different results between the two time periods in the TNRD.

By 2013, there were changes in the pooled perceptions. The areas where these changes occurred included the areas of budget formulation (more council involvement desired in 2013 than in 2003) and service distribution (more council involvement desired in 2013 than in 2003). As well, there are changes between the new and old perspectives on the way in which the civil service management related to its generally small staff. In particular, there is perception flowing from the 2013 data that there should be less council involvement in the development of internal management policies, the hiring and promotion of staff and the evaluation of city employees.

The differences involving how services are distributed as well as budget formulation might show heightening political (citizen) interest while the latter two are could result from increased or better board training for council members. However, in our latter survey, there was a reduced amount participation from mayors, so these outcomes may simply reflect the reduced influence of elected officials in the pooled outcomes. As before, the TNRD data runs from corner to corner, suggesting that are a number of jobs that are viewed not only as managements ultimate responsibility, but as jobs Council should leave to its employees. One might be interested in knowing whether this is a Canada wide difference from the Svara's original perspective or simply those of the individuals in a small and relatively isolated local region.

The jobs – 2013 TNRD compared to Canada:

The final “blind men” we want to compare before we evaluate the use of Svara's backward S are regional/size differences. In our case, we had run two virtually identical surveys during the virtually identical time period: the updated survey in the local area of the TNRD and a Canada wide survey. The shared twenty three identical questions. Recognizing both the political and

cultural differences as well as the authors' complete lack of bilingual competence, the Canada wide survey was run in all provinces except Quebec. Further, it was run in both larger and smaller cities and municipalities. Depending on the particular job under consideration, we had around 125 responses from the much larger Canada –wide survey in contrast to the 11 or 12 from the TNRD. Finally, the response rate from managers compared to mayors was much closer to one to one for the Canada-wide survey that for the 2013 TNRD survey where it was close to two to one.

As before, to enable comparison we had to order the questions from both data sets so that we compared identical questions. In this case, we used the outcomes of the Canada wide survey

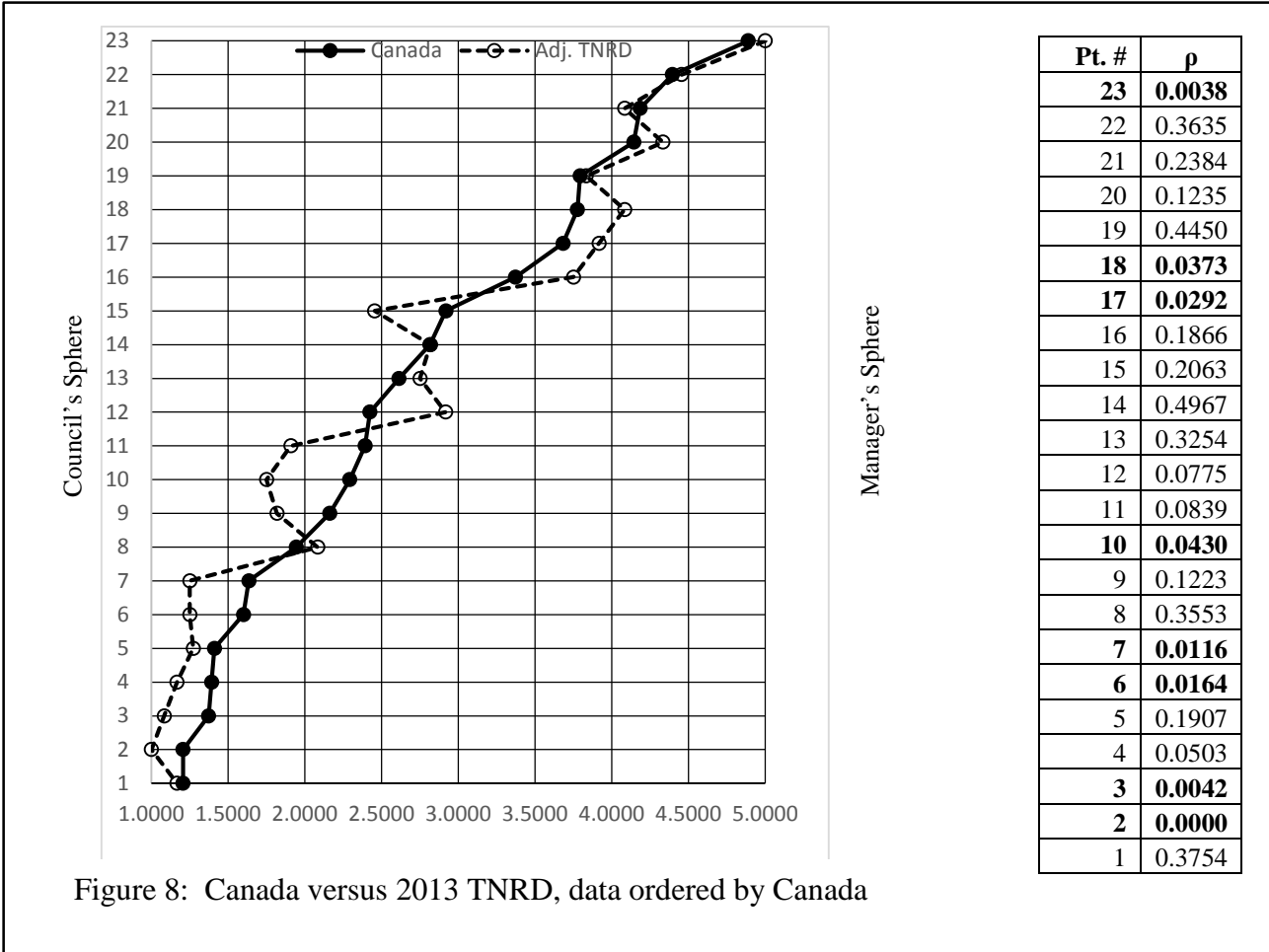


Figure 8: Canada versus 2013 TNRD, data ordered by Canada

as the base order with which we compared those of the TNRD, reordering the TNRD data outcomes to match the order of the Canada-wide survey. The results are shown in figure 8.

Also as before, we ran F tests to determine whether the sample variances differed and then ran the appropriate t-tests to determine whether the means of the sample were identical. The questions for which the difference between the two samples are significant at 5% are identified in bold print on the figure and described in more detail in Table 4.

TABLE 4: SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES, CANADA-WIDE & TNRD 2013		
GRAPH #	JOB	p
23	Evaluate the performance of the city manager	0.0038
18	Determine the scope of services provided	0.0373
17	Determine the level of spending on existing services	0.0292
10	Handle complaints from citizens	0.0430
7	Handle complaints from employees	0.0116
6	Implement programs and deliver services	0.0164
4	Make decisions about hiring and/or promotion of staff	0.0503
3	Manage human resources	0.0042
2	Evaluate the performance of other city employees	0.0000

When considering the six or seven jobs where the means from the local TNRD region were significantly different to that of the Canada wide data, we divided them into four groups. Starting from the mission/politics (council sphere), the first group contains one job, the evaluation of the city manager. The municipal act in British Columbia explicitly requires the Council evaluate the city manager’s performance. Since we do not believe this to be true in all provinces, this outcome is not surprising.

The next group of jobs where the mean responses differ deals with service provision, specifically, determining the scope of services to be provided and the level of spending on existing services and implementing them. The TNRD respondents indicate a preference for less sharing than do their Canada wide counterparts. Indeed, the small, regional area participants

seem to suggest that the council should make the decisions on what and how much to provide and then get out of the way to let the staff implement them. This suggests a next step in our research would be breaking down the Canada-wide data into various regional and size grouping for further comparisons.

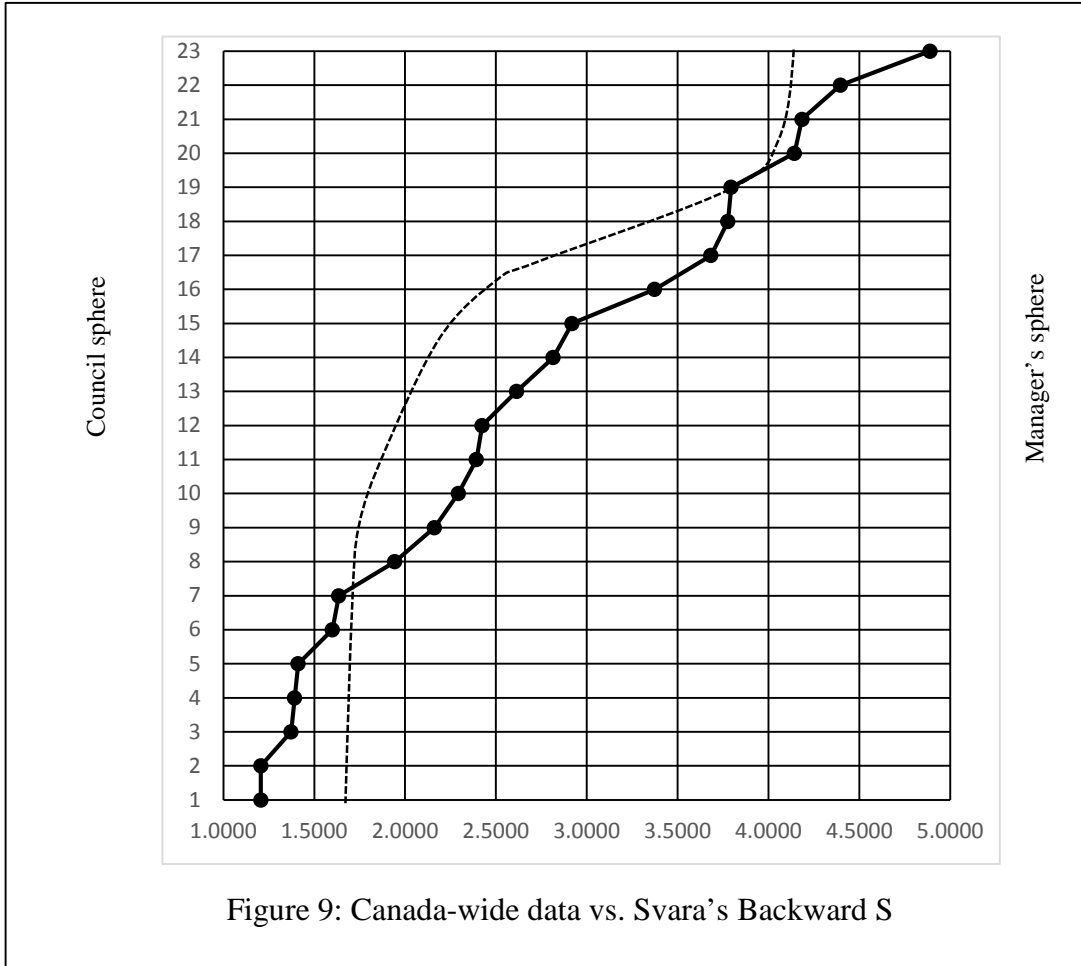
A third area of difference between the Canada-wide and the TNRD deal with complaints from either citizens or employees. The mean value in the TNRD for citizen complaints was 1.75 versus 2.29 for Canada-wide. While there is no clear dividing line those jobs that should left entirely to the civil service and those requiring advice from council, a number greater than 2 implies a job that clearly should have at least advice from council and perhaps a bit more. For the TNRD, however, mean is 1.75 suggesting a substantial fraction of respondents who think this should be left to the management alone. In the no doubt sensitive area of employee complaints, the Canada wide mean (1.63) indicates more interest in council advice than does that of the TNRD (1.25).

The final areas where the TNRD responses differed from those of the country as a whole were jobs that dealt with the relationship between the city manager and his staff. The means for these jobs in the TNRD ran from 1.0 (managing human resources) to 1.167 (making decisions about hiring or promotion of staff). In contrast these means for the Canada-wide respondents ran from 1.21 (managing human resources) to 1.39 (hiring/promoting staff). This is less surprising given the observation that our survey results indicated a significant shift between our 2003 and 2013 surveys toward less council involvement. It also makes us wonder if the TNRD pendulum may swing back toward the Canada-wide response over time.

In summary, with the exception of the job of determining the level of spending on existing services where the TNRD councils seeks less input from its managers than does Canada

as a whole, making us wonder if small town councils give more power to the managers than is generally the case in larger Canadian cities.

Figure 9, the final figure, reproduces the Canada wide data set with the addition of



Svara's backward S. With the larger sample size in the Canada wide data, the differences between the general shape of the Canada-wide data and that of Svara's hypothesized backward S are increasingly noticeable. The Canadian wide data set is much more linear, almost approaching that of a diagonal line running from the upper right (all council) to the lower left (all civil service) compared to that hypothesized by Svara. But unless and until we can compare our data with that from other countries, we are unable to say whether this shape is that of a distinctly Canadian elephant or a more universal one.

Slouching:

Based on the extant literature, there are a number of data sets that one could utilize the methodology we propose to graph the results and compare it with Svara's S. This would allow at the least a comparison between the resultant shapes that would obtain from that data the results of our Canadian data set. Indeed, with sufficient access to the actual extant survey questions and outcomes, it might form the basis of a meta-study. An appropriately designed meta-analysis can provide statistically stronger results than individual studies as the pooling of many studies can account for greater diversity than individual studies can provide.

However, if this task were replicated across various countries and regions, even if turns out that the data sets are not sufficiently similar to do an actual meta-study, this process would allow us to compare the shapes of our diverse elephants. While not providing the methodology to integrate the extant data into a single data base, this approach would at least allow a comparison of the various data sets in a standardized way.

Conclusions:

We have demonstrated that Svara's backward S can be operationalized. Ultimately we are left with is a descriptive technique allowing us to compare:

- Roles from perspective of any group for any sample that has group by group data
- Variables to see which of them change over time in terms of importance
- Countries or regions to the extent that the data has similar sorts of questions.

Until others analyse the extant data and apply either the same or a similar approach, it will not be clear whether Svara's hypothesis about the "typical" shape of the US data is correct (or not), nor whether it applies to other countries. It seems a bit of an ill-fitting shoe when applied to the Canadian data. But we suggest that in order to get a description of the entire elephant that constitutes the desired allocation of the jobs of running a city or municipality on the part of

locally elected and administrative leaders Svava's operationalized approach offers a beginning. This paper suggests a further research direction would include the application of this process to any extant data set to see whether or not Svava's backward S is a "typical" result or purely a hypothetical one.

Notes:

ⁱ It is not uncommon for studies to ask only administrators, but for our purposes we wanted to be able to compare the responses to see if there was a difference in the perceptions of elected and administrative officials.

ⁱⁱ There are a very large number of jobs that could be considered. We assume that if we asked about all of them, the answers would form a solid shape.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Rahman and Seldon (2016) for additional discussion about the region and the meaning of regional districts. We have altered the presentation and calculations of the horizontal axis for this paper to be consistent with the rest of the figures we present in this paper.

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