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Leadership transitions of state government executives: A naturalistic inquiry of cases of state agency executive succession in Ohio. (Volumes I and II)

Orosz, Janet Elizabeth Foley, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1991

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1991
"Researchers work outward from their own biographies."

--Norman Denzin, 1989
Interpretive Interactionism
VITA

August 17, 1956. Born-Akron, Ohio

1977. B.A., Political Science, Public Administration, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

1978-1980. Researcher, Ohio Youth Commission

1981. MPA, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1981-1984. Budget Administrator, Ohio Department of Natural Resources

1985-1990. Assistant Director for Business and Administration, Metropolitan Park District of Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio

1990-Present. Assistant Professor, Department of Urban Studies, The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Public Policy and Management

Studies in Public Sector Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management. Professor Robert W. Backoff
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION EVENTS AND TRANSITION PROCESSES

I'd say based on my observation [state agency leadership transitions] are very ad hoc. At the individual agency level, the transition is essentially up to the individual cabinet member. How that takes place, how he or she figures out what has been going on at the agency, what should be changed, what should continue, what should be emphasized, what should be de-emphasized.

I've never been in charge of an agency with 3,300 employees before, but I'm sure not too many people coming into this job have had that experience before.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The comments of these incoming and former directors of state agencies in Ohio highlight the importance of the executive transition process in government. Executives are selected for their political astuteness and background in substantive areas, but often lack the managerial experience in large-scale organizations needed to minimize the disruptions of transitions associated with the arrival of the new public agency executive.

Executive succession events occur frequently in public sector organizations, particularly at the federal and state levels (Allison 1983; Rainey, Backoff, and Levine 1976; Rainey 1989). Heclo (1977) reports that fifty percent of federal cabinet secretaries
from 1960-72 remained on the job less than two years, and the trend has continued for federal agency executive tenure since then. The average tenure of federal cabinet secretaries is reported to be eighteen to thirty months (Brauer 1987; Mackenzie 1987; Pfiffner 1988; Joyce 1990; Fisher 1987; Light 1987; Maccoby 1981).\(^1\)

At the state level, Olshfski (1989) reports the average length of service in a gubernatorial cabinet position in Tennessee as three years and a preliminary New Jersey average of approximately 2.4 years. In Ohio, the average tenure rate is approximately three years in twenty-seven state agencies from the period January 1983-December 1991. Haas and Wright (1989) find the tenure of the states’ appointed executives to be decreasing. These succession rates reinforce the need for study of the executive succession process in the public sector.

In part, the frequency of public agency executive succession reflects the automatic reconsideration of the president’s or governor’s tenure as mandated by elected terms of office. Multiple succession events across agencies at the general government level following political elections are inherent in America’s system of government (Wechsler and Rainey 1988). Yet, the documented succession rates of two to three years’ tenure for state agency executives suggest that executive succession in the public sector is not understood solely through the changes in gubernatorial constitutional terms of office.

Chief executive officer succession is a frequent phenomenon in private industry as well, although tenure rates are longer than in the public sector. Approximately forty-five percent of private sector chief executives hold their positions five years or less (Dalton and Kesner 1985; Heidrick and Struggles 1980; Osborn, Jauch, Martin, and Glueck
1981). The processes surrounding these succession events are critical to the understanding of leadership recruitment, selection, retention and turnover as well as related changes in organizational culture, mission, strategy, structure, performance, and the management of human relations. These matters point to the need to improve succession or transition management in the private sector as well.

The higher rate of executive succession in the public sector is noted in practitioner descriptions of public/private differences (Bluementhal 1983; Rumsfeld 1983). The implications of short tenure are considered by agency executives to be an impediment to the achievement of program objectives by creating a short time horizon from which to operate (Natalucci-Persechetti 1987; Olshfski 1987, 1989).

State government is a particularly good location for the study of public sector succession for the following reasons. First, within each state there are multiple succession cases across the various agencies. Second, the rare opportunity is available to study one executive in multiple agencies as directors move across agencies upon request of the governor. Third, since executive tenure is compacted, the study of multiple succession types is possible. Fourth, the multiple cases exist in a similar period with the general economic and statewide political conditions similar across cases. Fifth, the importance of the states in public policy and management is increasing (Wechsler 1989).

Although executive succession events tied to gubernatorial elections (constitutional) have the highest visibility at the state level, the disruptions within state agencies caused by executive transition occur throughout a governor's tenure. The circumstances
surrounding and reasons for midterm succession events have been rarely attended to, save media attention to corrupt acts of federal or state cabinet officials. Hamilton and Biggart (1984) refer to these midterm succession events as "fatalities," for when considered across the President’s or governor’s cabinet, they contribute to the attribution by the media, and potentially the electorate, that the elected official is unable to maintain stability in the operation of the general government.²

Improvement in the management of the transition process is of particular importance to the field of public administration since advancements in public policy depend in part on leadership ability and continuity. The short tenure of appointees and the related instability of executive relationships make policy direction and coherence difficult to achieve. When transition issues divert attention, policy questions are set aside. For this reason, Wechsler and Rainey (1988) call for the treatment of transition as a major subtopic within the discipline of public administration, with a "well-formulated literature and ongoing streams of empirical research, theory development, and related practical applications." It is the aim of this inquiry to contribute to this goal through empirical research, leading to the enhancement of a theory of public sector executive succession.

The descriptions of leadership transition experienced by executives of large state agencies in Ohio that begin this chapter highlight the potential for variation in effectiveness in the leadership change processes in agencies of state government. The documented tenure rates for these executives reinforce the need for study of executive transition processes in the public sector.
FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The research agenda of this study relates to leadership, strategic management and administration at the level of state government. Specifically, the study is a systematic inquiry of the events, processes, and patterns relating to executive succession events and transition processes at the level of state agency director and their relationships to the management of the agency in the state of Ohio.

The population for the study includes nearly thirty of the major executive agencies of the state of Ohio. During the period 1983- January 1991, over eighty succession events occurred within these agencies. The study period includes 1983- onward, during which time Governor Richard F. Celeste first assumed office in January 1983 and was reelected for a second term.3

A general theoretical framework of public sector succession types reflecting timing of the succession events and the backgrounds of the appointees framed the initial case selection (Orosz 1990). The executive succession events were selected for study based on the timing of the transition experiences relative to gubernatorial changes in office (early, middle, or late in term), on successor backgrounds (political, general administrative, or specialized policy expertise, or representational based on gender, race, interest group representation, or geographic origin), and relation to agency circumstance (type and performance of agency). Succession events studied occurred in agencies with variable levels of performance and stability, with variations in appointing structures; also of policy, service, regulatory, and internal service functions.
Agency executive succession events from all phases of the gubernatorial term, early, middle, and late, are included in the research sample. The study includes directors whose tenures began with the gubernatorial administration in January 1983 (constitutional term), and directors who began their tenures within the existing gubernatorial administration (midterm and end-of-term). Most of the succession events in the study occurred within the governor's term and were not associated with a change in political leadership (gubernatorial election event). Chapter three contains more detail on the sampling strategy.

Interviews occurred between March and August 1990 with twenty-three current and previous directors of 16 cabinet level agencies in Ohio. Collectively, the directors had experienced, as directors or acting directors, over forty transitions during the period 1983-90. Several supplemental interviews were conducted with senior staff of some agencies. The interviews ranged from 50 to 160 minutes, dependent upon the schedule and interest of the participants. Verbatim transcripts of these interviews were produced, and data were analyzed from a grounded theory perspective, meaning that patterns were sought within and across the experiences of the directors (Strauss 1987). Consistent with the notions of grounded theory, the study of transitions rested in the views of the participants. Consequently, text from these interviews is provided as evidence.

The emphasis in this study is on midterm succession cases, where the least scholarly attention has been paid. Succession events originating from a gubernatorial election event have been the focus of study from the political perspective of the functioning of a state gubernatorial regime and the broader context of gubernatorial strategies (Beyle
In the present study, agency executive succession events related to gubernatorial elections are of interest as a type of succession case, from an organizational perspective focused on the effects of the event on the agency and the accomplishment of its statutorily established mandates, rather than primarily a political focus on the broader concept of the functioning of a gubernatorial administration (Rogers and Halachmi 1988).

The Ohio cases enable consideration of chief executive turnover rates, conditions of predecessor and successor selection and their influence on the interpretations and actions of the successor in the setting of new agency directions and strategies. The focus of the study rests at the agency level with single succession events and transition processes rather than at the gubernatorial level where staffing of the administrative agencies (governor’s cabinet) is the concern. The unit of analysis is the singular succession event, considered in the context of the impact of that event on the single agency. The research sample includes multiple transitions within a single agency.

For each succession case, the nature of the succession event was studied, including what gave rise to it, how the selection and transition processes worked, what were the consequences to the actors and the organization, whether succession events varied by appointment type of successor or by type of organization, and how (and if) the succession event mattered. Transition and succession event patterns were sought to find if there are different types of transitions dependent upon context.
The succession events and transition processes were studied through the interpretations of current and former directors of the agencies. To improve transition processes, participants were asked what lessons were learned during and following transitions. Information on each case was collected on the backgrounds of participants, dates of events, and structural and personnel changes made to the organization.

The research supplements field studies in strategic management ongoing since 1982 in Ohio's state agencies (Wechsler 1985; Wechsler and Backoff 1986, 1987). These studies provided substantial access to the leadership of twenty state agencies during the tenure of two gubernatorial incumbents. The combined study periods include a transition of one gubernatorial incumbent to another, also the subsequent reelection of the second gubernatorial incumbent.

Many conditions make the State of Ohio suitable for the study of public sector executive succession. From 1983 through 1990, Ohio state agencies had executive succession rates averaging approximately three years, with many midterm succession events. This enabled the study of the antecedents of midterm and gubernatorial-election-related succession events. As a part of the Ohio strategic management studies, the Ohio succession events and transition processes can be placed in the broader context of public sector strategic management (Wechsler and Backoff 1986, 1987; Wechsler 1989).

In some ways, Ohio is archetypical of other states (Wechsler 1985). For example, on indices measuring governmental structure, Ohio ranks slightly above average with other states in gubernatorial powers. Specifically, Beyle (1990) ranks Ohio slightly
higher than the average state on the criteria of appointment powers, governor's control of the budget, and veto power. Ohio ranked slightly lower in gubernatorial powers with the legislative body of the state, lower in tenure potential, and removal power of officials. Roberts (1988) places Ohio in the top half of states in depth of civil service exempt positions in state agencies, reflecting the degree of politicalization within the bureaucracy. Relative to other states, Ohio generally remains within the mid-range on these various government indices.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For purposes of this research project, succession is considered to be an event, transitions a process surrounding a succession event. Executive succession is defined as the permanent or acting transfer of title in the chief executive office for the director or administrator of a state agency. This is consistent with the definition of Brady and Helmich (1984:6), who describe executive succession as the movement of individuals through the role in an organization that is formalized as the most powerful of the power centers, controlling and directing the efforts of the organization toward its goals. Brady and Helmich operationalize this position as the chief executive officer; in the public sector it is often the statutorily created position of director, commissioner, secretary, or administrator. While these definitions are specifically appropriate to the state government level, minor modifications allow applicability to federal and local levels.

Executive transitions are viewed as processes: a coalignment of individual and organizational conditions and actions. The transition process for public agencies includes
what Vancil (1987) calls passing the baton, but goes beyond it, beginning with the identification of a need for change in leadership and possibly extending beyond to what Gaertner, Gaertner & Devine (1983:422) have defined as ending when a workable coalition is marshalled internal to the agency in support of the new leadership. Similarly, Gephart (1978:554) describes leadership change in organizations as the process by which the particular incumbent in a formalized position of authority changes.

Transition processes at the state level include deliberate or non-deliberate actions taken by the appointing authority (governor or appointing board), the predecessor (prior incumbent director), potential successors and their sponsors, the successor (agency director), organizational members, the media, political actors or other organizational stakeholders to increase the probability that a succession event will occur, and end with the acceptance or non-acceptance of the successor by internal and external stakeholders.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The general objective of the research is to produce a mid-range theory of public sector succession events and transition processes at the state agency level. This is accomplished by looking for patterns within and between state agency transition processes, the basis of which is the elicitation of what actions interviewees participated in, made sense of, and explained throughout succession events and transition processes. In the study of public sector executive succession cases, the patterns may be across individual actions over time, within a given organization, across organizations, administrations, states, or levels of government.

The theoretical objective of the proposed research is to advance a theory of public sector executive transitions by systematically considering public sector transition processes. The intent of a broader research interest is to compare public sector succession processes across levels of government, federal, state and local.

The applied and long-range goal of this research project is to institutionalize support for public agency executives who are experiencing the transition process, leading to improvements and efficiencies in public sector executive transitions. Participation of executives in a study of transition processes has the added benefit of heightening awareness of what could be done to accomplish a successful transition.

Given the frequency of succession events, continuous changes in leaders, and the short period in which leaders and governors must carry out their policy changes and directions, enhancement of the capabilities to manage succession events and transition processes is one means to reduce distractions related to executive transitions.
Alternatively, if leadership change is superfluous to policy initiatives and agency goal accomplishment, then perhaps an answer can be identified to the question of whether succession events really do matter and are worthy of future attention in the study of public administration and public management (Rogers and Halachmi 1988).

In summary, the purposes of the study of public sector succession events and processes in Ohio at the state level are:

1. To investigate the circumstances surrounding public sector executive succession events at the state agency level and to examine the implications of these circumstances for transition processes.

2. To compare these circumstances and processes with extant findings about executive succession events and transition processes in the private sector, other governmental and quasi-governmental levels, and in other states to find what is general and what is specific about succession events and transition processes, and to examine the extent to which general transition principles apply in the public sector context.

3. To determine the role succession events and transition processes play in the management of public organizations.

Questions regarding these areas that might be answered through this inquiry are presented in Table 1.
Table 1
Public Sector Executive Transitions
Investigation Areas and General Questions

1. Public Sector Executive Transitions: What are the events, processes, and patterns relating to executive succession events and transition processes at the level of state agency director?

1.1 What is the nature of the specific succession event?
1.2 What gave rise to the succession event?
1.3 What was the transition process like?
1.4 What were the consequences to the organization?
1.5 What were the consequences to the participants?
1.6 What lessons were learned by the participants?
1.7 What was the selection process and how did it impact the successor's conceptualization of the situation?
1.8 What are the effects of multiple succession events?
1.9 Are there meaningful distinctions of succession events based upon the following:
   - Timing (constitutional, mid-term, end-of-term)
   - Organization context (size, policy type, age, turnover history, culture)
   - Successor type (insider, outsider, returnee)
   - Cause of succession (voluntary, involuntary)

2. Public/Private Differences: What are the systematic comparisons of public and private sector succession events and transition processes?

2.1 How are the factors which make the public and private sectors different manifested in the succession/transition process?
   - Context factors (degree of openness to the external environment, public expectations, organic law)
   - Procedural constraints (policy ambiguity, diverse interest groups, artificial time constraints, high ideals in performance measures, less dependency between career and political officials)
   - Structural constraints (centralized personnel systems, sunshine laws, referenda and recall initiative processes)

2.2 What are the differences in succession events and outcomes as described in the private sector events?
2.3 What is the impact of the factors of known and short terms of office?
2.4 What are the impact of frequent and multiple succession events on the agency?
2.5 What is the potential applicability of private sector succession findings to the succession events in the public sector?
2.6 Are certain types of succession events more like those described in the private sector?

3. Public Sector Strategic Management: What are the consequences of the succession event for the overall strategic management of the agency?

3.1 Under what conditions does agency strategy change or remain stable following succession events?
LOOKING FORWARD

The transition processes were viewed by the researcher through the temporal lenses of the appointments process, transition preparation and the initial transition period, with an emphasis on the first few months of tenure as agency director. This lens is carried through the organization of this dissertation.

Following this brief description of the problem statement and the design of the study, Chapter two describes the substantive literature pertinent to the study. Chapter three introduces the methodological issues underlying the study. The chapter concludes with methodological issues and choices confronted in the undertaking of the study, and presents examples of these issues from the research effort.

Chapters four through nine present the findings of this study of transition processes in the state agencies of Ohio. Chapter four considers the selection processes for directors and the implications of the selection processes for the transitions of the directors into the agency. Chapter five considers transition preparations that are possible by predecessors and successors. Chapters six and seven present the actions of the transition process in the first weeks of transition, concluding with a consideration of the determination of a transition period defined by the directors. The chapters present the issues confronting the directors in the first weeks of the transition. Chapter eight describes briefly some consequences of the transition process. The final chapter presents crosscutting issues from the earlier chapters and identifies patterns of transitions in the study. The patterns are linked to the extant findings on public and private sector succession. Additional areas for study are identified.
Chapter I Notes

1. Tenure figures vary due to ongoing service.

2. See, for example "Celeste fills five vacancies" Columbus Dispatch December 22, 1987).

3. While the study period includes a multiple-term gubernatorial administration, Ohio offers the situation of two consecutive two-term constitutional terms of office, the previous governor, James A. Rhodes having been in office for an eight-year term through 1982. At this time, a change in political parties in the statehouse occurred. Nineteen of these eighty events occurred in January 1991 with the change in gubernatorial administrations. Preparation for these events were underway in some agencies.

4. Specifically, nine of the forty succession experiences occurred following a gubernatorial transition.

5. The following statements by Strauss and Corbin (1990:22-38) describe the grounded theory process: "The grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon. Grounded theory is a detailed grounding by systematically and intensively analyzing data, often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase of the field note, interview, or other document; by 'constant comparison,' data are extensively collected and coded. The focus of analysis is not merely on collecting or ordering a mass of data, but on organizing many ideas which have emerged from analysis of the data. A research question in grounded theory study is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied. Grounded theory questions also tend to be oriented toward action and process." The grounded theory approach is outlined in chapter three.

6. The median tenure for directors was approximately 2.4 years.

7. Exempt employees are reported at the third line level, to division heads within agencies.

8. The proposed definition represents the traditional, hierarchical structure found in many line agencies of state government, with a single chief executive who is placed in a statutorily established position by a single appointing authority. Alternative organizational structures such as three commissioners, each appointed by a single or multiple appointing authorities represent potentially different or special cases. Examples of these structures are found in the state of Ohio in such agencies as the State Employee Relations Board (SERB) and the Public Utilities Commission (PUCO), and at the county level in boards of county commissioners (elected
officials). Such circumstances may or may not have built-in rotation of the chief executive on an annual or other plan. It is expected that the existence of a rotational plan would substantially alter the succession event and would lend itself to greater institutionalization of the transition process than would otherwise be present.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION EVENTS AND TRANSITION PROCESSES

The research reviewed in this chapter includes studies that have influenced the conceptualization of, and provided a theoretical foundation for, this inquiry. As discussed further in chapter three, this study is undertaken from a naturalistic inquiry and interpretive framework perspective in which the study participants' constructions of the problem predominate. However, the researcher's constructions first organize the research agenda and remain present throughout the research process. Consequently, the literature reviewed in this chapter, particularly those pre-1989 in publication, influenced the design of the study. Additional studies since that time speak to a recognition of the continuing importance of the topic. In general, limited studies have occurred specific to succession events in public agencies at the level of state agency director.¹

Research on the topic of executive succession has reflected the primary study foci of the researcher. For example, attention to the special case of public sector constitutional succession events has centered on a gubernatorial focus from a political rather than an organizational perspective (Beyle 1985, 1989; Hamilton and Biggart 1984; Bowman 1989). Those in the field of private sector organizational development have looked upon the placement of a successor from outside the organization as a failure in the personnel
career development system (Hall 1986).

Many scholars in the field of organizational strategy view leader replacement as a tool with which to achieve coalignment with the environment, from an objectivist contingency approach (Chaganti and Sambharya 1986; Gupta 1984; Gupta and Govindajaran 1984). From a more interpretive perspective, the succession event is an opportunity to obtain a new view of the leadership role and environment (Bartner and Tushman 1990; Friedman 1986; Gilmore 1988). Succession has been studied in regard to its relationship to other organizational phenomena such as cultural change (Louis 1985; Smircich 1983, 1985; Schein 1985), and relative to its role in organizational turnaround, transition and transformation (Kimberly and Quinn 1984; Miller and Friesen 1984). Considerable research on the relationship between executive succession and organizational performance in the private sector has been completed, with considerable variation in results (Puffer and Weintrop 1991; Grusky 1963, 1964; Carroll 1984).

The first set of studies to be reviewed relate to the topic of executive succession in the private sector. This is followed by a brief consideration of where executive succession fits in the public sector management process. The literature review then moves to studies relating to the operation of state government and gubernatorial transitions. This latter category is presented for the purpose of setting up the context of public sector executive succession, and leads to a preliminary taxonomy of public sector executive succession events at the state level. Extant studies are reviewed as they relate to the study of public sector executive succession. Tables 2 and 5 provide more comprehensive listings of studies and selected findings. Chapter three moves this
taxonomy into a sampling framework and discusses the methodological foundations and choices for the study.

PRIVATE SECTOR AND EARLY STUDIES OF EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION

A resurgence in the study of executive succession in the private sector indicates its importance as an individual and organizational event in today's administrative world (Comte and McCanna 1988; Gabarro 1988; Harrison, Torres and Kukalis 1988; Lubatikin, Chung, Rogers and Owens 1989; Vancil 1987). Private sector studies of succession events have generally assumed a linear or contingency model of sorts, considering the antecedents (poor performance), the succession event, and its consequences (improved performance and changes in strategy may be desired, structural changes and changes in organizational culture occur, new employees are hired, existing employees are fired or may eventually leave if they find the organization no longer suits them). A summary table of related research findings appears below (Table 2), with selected studies considered in more detail.

Organizations that have been studied include sports teams, using win-loss records as the measures of antecedents and consequences, and business firms, using business return measures. It appears that much of the empirical work has been driven by the availability of measures and succession cases. For example, it is unlikely that the sports team analogy is reflective of organizational life (Carroll 1984).
Table 2
Selected Studies of Executive Succession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Subject and Variables</th>
<th>Selected Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allen et al. 1979</td>
<td>Major league baseball teams, 1920-73</td>
<td>Small adverse effect on team performance following succession event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown 1982</td>
<td>26 NFL teams, 1970-78; number of games won</td>
<td>Player turnover negatively affects performance; outside successors create greater turnover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlson 1961, 1962</td>
<td>California school superintendents</td>
<td>Increase in number of central office staff following outside successors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll 1984</td>
<td>Succession effects in owner-founder newspapers</td>
<td>Succession effects depend on contextual factors of size, origin of successor and disposition of predecessor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eitzen &amp; Yetman 1972</td>
<td>129 college basketball teams, 1930-70</td>
<td>When team's prior performance is controlled, a coaching change has little performance effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamaon &amp; Scotch, 1964</td>
<td>22 major league baseball teams</td>
<td>When managers fired as scapegoats, performance does not improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grusky 1963, 1964</td>
<td>16 major league baseball teams; 22 major league baseball teams</td>
<td>Performance declines when outside successors are selected to manage; rate of turnover negatively associated with percent of games won.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmich 1974</td>
<td>29 large manufacturing firms</td>
<td>Outside successors increase organizational growth rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmich 1978</td>
<td>58 petro-chemical companies</td>
<td>Performance is negatively affected by executive turnover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborne et al. 1981</td>
<td>Nonrandom sample of 313 large industrial corporations</td>
<td>Firms experiencing succession had lower profits than nonsuccession firms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfeffer &amp; Davis-Blake 1986</td>
<td>NBA teams, 1977 to 1981; salary and win-loss records as measure of coaching ability</td>
<td>Succession event insufficient to predict performance; ability and experience of coach moderate relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinganam 1985</td>
<td>Stock prices of firms traded on New York and American stock exchanges</td>
<td>Performance declines with outside succession, depending on context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith et al. 1984</td>
<td>Methodist ministers' abilities as measured by salaries</td>
<td>Ability and experience moderate outsider's poor performance finding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrell &amp; Chandy 1986</td>
<td>244 firms with death at officer level, 1967-1981</td>
<td>Death of CEO did not affect investors' wealth unless CEO died suddenly or had name recognition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Succession Effects by Successor Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gouldner 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmich and Brown 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotin and Sharaf 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer 1975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedents of Succession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gephart 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmich 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborne et al. 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virany and Tushman 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancil 1987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of Successor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen et al. 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlson 1961-62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An early and continued emphasis of executive succession research is the selection of an inside or outside (origin) successor. Generally, an insider is now considered to be a person promoted from the executive staff of the predecessor (Helmich 1975). At the time the concept originated (Simmel 1959), the definition was less narrow, the insider considered one intimately acquainted with the informal behavioral structure of the executive staff.

Variations of this definition can be entertained: in the private sector, experience in the same industry; in the public sector, experience in the same level of government or technical area, or previous experience in the same agency under a prior administration could be considered relative "insiders" (Hamilton and Biggart 1984; Fisher 1987).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Subject and Variables</th>
<th>Selected Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dalton and Kenner 1983, 1985</td>
<td>Mid-range performers; New York Stock Exchange used as a measure of size</td>
<td>Selection of an outsider moderated by organizational size; outside succession occurs 25% less in large firms than in smaller firms; outside succession occurs with moderate performance levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmich 1974</td>
<td>29 large manufacturing firms</td>
<td>Outside successors increase organizational growth rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubatkin et al. 1986</td>
<td>472 industrial firms</td>
<td>Higher performance expectation when outsider selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiganum 1985</td>
<td>Stock value as a measure of stockholder confidence</td>
<td>Outsiders appointed more in small firms than are insiders; announcement of outsider promotions increase stockholder confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancil 1987</td>
<td>Interviews with current and retired CEO's</td>
<td>In 1962, outside successors constituted 9% of successors; in 1986, 25% of successors were recruited from the outside.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Private sector organization studies have shown approximately fifteen to twenty percent of successors to be outsiders (Dalton and Kesner 1983, 1985; Vancil 1987). This rate is believed to be moderated by organizational size and performance, with outside succession occurring less in larger firms than in smaller ones (Dalton and Kesner 1983, 1985).

The most common hypothesis regarding the selection of insiders or outsiders concerns the prior performance of the organization. In general, poor-performing organizations hire outsiders, who are then expected to initiate changes resulting in improved performance (Schwartz and Menon, 1985). A related hypothesis is that extremely poor performance limits the ability to attract outsiders. Modifications of this hypothesis include consideration of the length of stay of the predecessor, organizational size, and organizational life cycle.

Whereas outsiders are brought in to change the existing situation and to break with traditional patterns, insiders are chosen to maintain the current system and to provide stability (Carlson 1962; Carroll 1984).

The primary reason for the study of successor origin has been the determination of effects on organizational structure and performance. It has been substantiated that outsiders bring more structural change to organizations than do insiders (Carlson 1961, 1962; Gouldner 1954; Grusky 1969; Helmich and Brown 1972; Kotin and Sharaf 1967; Meyer 1975).

Studies of executive succession in the private sector have focused on determining the performance consequences of executive succession events, measured with win-loss
records of sports teams, or return-on-investment measures for business firms. Similarly, the decision to select insiders or outsiders as successors using performance outcomes as the selection criteria occupied the focus of early studies (as well as noting that outsiders made more changes to organizational structure). Notable exceptions to the orientations of these studies are Gabarro (1987) and Vancil (1987). Gabarro and Vancil each include process-oriented guides to the undertaking of leadership change of major corporations, termed "taking charge" and "passing the baton," respectively. However, the distinctions in tenure and appointing processes in the public sector result in substantial differences in transition processes.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE MANAGEMENT DIFFERENCES

A strong case has been made that fundamental differences between the public and private sectors do exist (Allison 1981; Bluementhal 1979; Bozeman and Crow 1986; Heclo 1977; Perry and Rainey 1988; Rainey 1989; Rainey, Backoff and Levine 1976; Ring and Perry 1985; Rumsfeld 1979). Ring and Perry (1985:278) summarize these differences in the circumstances influencing strategic management in the public sector. They include context factors of the degree of openness to the external environment, public expectations, and organic law; the procedural constraints of policy ambiguity, diverse interest groups, artificial time constraints, high ideals reflected in performance measures, unstable coalitions, less dependency between career and political officials; and the structural constraints of centralized merit-based personnel systems, sunshine laws, referenda and recall initiative processes, responsiveness to constituents, and the existence
of ethics committees. This leads Ring and Perry (1985:285) to express concern that generic research in strategic management does not "capture legitimate strategic management processes required by differing contexts of the public sector," suggesting that "research issues related to strategic management processes might profitably be explored prior to concluding that private sector models have general application to public sector organizations." Similarly, before accepting private sector succession study results as generic to both the public and private sectors, it would seem prudent to explore the implications of these underlying public/private differences to ensure the development of a comprehensive theory of succession.

Wamsley and Zald (1973) are credited with undertaking one of the first systematic attempts to build a mid-range theory of public sector organizations. Their model, "a political economy of public organizations" differentiates public and private organizations on the basis of two dimensions: political-economic and internal-external. They conclude that the external political economy is of great importance to public organizations, in ways that private organizations are not affected. Wamsley and Zald describe the public-private differences as originating on the political economic dimension, portrayed in Figure 1. A listing of the public sector attributes arising from this distinction is presented in Table 3, below. Executive succession frequency is one of the processes identified as arising from the political nature of public organizations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment Structure and Process</th>
<th>Internal Structure and Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political</strong></td>
<td><strong>Political</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Superordinate and authoritative executive bodies and offices (and organized extensions—budget, personnel offices).</td>
<td>* Institutionalized distribution of authority and power:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Superordinate and authoritative legislative bodies and committees (an organized extensions—ombudsman, inspectorates).</td>
<td>-Dominant coalition or faction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Independent review bodies—courts, judiciary.</td>
<td>-Opposition factions, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Competitors for jurisdiction and functions.</td>
<td>* Succession system for executive personnel (Emphasis added).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Interest groups and political parties.</td>
<td>* Recruitment and socialization for executive cadre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Media-communications entrepreneurs.</td>
<td>* Constitution: ethos, myths, norms and values reflecting institutional purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Interested and potentially interested citizenry.</td>
<td>* Patterns for aggregation and pressing demands for change by lower level personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Input characteristics: labor, material, technology, facilities, supply and cost factors.</td>
<td>* Allocation rules: accounting and information systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Output characteristics: demand characteristics and channels for registering demand.</td>
<td>* Task and technology related unit differentiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Macro-economic effects on supply-demand characteristics.</td>
<td>* Authority structure for task accomplishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Buffering technology or task core.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 1

Major Components of Political Economy for Typical Public Organizations
Table 3
Factors Related to the Political Dimension of Public Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Political Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals Consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand Aggregation and Conflict Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Leadership Succession (emphasis added)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadre Recruitment and Socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Task System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Allocation and Incentive Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Political Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power or Power Resource Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction and Adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Ambiguity or Clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveillance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrality of Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel and Funding Allocations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


PUBLIC SECTOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Building on the work of Wamsley and Zald (1973) is the strategic management framework of Wechsler (1989, 1985) and Wechsler and Backoff (1986, 1987). The public-private differences noted above are incorporated in the public sector strategic management model as internal and external factors of the public organization. These internal and external factors reflect policy differences as well as economic and political differences between agency circumstances. The model, along with a listing of the internal and external factors as identified by Wechsler and Backoff, is presented in Figure 2.
External Factors: (Political, Economic, Legal)

Leaderahqi Resource Constraints
Competence and Capacity Stakeholder Preferences
Consensus Political Agenda
Discretion Public Support
Alternative funding Fiscal Condition
Policy Type Balance of Powers
Service Delivery Technology Legal mandates


Figure 2
Strategic Management in General Purpose Public Agencies
The model's internal factors include leadership, organizational competence and capacity, consensus, discretion, alternative funding, policy type, and service delivery technology. External factors include resource constraints, stakeholder preferences, political agenda (balance between political parties and control of positions and organizations) as well as the political agenda of the individual actor and stakeholders (to include but not be limited to the governor, key legislators, media, special interest groups, individual friends, business and community leaders, and other agencies), public support (the level of public activity and visibility, expectations and interest in a given area) fiscal condition (of the general economy), balance of power, and legal mandates. These factors simultaneously influence one another and the strategic orientation of the agency. Executive succession, subsumed in this model in the leadership factor, is interrelated with each of the components of the strategic management model. These internal and external factors encompass many of the public sector attributes described through consideration of public-private differences.

One value of the strategic management framework lies in its potential to inform practice. First, as mentioned above, it subsumes the distinctive characteristics of the public sector—legal authority, involvement of stakeholders, inter-governmental relationships, structure, budget, and personnel constraints, involvement in public policy areas—and permits variations and recognition of the dialectical tensions that they produce. This is manifested both in the individual factors and in the resultant dimensions. Second, it is action-oriented and provides a basis for reflection on the complexities and dialectics in the management of a public agency (for a specific example of dialectics present in a
public agency, see Benson 1983).

As noted above, Wamsley and Zald (1973) include executive succession as one of the "public" internally focused occurrences as a result of the political orientation of the model. In the Wechsler-Backoff model, leadership and leadership succession processes would primarily be considered an internal organizational factor affecting both external factors and strategic orientations; hence locus of control, action taking and strategy. The narrow focus of this study on executive succession contributes to the testing of the model.

Gilmore (1988) concludes that strategy implementation is often not completed due to high turnover rates of executives. Gilmore's generic approach to the study of executive succession includes public, non-profit, and limited private sector succession planning techniques. His work is consistent with the strategic management approaches, addressing the complexity of the environment, with strong focus on external stakeholders in the transition process. However, the increasing role of the external environment is not specifically addressed as a public-private sector difference.

The impact of succession events and leadership transition on the overall strategic management direction is another unresolved realm. There is mixed evidence as to whether leadership change is required to make major changes in strategy. Chandler (1962) and Edstrom (1986) support the contention that a change in leaders is necessary for a major change in strategy to occur. Others merely state that major strategic change is easier when the incumbent changes (Schein 1985; Siehl and Martin 1984). Wechsler (1985) and Wechsler and Backoff (1986, 1987) find considerable variation in the
dimensions and overall strategies among agencies of state government and among different administrations in the same agencies. Hypothesized relationships concerning public sector strategic management and executive succession processes are presented in Table 4, below. The statements represent potential linkages of executive succession and strategic management patterns of the agency. This study does not test these propositions, but they remain for further study when expanding the range of the theory beyond its present limits of transition processes within agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship of Succession Events to Strategic Management:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Executive succession can be viewed as an organizational opportunity for change in interaction patterns, culture, and strategic agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leader replacement may be viewed as coalignment with environment—linking strategy needs with strategic planning process (Hall 1986).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The ability to make strategy explicit to subordinates is an important qualification of a high-performing leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Changes in strategy are more likely to occur following executive succession events when an outsider is appointed; conversely,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Changes in strategy rarely occur when an insider is appointed in a gubernatorial based appointment system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. However, a strategic change is more likely to occur when the appointment of an insider occurs earlier in the gubernatorial term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Insiders are more likely to initiate strategic change when appointed by a board or other process outside of the gubernatorial term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The environmental perceptions of the successor are important because they serve to shape the content of strategic processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STUDIES OF PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVE TRANSITION

The emerging interest in public sector succession processes has resulted in a loose collection of interesting findings. The fragmentary evidence has not been considered from a theory-building initiative and lacks generalizability. Large-scale comparative studies have not been undertaken (Wechsler and Rainey 1988). Some of the topics that have surfaced as being relevant to the public sector executive succession process are transition processes at the agency level in the federal government, and the study of gubernatorial transitions from gubernatorial and political perspectives (Gaertner et al. 1983; Beyle 1989). As stated in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, these studies are reviewed in relationship to the theoretical framework for this study, public sector executive succession at the state level.

While there is limited research focused at the level of state agency executive, Olshfski's (1987, 1989, 1990) studies of state agency executives in Tennessee, New Jersey, and New York are notable exceptions, important to efforts to develop cross-state and cross-jurisdictional analyses. Olshfski utilizes critical incident and reputational analysis methodologies, in which executives are selected for study on the basis of their reputations as strong performers. Interviews are conducted in a non-structured manner around policy success stories selected by the executives. Olshfski's research methodology is consistent with that used in this research—she looks for patterns in "what the executives saw, how they chose to respond, and how they felt about their responses" (1989:188). Her findings are consistent with those of this study concerning the transition process.
Olshfski (1989) finds that the public executive lacks at least one of the following at the time of appointment: knowledge of departmental operations, the organization's substantive area, or state partisan politics. She later (1990) distinguishes these knowledge areas as three types of politics--policy/issue, political astuteness, electoral politics--all necessary skills for successful executives. Olshfski (1989:195) relates that executive learning is hampered by the short tenure of the executives, and emphasizes the limited time "to learn the ropes and make an impact." Yet, Olshfski finds that executives had, surprisingly, longer term policy orientations, which might relate to the selection procedure (high performing executives) for her sample.

A specific comparison of Olshfski's (1989) findings with the conclusions of this study is presented in the final chapter of this dissertation as a means of demonstrating the potential for theory building in this area. Olshfski's work is focused more broadly on the experiences of executives. She calls for more study to determine what executive actions help to effectively "gain control of the bureaucracy" (1989:213). Improvements in transition process management would contribute to this goal.

Wechsler and Rainey (1988) produced a framework for the study of transition events that emphasizes the constructions of the mind of the successor regarding the subjective antecedents of the successor's commitment to action and the theory of the situation and the outcome subjective measures of the successor's sensemaking and attitudes toward the past and present. In the objective domain, antecedents identified include the circumstances of regime change, political pressure, performance gap, and personal factors. "Objective" transition outcomes identified include turnover in top management team,
reorganization, political and managerial strategies, and stakeholder relations. This framework appears in Figure 3. This framework is consistent with the present research.


Figure 3
A Framework for the Study of Transition Events
Other public sector studies are presented in Table 5, which is organized by state and federal focus. Also included are selected studies of college presidents and local government. Continued tracking and maintenance of such studies assist in the effort to move these investigations beyond a "loose collection of interesting findings" and facilitate the development of theory.

For example, it can be determined by a review of this table that the problem of predecessor and successor contact occurs at both the state and federal level (Beyle 1985, 1989; Covington 1985). Also, tenure rates at the federal level do not appear to be substantially different than tenure figures of state cabinet officials (Brauer 1987; Haas and Wright 1989; Olshfski 1990). Worth considering is the timing of budget preparation. The budget is an issue soon after electorally based transitions at both the state and federal levels (Beyle 1985; Haider 1981). Heclo (1987, 1988) comments that the trend of appointing federal-level assistant secretaries as political appointments rather than on professional qualifications is another problem, an issue also identified by some state directors in this study.

Sherwood and Chackerin (1988) state that few state executives experience more than one transition; but Beyle (1985) and Hamilton and Biggart (1984) indicate that succession experience contributes to a smooth transition at the gubernatorial level. As Olshfski (1989:190) describes, "Management skills are learned by active participation in management situations, or by vicariously experiencing a management problem." At the present time, state agency executive transitions, although occurring widely and with repetitive occurrences, are presently a lesson learned individually and personally.
### Table 5

Executive Transition-Related Studies in the Public Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHOR(S) AND DATE OF PUBLICATION</th>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>METHODS</th>
<th>SELECTED FINDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Government (General)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abney &amp; Lauth 1983, 1986</td>
<td>1119 state department heads, 50 states: summer 1977 (70% response)</td>
<td>Administrative role perspectives: state government administrative duties</td>
<td>Mail questionnaire</td>
<td>Over 1/2 viewed management rather than external relations the most important job task; moderated by activity of external actors. Ohio not archetypical: greater view towards importance of external actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abney 1988</td>
<td>State gubernatorial cabinet-level officials and legislators, 1987</td>
<td>Comparison of lobbying of private sector groups to government agencies</td>
<td>In-depth interviews with officials of 13 major state agencies and relevant legislators</td>
<td>Lobbying relationships differ among state agencies by relationship to governor, type of appointment source, veto power, background of executive (previous legislative experience, relationship to clientele groups, and personal style of executive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyle 1985, 1989</td>
<td>1982-83, 1983-84 gubernatorial transitions: 16 of 17 transitions in 1982-83; 12 of 12 transitions in 1983-84</td>
<td>Text of National Governor's Association (NGA) transition guidelines</td>
<td>Descriptive studies: State by state analysis, interviews, documents as data sources</td>
<td>8 factors affect gubernatorial level transitions: 1) gubernatorial style 2) fiscal, economic conditions 3) political culture 4) presence/absence of statutory transition procedures 5) interest group ties, strength 6) inaugural date 7) participants' previous experience with transitions 8) predecessor's disposition towards transition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition to Improve Management in State Government 1986</td>
<td>Gubernatorial transition processes</td>
<td>Organization of governor's office</td>
<td>Recommendations to Governor and Governor's staff for transition period</td>
<td>Recommends initial selection criteria for administrative positions in agencies include geographic distribution, political and public accessibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR(S) AND DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>SUBJECTS</td>
<td>VARIABLES</td>
<td>METHODS</td>
<td>SELECTED FINDINGS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check 1987</td>
<td>1982 gubernatorial incumbents; Governor and top staff in 50 states: 1996 state government agency heads</td>
<td>Gubernatorial control of agencies</td>
<td>National Governor's Association Survey</td>
<td>Variation exists in procedural involvement of governors in selection of agency heads. Innovations occurred when governors were procedurally involved in policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosler 1988</td>
<td>Role of individual public servant</td>
<td>Role of individual public servant, relationship to action theory</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Calls for comparative studies of state bureaucracies. Administrators view selves as part of &quot;whole&quot; government; are not purely self-regarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilmore 1988</td>
<td>Transitions in public and non-profit organizations</td>
<td>Action research approach to learning and empowering subordinates; contingency approach to the selection of leaders</td>
<td>Generic approach to transition studies, including government, public, limited private case studies from consulting engagements</td>
<td>Strategy implementation is not complete due to high turnover rates. Complexity, change and importance of external stakeholders is addressed, but not in the context of public/private differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haas &amp; Wright 1989</td>
<td>State agency heads, 50 states: 1959-1985</td>
<td>Policy type (redistributive, regulatory, distributive); Age of agency; State agency director-level succession events</td>
<td>Analysis of secondary data: Book of States, administrative officers of states classified by function.</td>
<td>Turnover rates have increased over past 25 years: 57.7% retention in 2-year period, 42.3% turnover. Turnover rate higher over longer period. Differences attributed to freedom of appointment power of governor, tendency towards single term governors, individual dissatisfaction with pay scales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR(S) AND DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>SUBJECTS</td>
<td>VARIABLES</td>
<td>METHODS</td>
<td>SELECTED FINDINGS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Biggart 1984</td>
<td>State gubernatorial administrations in California (Reagan, 1962-1975; Brown, 1975-1983)</td>
<td>Comparison of gubernatorial styles and transition processes</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>Initial cabinet appointments reflect substantive background, administrative expertise, interest group approval, gender, ethnic group, political factions, philosophic compatibility with governor, and political registration Cabinet turnover attributed to frustration, lack of management background, not understanding of government, not understanding the role of the legislature, not understanding how to work with people Publicly stated reasons for resignation: health, family, business commitments, initial commitment to governor fulfilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olshfski 1989</td>
<td>Effective state agency executives in Tennessee and New Jersey, 1985 and 1987</td>
<td>Leadership environment</td>
<td>Reputational analysis to select effective appointed department heads; interviews: case study</td>
<td>Public executive will lack at least one of the following at the time of appointment: knowledge of departmental operations, the organization’s substantive area, or state partisan politics Executive learning hampered by short tenure Leadership environment characterized by broad discretion, partisan issue politics, and partisan electoral politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR(S) AND DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>SUBJECTS</td>
<td>VARIABLES</td>
<td>METHODS</td>
<td>SELECTED FINDINGS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olib unfit 1990</td>
<td>State agency executives in Tennessee (1985 and 1987) and New York (1988 and 1989)</td>
<td>Appointed executives’ operations in a partisan political setting</td>
<td>Reputational analysis to select effective appointed department heads; interviews: case study</td>
<td>Three operational definitions of politics in executives’ stories: - Political autocracies - Issue politics - Electoral politics Leadership behaviors or issue politics are reinforced by the leadership behaviors of electoral politics, vice versa. Both sets are needed for executives to act as an effective leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olib unfit 1987</td>
<td>Effective state agency executives in Tennessee and New Jersey, 1985 and 1987</td>
<td>Nature job of public sector chief executive</td>
<td>Reputational analysis to select effective appointed department heads; interviews: case study</td>
<td>Characterized by short time frame Agency agendas reflect the influence of the governor, legislature, interest groups, will of the department executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers &amp; Halachmi 1988</td>
<td>1970-86: 5 Gubernatorial transitions in Tennessee</td>
<td>Constitutional provisions for succession Complexity, one party character Prior experience, personal relationships, priorities for transition</td>
<td>Interview and archival data</td>
<td>Prior experience a factor in establishing relationships—more informed, better issue understanding Knowledge of relevant constraints Personal relationship: all factors lead to improved transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherwood &amp; Chackmen 1988</td>
<td>1987 Florida gubernatorial transitions</td>
<td>Personality of governor Favorable political climate</td>
<td>Archival data, observation</td>
<td>Few experience more than one transition Turnover higher in governor appointed agencies Percent change varied by department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wechsler &amp; Rainey 1988</td>
<td>Administrative transitions</td>
<td>Framework for the study of executive transition</td>
<td>Essay and theoretical model of succession proposed</td>
<td>Call for establishment of succession as major subtopic in public administration Classifies types of succession literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s) and date of publication</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Selected Findings</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert 1988</td>
<td>Top administrative officials, 50 states, July 1985-March 1986</td>
<td>1) Government levels held by political appointees 2) # civil service exempt policy making positions 3) state government exempt officials/policy change since 1970 4) carryovers across administrative transitions 5) working relationships between political appointees, career-oriented professionals</td>
<td>Telephone survey of personnel departments and directors of classification in 50 states</td>
<td>Ohio has third line level staff and political appointees, making the # of civil service exempt policy making and managerial positions very extensive relative to other states. Across all states, the most common practice is for politically appointed agency heads to turn over following gubernatorial transition. Demonstrates structural change following transition occurs through hiring more people rather than firing incumbents. &quot;No time is more uncertain and traumatic in administrative transitions.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigelman &amp; Domestrius 1988</td>
<td>General elections immediately prior to 1977</td>
<td>Political resources, % vote won, % legislative seats in governor's party Governor's influence over agencies</td>
<td>Regression approach using Beyle's (1983) combined index of formal powers of governor (tenure potential, appointive, budgetary, organizational and veto powers as of 1980</td>
<td>Appointment power is a crucial source of influence over agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentine 1987</td>
<td>14,000 employee department of Health and Mental Hygiene, state of Maryland</td>
<td>Personnel changes following executive succession event</td>
<td>Newspaper report</td>
<td>Report of sweeping internal organization following agency leadership change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weinberg 1977</td>
<td>State agency management from gubernatorial focus, Mass. Sargent administration</td>
<td>Governor's interest in agency; agency conditions</td>
<td>Interviews, case studies</td>
<td>Political interests dominate agency strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR(S) AND DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>SUBJECTS</td>
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<td>METHODS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Witt 1988</td>
<td>State cabinet level officials</td>
<td>1988 selected cabinet salaries by state; 1987-1988 elected representative salaries by state</td>
<td>Interviews with officials on reasons for departure; analysis of secondary statistical data</td>
<td>Important &quot;voluntary&quot; reason for departure from cabinet is insufficient salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 1984</td>
<td>Experience in state of Michigan transition, NGA transition assistant: constitutionally based gubernatorial transitions</td>
<td>Campaign situation</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Harder for smooth transition after rough campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonafede 1987b</td>
<td>See Mackenzie 1987</td>
<td>Reasons appointees leave or don't accept job</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
<td>Aspects of jobs appointees found frustrating include slow pace of government, stakeholders, media involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Job not accepted for the following reasons: financial restrictions and reporting requirements, confirmation pounding, disclosure, post-employment restrictions; grey area of ethics activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonafede 1987a</td>
<td>Selection process for presidential cabinet</td>
<td>Selection process for presidential cabinet: between party transitions lack of cooperation; variables include political climate, age of administration</td>
<td>Historical essay: interview data</td>
<td>Role of stakeholders in appointments process (organized special interest, party leaders, prominent friends, supporters, foreign governments)</td>
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<td>Cabinet as &quot;balancing act&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deering 1987</td>
<td>see Mackenzie 1987a</td>
<td>Senate involvement in confirmation process</td>
<td>Senate records and interview data</td>
<td>Senate involvement is increasing, a problematic trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR(S) AND DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>SUBJECTS</td>
<td>VARIABLES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brauer 1987</td>
<td>see Mackenzie 1987a</td>
<td>Rates of turnover Reasons for departure</td>
<td>Cabinet secretaries</td>
<td>2.2 years average tenure, non-regulatory agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aspects of job most frustrating and difficult</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7 year average tenure</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Averages understate turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covington 1985</td>
<td>46 past and present staff of 3 federal agencies</td>
<td>Factors affecting organizational memory</td>
<td>Snowball sample-referrals from authorities at CEQ, OMB, NSC staff; interview data</td>
<td>Normative content of organizational memory includes prescriptive and descriptive actions</td>
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<td>Substantive content includes procedural and programmatic information</td>
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<td>Successor needs to learn from predecessor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6 factors affecting organizational memory include staff turnover, record keeping regulations, veteran, newcomer staff relations, goal compatibility, job routine, and recruitment control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durant 1990</td>
<td>Focus on Carter and Reagan presidencies</td>
<td>Framework for anticipating, understanding and addressing appointee/careerist relations</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Typology includes mutual accommodation, manipulated agreement, adversarial bargaining and disintegrative conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher 1987</td>
<td>see Mackenzie 1987a</td>
<td>Prior experience, tenure; turnover rates by demographics</td>
<td>Brookings 1983-84 data. Secondary analysis of existing data base.</td>
<td>Cites Heclo: rate undersecretaries work with secretary is less than 2 years</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Prior experience affects importance of tenure variable in effectiveness</td>
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<td>When incumbent defeated, has implications for successor and succession planning (less done)</td>
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<td>Budget problems to forefront</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUTHOR(S) AND DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>SUBJECTS</td>
<td>VARIABLES</td>
<td>METHODS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heclo 1987, 1988</td>
<td>History and future of presidential cabinet appointments process</td>
<td>Federal appointments process</td>
<td>Essay with roots in public administration</td>
<td>Negatives to appointments process includes biased recruiting pool, short-term thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Can no longer decry lack of studies, but their non-evaluative nature</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assistant secretaries often appointed without regard to qualifications: &quot;legacy for the 1990's&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heymann 1987</td>
<td>11 federal agencies and executives Work experiences during Johnson administration</td>
<td>Modifies concept of management strategy as set forth in Andrew's concept of corporate strategy Public-private differences recognized</td>
<td>Case studies of leadership change in federal agencies</td>
<td>Emphasizes role of media in decision to stay on or leave</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Recognize opportunities and dangers in taking charge</td>
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<td>Importance of initial appointment quality</td>
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<td>Recognition that strategy at top is not articulated in ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingraham 1988</td>
<td>January-June 1987; 40 HUD, DOT officials</td>
<td>Federal cabinet agency transitions: Specific program outcomes, hierarchical political control</td>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>Length of stay of directors, involvement of staff, mutuality over hierarchical control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce 1990</td>
<td>1985 NAPA survey of presidentially appointed political executives</td>
<td>Factors affecting employment tenure of federal political executives</td>
<td>Secondary analyses of survey data, descriptive statistics and multiple regression</td>
<td>Public/private salary differences influence tenure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Longer tenure is related to increased confidence in career officials</td>
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<td>Political appointees working longer hours had shorter tenure</td>
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<td>Executives appointed by Presidents lacking in commitment to traditional government service tend toward relatively rapid exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR(S) AND DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>SUBJECTS</td>
<td>VARIABLES</td>
<td>METHODS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light 1987</td>
<td>See Mackenzie 1987a</td>
<td>Appointee’s views of careerists; Role of careerist vs appointees (listing); Skills of appointees (listing);</td>
<td>See Mackenzie 1987</td>
<td>Average tenure is 18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Timing is important relative to budget cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackenzie (ed) 1987a</td>
<td>1964-84 and 1982 interviews; 1984-85 interviews with those serving as assistant secretary and higher, also comparable offices in independent regulatory commissions</td>
<td>Independent scholars’ views of appointments process</td>
<td>1985 mail questionnaire (n = 536 responses) Interviews with Johnson to Reagan officials Biographical files NAPA, other archival survey data. Includes 12-page questionnaire with recruiters and appointees. Taped and transcribed</td>
<td>Reasons for “in-and outer” system Descriptive information on consequences of system Tenure rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackenzie 1987b</td>
<td>Ethics required for appointees 1964-84</td>
<td>Ethics compliance</td>
<td>Essay with statistics on ethics requirements compliance</td>
<td>Importance of ethical actions by appointees; personal moral fiber. (Uses example of cabinet member picking up child at school) Has resulted in reliance on legalisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfiffner 1988</td>
<td>Federal cabinet executives</td>
<td>Transition type Politics-administration link</td>
<td>Presidential Appointees project, National Academy of Public Administration; Experience at OPM 1980-81; Interviews of 50 officials, Truman to Reagan administrations</td>
<td>Average tenure about 2 years Pattern of trust evolves over 2-year period Transition viewed as process, not event Provides list of recommendations and reform proposals for presidential transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR(S) AND DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>SUBJECTS</td>
<td>VARIABLES</td>
<td>METHODS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pfiffner 1987a</td>
<td>Carter and Reagan appointments processes</td>
<td>Party turnover-cooperation strained Retreads, holdovers</td>
<td>See Mackenzie 1987a</td>
<td>Recommends master list of potential appointees and vacancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfiffner 1987b</td>
<td>Orienting new presidential appointees</td>
<td>Public-private differences</td>
<td>See Mackenzie 1987</td>
<td>60% appointees not in same line of work immediately prior to appointment; 20% have no experience 40% transfer from other federal jobs; 60% in other occupations Public-private differences include external environment importance, fishbowl characteristic, coordination with White House staff, internal environment, and policy substance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Selected Studies of College President Transitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author &amp; Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Description of selection processes and outcomes; selection process as symbolic event</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birnbaum 1988</td>
<td>College president search processes</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>300-400 college presidents replaced per year Public/private difference includes not hand in selection of successor External candidates are more likely to be chosen Search process helps the organization make sense; symbolic event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh &amp; Slusser 1986</td>
<td>1979-1981 deans of major state universities identified through Chronicle of Higher education (administrative succession of college deans)</td>
<td>Questionnaire to all faculty members (n=209); 42 faculty members interviewed, midwest universities</td>
<td>Questionnaire to all faculty members (n=209); 42 faculty members interviewed, midwest universities</td>
<td>Interdependence affects the level of political activity, through development of consensus Relationship of level of political activity to selection of outsiders Consensus building, change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Returning to Table 5, survey data such as Sigelman and Dometrius's (1988) study on the relative degree of power of the three branches of government, and Roberts (1988) on levels of appointed positions provide an external political context for the study of state agencies. For example, Abney and Lauth (1986) find Ohio state agency executives to place stronger emphasis on external stakeholders than executives in other states. Additional studies listed in this table will be referenced as related issues arise throughout the data analysis.

Studies remaining for detailed consideration in this opening review pertain mostly to state gubernatorial transitions, where the focus has been on the functioning of the governor's office. One area where there are clear and consistent patterns across the
states is selection criteria for state agency executives (Beyle 1985, 1989; Hamilton and Biggart 1984; Olshfski 1987). This literature is reviewed below in the context of the preliminary sampling framework used in this study.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PUBLIC SECTOR SUCCESSION EVENTS**

**A Taxonomy of Succession Events**

Following a preliminary review of state government succession incidences, a taxonomy of succession events was proposed by Orosz and Card (1988). This typology is presented in Figure 4. The abductively formed typology reflects anticipated differences in succession event and transition circumstances and forms the preliminary basis for sampling and elaboration of transition process distinctions. Public sector succession types identified in the typology are constitutional, midterm, including voluntary and involuntary incidences, and end-of-term placeholders. These succession types frame this study of public sector executive succession at the state level, and are described in more detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Type of Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of Constitutional Term</td>
<td>Regime Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle of Term, Extension to Multiple Terms</td>
<td>“Fatalities” Voluntary and Involuntary Departures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Term</td>
<td>Placeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4

Taxonomy of State Level Public Sector Transitions
Constitutional terms of office

The first succession type reflects gubernatorial constitutional terms of office, including continuing terms of office and regime changes, when multiple succession events occur. Variations have been documented across the states, as well as in the electoral circumstances (change in political party, competitiveness of campaign, etc.) in the willingness of incoming administrations to consider keeping holdover agency directors into a new gubernatorial regime (Beyle 1985, 1989; Rogers and Halachmi 1988).

Several circumstances of constitutionally based gubernatorial changes are possible (Beyle 1985, 1989; Rogers and Halachmi 1988). The first are changes of an intra-party nature with subtypes characterized by friendly or hostile relations. A friendly change would likely occur when the incumbent is unable to run for an additional term of office due to state constitutional limitations on the number of terms, or the governor voluntarily elects not to seek another term, and the ideological difference between the incumbent and incoming administration is limited. A hostile gubernatorial transition might occur when the incumbent governor has been defeated by the governor-elect in the primary, where there is residue from characterization of the extant administration as a campaign issue, other electoral circumstances, or when there are strong ideological or political faction differences between the incumbent and the governor-elect.

Interparty constitutional changes at the gubernatorial level can likewise be between individuals of an ideologically convergent or divergent nature. Once again the transition may be characterized by cooperativeness or hostility. Factors such as the existence of a lame duck governor by choice or constitutional ineligibility, the tone of the campaign,
the overall economic and political climate, political ambitions of the governor and governor-elect, as well as the personal and political relationships of the two actors come in to play in determining if the overall tone of the transition at the gubernatorial level is friendly or hostile (Beyle 1985).

A third and final type of constitutionally focused gubernatorial transition is the extension of the gubernatorial term through the reelection of the incumbent. Such a situation presents the opportunity for a realignment of the administrative agencies on the part of the governor and for a reaffirmation of the agency executive’s commitment to serve in the administration (Rogers and Halachmi 1988). Factors considered at this time include an assessment of agency performance, cabinet member integrity, importance of the agency to gubernatorial interests and priorities and interest and direction of the second-term governor’s "legacy," gubernatorial commitment to directors as individuals and professionals, original commitment on the part of the incumbent director, policy and administrative interests of existing cabinet members, and the overall composition of cabinet (Hamilton and Biggart 1984). Cabinet member "shuffling" is apt to occur at this time. The second-term cabinet member search process would likely be more similar to the midterm circumstances than the initial cabinet selection.6

In the case of a constitutionally based succession event, the overall general gubernatorial circumstance is of greater consideration than in the midterm or placeholder events occurring throughout the administration. While differences between agencies in the nature of the succession events and transition processes are anticipated due to variations in organizational and personnel circumstances, the election-based
gubernatorial change is an important variable impacting succession events at the agency level, as is the availability of and the predecessor's disposition to facilitate the transition within a given agency (Beyle 1985, 1989; Wechsler and Rainey 1988). General factors influencing constitutional-in-origin succession events include gubernatorial styles, economic climate of the state, political culture, participant succession event experience, presence or absence of statutory transition procedures, interest group ties, degree the previous administration was portrayed as a campaign issue, personal relationships, policy agenda, and party alignments (Beyle 1985; Rogers and Halachmi 1988).

Examples of constitutionally oriented gubernatorial transition circumstances are provided in Beyle's (1985, 1989) volumes on the 1982-83 and 1984-85 gubernatorial transitions in multiple states. Specific factors influencing constitutional-in-origin succession events are listed in Table 6.

Table 6
Factors Influencing Constitutional-In-Origin (Gubernatorial-Related) Succession Events

| Gubernatorial Styles | Fiscal, Economic Climate of State | Political Culture | Participant Experience (Second or More Succession Experience) | Presence/Absence of Statutory Transition Procedures | Interest Group Ties, Magnitude | Degree Previous Administration Portrayed as a Campaign Issue | Inaugural Date | Personal Relations | Policy Agenda | Party Alignments |

Source: Beyle 1985; Rogers and Halachmi 1988
During gubernatorial changeovers following an election, there is frequently an appointments section or task force responsible to the governor’s office with the charge to select qualified individuals for each cabinet position. Initial selection criteria concerning candidate professionalism include related substantive or technical background, a proven track record where possible, compatibility with the governor’s philosophy and management style, interest group approval, legislative influence, and constituency links. Campaign workers and those with personal loyalty to the governor-elect constitute those in a set with personal and political ties to the new regime (termed "political" in Table 7, below). Across the cabinet, representational balances are attempted between sexes, geographical distribution, ethnic groups, and political factions (termed "representational" in Table 7). Definitions of balance vary across administrations and states, reflective of political philosophies and state histories, as does the governor’s role in the appointments and selection process (Beyle 1985, 1989). Also included in the initial cabinet balance are campaign workers and defeated candidates (Hamilton and Biggart 1984; Beyle 1985, 1989). Recommendations on initial appointments procedures are available from the National Governor’s Association (Beyle 1985) and other organizations such as the Coalition for the Improvement of State and Local Government (1986).

Characteristics of the initial gubernatorial cabinet appointees during regime changes and within regimes (cross-cabinet balance) are simplified in this framework as the polythetic (non-mutually exclusive) categories of political (personal and political loyalty and emotional commitment to the governor), professional competence (general administrative ability and expertise specific to agency mission), and representational
balances (as described above) across the gubernatorial cabinet. The polythetic nature of these categories is an important consideration; indeed the "ideal" candidate may well have attributes in all three of these categories. The cabinet selection criteria also apply to mid- and late-gubernatorial-term successors and are described in more detail below (see predecessor and successor backgrounds below).

Table 7
Cabinet Appointee Conditions
Ohio Succession Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Gubernatorial Circumstance of Succession Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Constitutional Cross Terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of Incumbent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Same Party    New Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Same    Same</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Within Regime Changes During Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early    Middle    Late</td>
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<tr>
<td>(temporal dimension)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involuntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early    Middle    Late</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>II. Cross-Cabinet Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Expertise    Substantive Expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Representational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituent    Minority    Female    Geographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor Loyalist    Political Loyalist    Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>III. Agency Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Insider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted from within    From another state agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Returnee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent Experience    Distant Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Outsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public    Private    Out-of-state (public/private)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Midterm succession events, the "fatalities"

A second succession type occurs throughout the gubernatorial term of office: these events are described by Hamilton and Biggart (1984) as "fatalities." Two types are possible: first, the voluntary resignation in which individual time and needs are no longer viewed by the role incumbent to mesh with organizational needs. Examples include retirement, ill health, family concerns, personal stresses, job opportunities, personal political ambitions, perceived accomplishment of personal or policy objectives, or completion of an initial commitment to the governor from the view of the appointee.

The second midterm succession type is involuntary removal. It is hypothesized that the actions leading to midterm involuntary succession events relate to a failure or inability on the part of the agency director to act appropriately in the public environment, one public sector equivalent to "poor performance." Involuntary removal may result from triggering events such as public crises, errors of ethical judgement, corruption internal or external to the organization, management incompetencies, philosophical disagreements with the governor or other appointing authorities, political errors, or dissatisfaction of internal or external stakeholders on the basis of policy focus or service level expectations. The perceived antecedent conditions relate to succession events and transition processes through the interpretations of relevant actors.

A Preliminary Model: As Hamilton and Biggart (1984) observe, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary executive departures is often unclear, as appointees are permitted graceful exits, and innocuous press releases are issued announcing cabinet
A Preliminary Model: As Hamilton and Biggart (1984) observe, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary executive departures is often unclear, as appointees are permitted graceful exits, and innocuous press releases are issued announcing cabinet director departures. Nevertheless, excepting severe illness and death, of the midterm succession events, the remaining involuntary departures potentially relate to a perceived failure or inability on the part of the agency director to act in an appropriate fashion in the public environment (Gilmore 1988).

Building on the competing values framework of Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) and the agenda building model of Cobb and Elder (1972), Orosz and Card (1988) identify a preliminary model of "the playing field" or the work environment for the state agency director (see Figure 5, below). The playing field is reflective of the public sector attributes as described by Ring and Perry (1985), as well as the external legitimation from non-government participants (Wamsley and Zald 1973).

![Figure 5](image)

Antecedents of Succession Events in the Public Sector
of a corrupt act (and public and media awareness of the event), the agency and agency
director's performance requirements are related to the antecedent conditions of the
involuntary succession event.

With heuristic observations, it is possible to map activities in each of the four
quadrants which contribute to the perceived demise of incumbent leaders. These demise
attributions are useful to the extent that when patterns are identifiable, general
propositions for "appropriate public sector leader behavior and public sector leadership
proverbs" can be initiated and examined against future behaviors.

Such consideration promotes the identification of conditions under which a given type
of successor best succeeds, produces higher performance, or minimizes poor perfor-
mance. The conditions could be examined and hypotheses for executive appointment
contingencies constructed. Much like the generic literature on the selection of insiders
or outsiders, the study of succession event antecedent conditions has implications for the
selection process for public sector leaders (Gilmore 1988). A multiple appointing
authority such as a board or commission could be substituted in quadrant 1 of Figure 5.9

Specifically, it is thought that the demise attributions of the successor about the
predecessor will influence the actions of the leader. As noted by Birnbaum (1988) with
the case of university presidents, the selection process influences the successor's view
of the situation, leading him or her to attend to the problem area or quadrant first.
"Predecessor demise" becomes a key variable in what has been termed by Wechsler and
Rainey (1988) the successor's "theory of the situation," which influences leader actions
at the level of the organization. Table 8 lists relational hypotheses concerning
involuntary succession events in the condition of a single appointing authority (governor).

While this study does not test these propositions, they logically follow from the extant studies and remain for further study.\textsuperscript{10}

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Hypotheses</th>
<th>“Involuntary” Public (State Level) Sector Succession Events(1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sources of involuntary succession events departures include: death, ill health, failure/ inability to act appropriately in public sector environment, inadequate response or preparation for crises, morale problems, and disagreements with the governor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The following areas receive more attention than in cases of voluntary succession events: employee morale, areas in which ethical or corruption issue occurred.</td>
<td>7. The more professional the organizational tradition, the greater likelihood disagreements concerning policy and politics are leaked to the media and the greater the likelihood of a succession event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The greater the conflict between the incumbent and the governor concerning the agency agenda, the greater the likelihood of an involuntary succession event.</td>
<td>8. A past history of tolerating political/unprofessional acts and normative systems interact with the probability of initiation of succession event from within an organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The greater the perceived performance gap by internal and external stakeholders, the greater the likelihood of an involuntary succession event.</td>
<td>9. Participation in the selection process by stakeholders deters the initiation of an involuntary succession incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Factors concerning the initial appointment type, political or professional; representation; constituency support, and personal ties with the governor will influence the length of time before the leader becomes a scapegoat for organizational events and, in the case of corruption, the length of time before the governor takes action.</td>
<td>10. Service levels of the previous incumbent establish a baseline performance against which the incumbent is judged; if expectations are not met, the greater likelihood of a succession event, if the stakeholders are in the governor’s relevant attention group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The greater the extent of a perceived incompatibility of director’s style with organizational ethos by key stakeholders, the greater the likelihood of an involuntary succession event.</td>
<td>11. The extent to which media perceive and highlight negative attribution to incumbent performance and organization, the greater the frequency of involuntary succession events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The greater the extent 1-5 above is true, the greater the speed and likelihood of an involuntary succession event.</td>
<td>12. Violation of core public service values produce a more rapid rate of expansion of the succession issue by the media, and the more likely the governor will attend to succession as an issue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Developed from Orosz and Card (1988)
Placeholding

The final succession type, placeholding, occurs late in the governor's constitutional term. The appointment and promotion of agency insiders is expected here, as the lame duck governor and the political parties, with an eye toward future regimes, use this succession occurrence type as an opportunity to provide leadership experience to loyal young lieutenants (Hamilton and Biggart 1984). Placeholding appointments are one of the few opportunities for executive leadership development often perceived to be afforded in the public sector.

Predecessor and Successor Backgrounds—Agency Experience

Returning to Table 7 (Section III), the conceptualization of predecessor and successor backgrounds in the public sector used in this study is an expansion of the private sector succession study insider/outsider in origin distinction, which does not adequately describe the range of relevant experiences in the public sector (Simmel 1959; Brady and Helmich 1984). Given the initial simplification of leader backgrounds as political, representational, and professional, this second set of characterizations is embedded in each type. First, a successor can be an insider to the current political regime and an insider to the organization. Second, a successor could be an insider to the regime and an outsider to the organization. Third, a candidate could be a returnee to the organization, perhaps having worked within the agency in an earlier administration. Finally, a candidate might be an outsider, not being a part of the current regime nor having previous experience in the agency.

Following the traditional line of executive succession research on insiders and
outsiders, the identification of conditions under which a given type of successor might best succeed (have higher performance) could be proposed.

**Variables Influencing State Agency Transitions**

Beyond the above distinctions of successor background, consideration should also be given in the research investigation to organizational and individual characteristics, events and processes that potentially affect the transition process. Listings of the potential factors, garnered from previous research efforts in public and private management, are presented in Table 9, below.

Individual events and processes might include successor background characteristics such as length and type of previous administrative service, prior occupation, family considerations, as well as the initial appointment commitment (Fisher 1987).

Knowledge of successor background characteristics is one key to understanding the subjective views of a successor. This is consistent with Olshfski's (1989:205) comment that problem definition for the agency is "in the eye of the beholder"—directors viewed the agencies very differently. Such distinctions are also important due to the influence of backgrounds and experiences in the role interpretations and choices of leaders (Das 1986; Axelrod 1976; Miller, Toulouse and Belanger 1985) as well as the expectations of career employees and political appointees, and the successor's interpretations of those who are considered internal and external in dealing with the newly appointed executive. Knowledge of successor background characteristics is important in understanding the subjective views of a successor (Wechsler and Rainey 1988).
Table 9

Listing of Potential Factors Influencing Transition Interpretations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual (See Fisher 1987, Hamilton and Biggart 1984)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic and other background characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length and type of previous administrative experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial appointment commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political view/activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in personal life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Subjective Values and Orientations (See Das 1986; Axelrod 1876)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future orientations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal orientations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data selection, analytic schema, judgment processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiosyncratic beliefs and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance for ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value orientations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jungian types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational (See Ingraham 1988; Rogers and Halachmi 1988; Sherwood and Chackerin 1988; Beyle 1985, 1989)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political life cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency life cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical relationships with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demise of immediate predecessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance for politicalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency ethos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive development commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral mandate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General (See Beyle 1985, 1989; Hamilton and Biggart 1984)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic conditions, national and state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance of legislative/executive control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General political climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of gubernatorial succession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizational Context Variables, including agency life cycles (e.g. revolving door agencies with high succession rates), historical relationships with stakeholders, agency policy type, organizational culture, and ethos such as tolerance to agency politicalization potentially play a factor in a particular succession circumstance. Organizational variables considered of importance to the study of state agency executive transitions include agency life cycles (e.g. revolving door agencies with high succession rates), historical relationships with stakeholders, demise of the predecessor, organizational culture, and ethos such as tolerance to agency politicalization.

General context variables such as the economic and political cycles, gubernatorial election cycles, gubernatorial cabinet balance, appointing-authority-initiated executive search process and related conceptions of new leader qualities and/or criteria for a successor search, would each be considered in the study of executive transitions (Hamilton and Biggart 1984; Beyle 1985, 1989; Fisher 1987).

These variables, identified in extant studies of gubernatorial transitions from the perspective of the operation of the governor’s office are expected to influence the transition process at the agency level.
CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, studies have been reviewed which provide the theoretical foundation or contextual background for the study of public sector executive transitions. Four groupings of extant studies potentially relevant to research on public sector executive transitions are considered in this chapter. These areas include studies of private sector executive succession, public sector strategic management, public-private differences, and public sector gubernatorial transitions. Each area contributes in a different way to this study.

Studies of executive succession in the private sector are primarily approached from a contingency theory perspective concerning the circumstances and consequences of succession events for organizational performance (Lubatkin et al., 1986; Reiganum 1985; Puffer and Weintrop 1991). With the availability of performance measures (win-loss records for sports teams or return-on-investment for business firms), the emphasis is placed on the decision to hire insiders or outsiders and the performance consequences of the occurrence of succession events. These studies involve the use of secondary data. Little is said about the process of transition within the organization.

A second emphasis in the private sector studies of executive succession is the structure of executive development and selection systems for successors, describing types of developmental experiences required for executives (Hall 1986; Vancil 1987; Gabarro 1987). Since the public sector operates with political appointees in the position of director, parallels to the public sector for in-house grooming of executives are limited. Similarly, performance measures for public sector executives are more complex and
difficult to simplify. From the private sector studies, the propositions that 1) poor performance is a predictor of the selection of an outsider, and 2) the possibility that the appointment of an outsider results in more structural change are potentially relevant to the study of public sector executive succession events.

The differences between the public and private sectors (identified by Rainey, Backoff, and Levine 1976, Perry and Rainey 1988, and Rainey 1989) reviewed in this chapter are one reason for the apparent irrelevance of the private sector studies of executive succession events to the public sector. These include the assuredness of end-of-term, short time horizon, and involvement of external stakeholders. The implications of these and other public sector characteristics are anticipated to be seen throughout the transition process. In chapter nine, following the consideration of the data, these public-private differences are reviewed and a listing of their visibility through the transition process is presented.

Studies of public sector strategic management processes identify the role of the leader and provide a larger context for the succession event (Wechsler and Backoff 1986, 1987). One testable proposition for future studies is the impact of executive transition on initiatives of strategic change.

A group of studies concerning gubernatorial transitions contributes important background for the study of executive transitions at the agency level. The initial selection of the cabinet from a gubernatorial perspective has been studied in several states (Beyle 1985, 1989; Hamilton and Biggart 1984; Sherwood and Chackerin 1988). These studies provide a gubernatorial perspective on the desired traits of agency executives, and
the concept of a cross-cabinet balance with the aim of appeasing various stakeholder groups is presented in these studies. Additionally, the importance of the political campaign and the political environment is addressed. The focus of these studies is decidedly at the gubernatorial level—the agency executives are evaluated regarding their impact on the governor. For example, succession rates are available for executives from the perspective of cabinet-member retention. The emphasis has not been on the individual leader at the agency level in studies of state agency executives.

One set of studies regarding the state agency political executive has identified that upon arrival at the agency, executives lack information on the substance, political or policy, of the organization (Olshfski 1989, 1990). This finding potentially overlaps with the study of executive transitions in that the process of overcoming these weaknesses is an important part of the transition. Still, these studies deal with successful executives from a policy perspective and do not address the universe of cases with less successful outcomes, nor is the focus solely on the transition process. Wechsler and Rainey (1988) move the focus to the executive at a conceptual level but do not empirically address the specifics of the transition process.

Studies of federal executives have addressed the reasons for the high turnover of appointed executives from the perspective of the lack of stability in agency leadership, with an eye toward improving conditions and eventually tenure (Mackenzie 1987). The extent of overlap between federal and state executives is as yet unspecified.

The studies reviewed in this chapter guide and inform the present research effort by influencing the questions pursued, informing construction of the preliminary sampling
framework and identifying potentially relevant variables to the transition processes. While the above sets of studies inform the study of executive transitions, there have been limited empirical studies of the transition processes of executives. The contribution of this study is the empirical investigation, grounded in the views of the directors, of the executive transition processes that occur on the average every two to three years in each agency. The aim of discovering patterns in the experiences of political executives of all levels of success and agency circumstances, and across all types of transitions, gubernatorial, midterm and end-of-term, offers the potential contribution of improvements to these recurring transition processes at the level of state agency.

In summary, in this chapter, private sector studies of executive succession were presented. After reviewing contextual differences in the public and private sectors, and locating the setting for executive transition in strategic management models for public agencies, the circumstances specific to gubernatorial transitions, which provide some background from the perspective of the governor's appointment of cabinet-level officials were considered. A preliminary typology was proposed of differences in successor backgrounds, leading to a theoretical sampling guide. The research areas identified in this chapter informed the preliminary sampling matrix used in this study to search for distinctions in the agency transition processes.

The linear models, contingency approaches, and statistical measures particularly used in private sector succession studies fail to enlighten the processes of transition from the view of the successor. One intent of the transition studies is to improve or develop the capacity for change in public agencies. It is hoped that the "scripts" which are used by
organizational actors during transition periods might be identified and improved (Bryson and Hostager 1988).

The underlying assumptions about the nature of the social world influence research strategy appropriateness. Paradigmatic differences and the implications for the selection of appropriate research methods are the focus of chapter three.
Chapter II Notes


2. According to Pinder and Moore (1979:100) "theories of the middle range attempt to predict and explain only a subset of all organizational phenomena. As such, each midrange theory makes different sets of assumptions about organizations, considers different parameters to be important, and leads to entirely different prescriptions for practice than other midrange theories." Pinder and Moore identify three ways to develop midrange theories: "by developing more or less specific theories to deal with each particular phenomenon of interest, by limiting the sample frame of analysis by sorting individuals, groups or organizations into categories for subsequent analysis—a strategy of forming typologies or taxonomies of organizations. A third strategy combines the first two, developing limited range theories concerned with particular phenomena in the context of limited classes of organizations." In the present case, the third strategy is pursued, the goal to understand the phenomenon of executive succession and transition in the case of state-agency level public organizations.

3. These hypotheses are abductively generated by the researcher from studies of executive succession and strategic management, as well as preliminary exposure to the strategic management patterns of the state agencies of Ohio.


5. The following typology concerns agencies for whom the statutory appointing authority rests directly with the governor (with legislative approval). Where alternative appointing procedures exist, particularly where the appointing authority rests directly with a board and indirectly with the governor through the ability to appoint the board (often found in public utility commissions and state higher education board of regents) the procedure would be delayed until the governor has appointed the board members. Selection criteria would vary as well. Where the sole appointing authority rests outside the governor e.g. state boards of education with board members as elected officials themselves, the interested reader is referred to Gilmore (1988) for a recommendation on executive selection procedures.

6. However, Rogers and Halachmi (1988) present evidence that second term cabinet realignments can represent substantial turn-around efforts on the part of the continuing governor.

7. Examples of each of these constitutionally oriented gubernatorial transition circumstances are provided in Beyle's (1985 and 1989) volumes on gubernatorial transitions.

8. Private sector studies of executive succession of a logical positivist paradigm focus on antecedents of succession events, utilizing performance records as a predictor of a forthcoming succession event. Often the performance measure is a financial indicator.
(Lubatkin et al. 1989), or in the case of sports teams, won-loss records (Gamson and Scotch 1964; Pfeffer and Davis-Blake 1986).

9. Examples of public agencies operating under the structure of separate boards include special districts, departments of education, boards of regents, public utilities commissions, industrial commission, etc.

10. While access to most of the selected agency executives was received, three interviews were not obtained; one in which the former director was serving time in a federal corrections institution, two for which contact was made and non-responses occurred, and a fourth case in which the former director was not located. Each of these directors left under circumstances of potentially involuntary departures.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INQUIRY

In this chapter the linkage between paradigmatic commitments, beliefs about the social world, and the implications of such choices for research in a social setting at a general level and specifically for suitable research designs in the study of executive succession in the state agencies of Ohio are considered. The chapter begins with a brief overview of alternative paradigms leading to the selection of a paradigm that is appropriate for the study of the social world. An examination of the methodological implications of the adoption of the interpretive paradigm, both at the general level of inquiry and at the particular level of this study of executive succession in the state agencies of Ohio, follows this introductory section. Research practices that advance conformance with appropriate standards of methodological rigor are then described.

One intent of the chapter is to delineate how the paradigmatic beliefs of the researcher and the nature of the research question necessarily impact upon the goals and structure of the research design, the practice of research, and the possible utilization of the results. This preliminary work is followed by the study design. An epilogue concerning the research process for this study appears in Appendix C.

The chapter begins with a brief summary of paradigmatic distinctions, leading to the articulation of the paradigmatic beliefs of the researcher/ethnographer.
PARADIGM CHOICES AND RESEARCH STRATEGIES

The emerging movement in the study of organizations away from linear models and simple contingency theories arises in part from the acknowledgement by scholars and practitioners that the social world in which we live is ever changing and characterized by complexity (Ackoff 1981; Chaffee 1985; Lincoln 1985). Scholars have begun to consider that simple models of management and leadership merely extend the gap between theory and practice (Smircich and Stubbard 1985; Hunt, Baliga, Dachler and Schriesheim 1988; Hummel 1991).

Paradigmatic shifts occur when a challenge is formed due to the identification of inconsistencies or anomalies between extant theories and perceived reality (Kuhn 1970). Burrell and Morgan (1979) provide a framework for the comparison of the alternative paradigms (see Figure 6). Two dimensions, regulation-radical change, and an objective-subjective dimension are used in categorizing the paradigmatic differences. The positivist and interpretivist paradigms share the same general location on the regulation-radical change continuum, indicative of the acceptance of the status quo, the existing social order, social integration and cohesion. In contrast to these paradigms, the radical humanist and structural functionalist paradigms are located on the change end of the dimension, reflective of roots in radical change, structural conflict, domination, dialectics, emancipation of the individual, and potentiality rather than actuality.
The positivist and interpretivist paradigms differ in their underlying beliefs about the nature of the social world. These underlying beliefs are characterized by Burrell and Morgan on the objective-subjective dimension on the basis of four placement criteria: the nature of the human-social world, ontological and epistemological status, and methodological approaches. The four placement criteria and their relationship to the study of organizations are summarized below.

**Nature of the Social World**

The paradigm differences concerning the nature of the social world are summarized by Clark (1985, based upon Schwartz and Ogilvy 1979:13) as listed in Table 10. The positivist view of the world is deterministic, which implies an ordered, linear world, with limited ability to change the nature of events. The positivist/functionalist paradigm does not fit the social world, which is complex, heterarchic, morphogenic, allows free choice,
is mutually created, reflective, and action based. The assumptions of the positivist paradigm are not the characteristics of the world of human or social beings, who have the capability for deliberate action taking and who act intentionally rather than behave or react (Paris and Reynolds 1983; Polkinghorn 1983).

Table 10
Profile of the Classical Organizational Paradigm on the Characteristics of the "New" Paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominant &quot;Positivist&quot; Paradigm</th>
<th>Emergent &quot;Interpretive&quot; Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From:</td>
<td>Toward:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchic</td>
<td>Heterarchic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>Holographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determinate</td>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear Causality</td>
<td>Mutual Causality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembled</td>
<td>Morphogenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Perspectival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Ontological Factors

Logical positivism embraces the realist belief that an objective, knowable reality exists, while interpretivism rests in a belief in nominal realities and structures that are constructed by humans. Therefore, to the interpretivist, there is no one certain and verifiable truth; events are open to multiple interpretations and are context specific. Information requires interpretation and facts do not exist independent of interpretations
Acceptance of the interpretive paradigm requires consideration of individual and collective meanings and understandings. The objective of interpretivist-based research in organizations is to understand and comprehend the meanings that are held by the organizational actors rather than to identify the objective truth and to predict behavior as is the case in the positivist world.

**Epistemological Factors**

As stated above the intent of interpretive research is to comprehend the meanings that are assigned by participants. This is in contrast with the positivist intent to identify the objective truth and to predict future behaviors. For the positivist, only behaviors that are observable, concrete and measurable can be considered the basis for knowledge. Naturalistic or emic inquiry is based on the science of the singular, meaning it is ideographic, rather than inquiry directed towards the generally applicable, nomothetic model as is the etic or positivist model. For the interpretivist, inquiry is based upon the development of an ideographic body of knowledge. Rather than seeking prediction and control, the interpretivist seeks patterns across situations to gain an understanding of interpreted realities. The emphasis is not prediction, but whether patterns may be found to exist within or across the actions and thoughts of individuals, or concerning characteristics of a specific organization, or across organizations.

**Methodological Approaches**

Logical positivist techniques utilize the methods of the natural sciences, are based upon a linear model, are deductive in nature, and aim to develop law-like generalizations about the world. Logical positivist science is to be replicable, and there is believed to
be a single, discoverable, verifiable truth. Methodologically, this extends to the development of generally applicable nomothetic models derived through the use of reductionist data techniques. For the interpretivist, information requires interpretation due to the existence of multiple realities; the view of the participant is required. The inquirer and the object of inquiry interact and influence each other, necessitating the use of qualitative methods and case studies which allow the consideration of context and a reliance upon the subject/actor's views (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Interpretive research methods are inductive, beginning in context-embedded data.

In review, it is advanced that the weakness of the positivist/functionalist paradigm as the sole basis for research in public organizations and leadership is its lack of correspondence with the complex and action-based social world. The interpretivist/social constructionist paradigm allows consideration of the intentionality and deliberate action-taking by humans in the process of the creation of meaning. The term ethnography, "the study of lived experiences involving description and interpretation," (Denzin 1989b:141) will be used in this chapter as a term describing research consistent with the interpretivist/social constructionist paradigm.

Movement Toward Change—Critical Action Theory

As summarized earlier, the positivist and interpretivist paradigms are located in the regulation side of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) regulation-radical change continuum, reflective of acceptance of the status quo and the existing social order.

A research approach here termed "critical action theory," combines the interpretive perspective with action learning. The practice of "critical action theory" requires a
reconsideration of the logical positivist and interpretivist paradigmatic acceptance of the existing world. Critical action theory represents a movement along Burrell and Morgan's (1979) regulation-radical change continuum.

Morgan and Ramirez (1983) summarize the essence of action learning as "resting in the idea that each and every one of us learns through action." This means that we develop our beliefs about human nature and about self through action. Morgan and Ramirez (1983:23) state that the challenge of action learning is:

> to set a basis for personal and collective self transformation in which individuals collaborating with others voluntarily act as agents of change, choosing paths of action in ways that are informed by an appreciation of the system or relations within which the action is set.

In summary, the individual engages, thorough action learning, the development of self. When this occurs, no longer is the instrumental concern of methodological individualism relevant, and mutuality can become the basis for decision-making and action taking. This is the position of the action-theorist Harmon (1981).

The critical action theory perspective requires feedback of interpretations to study participants. This activity is unique to much management research (research on the topic of organizational culture is the most frequent exception; see for example, Siehl 1985). Although the current research effort does not extend to the requirements of critical action theory, future research efforts could move in this direction.

Attention is next directed to the selection of an appropriate paradigm and the consequent implications for research from the selected paradigm.
Methodological Implications of Research Questions and Paradigm Choices

The underlying assumptions about the nature of the social world influence research strategy appropriateness. The propositions below describe the nature of public administration and the administrative world (Harmon 1981:4-5):

1. Beliefs about human nature are central to the development of theories of public administration.

2. Description and explanation in social science should be primarily concerned with action, a concept that directs attention to the everyday meanings people give to their actions.

3. Personal responsibility implies that actors are agents who must bear the moral brunt of their actions, rather than shift blame and responsibility.

4. Administrative action is explainable in terms of the relationship between situations or contexts as perceived by administrators and their predispositions both to initiate projects and to respond to claims and demands originating in their environments.

Consequently, to know and to understand the social world requires the engagement of the researcher with the setting, and a change in the process in how we come to know.

The axioms of naturalistic inquiry as stated by Guba (1985:85) serve as the framework for the proposed research based upon the interpretive paradigm:

1. There are multiple constructed realities that can be studied only holistically; inquiry into these multiple realities will inevitably diverge (each inquiry raises more questions than it answers).

2. The inquirer and the object of inquiry interact to influence one another; especially is this mutual interaction present when the "object" of inquiry is another human being.

3. The aim of inquiry is to develop an ideographic body of knowledge; this knowledge is best encapsulated in a series of working "hypotheses" that describe the individual case; differences are inherently as interesting as similarities.
4. An action may be explainable in terms of multiple interacting factors, events, and processes that shape it and are part of it; this interaction manifests itself as mutual and simultaneous shaping. Inquirers can, at best, establish plausible inferences about the pattern of such shaping in a given case.

These principles are applied to the present study of the circumstances, processes and patterns relating to executive succession events and transition processes at the level of state agency director in executive agencies of the state of Ohio. The topic is studied through the interpretations of the participants.

The general objective of the project is to better understand the executive transition processes in state agencies of Ohio. This is accomplished by looking for patterns within and between state agency transition processes. Data collection is based in what is termed the "encyclopedic approach" of ethnomethodology (Werner and Schoepfle 1987), the goal of which is the elicitation of what actions interviewees participated in, made sense of, and explained during and after succession events and transition processes.

RESEARCH STRATEGIES: THE HUMAN INSTRUMENT AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

A research process framework for naturalistic inquiry advanced by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which is consistent with the naturalistic inquiry axioms, has as its basis the acceptance of the interpretive paradigm. The framework shown as Figure 7 serves here as the focal point for the consideration of naturalistic research design decisions. Each phase of the Lincoln and Guba framework is addressed, to include an examination of the general issues and decisions concerning the process of naturalistic inquiry. Application
of these phases of naturalistic inquiry to the research on executive transition in the state agencies of Ohio follows.

The character of the research question should determine the approach taken in the development of a research design and the direction of research efforts (Burrell and Morgan 1979; Pugh 1983; Olgivy and Schwartz 1979). Therefore, the research on public sector executive succession events and transition processes should uncover the "presumptions underlying actions" during administrative transitions (Werner and Schoepfle 1987).³

Belief in the relevance of context, the importance of practitioner interpretations and the ideographic nature of knowledge accordingly implies that the appropriate research strategy involves a dialogue with the participant, with concern being placed on the development of understandings that are sensitive to context and the discovery of the meanings of participants rather than on the validation of pre-conceived theories of the researcher (Mishler 1986:110). In this emic perspective, it is the participants who possess the relevant knowledge (Fetterman 1989).

Werner and Schoepfle (1987) use the term "research consultant" rather than respondent or informant to emphasize the important and collaborative role of the actor in the emic perspective, and this terminology was adopted for this research project.⁴ To capture the importance of context and the individual interpretations of consultants, naturalistic inquiry demands reliance on a "human instrument" (Lincoln and Guba 1985:39), the subject of the next section.
Figure 7
The Flow of Naturalistic Inquiry
Lincoln and Guba (1985:188)
Human Instrument

As stated above, the importance of the understanding of context leads Lincoln and Guba (1985) to the term "human instrument" for use in gathering and interpreting data. Such a statement highlights the acknowledgement of the role of the ethnographer in the research process. Denzin (1989b:49) states "researchers work outward from their own biographies" meaning that the impact of the researcher begins with the selection of a research question, intrudes into the research design, data collection, and interpretation of results. In positivist science, standards of replication and other reliability measures serve to minimize the role of the researcher in the collection and interpretation of data. In the study of the social world, alternative practices and standards are applied to identify and monitor the role of the researcher/ethnographer. Such standards and practices pertaining to the proposed research on executive succession are described below in the section titled "Sophisticated Rigor in Qualitative Research."

Qualitative Research Methods

The gathering of emic data requires that the viewpoint of the actors be accurately portrayed with minimal--(monitored and recognized) intrusion from the ethnographer's framework. Qualitative research methods, particularly the personal interview, enable an understanding of individual participant's interpretations (Schatzman and Strauss 1979; Mishler 1986; Strauss 1987; Werner and Schoepfle 1987; Denzin 1989a). Schatzman and Strauss (1979:6) specifically relate the interview to the interpretivist approach when stating: "A dialogue with persons in their natural situation will reveal the nuances of meaning from which their perspectives and definitions are continually forged." The
selection of interviews as the primary data collection strategy presumes the interviewees have working knowledge of their conduct and experiences (Denzin 1989b; Werner and Schoepfle 1987).

Within the general guideline of qualitative research methods and the more specific suggestion of the interview as a data collection means, there is much diversity and latitude for the role of the researcher. Mishler (1986) identifies the potential roles of the naturalistic inquirer to include informant and reporter, research collaborators, and learner/actor/advocate. The traditional informant role involves giving reports about individual or general patterns of behavior after summarizing observed situations (Seidler, 1974). For the interpretivist a more participative or collaborative role for the research collaborators is preferred, rather than allowing the interviewer's definitions to dominate the interaction as in a structured interview. The unstructured interview is appropriate for this research strategy.

Building on the collaborative nature of the research effort and the emic nature of social inquiry is the important concept of negotiated outcomes between researcher, consultant, and other researchers, the topic of the next section.

**Negotiated Outcomes**

As described above, from the social constructionist's perspective, knowledge rests with the person who is taking action. Therefore, the appropriate interpretation is one which the participants of the situation acknowledge, and which makes sense and serves as the basis for current and future actions.
Louis (1985:89) describes a hierarchy of interpretive processes which reflect possible interpretation levels for naturalistic inquiry (see Figure 8). The various interpretation levels correspond to the "negotiated outcomes" identified in Lincoln and Guba's (1985) flow of naturalistic inquiry. Louis's hierarchy with modifications is consistent with the methods used in this study. The hierarchy as presented by Louis does not reflect the iterative and cyclical aspects of the naturalistic inquiry process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Critical Interpretations of the Researcher</th>
<th>Social Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Researcher's Interpretations Validated by Actor Post Situation</td>
<td>Validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Negotiated Interpretations: Between Two Researchers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Researcher's Interpretations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Negotiated Interpretations: Between Actor and Researcher in Situation</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Actor's Interpretations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Action/Experience</td>
<td>Coping/Adaptation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Louis (1985:89)

Figure 8
Levels of Interpretation in a Research Process
Overall, the hierarchy clarifies that hermeneutic study is based on the action and experience of the participant, subject first to the interpretations of the actor. During the interview process, the actor and researcher negotiate interpretations; these shared interpretations are filtered by the researcher, as addressed above in the "human instrument section." As Lincoln and Guba (1985:213) identify, "the negotiation of outcomes is a continuous process that goes on, formally and informally, from the very inception of the study (in Chaffee and Tierney 1988: 201). Oftentimes the interpretations are subject to discussion and further interpretation by colleagues, advisors, and reviewers. The researcher's interpretations may be presented to the actors for reaction and validation. A final process in Louis' approach is the interpretation of patterns across multiple settings by the researcher. The negotiation process between two researchers is likely repeated at this time.

Specifically, levels zero through three are the subject of concern of most case studies, in which the actor's recall, and sometimes the actor's interpretation of the situation or process and its impact on organizations, is sought through negotiated interpretation between the actor and the researcher. One statement appearing with level zero in Figure 8 has received little attention by Louis: the action/experience of the participant is used to cope and adapt to the situation. This implies that the actor/participant operates with a theory-in-use (Argyris and Schon 1978) which may or may not be recognized or correspond to espoused theories.\(^5\) Bryson and Hostager (1988) describe these individual and group interpretations as metaphors and scripts. These metaphors or interpretations are used as constructions that guide actions (Morgan 1986). Expansion
of the Louis framework allows reconsideration of the theory-in-use by the participant and movement to a critical action theory perspective. These levels of interpretation relate to the location of knowledge in emic inquiry.

Levels four, five and six of Louis's (1985) ladder of interpretation move beyond the subjective-objective dimension of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) classification. These levels urge the researcher to examine the consequences of the operative assumptions and to examine the alternatives. Louis's focus lies with the researcher as the discoverer of new truths. Expanding on Louis, if one adopts the belief that facts and interpretations lie within the actor, then the focus must shift to the actors, or the actors and the researchers, as joint discoverers.

Relating these interpretation levels to the general study of gubernatorial-based executive succession processes, Beyle (1985) reports that many of those who had experienced a gubernatorial succession event were more cooperative in future transitions. Consequently, there is reason to believe that individuals repeating their roles during transitions have engaged in action learning and modified their actions accordingly when encountering new succession events. However, research has not been conducted from this critical action perspective in the public sector, and most certainly succession research in the private sector has not been focused from a critical action theory perspective (Gephart 1978 is a possible exception). Perhaps the existence of readily available approximations of organizational performance measures for private sector organizations has contributed to the limited succession research from this perspective.
Louis cautions the researcher "to be clear which levels of interpretations are necessary to the study and why, and to specify which interpretations will be considered materials of study." This caution is considered in the present research as well, to be discussed following a presentation of Louis's hierarchical levels of interpretation. The present study operationalizes in levels three and four of Louis's hierarchy.

The acceptance of negotiated outcomes and the validity of individual interpretations of situations also has implications for research method standards. Qualitative researchers of the past were concerned with establishing "factuality" or truthfulness (Dexter 1970; Huber and Power 1985). Negotiated outcomes based upon individual and shared interpretations now depend upon "trustworthiness" in the sharing of true interpretations and perspectives (Lincoln and Guba 1985). More than a triangulation of data resources must be sought; rather, contexts influencing plausible interpretations and alternative interpretations must be considered by the researcher.

In summary, in this section the importance of negotiated outcomes and the various levels of interpretation have been considered. The legitimacy of these levels of interpretation rests with their basis in action and experience. A linkage has been established with the use of a human instrument and the type of interview (unstructured) and their ties with the interpretive paradigm to the study of executive succession circumstances in the public sector. Difficulties concerning the monitoring and awareness of the influence of the researcher/ethnographer in the research effort were identified. Next, sampling strategies appropriate to naturalistic inquiry are considered.
Purposive Sampling

This section focuses upon the theoretical case selection process. Such attention is warranted due to the potential contribution of theoretically selected cases in accelerating the determination of limits of generalizability in grounded theory development, representing movement beyond the production of single, potentially idiosyncratic, case analysis. The problem of moving beyond a loose collection of interesting findings (i.e. generalizability), as is the situation in the preliminary stages of research in executive succession in the public sector, can be advanced by attention to the procedure of theoretical sampling.

Belief in importance of context and the ideographic or emic nature of knowledge negate the appropriateness of the random sample and lead to the use of theoretical sampling, termed "purposive" by Lincoln (1985). The specification of limits of a theory requires the denotation of applicable contexts and circumstances (Whetton 1989; Bacharach 1989; Tsoukas 1989). Theoretical, not random, sampling in a specified population is advocated by Eisenhardt (1989) and others (Lincoln 1985; Strauss 1987; Marshall and Rossman 1989; Yin 1985) in the analysis of case data. Eisenhardt (1989:533) summarizes the reason for theoretical sampling as "[focusing] efforts on theoretically useful cases—i.e., those that replicate or extend theory by filling conceptual categories."

The development of pertinent conceptual categories and taxonomies in case-based research requires both deductive and inductive thought (Denzin 1989a). The researcher deductively uses extant theory and inductively uses case data to propose preliminary
categories of circumstances. These initial categories may then be used as a preliminary sampling guide. A procedure for the construction of a theoretical sample for case data is presented in Table 11.

Theoretical sampling strategies mirror the emergent design attributes of naturalistic inquiry, meaning that sampling continues until redundancy is reached; that is, until no new information is identified or patterns emerge and anomalies are either explained or accounted for in some fashion (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Werner and Schoepfle 1987; Poole and Van de Ven 1989).

Specific cases are candidates for sample selection and detailed study if they are extreme or deviant, typical, demonstrate maximum variation on a single dimension, are considered to be critical cases for some theoretical reason, or are considered to be political or sensitive cases (Patton 1990; Yin 1985). The use of replication logic through theoretical sampling across cases is a deliberate way to identify the theoretical tensions, opposition, and anomalies that are useful in determining if process and outcome differences exist (Yin 1985; Poole and Van de Ven 1989).

One of the difficulties of grounded theory and purposive sampling strategies arises from an acceptance of an interpretive framework in which the views of the participants predominate. While the researcher's constructions first organize the research agenda and remain present throughout the research effort, being particularly influential in the sample selection, the interpretive framework requires documentation of and a reconciliation between the views of the researcher and participant when differences exist (Werner and Schoepfle 1987).
Case access is also a logistical selection criterion for study participants (Fetterman 1989; Werner and Schoepfle 1987). While cautious consideration of all sampling decisions and their implications is in order, particular sensitivity to potentially biasing or limiting the study is necessary when collecting data from readily accessible cases.

In summary, this section includes a justification for the selection of a purposive sampling strategy for the present project, follows with some difficulties inherent in the adoption of a purposive sampling strategy, and offers suggestion of actions which serve to offset or minimize these difficulties. Consideration of these difficulties and differences in research approaches leads to further consideration of the role of inductive data analysis and grounded theory in naturalistic or ethnographic inquiry, the subject of the next two sections.
### Table 11

**Construction of Theoretical Sample from Case Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of relevant theoretical literature</td>
<td>Deductively informed conceptualization</td>
<td>Preliminary, deductively generated taxonomy/conceptual categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification and preliminary study of focused population of cases</td>
<td>Abductively and inductively generated variations in cases: pattern seeking within and across cases</td>
<td>Preliminary categories from population of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary exposure to selective cases; those that are extreme or deviant, typical, demonstrate maximum variation on a single dimension (Patton 1990)</td>
<td>Testing of conceptual categories with replication logic</td>
<td>Case-specific data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of sampling matrix</td>
<td>Tests to ensure that all types of cases fit in taxonomic structure; test that all cases are included</td>
<td>Researcher's case-informed sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated sample and close study of cases</td>
<td>Sample until redundancy occurs, patterns emerge, deviations identified, complexities reviewed, and anomalies and theoretical tensions exposed and explained (Werner and Schoepfle 1987; Poole and Van de Ven 1989)</td>
<td>Patterns emerge and repeat; variations explained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verification of taxonomy by case participants</td>
<td>Assures findings grounded in case data</td>
<td>Emergent or requested verification of types and patterns by case participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of taxonomy, case placement, and pattern interpretation by collaborators</td>
<td>Improved reliability</td>
<td>Agreement, disagreement, reinterpretation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Activities are iterative and non-linear in timing. Documentation of theoretical adjustments by researcher is recommended.*
Grounded Theory

The adoption of a grounded theory approach has implications not only for the process of theoretical formulations and the design of a research project, but for data analysis strategies as well. The term "grounded theory" originated in the (1967) seminal work of Glaser and Strauss. The following statements by Strauss and Corbin (1990:22-38) describe the grounded theory process:

The grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon. Grounded theory is a detailed grounding by systematically and intensively analyzing data, often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase of the field note, interview, or other document; by 'constant comparison,' data are extensively collected and coded. The focus of analysis is not merely on collecting or ordering a mass of data, but on organizing many ideas which have emerged from analysis of the data. A research question in grounded theory study is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied. Grounded theory questions also tend to be oriented toward action and process.

Grounded theory is derived from context-embedded data, as opposed to general theory alone guiding data collection (Lincoln 1985:145). The implications of a grounded theory approach to research occur at both the level of theory and at the level of data collection and analysis, the later discussed in the following section on inductive data analysis.

The adoption of a purely grounded theory approach could potentially hinder the identification of unique or limiting conditions relating to the specific context in which the research is conducted, resulting in a myopic view of the succession event. For example in the study of public sector succession cases, considerations such as shortness of tenure,
assuredness of end-of-term departure or other factors that may influence the transition process may not be considered unique to public sector succession cases without an awareness of extant private sector succession circumstances, which do not consider these issues. At the other extreme, general theory alone driving data collection may unnecessarily limit the structure of research to incremental changes in the current understanding. For example, data might be collected solely on insider/outsider successors without considering variations appropriate to the public sector. Grounded theory limits considerations such as the researcher's selection of data to consider, subjects to interview, and questions to ask.

In most circumstances, theory and data are intertwined and embedded in one another. The important factor to recognize and address is the influence of grounded theory and general theory in the research design and process.

The present research effort utilizes both grounded theory and general theory to direct data collection. The general theories reviewed in chapter two informed the initial sampling strategy and interview guide construction, as did previous exposure--grounded theory--to the state agency data base. Familiarity with the Ohio studies' succession cases provides the researcher with sufficient understanding to tentatively propose the taxonomy of public sector succession events and alternative characterizations of predecessor and successor characteristics that are used to guide the purposive sampling.

The project is also grounded in an awareness of current theory in the areas of the nature of public organizations, public and private sector executive succession, and strategic management in the public sector. These areas are each considered in chapter
two, and are summarized here in Table 12 with examples of grounded and general theory applications. Particularly in terms of public and private sector executive succession theories, the interpretations of events in succession cases in the state agencies of Ohio are not considered to be "explained" sufficiently by the extant theories (see literature review).

One useful tool in the development of grounded theory is the production of guiding hypotheses, which serve to generate question areas, to frame case selection, and to develop preliminary categories of data for use in the analysis stage (Marshall and Rossman 1989). In this case, the guiding hypotheses are abductively generated from the researcher's exposure to the Ohio studies data base from 1983-1988, during which time agency directors were asked in a preliminary fashion about their succession experiences. The guiding hypotheses are also informed by the relevant general theoretical literature on executive succession processes. The impact of the guiding hypotheses in the present research is visible in the preliminary purposive sample selection.

The use of both grounded theory and general theory is incorporated into the prescribed steps in interpretive interactionism or ethnographic research as outlined by Denzin (1989b:31). These steps include deconstruction--a critical analysis of prior studies and existing theories of executive succession, capturing--seeking multiple sources of data, bracketing--reduction of data, construction--a synthetic act organization, and contextualization--fitting generalizations to specific contexts.

Contemplation of these steps leads to a second level consideration of grounded theory as a data analysis approach, often termed inductive data analysis.
Table 12
Selected Contributions of Grounded Theory and General Theory
to the Present Study of Public Sector Executive Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grounded Theory</th>
<th>General Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Sector Executive Succession</strong></td>
<td>The insider/outsider distinction is not sufficiently explanatory in the public sector case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With the exception of constitutional changes, outsider appointment relates to the desire for change, or in the case of ethics problems, the need to &quot;put things in order.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor performance is a predictor of the selection of an &quot;outsider.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The appointment of an outsider results in more structural change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Sector Executive Succession</strong></td>
<td>Types of succession events include midterm, constitutional, end-of-term in timing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary/involuntary distinction blurred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of succession planning system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selection process varies by time in term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Sector Strategic Management</strong></td>
<td>Executive succession/transition processes impact overall strategic management of the agency through changes in interpretations and emphases in legislative mandates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public/Private Differences</strong></td>
<td>Involuntary succession events occurring in public sector result from a failure or inability of the agency director to act appropriately in public sector arena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More insiders are appointed at the end of the term due to known time constraints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time pressures vary during gubernatorial cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personnel turnover greatest following constitutional change of office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of insider appointments is lower in the public sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average tenure shorter in public sector than in private sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum tenure known.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The use of both grounded theory and general theory is incorporated into the prescribed steps in interpretive interactionism or ethnographic research as outlined by Denzin (1989b:31). These steps include deconstruction—a critical analysis of prior studies and existing theories of executive succession, capturing—seeking multiple sources of data, bracketing—reduction of data, construction—a synthetic act organization, and contextualization—fitting generalizations to specific contexts.

Contemplation of these steps leads to a second level consideration of grounded theory as a data analysis approach, often termed inductive data analysis.

**Inductive Data Analysis**

Recent prescriptions concerning ethnographic research muddy the terminological distinctions of grounded theory, using it as a sub-type of inductive data analysis (Bogden and Biklen 1982). The important distinction to be made is that grounded theory arises directly from context-specific or embedded data, rather than solely from general theory, with the general theory being deductively applied to a general data set. The terminology is less important than the spiraling upward from the data to increasingly higher levels of abstraction through the use of a systematic process of pattern seeking.

As a data analysis approach, grounded theory requires the identification of clear and consistent patterns of a phenomenon by a systematic process (Strauss 1987; Marshall and Rossman 1989; Werner and Schoepfle 1987). The object of the analysis is "to determine the categories, relationships and assumptions that inform the respondent's view of the world in general and the topic in particular" (McCracken 1988:42). Consider again a statement of a leading sociologist on the practice of grounded theory:
The researcher, in the practice of grounded theory, should aim to obtain this "detailed grounding by systematically and intensively 'analyzing data, often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase of the field note, interview, or other document' by [a method of] 'constant comparison'... organizing many ideas which have emerged from the analysis of the data... thus producing a well-constructed theory" with its basis embedded in the data (Strauss 1987: 22).

There is now appearing a plethora of grounded theory and inductive data analysis procedures, although with different phasing and titles. A synthesis of systematic inductive data analysis approaches is utilized in the determination of patterns during this research on public sector executive transitions (see Pinder and Moore 1979; Yin 1985; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Bogden and Biklen 1982; Strauss 1987; Werner and Schoepfle 1987; McCracken 1988; Denzin 1989; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Eisenhardt 1989 for examples of systematic methods of inductive analysis). These approaches emphasize the search for similarities and differences between cases, for both are of interest in the construction of an inductive theory (Guba 1985:85). Consideration is also made of events in terms of part to whole and whole to part (McCracken 1988; Denzin 1989b).

Typical of the recommended specific actions and procedures for the conduct of grounded theory as a data analysis approach are the prescriptions of Strauss (1987:23):

1. Development of a concept-indicator model which directs coding
2. Data collection
3. Coding
4. Development of core categories
5. Theoretical sampling
6. Development of comparisons
7. Reaching of theoretical saturation
8. Integration of the theory
9. Production of theoretical memos
10. Theoretical sorting
At the proposed highest level of abstraction, the constant comparison approach involves sorting categorical observations on the basis of logical relations, identity and similarity, opposition and contradiction, giving rise to a mid-range theoretical framework based upon the construction of taxonomies in which "relations between actions are described" (Denzin 1989a:51), leading to the development of conceptual frameworks and theoretical systems (Pinder and Moore 1979).13

Field data are intensively analyzed by a method of "constant comparison" to seek patterns within and across cases (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990). Such constant comparison or deconstruction is undertaken within and between interviews. Use of verbatim transcripts improves the ability to identify areas of disagreement within and between consultants, and other types of disagreement as well.

Inductive data analysis has as its basis the role of anomaly in the discovery of knowledge (Kuhn 1962:64; Werner and Schoepfle 1987a). Pattern-seeking through awareness of discrepancy and anomaly in the process of inductive data analysis begins at the level of the interview transcript. In the resolution of anomaly, Werner and Schoepfle advise "open and skeptical" awareness by the researcher of both anomical positions until the discrepancy is explained. At least four sources of discrepancy/anomaly are to be expected (Werner and Schoepfle 1987a). These sources of anomaly and possibilities for their resolution in terms of inductive data analysis and grounded theory building are described below. Examples from this study are used to illustrate discrepancy types, the quotations placed immediately below the sources of disagreement.
Disagreements among consultants: Resolution possibilities include the role differentiation of consultants, case or type distinctions, and context circumstances. These differences are used in the construction of a taxonomy. Another possible source of this type of discrepancy is miscommunication between the ethnographer and the consultant. The example below shows discrepant views between two directors about a transition meeting.

[successor] The main thing I wanted to cover was people . . . I didn’t want it to be said that I didn’t try to evaluate every one objectively. So I did sit down with [my predecessor] and one of the main issues was going over each one of these individuals. . . . So that was the primary thing I spent time talking to [him] about.

[predecessor on the same exchange, answering question, “Did you end up having any discussion with your successor, then, telephone or otherwise?”] Very little. We had lunch one day which was not particularly eventful. At that point [the assistant director] had again assumed acting directorship of the agency.

Disagreement of consultant and ethnographer: Sources of anomaly include a commitment by the researcher to an underlying framework which does not permit observance of the viewpoint of the research consultant. Also, conceptual framework level differences may exist between the ethnographer and the consultant. In the example below, the research consultant describes his views on the issue of firing non-civil service employees immediately or gradually: the researcher views the director’s comments in light of placement in the preliminary sampling framework.

In my case when I went to the Department, we counted up all the unclassified employees and contrary to some political advisors I went to all the people, either on a personal basis or one of my key lieutenants, and basically said, you know you got your job by political appointment and you understood that and I understand that. At the same time I understand you have personal problems that is in some cases there will be retirements
involved, some cases you need some time to look for a job. We want to cooperate with you and we want you to cooperate with us in the transition. We had absolutely beautiful cooperation. As a matter of fact, the employees, they knew before I got there that they were going to lose their job.

[Researcher field note] This is paradoxical based on how he considered himself.

**Inconsistencies within individual consultant:** Misrepresentation, lack of perceived correspondence between questions, misinterpretation of questions, contextual differences, and difficulty with recall are each sources of resolution of internal contradictions. In the example below, the director first describes employee expectations of the new director prior to arrival at the agency. The second statement is a description of the director's actions upon arrival.

For reasons that I don't quite understand yet, maybe I will at some point, a reputation was acquired, I still don't understand why, as sort of a hatchet person of sorts.

After initial interviews in the agency, it was clear to me that all of the chiefs in the Department weren't capable of operating at my standards. There was no uncertainty about that at all. I believe you take small losses early. . . . I just kind of fired everybody in the first week or so after I interviewed them, and asked them about the organization and the things that they should know about the organization, they didn't. It was just, it's been nice seeing you, when would you like your last day to be?

**Inconsistency between extant theory:** Inconsistencies between existing theories and data are sources of anomaly leading to reconsideration of the overall framework. In this example, the director speaks of his distrust of the senior employees of his predecessor.

The researcher anticipated this extreme distrust to exist only in succession events
associated with gubernatorial changes.

[Midterm successor] I was going to be dealing with people who were left behind by my predecessor, some of who I felt just were of no use to me and couldn't help me in any way. In fact might be working against me. So I had concerns there.

[Researcher field note] It might be thought that this would only be heard at the constitutional term of office.

The process of searching for anomalies until all are explained highlights the iterative nature of the inductive analysis. With movement from the particular to the general, each iteration of analysis increases in abstraction. The process of the organization of data, reduction, display, conclusion drawing, and verification (looking for negative instances) occurs iteratively throughout the research process. As described by Bogden and Biklen (1982:66) the abstractions of grounded theory and inductive data analysis are built upon particulars, gathered and grouped together.

So far in this section, the relationship of grounded theory and inductive data analysis has been considered. Prototypical inductive analysis research steps were advanced, and the role of guiding hypotheses in the development of grounded theory was considered, as was the importance of anomaly and its sources in the inductive movement from the particular to the general. The iterative nature of the research process has been repeatedly demonstrated. The final component for discussion of the conduct of naturalistic inquiry is the characteristic of emergent design.
**Emergent Design**

An important methodological characteristic of naturalistic or emic inquiry as identified by Lincoln (1985:142) is that "the design of the [naturalistic] research will likely be emergent in the interaction of the researcher with the setting and the participant." This is true both due to the interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee in constructing a shared sense of reality as well as due to reformulation of the ethnographer's research questions as research constructions emerge. Use of an unstructured interview limits the ethnographer's preconceived research agenda constructions influence on interviewee responses (Mishler 1986).

The notion of the emergent design is at odds with the logical positivist values of prediction and control. Prediction and control are based in the testing of the researcher's preconceived understanding of situations, allowing mostly incremental learning by not upholding hypotheses. With the use of grounded theory and emergent design, the researcher's interpretations change throughout the field contact, not just at the point of data analysis following data collection.

Implications for the Ohio studies in executive transition follow. Beyond the general study of public sector executive succession events and transition processes it is difficult to know specifically what will be interesting about the topic to the participant: "Each inquiry raises more questions than it answers" (Guba 1985:85). While beginning with a summarization of what is reasonable or applicable from extant studies, what is important to the research collaborator additionally and ultimately becomes the subject of study.
Secondly, with emergent design, ethnographic field encounters are theoretically repeated until redundancy occurs, serving as an assurance that the complexities of the problem have been considered (Lincoln and Guba 1985). From a practical perspective, it may become necessary to identify a cut-off point after which field data collection ceases and becomes a research boundary. Otherwise, the research effort can become a boundless, all-consuming, ever enduring effort. Most studies are bounded by outside constraints from funding sources, project sponsors, or time constraints (Fetterman 1989). Alternatively, an inventory of completed and uncompleted areas can be taken and cut-off points established. In this inquiry, decisions were made to focus on the perspectives of the directors rather than to involve external stakeholders, and to set aside additional discussions with most directors.14

Review of Paradigm Choices

So far, paradigm differences have been reviewed, and paradigmatic commitments acknowledged. This was followed by a consideration of the implications of the paradigmatic commitments as manifested in research choices and processes. Specifically, this translated to the use of a human instrument, qualitative methods (unstructured interview), adoption of purposive sampling and acceptance of emergent design and negotiated outcomes, the use of a grounded theory approach utilizing inductive data analysis procedures, with a specific focus on the role of anomaly in the building of grounded theory. These areas correspond to the components in the flow of naturalistic inquiry as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in Figure 7 above. Each of these areas have been applied to the specific research topic of public sector executive succession
events and transition processes in the state agencies of Ohio.

Ideographic interpretation leads to a primary difficulty of naturalistic inquiry, that of assuring that the interpretations are based in the data. Consideration of appropriate research standards and practices addressing the particular difficulty of making interpretations, the role of the ethnographer in the structuring and practice of the research, as well as standards and practices assuring the quality of the research are the subjects of the next section of this chapter. Included here are the broad topics of data collection and management, analysis strategies, ethnographer self-management, interview management, and research standards.

"SOPHISTICATED RIGOR" IN THE PRACTICE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As demonstrated above, data content and research strategies of naturalistic inquiry differ substantially from those of more quantitatively based research. However, there is no less need to properly manage the data base with standards of appropriate care and thoughtfully established procedures.

Fortunately there are now a sufficient number of resources, arising primarily in the educational and sociological fields, available to permit research procedures, data analysis, and data base management approaches to be contemplated and articulated in advance (Mishler 1986; Yin 1985; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Werner and Schoepfle 1987; Fetterman 1989; Marshall and Rossman 1989; Denzin 1989; Strauss and Corbin 1990 are examples). Many of these prescriptions are utilized in the research on executive
succession in state agencies of Ohio. Each data management decision made in advance, in the field, or in the analysis stage, embodies tradeoffs, the implications of which should be considered while making choices. These choices involve what is important to collect, how to collect it, and how to analyze what is being collected.

**Data Collection and Management**

**Management of interview data**

In this section, standards for and tradeoffs concerning the conduct of interviews, the creation and maintenance of a data base from the interviews, and alternative analysis strategies are considered. Due to the various circumstances and means by which the ethnographer interacts with the data and the potential for the views of the ethnographer to become intertwined with the actual field data, considerable attention is given the task of monitoring ethnographer input, influence, and development, with procedures specified and committed to for the present research. This is particularly crucial given the importance placed upon the documentation of and the need to work from the research consultants' views of their own experiences in ethnographic research. Consideration is given to the appropriate methodological standards for qualitative research, juxtaposed with traditional research standards. In general, it is expected that naturalistic inquiry be performed with standards assuring the integrity of the findings.

As stated above, "systematic methods must be developed for the conduct and analysis of interviews" (Mishler 1986:x), including the components of the research design, analysis strategies, and creation of a case study data base (Yin 1985:97; Olshfski 1989). The first topic presented for consideration is the management of interview data,
beginning with the recording of the interview.

Direct transcription of all interviews is recommended as the primary data source for inductive analysis and grounded theory development. Strauss (1987) and Werner and Schoepfle (1987) present convincing evidence of content differences between outputs from transcription, note-taking during the interview, and post-interview writeups.

Direct transcription is also necessary to adequately keep track of variation, including areas of agreement and disagreement between consultants, which is central to the proposed ethnographic analysis process (Werner and Schoepfle 1987). The availability of transcripts similarly enhances the ability to sort for themes (Strauss 1987).

Even transcription output is subject to variation in reliability. Mishler (1986) recommends that only the ethnographer transcribe the interview sessions, as checks on transcriptions produced by others have demonstrated increases in the likelihood of errors in word selection and phrasing. The selected analysis procedures play a key role in the selection of a transcription process. Structural analysis of individual narratives in portions of the text as speech events may well require transcription by the ethnographer (Mishler 1986).

Given normal constraints of time and budget, Werner and Schoepfle (1987) and Strauss (1987) recommend that a rating system be established to determine interview quality and usefulness, and that this system be used to establish transcription priority. The assigned priority should be reviewed periodically throughout the research effort, as the ethnographer may well develop an "appreciation of the consultant's perspective" as the field work proceeds (Werner and Schoepfle 1987). Field notes and interviews can
be documented with standard symbols (see Pfaffenberger 1988 for a description).

Transcription presents the greatest opportunity for accurate portrayal of consultants' comments, and consequently increases the validity of the research. The ability to use verbatim quotes in the final document further improves validity by allowing the reader to better assess the accuracy of conclusions, however selective the inclusion of quotes.

**Analysis of interview data**

This section relates to the steps of analysis termed "construction" by Denzin (1989b) or "development of core categories" by Strauss (1987) in the practice of grounded theory. The identification of these core categories through the method of constant comparison relies upon the review of transcripts and the identification of key words or themes.

Following each interview, and ideally prior to discussion with others, a debriefing period occurs where immediate thoughts and interpretations of the interview as an event are recorded. Such immediate debriefing is necessary due to the natural tendency of improved recall, and the reduction of the possible distortions which occur with time lapse. Key phrases pertaining to the interview are developed and maintained for use during the coding process.

At the level of transcript analysis, key words or phrases are input by the researcher into text margins. Rather than use word count analysis computer packages with resultant reliance upon word frequencies as key words, theme analysis is done heuristically.

Procedures enhancing the reliability and validity of the abstractions are a valued objective in managing interview data. Recording and documentation of interviews represent the minimum level of data maintenance. Systematic and consistent management
of data improves the qualitative research effort. See Appendix C for additional background on the analysis procedures used in this project.

Ethnographer self-management

A key and repeated theme in nearly each ethnographic research action, from problem identification to the practice of grounded theory and inductive data analysis, is the role of the ethnographer. Poorly undertaken naturalistic inquiry has as its basis only the ethnographer’s statement of the situation. Critical to portraying the research consultant’s view of the situation is the ability to separately maintain records of field data and ethnographer input.

Figure 9 portrays the importance of the ethnographer in the conduct of research. As ethnographic analysis is based upon the views of research consultants (directors, in this case), it is advisable to separately document the implicit and explicit theories, values, and ideas of the ethnographer. This requires ethnographic self-reflection on personal bias, assumptions, and breakthroughs (Denzin 1989b).

The method selected to document separately the views and conceptual development of the ethnographer in the project arises from Werner and Schoepfle’s (1987) Systematic Fieldwork. Werner and Schoepfle differentiate between the notion of type one and type two text, a distinction which will be used throughout the remaining portions of this chapter. Type one text reflects an acknowledgement of the critical role of the ethnographer in naturalistic inquiry. Type one text is often maintained in the form of a journal, written or recorded, with calendar dated entries. At the outset, the journal provides documentation of the ethnographer’s beginning theoretical formulations,
including the abductively generated framework, research proposal, records of potential interview questions, and sampling strategies. Type one text provides documentation of the ethnographer's thoughts prior to entering the field. Type one text is continued throughout fieldwork, with entries to include reflections on ethical dilemmas and conflicts, comments on the ethnographer's frame of mind, and points requiring clarification. Schematic drawings can represent hypothesized or constructed relationships during the research process. Field decisions altering strategic or substantive focus of the research and post-fieldwork thoughts on the research topic are a part of type one text.

Figure 9

Text 1, Product of Ethnographer's Mind
The maintenance of separate texts provides the mechanism for documentation of and reflection on field problems, mistakes, and related adjustments. Denzin (1989), Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1990), and Bogden and Biklen (1982:84-89) offer advice consistent with Werner and Schoepfle (1987) on the separation of the ethnographer's ideas and work from the original text, although terminology and format differ. For example, Strauss (1987) recommends the development of theoretical notes, "analytical memos" to document the evolution of the ethnographer's formulation/interpretation of the interviews.

Wemer and Schoepfle's (1987) type two texts consist of field data only, including tapes and transcripts of formal and informal interviews and conversations with field consultants, so called "value-free" researcher field notes, documents, and pertinent archival data. Of course, all records are impacted by the "human instrument," particularly by the structure of the interviews or other decisions concerning the gathering of data. Relating to level 4 of Louis's hierarchy of interpretation appearing in Figure 8 above, discourse between research team members becomes type one text; if recording or other documentation of the discourse is possible, this too is an entry.

Later entries in the ethnographer's journal similarly become an integration of text one and two, consistent with the continuous loops and cycling back during the ethnographic research process. Review of type one and type two text serves to generate additional question areas and provide impetus for theoretical breakthroughs (Strauss 1987).
In summary, maintenance of distinct texts offers the advantage of improving the likelihood that data are based upon the interpretations of research consultants, therein being truly context embedded, a quality which is the heart of ethnographic research and emic knowledge. Commitment to the extra efforts in documentation and maintenance of separation of texts, in addition to the benefits of improving analysis, enhances the credibility of the research by reducing the possibility of distortion of observation.

Interview Management

One of the tradeoffs with impacts of considerable magnitude to the content of field data is the decision on the type of interview to be conducted between the ethnographer and the consultants. Returning once again to Louis's hierarchy of interpretation, the lower levels are based upon the interpretation of situations by the actor. This is consistent with the understanding that emic knowledge requires the situation as viewed by the actor to be accurately portrayed in the research process; that is, the phenomenon is to be viewed at the level of the action/experience, with minimal intrusion of the ethnographer's framework (Strauss 1987; Werner and Schoepfle 1987).

Even when an open-ended approach is used, deductively/abductively generated questions created prior to field entry based upon theoretical considerations force further theoretical self-awareness on the part of the ethnographer. Such preliminary questions are a critical component of type one text. These questions could be held in abeyance during the interview/discussion; allowing the determination of what areas are deemed initially important to the consultant in an unstructured interview. Importantly, there must be the ability to focus on the areas that research consultants find important from any list.
of questions.

Following the covering of the introductory information in the interview, Werner and Schoepfle (1987:318) suggest the use of "grand tour" questions to begin the unstructured interview. One of two grand tour questions was used in this research: "How did you come to the position of director of agency x?" or "How would you characterize executive succession events and transition processes in state agencies of Ohio?" Use of at least one "grand tour" question enhances the surfacing of the more salient points to the research consultant.

Utilization of an unstructured interview approach requires additional practice on the part of the ethnographer; much like pretesting a questionnaire, the ethnographer must develop skills in listening. With sole reliance on the unstructured format, the "good" consultant is also likely to appear to be verbally articulate and thoughtful when provided a limited period of reflection (Werner and Schoepfle 1989). However, less positive topics and those subject to recall difficulties may not surface in such an unstructured format (Werner and Schoepfle 1987).19

Information provided by research consultants will either be "additive, complementary, or contradictory" (Werner and Schoepfle 1987). Since data collection continues until circumstances or discrepancies are repeated, a journal can be used to identify areas where new information is no longer being surfaced.

In this discussion of interview formats, the importance of paradigmatic grounding and the beliefs of the researcher are again evidenced. Examples are provided of the extension of paradigm selection into the research process to develop choices consistent
with paradigmatic assumptions, to identify deviations from the best suited choice for the paradigm, and to state the consequences of the selection of another option.

**Research Standards in Qualitative Research**

Throughout this chapter the importance of context, the views of participants, and the role of the researcher as human instrument have been emphasized. Each issue arises from the adoption of the interpretive paradigm as the underlying belief of the researcher in the nature of social inquiry.

Differing views are held as to the appropriateness of the more traditional approaches to the maintenance of reliability and validity as the standards for quality in naturalistic inquiry, the basis for the dispute being the epistemological and ontological grounds of knowledge. If indeed, knowledge is based upon individual and collective interpretations, then as Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, complimentary substitute standards for naturalistic inquiry may well be required, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Statistical assurances of reliability and validity are inappropriate for research that is case study based. However, if conceptually defined in terms meaningful to the practice of naturalistic inquiry, standards of validity and reliability can and should be practiced in the undertaking of naturalistic inquiry. Notably, this involves the practice of triangulation to improve study reliability and validity (Denzin 1989). Triangulation involves the "testing" of one source of information against another to strip away alternative explanations (Fettersman 1989). While many of these research actions have been stated throughout this chapter, they are explicitly stated here as measures to
I l l

improve study validity and reliability.

A valid observation is defined by Denzin (1989a:96) as one which is "theoretically directed and grounded in actual behaviors of interacting individuals." In the data gathering stage, actions enhancing validity include the maintenance of researcher field notes on cases, and verbatim transcriptions (with periodic checks for accuracy), each serving to improve validity. Further, a clear separation of type one text from type two text serves to improve the validity of the research effort by permitting verification of the extent of commitment to grounded data and the views of the research consultants.

Collected archival data on succession events such as dates of succession, changes to organizational structure, personnel changes, agency documents, newspaper articles, and subjects' work and biographical backgrounds also serve as interview verification. Such "multiple streams of evidence" (Denzin 1989) serve to enhance validity. These multiple streams of evidence correspond to Kirk and Miller's (1986:22) terms of "pragmatic or criterion validity," in which observations match those generated by alternative procedures.

In a similar vein, it was attempted to interview more than one party involved in each transition process. Such triangulation of data sources allows the comparison of one source against another to check accuracy, identify differing contexts, and to eliminate alternative explanations (Fetterman 1989; Marshall and Rossman 1989; Werner and Schoepfle 1987). Comparisons with results conducted from completed studies of executive succession in other states as well as the sharing of field notes of concurrent studies in other states should enhance theoretical validity. 21
Reliability is defined by Denzin (1989a:96) as "observations which could have been made by a similarly situated observer." Issues of reliability are addressed through the participation of members of a collaborative research team in reviewing data observations, interview quality judgments, inferences, classification decisions, coding schemes and preliminary conclusions (Denzin 1989a; Yin 1984; Lincoln and Guba 1985). An audit of data collection and analytic procedures is established. The audit trail includes the ability to trace quotes to sources, the accuracy of transcription, and maintenance of source materials (Marshall and Rossman 1989; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Yin 1985).

Use of verbatim quotes throughout the written text, although selective, provides the reader an opportunity to become involved in the interpretation of data, to draw his or her own conclusions, checking interpretations against the data for inconsistencies from another framework (Chaffee and Tierney 1988:200).

In summary, whether considered in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, or whether addressed as specific and appropriate components of reliability and validity, adoption of standards assuring that the research conclusions are solidly grounded in field data in the views of participants enhances the legitimacy of research conclusions to the readers.

Attention is now focused on the actual research design for this study of public sector executive succession events and transition processes in the state agencies of Ohio.
RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Sample

As indicated in chapter two, a preliminary framework of public sector succession types framed the initial case selection (see Table 7 chapter two). Figure 10 transfers this framework to the beginning sampling matrix used in the research on public sector executive succession and transition processes in the state agencies of Ohio. Preliminary succession event classifications and sampling criteria are: Cross-Cabinet Balance, including Political (Insider, Outsider to Gubernatorial Regime); Representational (Minority, Female, Geographic Region, Other, such as out-of-state in origin); and Professional (General or Specific in expertise). A second sampling criterion, Successor Origin or Agency Experience (Insider, Outsider, or Returnee to the organization) arises from the extant literature on executive succession. The preliminary sampling strategy also reflected Constitutional Circumstance of the event, (Constitutional, Midterm or End-of-term in timing). The creation of a sampling matrix assures that classifications are logically consistent and complete (Orosz 1990).

Additional variables outside the initial sampling framework but of likely significance to the succession event and transition process included interim office holders and length of predecessor tenure. Directors were asked for recommendations for additional study participants. This "snowball sampling" was used to determine additional sources on the same succession event and general succession circumstances in state agencies of Ohio (see Chaffee and Tierney 1988; Bogden and Biklen 1982 for examples of snowball sampling). The sampling matrix was modified as theoretical insights evolved, consistent
### Cross-Cabinet Balance

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<tr>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Representative</th>
<th>Political</th>
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<td>General</td>
<td>Specific</td>
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<td>Insider</td>
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<td>Outsider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consit</td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within Regime</td>
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**Figure 10: Sampling Selection Matrix**
with the notion of emergent design. The interim office holders (acting directors) were added to the purposive sample on the basis of snowball sampling. A preliminary assessment of predecessor departure circumstances (voluntary or involuntary in nature) was included in the initial sampling matrix. The departure variable was dropped and an intuitive agency performance level substituted.

Sample characteristics

This sample description expands on the preliminary information presented in chapter one. The population for the study includes the nearly 30 major state agencies of Ohio. During the period 1983- January 1991 over eighty succession events occurred within these agencies. The present study period starts with 1983 and encompasses a period during which the Governor, first assuming office in January 1983 was reelected for a second term. Succession events studied occurred in the following state agencies: Office of Budget and Management, Public Utilities Commission, Department of Mental Health, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Aging, Department of Taxation, Department of Commerce, Board of Regents, Department of Human Services, Department of Youth Services, and peripherally, Department of Highway Safety, Lottery, Bureau of Worker's Compensation, and Bureau of Employment Services. These departments include variations in levels of performance, stability, and crisis, variations in appointing structures, also policy, service, regulatory, and internal service agencies.

The research sample includes multiple transitions within a single agency. The unit of analysis is the singular succession event, considered in the context of the impact of
that event on the single agency. Multiple case studies can be viewed as "multiple experiments," following "replication logic" (Clark 1985:72; Yin 1985). Fourteen of the sixteen agencies experienced two or more transitions during the study period (in part but not entirely a reflection of the sampling procedure).

The study included directors whose tenures began with the gubernatorial administration in January 1983 (constitutional term) and directors who began their tenures within the existing gubernatorial administration (midterm and end-of-term). Most of the succession events in the study occurred within the governor’s term and were not associated with a change in political leadership (gubernatorial election event). Nine were appointed as directors of their agencies within the first six months of the governor’s first term (two remained in office at time of the interview).

Interviews were conducted with twenty-three current and previous directors of sixteen cabinet level agencies in Ohio. Collectively, the directors had experienced, as directors or acting directors, over forty transitions during the period 1983-90. Their average tenure was approximately three years. The interviews occurred at various times in the succession and transition processes, reflecting the ongoing nature of executive succession events in state government. Transition preparation activities at the agency level for the forthcoming gubernatorial transition to occur from six to nine months in the future were also discussed for fifteen of the agencies during the interviews.

Of the directors in the sample, six had experience as acting or interim directors during this period. Eight were insiders who had been promoted to the position of director. Their tenures and careers within the respective agencies differed at the point
of appointment to director, including career agency employees, appointees whose tenure
with the agency began with the current gubernatorial administration, and others who
served less than six months within the agency prior to their appointee. One director was
a returnee. Also included in the sample was an "outside" insider, a policy specialist
located elsewhere in state government who was a part of the predecessor’s informal
management team and at the end-of-the-term, appointed director. Of the twenty-three
directors interviewed, nine were female, two were male minorities.

Additional interviews were conducted with current and past staff members of selected
agencies. Specifically, seven current or past executive staff members were interviewed
concerning their transition experiences in six of the sixteen agencies. These views were
sought for triangulation purposes, including cases in which there was only one director
interviewed (due in some circumstances to long tenure of the incumbent or the non-
availability of other directors), in the circumstance where the staff member had
experience with multiple numbers of directors, or to obtain an understanding of the role
of the acting director in the transition, a suggestion of one of the respondents. These
second-tier interviews were generally undertaken on the basis of availability of the
research consultant/interviewee and most had some familiarity with the researcher from
professional activities. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a triangulated
perspective on the succession event. In the case of an observer of multiple directors,
these interviews assisted the researcher in identifying distinctions and similarities in the
styles of the directors. In other cases, predecessors or successors performed this role.
These second-tier interviews were generally not included as evidence in the text of this
Multiple views of single succession events were solicited. It was determined, due to the need to close off the data collection process, to stay with the views of predecessors and successors, and to locate, where the predecessor was not available, a senior staff member who had worked for one or more directors in the same agency. Where access was closed or not pursued for another reason, the case was moved to "peripheral" status, and was not heavily relied upon in the case analysis. When this happened, other cases were substituted according to the purposive sampling criteria.

A study involving fewer agencies might be refocused to include the views of those within the formal boundaries of the organization, as well as external stakeholders. This latter group might include management and budget personnel, governor's staff, general assembly members, and interest group representatives.

**Sample adjustments**

The preliminary sample from the proposal stage of this research included twenty-one directors from ten agencies. Of these initial twenty-one contacted, three declined to participate. All three of those who declined were former directors now outside of state government (or in one case serving a jail term), and despite the willingness of the researcher to travel, efforts to initiate an appointment were rebuked. Two of the three were prior directors from the same agency which was characterized by considerable management problems. Consequently, another agency in which a director departed in circumstances of agency crisis was substituted. Additional agencies were included due to transfers of directors between agencies: while the primary topic was a specific
transition, if a director had since experienced a transition in another agency, this too was covered in the interview. Finally, some directors were added to the sample because of additional transitions in an agency during the six-month period the interviews were being conducted. However, in one end-of-term succession event, a follow-up interview with the new successor was not conducted, since it was felt the point of redundancy was reached for end-of-term cases. Directors' schedules also influenced such decisions: scheduling for incumbent directors could involve long delays.

Data Collection

Interviews

Interviews were conducted from March through August 1990, with the majority conducted in April and May. A member of a collaborative inquiry team was in attendance and participated in interview dialogue in most interviews. Interviews were generally two or more hours in length. From an ontological viewpoint, the ideal situation would have been to allow the directors to talk about transitions from their own viewpoints in an unguided fashion (Mishler 1986; Brenner, Brown and Canter 1985). Appendix B contains the general interview guide used by the researcher, developed from abductive, deductive, and inductive insights. In line with ontological beliefs concerning this project, the interviews were conducted in an unstructured manner. The interview guide became a part of the text one: the beliefs of important areas to the researcher and the existence of a schedule helped to assure that these topic areas were covered. Each interview generally began with the grand tour question listed as 1.1 on the interview schedule: "How would you characterize executive
succession events and transition processes in state agencies of Ohio?" or alternatively, for those who had difficulty beginning at such a level of abstraction, "How did you come to the position of director of agency x?" The interviews then took off in the areas of interest of the directors, which required some attentiveness to what topics had been considered by a director. Consequently, the balance of time spent in given topic areas reflected the interests of the directors as well as pre-designated topics. There were some topics that just did not catch on with the majority of the directors: others were not considered or left until last, given time constraints of an interview.

Each interview was different in content, pace, and style, based upon the interaction of the researcher and the director, as well as the style of the director. In one instance, a director requested that the questions be sent in advance. Due to prior acquaintance, I knew this to be the result of the director liking time for reflection prior to a response being required. The director reviewed the questions in advance and noted some which were of interest. Other directors were expecting a structured exchange: in situations in which this was required to cover the topic areas, the interviews became more structured in presentation. Even in the structured interviews, there was room for the directors to bring out their own interests on the topic of public sector executive transitions.

Additional data sources

The precepts of triangulation as advocated by Denzin (1989) were followed throughout data collection and analysis. For example, archival data on succession events such as dates of succession, changes to organizational structure, personnel changes, agency documents, newspaper articles, and subjects' work and biographical backgrounds
were collected for use in interview verification. Such triangulation of data sources allows the testing of one source of information against another to check accuracy and to eliminate alternative explanations.

The existing Ohio studies' strategic management data base (Wechsler and Backoff 1986, 1987) provides information on agency characteristics including structure, mission, strategy, personnel changes, etc. Data available in the existing data base are summarized in Table 13. The data base also contains interviews with agency directors on their views of their predecessors' problems. These studies can be used to develop the linkages of succession to strategy, as well as to confirm findings of succession studies from the logical positivist perspective, such as changes in the inner circle (executive role constellation), the relative structural changes made by insiders and outsiders, and the effects on organizational performance.
On Writing Ethnographic Research

I did not expect to write the story of public sector executive transitions with so heavy a reliance in the body of the text upon the verbatim transcriptions. However, I was influenced by the power of ethnographies utilizing this method (for example, Richardson 1985, 1991). I take full responsibility for the presentation of the material in so thick a
manner, whether judged by readers as engaging or annoying.

The assurance of anonymity of responses to the directors had implications for the writing of this text. I have removed names and titles or made the reference more generic so as to expand the pool of potential ownership of citations. For example, "environmentalists" was changed to [stakeholders] within a quotation. Similarly, "Pat" was changed to [predecessor] or [successor] as appropriate. Preliminary readers advised me on the anonymity of specific quotations, and in most circumstances the readers indicated I erred on the side of reducing the meaning of the quotation by making the statement more generic. In some cases where this occurred, I removed the quotation. I hope that we were correct in our assessments. If I was not, my apologies to the directors. Every effort was made to follow guidelines to assure anonymity. On the other side, my apologies are offered to the reader for so generalizing a quotation that it loses its engagement.

Another potential concern for the reader is the length of the quotations. Here too, I relied upon early readers for help in reducing the quotation to its most succinct form, while remaining true to the text. This is addressed in appendix C, with examples provided on the editing of the quotations. The heavy reliance upon quotations relates to my wish for the reader to make his or her own judgments on the basis of the quotations provided, vital to the ability of the reader to make an assessment of the validity of the research conclusions (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Richardson 1990).

In writing about the directors' transition experiences, when contradictions in the patterns were present, the contradictions were addressed through the inclusion of specific
examples. Alternative views are exemplified through selected quotations. At the individual level, I have made every effort to ensure that the quotations are representative of the entire view as expressed within the interviews, and are not a selected quotation out of context and misrepresentative of the interview. Further, when contacts with executive staff or quotations were inconsistent with other non-interview interactions with the executives, an effort was made to determine the appropriateness of the statement as representative of the beliefs of the director. I take responsibility for any misrepresentations that may have occurred. Consequently, the statements included as evidence in this document represent the views of the participants, as interpreted through the eyes of the researcher.

**Pre-field interview constructions**

The initial interview schedule, the interviews for which were conducted in an unstructured emergent style, revolved around the following general or grand tour questions: How did you come to the job [selection]? What preparations did you make for the job of director of a state agency [preparation]? What was the transition like [transition experience]? What were the consequences of the transition event? The transition process components became the transition selection and transition preparation processes, the transition experience, and transition outcomes. These components remain as the organizing concepts for this document in the discussion of transition events and processes of state agency directors.

My interest in executive succession events at the level of the state agency is based in a belief that careful study and consideration of transition process patterns of the
executives could result in improvements in the quality of work life for organizational members and in a reduction in the loss of performance due to transition start-ups. Other researchers have focused on transition at the gubernatorial level, which I suspected would be politically guided and too general to tie to potential improvements at the level of actions in organizations. A constitutional-term appointee interviewed midway through the research effort described this distinction between gubernatorial and agency level transitions:

I'd say based on my observation [the transition is] very ad hoc. Cabinet wide less ad hoc than at the individual agency level. Where, at the individual agency level there is almost from the standpoint of what the Governor does and what the chief of staff does and other folks do, the transition, the succession, is essentially up to the individual cabinet member. How that takes place, how he or she figures out what has been going on at the agency, what should be changed, what should continue, what should be emphasized, what should be deemphasized. Very little impact on that from the executive [the Governor] with the exception of specifics, like individual campaign promises, dos and don'ts. How would I characterize the succession process, I would say in general, very ad hoc. Unstructured, that's really it.

Inductive, grounded theory based research, the orientation of which is pattern seeking, proved a useful approach in the study of transitions. The potential for sense-making of these seemingly ad hoc experiences and the development of a set of useful transition activities and patterns encouraged me to continue with the research project.

Initially, I started with a framework that anticipated differences in succession events and processes dependent upon timing of the event relative to the constitutional cycle. As discussed in the opening chapters, agency executive tenure rates averaging three years meant many transitions were not directly related to the tenure of the Governor. That the
transition circumstances differed based upon timing was evident through the circumstanc-
es of these directors in a constitutional change, a midterm change, and two end-of-
constitutional-term succession events. The transitions differed on the basis of general
orientation and on specific transition actions. These quotations illustrate some of these
differences: Constitutional Change:

I think you start with the premise that particularly where you have a
change in political party, you don’t really have succession, you have
discontinuity. And it’s intentional. And studied. I mean there’s an
attempt to bring the previous administration to a conclusion and to start fresh. I’m certain that’s true when there’s a change in political party, I’m
also certain, almost as certain, that it’s true where you have someone of
the same political party taking over. Now this is particularly true at the
gubernatorial level. Governors and in general elected officials don’t get
any particular joy out of running somebody else’s agenda. So there’s an
abrupt change there.

For middle-of-term transitions, the whole of government is not in flux, as all are
trying to learn the systems and roles:

In some sense it’s very different because it’s only one disruption within
a much larger picture of continuity and regularity. So if you changed
cabinet officials, if you’re changing state government from top to bottom
at least in the executive branch, changing all the cabinet heads, I think it’s
much tougher than if you’re only changing one. Cause you at that point
you have one person, assuming that person didn’t come from a cabinet
agency, it’s even easier if that person comes from within the cabinet cause
it’s a matter of moving from one slot to another. But you know, the lines
of communication are in place at that point, people know in the Govern-
or’s office pretty much.

This transition description can be contrasted with another director’s circumstance,
who at the end of the second term was departing early.
Because we are so clearly in the middle of something, it’s not like it’s a new job. And what we’re in the middle of is so complex, that you really need to be able to understand it, and he [the Governor] knows that there are eight more months and we’ve got things we want to get done yet, that really need to be in place in order to institutionalize this, so to miss a beat would have been a real major problem.

The distinctions between these two succession circumstances indicate that the job of the successor and the impact of the succession event on the agency can be much different near the end of the term than at the constitutional change in office. Within end-of-term succession events, the level of agency activity and remaining agenda influence the role of the end-of-term successor and the transition process.

Distinctions also existed between types of succession events and transitions timed near the end of the constitutional term. The end-of-term succession event described as "placeholding" was typified by this late-in-the-gubernatorial-term appointee:

I have already begun to set in my mind that every time I look at something, I’m thinking, I’m only here till January. I’m basically here till December in the sense that it’s the end of the year and the end of the, you know. And if this makes sense or not, how does it make sense? Not that we can do it, but, how does it fit in?

These differences in succession experiences relating to the timing of the event with the constitutional office of the governor reinforced the research sampling framework identified earlier in this chapter. One of the factors included in the development of the purposive or deliberate sample and the selection of cases was the relationship of the transition to the constitutional change through a succession-event-timing variable that reflected first and second terms of the governor. As implied above, this dimension was
important throughout the four components of the transition process. For purposes of
document organization, the transition components identified are Selection of the
Successor, Transition Preparation, Transition Processes, and Transition Consequences.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Limitations of this study arise from choices in three areas: the general research site,
pre-set boundaries of the study set in the development of midrange theory, and limitations
arising from study design circumstances. These limitations are now considered.

Limitations Arising from the Research Site

The choice to study succession events and transition processes in the state agencies
in Ohio during the years 1983-1989 limits the transition experiences to directors serving
a two-term governor of one political party, a party that had been outside the governor's
office for sixteen of the previous twenty years. Ohio has a history of two-term
governors, the last single term governor having served from 1970-74. While two-term
governors are typical for this state, this potentially limits the study. For example,
Hamilton and Biggart's (1984) study of gubernatorial administrations in California
compares the administrations of ideologically different Governors Reagan and Brown
from the view of the operation of the Governor's office. Continuation of the Ohio
studies of state agency executive transitions into the new gubernatorial administration
entering office in January 1991 is a logical extension of the research. A related
extension is to study the transition process in a state with different retention norms for
directors during circumstances of gubernatorial change.
Limitations Arising from Research Topic Boundaries

As discussed in chapters one through three, naturalistic inquiry and grounded theory underlie this study of executive succession events and transition processes in the state agencies of Ohio from the perspective of the agency directors’ roles of predecessor and successor. Approached from the perspective of grounded theory, pattern seeking within and across the transition experiences of the directors gives rise to the identification of transition process activities. While contributing to the development of a clearer understanding of the transition experience from the perspective of agency director, this methodology also bounds the study.

For example, research on the topic of executive succession in the private sector has focused on the outcomes of the executive succession event, notably financial measures, with the intent on developing contingency theories of chief executive officer replacements—the hiring of insiders or outsiders under certain performance conditions with the expectations of changes in performance. This study does not replicate these methodologies, which say little about the process of the transition that follows the succession event. So, while there is a chapter included in this study about the consequences of the succession event and the transition processes, the material reflects the directors’ views of consequences experienced by themselves, by agency personnel, and reflections of the change in the structure of the organization. The study does not measure in a systematic and linear manner the performance consequences of succession events. A study specifically designed to identify performance and other consequences in a systematic way could be designed post-hoc for the events in this study and for future succession events.
that will occur in these agencies.

Similarly, the research is not focused at the policy level. The interview guide was not focussed in this direction, and background on beginning policy initiatives did not surface sufficiently in the interviews to enable a detailed analysis of this aspect of taking charge of an agency. Additional research could be done in this area.

Although the literature review identifies selected work done in the state of Ohio and more generally on the topic of public sector strategic management, as reflected in the depth of the review, this study does not measure the implications of executive transition for strategic management. The literature on strategic management provides a context for the public sector succession events and transition processes in the management of a state agency. Leadership change is a variable in the strategic management of a general purpose government agency—a broader framework than the executive succession process (see Wechsler 1989; Wechsler and Backoff 1986; 1987). The midrange theory that is the focus of this research rests below strategic management at the level of a particular organizational phenomenon (see Pinder and Moore 1979). The impact of these and future succession events on the strategic management initiatives of the agency is an area that should be investigated further, and data collected for this study should contribute to that goal.

A restriction of the study relates to its placement at the state level. The extent of parallels to executive transitions at the local and federal levels are not identified in this study. The study could contribute as background to a broader theory of executive transitions, generalizable to other states and to all cases of public sector executive
Another boundary of the study relates to the role the critical action theory research. The perspective is identified in this chapter in the Louis framework seen in Figure 8. While a critical action theory perspective was an initial ideal for the research project, the requirements for continued conversation with the number of directors were too great to pursue this effort. Movement of the research on executive transitions into the critical action research approach would advance the practice of administration, and is another important direction for future research.

Limitations Arising From Study Design Circumstances and Research Practice

One change in plans from the initial research proposal was the decision to limit the scope of the research project primarily to the views of the directors. As noted above, interviews with senior level staff (assistant directors, acting directors, or director's office staff members who viewed multiple directors) were included in the sample. However, for analysis purposes, the focus was limited to the perspectives of directors in the succession /transition process. Future research could focus on other perceptions, such as Farquhar's (1991) study of the staff perceptions of outsider appointees of Legal Rights agencies. Employee and stakeholder views would be of interest in obtaining additional perspectives on transition events. This decision was made on the basis of time requirements, with the understanding that the transition experiences described in the study would be limited primarily to the views of the present and former directors.

The decision by the researcher to generally limit the perspectives on the issues presented in this chapter to those of the directors, rather than to obtain views of
stakeholders and representatives of the governor’s office is a related methodological point. Justification for this limitation relates to the emphasis in this research of the interpretations of the directors guiding their actions in the transition process, particularly guiding the theory-in-use of the successor. As a second, possibly complementary viewpoint, access to the governor’s office would be preferred, but was not sought. In part, this choice relates to the criterion of research practicality and the need to call a halt to the ever-expanding nature of a qualitative research project (Fetterman 1989). Further study of the qualifications of cabinet level executives, appointment agreements, and desirable actions from the viewpoint of the governor, if undertaken, could be contrasted with the views of the successors presented here. General studies on state government management undertaken from the governor’s office perspective include Weinberg’s (1977) study of the Sargent administration and Hamilton and Biggart’s (1984) study of California’s Brown and Reagan administrations.

This study is based upon the recollections of current and former agency directors about the selection processes and agreements which occurred relating to their tenures as directors of state agencies of Ohio. As such, they are subject to the difficulties of retrospective recall and reconstructed evidence identified earlier in this chapter. Further and more importantly, they represent only the views of the directors, which for purposes of this research are considered to be the views which influenced the action taker at the time of action.

The patterns which unfolded concerning these topics reflected the actions which could be identified from the selective sample. Problems such as self-censure of the
identification of socially unacceptable or illegal behaviors possibly could have occurred during the interviews. Items which were considered inappropriate for discussion were likely not released to the researcher. This type of limitation could be reduced by follow-up interviews and by cultivating rapport between researcher and research consultant.

One weakness of the selective sample as outlined in the methodological chapter was in the inclusion of a limited number of extreme political types and in those who were convicted of crimes committed during office. Therefore, patterns relating to such activities could well be missing from the research project. Such activities are viewed as supplemental and outside the main stream of transition processes. Should access be granted at a later date to such cases, patterns relating to these cases should be compared to the current findings, and a research note on these activities should be prepared.

In addition, the lack of participation of former directors whose agencies were in trouble at the time of their departure limited the study of this circumstance.

In review, the long term theoretical objective of the research is to advance a theory of public sector executive transitions by systematically considering transition patterns across individual actions over time, within a given organization, across administrations, states or levels of government. The research effort to date describes the patterns found in executive transitions in the state of Ohio.
CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, it has been shown how the paradigmatic commitments of the researcher, and the nature of the research question necessarily impact upon the goals and structure of the research design and the practice of research. Consideration to these topics has been given both at the general level and specifically applied to the present research project on executive succession events and transition processes in the state agencies of Ohio. Procedures and standards for the conduct of inquiry from a naturalistic and grounded theory approach were explored, and limitations of the study were addressed.

Before beginning the presentation of the data, a final consideration regarding the validity of ideographic, qualitative research is warranted. There recently has been renewed consideration on the issue of the validity of idiographic qualitative research based upon the stories of those in action. Hummel (1991:38) is representative of this attention:

The fundamental criterion of validity for a story is therefore the ability of the listener to literally "recognize"--in the original sense of knowing again--the familiar even in an unfamiliar story. . . . In fact, relevance standards are epistemological standards of the first order, because they ask the question: "Does this ring true?"

Similarly, Richardson (1990:35), writes "validity, though, will rest, finally, in whether what I present resonates with the experiences of other[s]." These standards are appropriate for this study of public sector executive transitions. The presentation of the findings relies heavily on the words of the directors as the transition experience unfolds.
The criteria for validity as advanced by Hummel (1991) and Richardson (1990) should be kept in mind throughout this review of state agency executive transition process.

For purposes of research presentation, the transition components identified are Selection of the Successor, Transition Preparation, Transition Processes, and Transition Consequences.\textsuperscript{32}
Chapter III Notes

1. For example, researchers in the field of leadership are in the midst of a paradigmatic debate (see literature review) about the assumptions we make about the world in which we live and work and the implications of these assumptions for research and how we come to know and understand the social world. For those with substantial investment in the positivist paradigm, consideration and possible acceptance or adoption of these alternative views is often a difficult process (Hunt, Baliga, Dachler and Schriesheim 1988).

2. Naturalistic inquiry is defined by Bogden and Biklen (1982: 212) as "the description and analysis of complex experiences." Emic inquiry is described by Fetterman (1989:30-31) as "the insider's or native's perspective of reality... (compelling) the recognition and acceptance of multiple realities." In contrast, the etic perspective is the external, social-scientific perspective on reality" (Fetterman 1989:32). Ideographic research "treats each individual as a universal singular, seeks to study experience from within" (Denzin 1989b:141). It "requires interpretation of data in terms of the particulars of the case because different interpretations are likely to be meaningful for different realities; and because interpretations depend so heavily for their validity on local particulars, including contextual factors and investigator-respondent interaction" (Lincoln and Guba 1985:42).

3. Although later works on succession utilize a reductionist approach of aggregate data from succession incidents (eg. Eitzen and Yetman 1972; Helmich and Brown 1972; Reinganum 1985; Virany and Tushman 1986), earlier studies utilize the case approach to better understand the process of executive succession (Argyris 1952; Carlson 1961, 1962; Guest 1962; Gouldner 1952). Gephart (1978) suggests an integration of our understanding of process with the analytical approaches that are presently flourishing.

4. While the terminology is used for the research framework, in the writing of this text (chapters four through eight), the research consultants are referred to by their roles--e.g. director, successor, predecessor. Early readers found the terminology annoying and confusing in the presentation of data.

5. Argyis, Putnam, and Smith (1985:81-82) provide the following distinctions of theories of action: "Espoused theories are those that an individual claims to follow. Theories-in-use are those that can be inferred from action. Espoused theory and theory-in-use may be consistent or inconsistent, and the agent may or may not be aware of any inconsistency."

6. The exception being when an inter-party election had occurred with the incumbent being defeated.

7. For example, alternative sampling strategies such as "reputational analysis" (Olshfski 1989) might have been utilized if a more deductive approach was desired. In fact, a modification of reputational analysis occurred through the snowball sampling technique. However, reputational analysis is not the sole basis for sample selection in this study.

9. Although terminology differs, others (Fetterman 1989; Marshall and Rossman 1989; Strauss 1987) prescribe a similar integration of grounded and general theory.

10. Although terminology differs, others (Fetterman 1989; Marshall and Rossman 1989; Strauss 1987) prescribe a similar integration of grounded and general theory.

11. Core categories are those that are central, appear frequently, relate easily to other categories, have clear implications for general theory, allow maximum variation.

12. Advice concerning the development of theoretical memos include keeping the memos and data separate, interrupt coding for memo writing, modify as research develops, keep list of emergent codes nearby, follow through on problematic digressions, talk conceptually about the substantive codes, indicate when idea is saturated.

13. During the practice of constant comparison, the use of techniques such as constructed alternativism (Pinder and Moore 1979) often forces a discrete choice on the part of the researcher: "a and not b" is a decision that must often be considered by the researcher. However, as Ford and Backoff (1988) have advanced, organizations and organizational members are often simultaneously engaging in both aspects or qualities. Consequently, a framework such as Quinn's (1988) competing values assessment is useful in resolving the issue of choice.

14. These choices were necessary due to time requirements in the production of transcripts with agency directors.


16. The transcription of one forty-five-minute interview can produce as many as forty pages and take eight hours or more in time to complete (Fetterman 1989; Werner and Schoepfie 1987).

17. See questions on public sector executive succession in the state of Ohio listed in Appendix.

18. Some directors did not appear to be comfortable starting out with the level of abstraction required by the second question. The first question listed dealt with the level of the individual, and most were comfortable telling their story.

19. This was the case with one director who left the agency in difficult times. In an attempt to consider the "demise attribution" variable, it was quite difficult to have the timing and reason for departure articulated.
20. Alternative Conceptualizations of Interview Research Validity: While case studies of the management of public and private organizations have frequently utilized retrospective reports of managers and leaders as the source of information (see for example, Bauer, Pool and Dexter, 1950; Kotter, 1982; Mintzberg et al., 1976; Pennings, 1975; Peters and Waterman 1982; Selznick, 1947), not all have adopted the interpretivist view in the value of the interviewee's perspective. Huber and Power (1985) reflect the logical positivist perspective on the validity of the research interview in identifying four reasons informants may give inaccurate information, implying the potential for distance from "the truth": 1) they are motivated to do so; 2) their perceptual and cognitive limitations result in inadvertent errors; 3) they lack critical information about the event of interest; and 4) they have been questioned with an inappropriate data elicitation procedure.

The potential sources of "inaccuracy" can be overcome by taking specific actions in study design. The informant selection problem can be minimized by using a sampling of respondents both to validate views and to identify location and role perspectives (Dexter 1970; Huber and Power 1985; Phillips 1981; Selznick, 1947). Problems of recall can be limited by seeking the proper source, as determining the bounds of experience and by limiting the time lapse following the experience (Dexter 1970; Lincoln 1985; Selznick 1947; Yin 1985).


22. This more tenuous "demise attribution" of the predecessor related to the predecessor departure circumstances described above. Reduced to the more general categories of Voluntary/Involuntary as the nature of the predecessor's departure in the initial sampling matrix, both considerations are presently dependent upon the shared interpretations of the research team for case placement selection criteria. While data are available from the strategic management project, utilization of these attributions could result in overreliance on the judgments of the researchers, when in the interpretivist framework, it is the views of the participant through which knowledge and understanding are gained. These demise attributions were used as a sampling guide, but were considered entirely preliminary; rather, a strategy of categorization following field interviews is appropriate when consultants' views are considered. Completion of the demise attribution scenarios can be handled by an expansion of the sample if the matrix is incomplete. Alternatively, it may be discovered that other demise attributions are made by the participants, in which case the demise framework would be reevaluated.

23. Specifically, nine of the forty succession experiences occurred following a gubernatorial transition.

24. In one case, the director strategized spanning the gubernatorial administrations, and continued the work of the agency rather than prepare for a potential leadership transition.
25. One advantage to the presence and participation of a second researcher was the double recording of the interviews (needed in some cases as batteries ran out or technical problems occurred). A second benefit was the ability to shift the dialogue to the second researcher while the first researcher considered the remaining topics on the interview schedule.

26. The questions in exhibit B consist of core questions asked of each director on the area of transition process experiences of the directors. Each question was systematically reviewed for anticipated purpose using a matrix of questions and anticipated outcome or purpose and its relationship to theory development. Discrepancies between researcher anticipated directions for particular subjects and the directions questions were taken by the research consultant/directors were the subject of journal entries during the interview analysis. These pre-interview question constructions became a part of the researcher’s text one documentation of researcher beliefs.

Where time and interest permitted, additional questions on leadership and personal background, and state government and management issues were also asked.

27. This was a benefit to a second person in the interview setting: shifting of the dialogue to the second researcher allowed consideration of the remaining topics to be covered.


29. The measurement of public sector organizational performance is more complicated than the private sector, in which statistical measures of meaning to the researcher such as return on investment, win-loss records, etc. are used. In the public sector usually no such profit measure is available. Strategic reports and budget documents often provide goal statements and it is conceivable that performance measures could be collected. However, these measures are generally provided for public or purse-string-holder consumption and are unlikely to provide useful information (Huber and Power 1985). It is proposed instead that the interview respondents, both internal and external to the formal boundaries of the organization, assess organizational effectiveness, construed to include the following: smoothly running internal operations, satisfaction of constituents, absence of scandal surrounding the organizations, overall effectiveness, and a general feeling of good will expressed by organizational members, clients, and external stakeholders. (Media coverage could also be used for triangulation purposes.)

Specifically, the model of organizational performance developed by Robert Quinn (1988) is utilized in the analysis of organizational performance. These data are contained within the existing data base for the period 1983-present.

30. See interview schedule in Appendix B. These questions were generally not asked directly. There was an attempt to use these question areas as guides, with the hope that the research collaborator would cover each of these areas in a manner that was meaningful to their experiences. In some instances, the interview was more structured than others. If the topic was not an emergent one initiated by the research consultant, the question was asked directly.
of the respondent.

31. Despite one of the longest tenures of the governor's cabinet in number of years, this director is leaving early because it is prior to the absolute end of the governor's term, an attribution that is made by the media and the general public.

32. The linearity imposed by the chapter organization is misleading: the transition processes experienced by directors were non-linear.
CHAPTER IV
SUCCESSOR SELECTION PROCESSES

This chapter describes the various circumstances and processes which lead to the selection and assignment of agency directors to their positions. While the focus of this research project was primarily on the transition experiences of executives in the state agencies of this midwestern state, the circumstances and processes leading to the succession event were found to be important, for they influenced the theories-in-use of the successors as portrayed in the Wechsler and Rainey (1988) model, described in the literature review and displayed in Figure 3, chapter two.

Specifically, the circumstances leading to selection as director were factors in the theory-in-use of each successor concerning the approach to transitioning into the agency. For this reason, the directors were questioned concerning how they arrived in their positions, and about any agreements concerning their general approaches to agency management and authority which were negotiated with the appointing authority prior to or early in their tenure in office. Their responses to these questions constitute the foundation for this chapter.

The primary focus of this chapter concerns the events and circumstances leading to the announcements of the appointments of the agency directors. Looking across the
cabinet appointees from the study period, the chapter begins with an overview and modification of the appointment types which were presented in the methodological chapter and used in the sample selection. The comparison of the director's views of self versus the preliminary sampling framework is important in a grounded theory approach to data analysis, assuring that the sampling framework corresponds with the directors views of self and is not solely an artifact of the researcher's preconceived framework.

Related to these discussions on selection processes are considerations by the directors of the varying characteristics of appointees and the differing qualifications for the position which candidates might bring to the job, or might need to perform satisfactorily in a position. These characteristics and qualifications of appointees are considered from the viewpoints of the directors after or while experiencing the requirements of the position.

Directors were also asked about the conditions of acceptance which they negotiated prior to entering the job, as these conditions can influence the transition processes. Finally, directors were asked the reasons for their acceptance of the position.

In each of the topical areas—candidate search processes, qualifications, acceptance conditions and reasons, patterns were evident in the responses. The chapter is organized around the patterns and the variables identified which, from the view of the researcher, related to these patterns. Further research in the area of executive transition processes would focus on investigating these variables and their influence on the processes of succession. With these limitations and considerations in mind, attention to the selection qualifications and appointment types of the successors begins.
SUCCESSOR APPOINTMENT TYPES

The general theoretical framework for public sector succession types which framed the initial case selection was not modified in any substantial manner during the research process. Table 7 (Chapter 2) summarizes the taxonomic classification which served as a sampling matrix in this research on public sector executive succession and transition processes in state agencies.

Preliminary succession event classifications and sampling criteria included: Cross-Cabinet Balance, including Political (Insider, Outsider to Gubernatorial Regime); Representational (Minority, Female, Geographic Region, Other, such as out-of-state in origin); and Professional (General or Specific in expertise). A second sampling criterion, Successor Origin or Agency Experience (Insider, Outsider, or Returnee to the organization) arises from the extant literature on executive succession. The preliminary sampling strategy also reflected the Constitutional Timing of the event (Constitutional, Midterm or End-of-term in timing); and a preliminary assessment of Predecessor Departure Circumstances (Voluntary or Involuntary in nature). The predecessor departure circumstance was later dropped from consideration in the sample selection process or substituted by an "agency condition" variable. The non-mutual exclusivity of these categories is an important consideration; indeed the ideal candidate may well have attributes in all three of these categories. For example, one female director viewed herself more strongly as political than as a female appointed as a part of an effort to enhance cabinet diversity. This reflects the polythetic nature of the categories.
A characteristic of the process of grounded theory and data collection is the iterative reconsideration of concepts, including the testing of preliminary frameworks against those arising in a grounded manner in the field (Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990). In the process of this iterative examination, it was found that most of the research consultants revealed their self views of placement on the above-described appointment-type dimensions.

The qualifications identified by the directors relate well to the case selection matrix presented in the methods chapter of this document. The qualifications provide an opportunity to test the research sampling framework against the self views of the current and former directors.¹ This is one of the first tasks which is explored in this chapter on selection processes for the position of director of a state agency in Ohio.

There were important and clear distinctions in how the directors viewed themselves on the dimensions. The categorizations described above in the cross-cabinet balance sampling criteria (political, representational, and professional) were the focus of the self views of the directors’ orientations to their positions.

The validity of the categorizations of political, representational, and professional as sample selection criteria will now be exemplified with excerpts from the interviews which illuminate the directors’ self views. If additional clarity is brought to the categorization, the descriptions and views of others in the cabinet or personnel in the agency will be provided to supplement and corroborate the self placements. The self observations were checked against others’ viewpoints, including non-directors in the sample as well as research team collaborators with knowledge of the project. The view of self affects how
the job and the transition process are approached by the successor. These linkages will be demonstrated in this and subsequent chapters.

The first appointment type considered is the appointment based primarily in political considerations, in which the successor has personal or political loyalty and emotional commitment to the governor.

**Political (Insider, Outsider to the Gubernatorial Regime) Appointees**

One of the interview contexts in which directors' views of self relating to the position were revealed was in response to the question "How did you come to the position of director of agency x?" This question elicited stories pertaining to these initial circumstances. Illustrative of the political insider:

If I were to objectively view my part in this process, I was kind of a gimme. I was an elected woman official from a rural area who had been with the Governor and his campaign since 1974. I had the kinds of things that the political system finds is important, which is loyalty and the ability to kind of stick through. I didn’t have the formal credentials for a lot of cabinet positions in the traditional way. But I think that the Governor felt that I was somebody he wanted to bring into his cabinet. Even if he didn’t feel that way I had enough supporters who felt that way.

As noted earlier, many of those who obtained their positions through close allegiance with the governor were limited participants in the study.² Appointees with strong political orientations and without generalist management interests and expertise may have approached the transition process with different emphases. It would be possible to have obtained a position for political considerations and yet approach the management of the agency from a professional perspective, as will be seen below.
The self view affected how the job and the transition process were approached. For example, this director related that he ran (and lost) for a statewide political office during the gubernatorial election year:

Let me put it another way. I ran on the same ticket in the primary with the Governor.

From this statement, it might be expected that the speaker would adopt a politicized approach to agency transitions, an approach that is frequently associated with immediate turnover of staff. However, his statement demonstrates why it is important to ask the directors about their own self views:

I had excellent cooperation. Even though I’ve been in politics for a long time, I’m basically a non-political person.

He further described a willingness to work with holdover political appointees within the agency until alternative situations could be found, disregarding the transition advice of political experts.

During the interviews, successors frequently offered their views of the orientation of the predecessor, a topic that will arise again. Differences in background were the general source of such comments, and they reflected the relationship that the successor maintained with the predecessor:

The leadership of this department was not substantive in terms of: the expertise was either politically based, or based in what I call the frills around what people need as opposed to the guts of what is necessary.
Representational Appointees

The second orientation in cabinet appointees was the appointment made to the cabinet on a representational basis. These included appointments made to demonstrate cross-cabinet balances for minorities and females, and appointments made on the basis of geographic region—within and out-of-state origin.

The assignment of representational appointees was one situation in which discrepancies existed between self views and the views of others. The directors may not have recognized their backgrounds as a primary reason for their own appointment. The directors often volunteered views of the appointment bases of others in the cabinet. During the research analysis process, where the discrepancies between accounts existed, they were noted and reasons were considered for the discrepancies.

Directors whose comments were emphasized in the development of the representational appointment analysis included members of the initial appointments selection committee at the gubernatorial constitutional change, a senior member of the governor’s staff, key participants in midterm selection processes, and the directors. For the study period 1983-1990, the concept of obtaining a cross-cabinet balance on representational bases was uniformly confirmed by the consultants, as evidenced by the comment of this member of the initial appointments committee:

If we didn’t send him a Black or an Hispanic and a woman along with the three that we always sent for him to interview, he would not like that at all and, well, we learned, you just didn’t do it. But in the beginning, he’d make you go find some more diverse types.
As Hamilton and Biggart (1984) record in their study of gubernatorial transitions in California, the emphasis and definition of representational appointments vary by governor and philosophy. In the time period studied, the directors observed that the cabinet diversity criteria were important to the governor, but often attributed negative consequences in circumstances when the only criterion for selection was the representational balance across the cabinet.

One of the problems, I think, with the Governor is he tried to be all things to all people. He tried to look at things geographically, he tried to look at it on a basis of race, he tried to look at it on the basis of getting females, and I think that created a problem. I think some of the minorities were not qualified. I think with women, some of the same things were true.

One lesson to use . . . is that you’ve got to temper your political situation. The best qualified people for the job. And while you like to have a good representative portion of minorities and women in the cabinet, you don’t sacrifice quality just to meet the EEO mandates.

He was active in the campaign and was black and they were looking for a slot for him . . . I think it’s good to have a good representative group but you also want to have people that will be able to do the job well.

An out-of-state origin was one of the possible representational backgrounds in the sample selection:

I felt that he had a lot of good qualified talent around Ohio. But the Governor did a broader search. He looked beyond Ohio's borders and I suppose that’s good in many respects. You’re trying to hit the broadest possible input for the best people that you can find, but at the same time there are a lot of good people sitting right in your own backyard that you don’t have to do such a broad search.
For agencies which were not in crisis at the time of selection, being an out-of-state resident or a recent resident to the state could negatively impact selection chances:

She was from out-of-state so people were not willing to recognize her on her own credentials.

Those from out-of-state who were selected faced extra difficulties in the transition process in gaining initial credibility with stakeholders, other cabinet members, and agency members.

I think initially there were all the stories in the paper about bringing this out-of-state woman to run the budget office, and of all the offices, why would he bring an out-of-state person in to run the budget office.

Out-of-state appointees were generally able to overcome these initial apprehensions, and such appointments had the advantage of bringing new perspectives to the state. For situations of agency crisis, an out-of-state professional was one approach to bringing credibility to an agency.

She really hadn’t spent any time in the state. So she did have a different perspective on things which was interesting.

Other appointments reflected stakeholder influences, such as the business-labor or industry-regulatee balance.

And interestingly enough, because my background is so different than the past director, we could acknowledge that. Because I don’t come from the industries; I come from the administration part.
Appointees of Professional Backgrounds (General or Specific Expertise)

Two types of professional expertise were identified in the sample of appointees. One group included highly respected generalist administrators, many of whom were old timers in the political system. The first quotation is from a director who considered herself to be a generalist administrator:

As a matter of fact, the day he offered me the job, the way he offered it to me was, he said "what are you going to say to the newspaper reporters at the press conference when they say, how can you be commissioner when you haven’t been a CPA or you haven’t been an attorney?" And essentially what he had enumerated to me was that I was hired to be a manager.

Really the commissioners here have traditionally not been particularly knowledgeable about [the policy area] per se. We’re chosen from administrative or political or activist experiences and not really from some of the same choices that would go into just general administrative as opposed to subject matter knowledge.

The second group of professional appointees held credentials in a specific policy area. The sharpest appointment type distinctions were drawn by directors who viewed their expertise in a specific policy area. As described in the section above on political-in-origin appointees, these distinctions related substantially to the transition processes and the successor-predecessor relationship.

First of all, I have never been a political person. . . . So basically I’ve always purposely tried to keep myself away from the political process. I’ve looked at myself as a scientist. You know, trying to do a job. And obviously once you get in this job, you can’t divorce yourself like that and you find out you’ve really got to become a political player, I guess and it’s always kind of bothered me.
The polythetic nature of the appointment categories is exhibited this statement:

Let me say the personal side of this first. I have known the Governor since probably 1969-1970. . . . If the Governor was not going to select me, it seemed to me it was because of political reasons, not on substantive grounds. I couldn’t imagine who was going to have better credentials than I was.

Not limited to statements about themselves or others, the directors also provided validation at a general level of typology:

People who end up as the director of [agency x] often times are just chosen for administrative ability. But people who are chosen to head [other departments] usually have some developed expertise in the area. And I think part of that comes from old statutory requirements that those folks have a medical degree or some other type of formal educational background.

The initial professional typology in the sampling matrix was enhanced beyond the generalist administrator category during the research process. A non-director study participant described the "super star":

A type of person that’s just so recognized as being a quality administrator that you ask them first, and then if they say yes, you try to find a key spot for them. . . . Somebody that you just automatically think of because they’re so good at what they do that you want them in your administration.

Selection of Insiders or Outsiders

Selection of inside successors was generally limited at the gubernatorial change of office, when political debts are the highest and the degree of trust of agency insiders is low, particularly in circumstances of change of political party. A director who
participated in the initial screenings for cabinet directors:

We sort of had an unwritten, I don’t remember how strong a mandate this was, but we weren’t going to take somebody from inside the agencies, I mean we just figured they’d have too much history or made too many enemies or friends, so that was a sort of an unwritten thing . . . we weren’t to do that, we tried not to do that. We had to have some acting for a while till we filled all of them.

Similarly, this departing director anticipated the following in the forthcoming gubernatorial change:

I think that the directorship of this department is going to be seen as far more important to the next governor than it has been to previous governors in terms of making the appointment, because of the increased budget, because of the increased visibility and so they’re likely whoever they are likely to want to appoint somebody who is one of their folks, as opposed to identifying somebody internally who can actually pick up the ball and run with.

The background distinctions described throughout this section are related to the approaches taken by successors during their transition processes, particularly in their relationships with their predecessors, in the formation of an executive team, and in the quick study process that is necessary to comprehend the agency, its people, and its policies. These actions are the subject of chapters six and seven. The next topic, which also influences the transition process is the experience of the successor during the selection process.
CANDIDATE SEARCH PROCESSES

While the search process was not the primary focus of this study, the topic of how cabinet level searches were conducted was addressed from the interest of the relationship of the search processes to the transition of the selected successor. Directors were asked about the processes that led to their nomination and acceptance of the position, and patterns of selection processes emerged through the discussions. Certain selection processes were found to be of assistance to the successors in transitioning into their positions.

The variables relating to these patterns in search processes included the following: timing of the event, priority of the agency to the governor, agency performance, the availability of strong internal candidates, job requirements, agency appointment structure, level of stakeholder activity, visibility of the agency, availability/desirability of political in-group candidates, length of time available for decision and selection, and number of cabinet-level openings at a given time. These variables are listed in Table 14, which summarizes the patterns of these factors in contributing to the use of a particular selection process.

Detailed description of the successor selection processes is beyond the scope of this study, requiring inquiry of the governor and members of the selection teams. The variables of greater import to the selection process are addressed below.

Timing of the Event

The agency director selection processes varied according to the timing of the succession event. General descriptions of the selection processes that occur early,
middle, and late in the gubernatorial term are provided below, from the interest of the types of selection processes experienced by the executives. Variation occurred in these selection processes on the basis of other factors as identified in Table 14.

Table 14
Factors Affecting Selection Processes for Agency Director

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constitutional Timing of the Event</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Constitutional</th>
<th>Middle of Term</th>
<th>End of Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of Time for Decision/Selection</td>
<td>Long-</td>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>N/A Ltd., Mod.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short-</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority of Agency to Governor</td>
<td>High-</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Ltd., Mod.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low-</td>
<td>Ltd., Mod.</td>
<td>Ltd., Mod.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of Acting Director</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Performance</td>
<td>High-</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate-</td>
<td>Mod., Ltd.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low-</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crisis-</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Director Turnover Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod., Ltd.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Internal Candidates</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Job Requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
<td>Mod., Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Appointment Structure (Non-Gubernatorial or Mixed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Comp., Mod.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Stakeholder Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mod., Comp.</td>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Ltd., Mod.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desirability of Political In-Group Candidate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Cabinet Level Openings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
<td>Ltd.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table of Abbreviations:
N/A- Not Applicable
N/P- No Pattern
Comp.- Comprehensive Search (extended in time and participation of outsiders)
Mod.- Moderate Search (shorter in time duration, some outside participation)
Ltd.- Limited Search (limited search for candidates, often informal process)
Changes of cabinet officials coinciding with the start of a new gubernatorial administration generally involved the use of appointment committee(s) and task forces assigned to search for directors of agencies in certain policy areas. In this midwestern state, the tendency has been to delay any intensive search for cabinet positions until the election victory is assured, thereby compressing the time available for candidate searches to the period election-to-inaugural date (approximately two months), or causing delays in the announcement of permanent appointments. Consequently, if the appointment is made during this election-to-inaugural period, searches may lack comprehensiveness. The pressure to name the appointee prior to the inaugural date can be reduced by the installation of an acting director, allowing a comprehensive search for a director to be completed.

The general selection process at the constitutional change was consistent with that described by Hamilton and Biggart (1984:72) who found the appointee qualifications in California under Governor Reagan and Governor Brown to be "some but not too much" policy expertise: the successful candidate represented a balance of technical knowledge, administrative skills, constituency links, political allegiance, and philosophical compatibility with the governor. During the initial appointment period in a gubernatorial transition, political debts and loyalties are the strongest, and across the cabinet, a higher proportion of political-in-orientation appointees occurs (personal political loyalty to the governor or other key political figures).

In the initial appointments process, resumes were solicited from interest groups, professional associations, professionals in specific fields, friends and acquaintances of
selection committee members, and the governor's electoral team and political allies. A screening and interview process was undertaken, with one or more candidates in the final pool invited to meet with the governor. Key stakeholders were scheduled for meetings with the candidates before final selection. The priority of the agency to the governor impacted the extensiveness of the search, with comprehensive searches occurring in agencies of more importance to the governor, provided a political ally was not appointed.

Of the directors in the study who were selected and began their service at the beginning of the constitutional term, most described the selection process as eleventh hour; directors for whom the appointment was made prior to the inauguration date in early January commented that the call from the Governor came within two weeks of the start of the administration.

Such a delayed start in the search process for the director and the transition at the agency level is significant. The likelihood is severely reduced that executive team members can be identified in a time frame which will allow key staff appointees to arrive at the agency simultaneously with the director. The lead time prior to the starting date for the director is so diminished by the selection process time frame that the director may well walk in the door virtually alone:

The biggest issue with any new person coming in, you've got to immediately know who you can count on and whether there is anyone you can count on. Cause it gets pretty lonely if you've got to do this by yourself.

The first person I brought over I hardly knew; I had met her before and she just helped me sort through mail and things. She at least knew the city, which I didn’t. She was about the first one that I knew inside the agency because I brought her, but that was again a couple of weeks after I'd been here.
One of my friends had a friend of hers come down because she didn’t know anything about the agency. And her friend came kind as a trusted ally to run the place.

Successors emphasized getting a management team in place as an important step in the transition process. The compressed time frame for executive selection delays this activity. This will be demonstrated in chapter seven on transition processes.

When succession events occur within the term of a governor, the proximity of the a forthcoming election impacts the type of search process utilized to locate a replacement director. If sufficient time exists, a thorough national or state wide search for candidates may be undertaken. A national or extensive state-wide search would be most likely if the agency has been a low performer in need of "outside professional care," if there are interested and active agency stakeholders, if the agency is important to the governor, if a level of policy expertise is required, and if there is no interest in placing a political ally as director of the agency. These variables were summarized in Table 15, above.

A comprehensive search process within the term of the governor (shortened as midterm) might involve contact with stakeholders throughout the state to receive feedback on agency performance and the selection of a committee involving other cabinet members, stakeholders, agency employees, and outside policy experts. Executive search consultants might also be hired on a contractual basis to assist in the search.

There are advantages for the midterm successor who is screened in this manner. The expanded and more in-depth information obtained in a comprehensive search process is useful in the quick study exercise that the director must undertake in learning the agency and its stakeholders:
Afterwards I sat down with them [the search committee] and some of them gave me the notes and said look, here's things you need to do. Here's what we heard from people around the state. Because there were people on the committee that represented industry, some represented environmentalists and legislators, someone from the Governor's office, someone from the Attorney General's office.

Since the stakeholder communities have been involved in the process, the "honeymoon" period is reasonably extended for the successor, and initial relationships with stakeholders are on their way toward being established.

I did use them the first year. I used them extensively . . . meeting with them to talk over problems. Initially when I came in here I set up a couple of task forces to look at issues like public involvement, district operations, and I chose people from the committee to sit in on the task force. So they were quite helpful. And of course some of those people were in the environmental community. And I was destined to be working with them anyway.

More than for transition events that occur at the beginning or end of an administration, midterm successor selection processes reflect the organizational circumstances and the characteristics and deficiencies of the predecessor. At constitutional changes, unless the agency was a campaign issue, the incoming governor may not have ownership of the organizational circumstance and the perceived predecessor failings nor full awareness of them. For the within-gubernatorial-term succession event, these variables impact the selection process and qualifications sought in the successor. In the selection process, the circumstances of the predecessor's departure, when included in an assessment of organizational situational assessment, can become a part of the selection process and thereby be potentially useful in the development of the "theory-in-use" of the successor.
My predecessor wasn’t very helpful to her staff in terms of getting things done. She was also not interested in taking risks or rocking the boat because she was essentially a political person and she wanted to make sure that there was low visibility and stability and that’s exactly what we didn’t need anymore.

If you go back to my predecessor, there was a lot of discontent with the way he did things.

Other types of selection processes are also likely to occur in the middle of the gubernatorial term. Particularly if there is an election forthcoming and the likelihood of a second term is unknown, a rather informal one-on-one exchange between the governor and potential cabinet members could result in transfers of cabinet members from one agency to another. In most circumstances, such transfers involve generalist administrators or those with a political orientation rather than those with specialized technical expertise. Successors’ reasons for acceptance of transfers between agencies are discussed below in the section on acceptance reasons, and are briefly characterized here as moving to a more desirable position or complying with a request of the governor.

A successor arriving at an agency through an inter-agency transfer, as a within-political-regime player, has the advantage or disadvantage of having established a reputation: agency employees check in the old agency for a report on the transferee:

I think that I had a good reputation. I think that my reputation preceded me and I was well accepted.

One of the problems was that for reasons that I don’t quite understand yet, and maybe I will at some point, a reputation was acquired, as a hatchet person of sorts. So the agency on my arrival was really very apprehensive because of this rumor, of this administrative ogre that was on their way and his assignment was to shape the place up.
The transferring successor has the advantage of having already learned the state government system. In addition, experience in transition in one agency can be carried over to the next agency experience.

It's kind of standard operating procedure. Obviously when you take over any new operation, you want to look at the operation with a kind of critical eye as far as organization, structure, efficiencies, budgets, internal controls, all of those things and then get to know the people.

Toward the end-of-the-term, time constraints serve again to limit the type of search processes which can be undertaken in seeking a successor. Due to the brevity in potential tenure, outside candidates are more limited in supply. An abbreviated search with insiders under consideration and individuals generally known to the department or the governor's office is likely at this time. Informal stakeholder review and consent are still likely to occur. The least comprehensive and informal searches are appropriate for this circumstance of brief tenure.

If we were looking at a four-year commitment, that would be an entirely different situation. Or a two-year commitment, or three years or something. . . . I mentioned a couple of names but this is a real different time of things. Whether or not those things are going to work out, we agreed that we would prefer to have this one thing happen. I don't think it will. Because I don't think the person will take the job.

Agency insiders are often considered candidates in situations of short tenure and in agencies which have experienced high turnover of directors. The predecessors played their strongest roles in the selection process when insiders were considered. The role of the predecessor in the selection process will be discussed below.
In summary, types of selection processes differ according to the circumstances identified in Table 14. A predominant variable in determining the type of search undertaken is the timing of the succession event in relationship to gubernatorial term. Selection process differences contribute to the individual contexts that agency directors encounter when they enter the agency, both through the theory-in-use of the successor and, if the process is one in which stakeholders have participated, by taking a first step in the development of relationships with agency stakeholders.

During the research process, it was found that variation existed in the roles that predecessors chose and were able to take in influencing the selection process. The next section of this chapter addresses the involvement of the predecessor in the selection process. The predecessor’s involvement in the selection of the successor coincided with circumstances which enhanced the likelihood of an in-depth hand-off from the predecessor to the successor.

**Influence of the Predecessor in Candidate Selection Processes**

With several exceptions, for the directors interviewed, predecessor involvement in the selection process was generally limited. The predecessors' roles took one of several forms, beginning with no involvement whatsoever. This occurred when there was an involuntary departure or an unsatisfactory relationship between the governor’s office and the incumbent:

We didn’t have any conversations about that. As I said, I waited for awhile for him to find a successor. . . . I really don’t think I offered any suggestions or thoughts on that. No, he didn’t ask me.
A second level of predecessor involvement in the selection of the successor focused on discussing potential internal and external candidates, including recruiting of internal candidates. In the sample of midterm and end-of-term succession events, this was the most common role for predecessors to serve. However, in many instances, the candidate on the top of the predecessor's list was not the choice of the governor:

I was asked to give a list of names and he was on it. . . . He was not my first candidate.

But I said "okay, here's my thoughts, and you can put those on your long list at the moment and we can develop that."

The recruiting and development of executive competencies of internal candidates was one of the tasks in which many midterm and end-of-term predecessors were active. In part, this related to the staff development and mentoring tendencies of specific directors:

[My predecessor] said I want you to talk to the Governor. I've already mentioned that I think you would be a good replacement. . . . [my predecessor said], talk with the Governor, go through the process and if you're selected fine. And if you're not, then you can be happy staying where you are and you're not giving anything up one way or the other.

In fact, the first conversation I had with [my successor] when I asked her to be [on my senior staff] at the beginning of my time was that I thought she ought to spend several years thinking systematically about why she should not be the next [executive]. That was literally our first conversation. Because I just sensed that she has that kind of capacity and I think that in this last several years she has been trying to fill in some of things that she did not have experience in.

I had a hand in it, I guess, in the sense that there were probably five people in the department who could run an agency. . . . They'd do it all in very different ways, and so what I said to him was exactly that. "Governor, you've got four or five people who could run the department. You've got some choices." And it was up to him to make that choice.
Predecessors in the selected sample who departed prior to the end of the governor's term were often in favor of internal candidates or close allies as successors, thereby reducing the transition period.

I basically felt it would be a mistake to bring an outsider in. I think that the knowledge base thing is important. Where it was in the administration in terms of time, that they would spend months with it transitioning somebody in and we don’t want to do that.

Some predecessors felt strongly that the selection of a successor was the governor’s or appointing authority’s choice and it was therefore not their role to select the successor. This group responded to questions as requested by the appointing authority:

I didn’t have a hand in the sense that I didn’t tell the Governor who to select. I wouldn’t have done that, it wasn’t my role to do that. It’s his selection, not mine.

The two extremes of involvement in the selection process were found in instances in which the governor did not have complete control over the appointment process. In one situation, the retiring predecessor expressed his belief that the appointing authority belonged solely to the board. This was reiterated in interviews with agency members and was related to the culture of the agency:

I felt very strongly that I ought not to try to name the [successor]. I do feel that very strongly. And I didn’t try to. . . I had the chairman ask me later as the chairman of the search committee, as did one member of the search committee ask me just for general counsel on the kind of leadership that I thought they should should be seeking. And I just did that in general conversation. But I never tried to influence. And I’m not now.
In an opposite case, the predecessor viewed as an important part of his role in the transition preparation the development of a list of qualified candidates from which to select his successor, and he subsequently went about recruiting candidates. The first quotation presented below represents his view of his intentions. The successful candidate's comments about the predecessor's recruiting efforts follow:

Once it was accepted that there was going to be a need for a person, the Governor, the Governor's staff, and I actively looked for people to try to recruit them, to put in applications. . . . So that was the first thing that I was involved with was trying to find some people whom I could convince to apply. And to communicate with the Governor and his office as to who those people were that I thought we ought to try to get.

His strategy impacted the eventual successor:

I guess my interest was more than anything generated by [my predecessor's] excitement over what was happening in the [policy area].

The predecessor's involvement in the selection of the successor may increase the potential for the selection of a more qualified applicant through consideration of the predecessor's thoughts on the requirements for the director. Other consequences of predecessor participation are the possibility of greater interaction between predecessor and successor on transition issues and, indirectly, through this predecessor-successor contact, the possibility that executive staff would be maintained for a longer period of time than otherwise, enhancing agency continuity. However, in the event the direction of the agency is perceived by the governor as in need of change, participation of the predecessor would limit the likelihood that candidates interested in changes in agency
direction would be recruited. The conditions or circumstances and the related levels of predecessor participation in the selection process are summarized in Table 15, below.

Table 15
Roles of Predecessor in Selection of Successor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Activity</th>
<th>Conditions or Circumstances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Involvement</td>
<td>* Constitutional Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Unsatisfactory Relationship with Predecessor and Appointing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Predecessor Views as Appropriate Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Advice</td>
<td>* Predecessor Views as Appropriate Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Predecessor’s Views Respected by Appointing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice on Potential Candidates</td>
<td>* Middle and End of Term</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Predecessor’s Views Respected by Appointing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Potential Inside Candidates</td>
<td>* Predecessor Mentoring in Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location and Persuasion Potential Candidates</td>
<td>* Predecessor Views as Part of Transition Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Predecessor’s Views Highly Respected by Appointing Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timing of the selection process

Although it has not been emphasized in the consideration of selection procedures so far, many of the directors found timing to be a problem in the transition process. Specifically, the type and scope of the selection process and the related timeliness of the decision impacted the availability of the predecessor to the successor. For successors
who valued contact with their predecessors in non-constitutionally based succession events, the most helpful transitions involved on-site overlap of the directors from one to several weeks.4

This group indicated that timing was a problem for the predecessor-successor interaction. The problem, at its extreme during constitutional changes, is highlighted by one director's responses to the opening "grand tour" interview question (How would you describe succession events and transition processes in the agencies of state?):

I'm not sure I understand the question. In a political situation there's very little in the way of transition. For example you work with your predecessor a matter of hours or a day or two. It's not like you've worked in the job for a period of time, you've worked your way up through the ranks, and you know all about it before you step in the office. So you almost have a learning process as you undertake whatever position you're talking about.

As indicated in the above director's statement, in constitutional changes, formal transition between predecessor and successor is limited because the predecessor is not available.5 In cases of midterm succession events, the possibility of enhanced transition is greater if the selection of a successor occurs in a timely manner and overlap exists between successor and predecessor, or if an insider is selected as successor.

Summary

The selection process serves as a source of information as the new director begins to learn about the agency. This would be true for returnees as well as outsiders: the perspectives of agency stakeholders on performance can be presented in an accelerated pace in the interview process. Additionally, the nature of the selection process relates
to the transition experience through its generally slow timing and impact on the availability of the predecessor.

The subject now shifts to the qualifications for the position of state agency director.

SUCCESSOR QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications presented in this section reflect the views of the directors, not necessarily those of a selection committee or the governor. The qualifications are based in the experiences of the successors, some who had successful tenures in high-performing agencies and others who experienced less success in particular assignments.

One of the position qualifications which most directors emphasized was the need to be a quick study, or to be a specialist in a policy area germane to the agency assignment. These directors shared their perspectives on the need to be a quick study:

My feeling about going into agencies or into any organization, is that, when you do that you have an obligation in fairly short order to begin to really know and understand the programs, the issues that you're dealing with. And to me that is your own crash course.

(on what characteristics he desired in his successor) I was looking for somebody who was bright, just sheer intelligence-wise, I wanted somebody who was smart and who I thought could be a quick study, because I don't think you get a lot of time to get up to speed. So I was looking for someone who not only had just raw intelligence, but was a quick study. Someone who listens well and picks up and is willing to listen to a variety of people.

The directors held definite ideas on other qualifications required of a successful agency director. There was agreement in some areas; the strongest disagreement on the topic of qualifications occurred between those directors possessing political orientations
to the positions and those with specialized expertise in a policy area pertaining to the agency to which they were assigned. These attributes are listed in Table 16, and are discussed below.

Table 16
Attributes of Successful State Agency Directors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quick Study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generalist Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to Work with Constituencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to Handle Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Taker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Astuteness (Acceptability and Compatibility)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
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</table>

*as identified by position holders

Those holding advanced degrees in a particular policy area strongly distinguished their performance potential over generalist predecessors or successors:

The leadership of this department was not substantive, the expertise was not a substantive expertise, the expertise was either politically based, or based in what I call the frills around what people need as opposed to the guts of what is necessary.

I don’t know if you knew much about [my predecessor’s] administration, but he . . . knew nothing about [the agency subject matter] and said so the day he walked in the door. I don’t know anything about this.
An opposing view held that generalist administrators with good knowledge of state government could do an effective job as an agency director:

I think being a director of a governmental agency requires both some expertise . . . and I think in most cases administrative is more important than technical information. I don’t care where it is. I think the administrative talent will help you more than the technical ability.

The advantage was that I knew so little that I didn’t know what was stupid or what was smart. And a lot of the stuff that was thought to be smart I couldn’t get an adequate explanation of the logic that undergirded it. In some instances it turned out not to be so smart. So what you had was a set of eyes that had a little bit different orientation.

A widely espoused qualification was the ability to work with constituencies:

A lot of it has to do with non-subject-matter skills, understanding the process, and if I had to short-hand it, I’d say that one of the best things about politics is it’s people-oriented. And if you understand constituencies and people and that, you have an opportunity to succeed in a cabinet position.

Beyond the debate on the virtues of being a generalist or specialist administrator, the necessity of being a quick study, the ability to work with constituencies, other qualifications mentioned by the directors included the abilities to see the big picture, to be a forward-looking policy-thinker, to be a risk-taker, to fulfill agency specific statutory qualifications, to have and maintain political acceptability and compatibility, and to handle power.

Executives who functioned in commission structures rather than hierarchical agencies emphasized that additional skills were needed for their roles:
I was looking for someone who would be able to be a consensus builder in the context of the [agency]. Unlike other agencies where you go in, you're the CEO and you have staff that report to you, but you're the boss. At the Commission, while you are the CEO and the boss, as chairman you also cannot really do anything substantively without having two other votes to go with you. So it's a constant process of building consensus. So I thought it was necessary to have a personality that was comfortable with that and not an authoritarian kind of personality.

Several of the directors, particularly those for whom this was the first experience as chief executive, indicated they were initially concerned they might not be qualified for the position of agency director. Qualifications for those in the no-experience group were based on potential:

You know one of my best friends was not qualified, I don't know that I was qualified. I'm not saying I was qualified either . . . . But I guess you've got to look for the person's ability to do a job, not necessarily their training in whatever area you're talking about.

The qualifications discussed above link to the transition processes by increasing the importance of a successful transition experience. Where there are absences in qualifications, the importance of compensating actions during the transition process increases. For example, if the stakeholder connections are already in place by virtue of successor background or experience, the initial efforts required toward the building of stakeholder alliances are reduced. This appeared to be particularly the case for directors who had legislative backgrounds.

As an example, for a successor with limited substantive policy background, the importance of a successful quick study period was greater than for a successor who possessed substantial experience in the issues of the department. In short, the
qualifications for the positions and the successors' matches to these qualifications impact the transition process and permit the identification of potential areas in need of emphasis during the transition period.

Similarly, conditions of acceptance that are negotiated with the appointing authority influence the transition process.

POSITION ACCEPTANCE CONDITIONS

When describing their selection process experiences, the directors were asked a follow up question. Did they meet with the governor prior to their appointment (they did), and if so, what areas of agreement were discussed? In the ensuing interview segments, areas of discussion between the appointing authority (in most cases, the governor) and the would-be successor are considered.

Although not all successors had the same types of discussions or agreements, patterns emerged in the negotiated acceptance conditions based upon agency circumstances, orientation and experience of successor, and timing of the succession event relative to the constitutional change of office of the governor. These patterns are summarized in Table 17, below. In addition, based in their experiences of managing the agencies, there was consensus around several areas which successors indicated they wished they had negotiated.

Consideration of these conditions begins with the agreements concerning the personnel authority of the director. These agreements relate to the transition action, the formation of a cohesive management team.
Agreements about Personnel Authority

Many of the directors indicated they negotiated at the outset of their terms certain guidelines concerning control of the personnel function in their agencies. The personnel-related agreements varied on the basis of agency condition, orientation and experience of successor, and the timing of the succession event relative to the constitutional term of office of the governor. For example, those with previous executive succession experiences typically negotiated for personnel authority; however, other circumstances may have precluded such negotiation. Such deviations generally related to functions of the other variables listed above, such as timing of the succession event. This is a circumstance in which the specificity of individual contexts reinforced the ideographic nature of the research question.

The primary personnel-related agreement area involved constraints on hiring or firing of existing staff. At the constitutional change of office, there was substantial variation in the negotiation of this item. With constitutional changes, particularly changes of political party, there was no need to seek authority to replace "holdovers" on the executive staff, but personnel agreements were made concerning control of the selection processes for and selection of senior staff and lower level employees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Personnel Related Agreements</th>
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<td>Replacement of Key Staff</td>
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<td>Agency Condition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revitalization/High Performance</td>
<td>N/P</td>
<td>Control at Agency Level</td>
<td>Continue Direction of Predecessor</td>
<td>N/P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Performance</td>
<td>N/P</td>
<td>Control at Agency Level</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Low Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Replace</td>
<td>N/P</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation and Experience of Successor</td>
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<td>Insider/Outsider</td>
<td>N/P</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional (Generalist or Specialist)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Control at Agency Level</td>
<td>Generalist: Emphasis on Administrative Issues Specialist: Specific Policy Issues</td>
<td>N/P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Key Staff Replaced</td>
<td>Control Outside Agency</td>
<td>Political Objectives</td>
<td>N/P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representational</td>
<td>N/P</td>
<td>Control Outside Agency</td>
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<td>Control at Agency Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Personnel Related Agreements</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Timing of Event Relative to Constitutional Change of Governor</td>
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<td>General Level Discussion of Campaign Promises</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>N/P</td>
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<td>Structure in Place</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of Term</td>
<td>As Turnover Permits</td>
<td>N/P</td>
<td>Winding Down</td>
<td>Structure in Place</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Provisions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor’s Interest</td>
<td>N/P</td>
<td>N/P</td>
<td>Policy Focus, Support</td>
<td>More Direct Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Governmental Constraints</td>
<td>Limit Placement</td>
<td>N/P</td>
<td>N/P</td>
<td>Structure in Place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N/P = No Pattern
In constitutional term-based succession events, some directors specifically requested such authority, others assumed it would be there, and a third group did not feel it appropriate to negotiate such an item, or did not see a reason to do so.

This director was typical of the group that negotiated to maintain full control of the personnel process at the start of the administration:

Part of my agreement in working in government was that I get to make choices. Among those choices would be who works with me. So that I started out with that understanding. Because I certainly wasn’t going to face the prospect of failure with people who were not of my choosing.

This director’s approach to the handling of referrals for hiring did not necessitate a general agreement with the governor over political intervention in hiring:

I can truthfully say that they never made me take one employee that we did not feel was qualified. . . . If that person [who is sent over for an interview] can’t do whatever job they’re being interviewed for, you don’t hire them.

Typical of a third view, where an agreement on personnel issues would be an inappropriate request of the governor, was this director:

I don’t think he [the Governor] would be open to that. He would be open, if I said I could only stay two years, he would do that, but I can’t imagine putting any other strings on that.

Through the research process, a clear understanding materialized concerning control of key personnel decisions. Early control enhanced successors’ processes of forming a top management team of their own choice— an important factor in the transition process.
For succession events occurring at the time of a constitutional change in office, the agreements hinged upon control of the hiring process. The negotiated areas changed for successors who assumed their positions during the middle of the term, when a second constraint is added: the authority to replace the key staff of their predecessor, many of whom were loyal to the governor. This is one of the key differences between transition processes on the basis of timing of the succession event.

To expand on this distinction, in midterm succession events, some successors perceived there was an obligation to work with the existing staff of the predecessor:

Had I taken this job in January of '83 [at the start of the administration], there would probably be some different people here in the key roles. But I accepted what was in place and tried to work with them.

However, across middle-of-term succession events, there was variation in the negotiation of the replacement of key staff. Affecting the agreements were agency performance conditions, limitations on the total number of employees in the agency or within sections of the agency, and limitations on replacing executive staff members through non-voluntary means. The above limitations were sometimes constraints for those who assumed control of agencies in crisis. Examples of these variations follow.

A middle-of-term successor sought and received authority to replace executive staff in his charge to restore credibility to the agency:

One of the things I made clear to the governor's office was if I came here, I had to get rid of all the deputies and put in my own people. And they agreed.
However, others in similar crisis management circumstances were not provided this luxury:

When I took the job, it was with several caveats. One of them was I could not bring any staff with me, and I could not fire anybody, so, being who I am, I said sure, that’s okay.

Given the relative importance of "building your executive team," which will be discussed in the transition process chapter of this document, the inability to replace staff through involuntary means was a major restriction on successful tenure due to lack of trust and slowly developing working relationships. At a minimum, this restriction served to prolong the transition process.

Eventually what I’ve been able to do, it’s taken three and a half years, I slowly am building my own team of executive staff, if you will. Deputy, chief counsel, chief inspector, a number of people that are in many ways, and built so to speak for the challenge. Not too many people, I think, could endure the kind of brain bashing that you take when you come here.

Non-familiarity with bureaucratic traditions further inhibited the ability of some successors to hire their "own people." This successor did not understand how restrictions related to numbers of employees could be circumvented:

I was told that I would not be able to hire. And in order to hire one person I had to make sure that I moved somebody else out . . . On the other hand, there’s a whole bunch of people around here who work at the pleasure of the director. And I guess that I didn’t understand that I could have been displeased earlier.
Restrictions on the movement of personnel were greatest for successors who assumed leadership of the agency during the midterm and for whom the agency was not in crisis:

I really didn’t make any major change of personnel at all. But what I wanted was my assistant director who I had worked with for ten years. I just wanted someone who I felt comfortable with; when I told him what to do I want him to go out and do it. And I just didn’t feel comfortable with the fellow who was there because he was a nit-picker and he worried about all the wrong things.

I’ve been very successful in trying to work with the division chiefs that I have had, they’ve all stayed.

The midterm restrictions on personnel dismissal could result in complex negotiations to find homes for these employees as alternatives to complete dismissal from their assignments.

He would have been changed about a month ago or so but the deal fell through, unfortunately. Still the round peg, square hole. And I would never put him into that job. But at this stage of the game, things are probably the best that they can ever be. But if I were putting that person into the job that’s not who I would have in that.

At the end of a gubernatorial term, the personnel team-building activities were submerged due to the shortness of tenure and the difficulties successors would have in locating replacements.

Finding people who will come for six months is not that easy. And so I feel like I’m lucky to have two good candidates.

I wasn’t about to ask and begin to take action and challenge and take steps to get rid of a deputy who was managing a group of people when I wasn’t going to be able to offer them diddly . . . Maybe we can work together.
In summary, the negotiation of personnel authority with the appointing authority prior to or early in the tenure as director was an important condition for successors who assumed their positions at the constitutional term or within the middle of the term. Lack of an agreement prolonged the time needed to assemble a management team. The next acceptance agreement concerns the policy orientation of the agency.

**Policy Orientation**

A second area of negotiations, which occurred at all phases in the constitutional cycle regardless of agency condition, was a discussion of the policy expectations and policy directions that the successor and governor wished to pursue. There were some differences in policy orientation agreements for directors of agencies in crisis when contrasted with other circumstances, and these differences will be noted.

For many successors, particularly at the beginning of the constitutional term, the policy discussion with the governor occurred at a general level. This reflected the non-specialist background of many of the appointees: generalist or political in background appointees may not have a full grasp on agency issues prior to their assignment; also, agency issues are new to a first time governor.

At the constitutional change, if the agency is one in which campaign promises have been issued, there was discussion to clarify campaign promises to be certain that the director is aware of and moves forward in these areas:

Other than the things on which there were specific commitments, I don’t think I had a charge different from the other cabinet people. Just . . . kind of a general mission.
It was just a huge policy direction, to bring this agency out of the 19th century and make it part of the whole economic development.

Where specific campaign promises were not a condition, but the agency's policy orientation was of concern to the governor, general objectives and support for a philosophical direction occurred in the initial meetings. Such policy considerations include both substantive and political concerns:

We did discuss the broader aspects of program; the Governor believes in community services, and that was a very strong point to have in common; I do too, and we did discuss that type of an issue.

Those are the only two agreements that we have. He stays out of my department, I stay out of politics.

We talked a lot during the interview process, but specifically about [the agency], the only thing he brought to my attention was the political system, did I have any problem with it? And I said no, not really.

Similarly, the governor's commitment to agency policy initiatives was a topic for successors who were considering accepting appointments during the middle of a governor's constitutional term of office. The agency initiatives could become re prioritized in the governor's agenda through a reelection campaign or other adjustment:

Whether it was explicit or not, . . . I knew very well what it was he wanted in terms of putting that act together so he could make it a high priority and make his final budget. . . . Also I never would have taken the job if it wasn't real clear early, without his support we would never have been as successful as we were.

Successors in agencies with regulatory responsibilities which were not necessarily high in priority were also given general guidelines. "Firm but fair" was a phrase heard
by those in charge of regulatory agencies.

The Governor was concerned about two things that had gotten to him as far his understanding of how the department was run. His two pieces of advice were to me to be fair and to be timely. . . . that was advice that he could have given to and hopefully gave to every cabinet person.

What I tried to sell myself on through the interview process was balance. I made that point to the Governor. Look, I feel I have a balanced approach to [agency] issues.

In agencies in which there was a crisis and a middle-of-the-term replacement, discussions concerning the stabilization of the slide were prevalent, and attention was focused on potentially urgent issues:

Because the big issue in the Governor's mind was the loss of authorization. And how do we stop them [the federal government] from taking it away from the state.

For successors who assumed positions during the middle of the term in agencies which were not in crisis, perceived weaknesses, problems, and the lack of emphases of predecessors provided a starting point for direction:

He [the governor] wanted the agencies not to hate me as much as they hated my predecessor.

But there wasn't an assignment to clean the place out. It was to try and make it functional, reliably.

In the circumstances of a mid- to late-term replacement, in moderate- to high-performing agencies, successors were sometimes hired to continue the directions set by their predecessor.
One of the things when I interviewed with the Governor, that I was told, one of his big concerns was continuity. Continuity in the agency. Because [my predecessor] had done some good things and he was interested in taking those things, keeping those things rolling. I had no problem with that.

It's really hard to call the thing a transition in my mind. It was just like more of the same.

While I didn't feel I could offer the same sort of leadership as my predecessor, I felt that I could offer perhaps a different style, and could follow up real well on some of the things we had done together.

I felt my responsibility at that point, and he [the Governor] did as well, was to make it as sound as I possibly could for whatever period of time that I stayed and to retain continuity in the department so that the department could continue to progress, but also function smoothly and not have a lot of upset from somebody being brought in from the outside.

In summary, policy-related discussions occurring as a part of position acceptance conditions centered on the following areas: general policy direction at the outset of an administration, specific policy directions, campaign promise details, agreements concerning policy and politics, general philosophies concerning regulatory outlooks, crises intervention, and a change or continuation of predecessor policies and management approaches.

**Anticipated Length of Stay**

An area of agreement for many of the successors was the anticipated length of stay as director. These commitments took several forms: at the beginning of the administration, some committed to the end of the first term:

He had said he had made a commitment, he would stay on until after the election and then he wasn’t sure how long he would be here.
Similarly, some midterm appointees committed until the end of a second term:

The other question is how long are you going to stay, and that was one the Governor himself dwelled upon in some length. I said if I take the job, if you offer it and I accept it, I'll stay five years, throughout your term. You change your mind, let me know, I'll go someplace else, but I'm not just coming in for a year or two.

Others had no explicit agreement at the point of hiring: "Some people did, I didn't. I suppose I was thinking one term." Others had a more general agreement:

I told him that I would do it as long as I thought I was making a contribution. But I didn't expect that I would be a career employee in public service. That was good enough.

As long as I can support the Governor, I'll stay in the job and when I can't, I won't. He won't have to fire me. It doesn't mean we've had a 100% concurrence down the road, though we've probably had 90 which is probably higher than most people would have, any employer-employee relationship.

For end-of-term appointments, there were specific agreements that these successors would stay until the end of the governor's term:

I did commit to the Governor when I took this job that I would be here till the end. That was a part of my commitment. So I might be different than some others who have been here a long time and didn't have to make that commitment.

I had to commit to the remaining exact number of days.

(Was there a commitment asked for as to how long you would stay?) Yea, to the end of the administration because they had been through three directors and they didn't want to go look for another one.
These commitments sometimes did not correspond to the actual determination of when it was time to go:

When I came into this with three years left to go, I had every full intention of doing it for three years. And I would have. In fact the deal on this was I would be joining the company at the end of the term. But because of their own internal needs, private industry does not wait on election dates. So, they came back to me and said, can you come to us sooner?

(Continuing) Now, I think I could probably walk over there and say I'm leaving, because I think at this point, I mean, at that point I didn't have an in house assistant director in mind. And I think they are so totally comfortable with [my assistant director] at this point I don't know if that would be as big a concern as it was.

**Personal Issues**

On the basis of the agreements discussed with the researcher, there appeared to be a gender-based difference in discussions with the governor concerning the impact of the position on personal and family lives. Particularly in the middle or end of the gubernatorial term, family concerns and job expectations were linked by the female appointees. Others expressed family concerns as a reason for departure from the position.7

My biggest concern about being director was the time commitment and the physical, mental wear and tear and what that does to the quality of time, even after the time commitment, that you have with your family.

In fact, when I interviewed with the Governor he asked me what my principle concern was. And I said it's my family.
Relationship With the Governor’s Office

A final area of pre-appointment agreement for some successors was the structural relationship of the governor’s office to the department and the director. This relationship became a problem for many of the directors, and surprisingly few had discussed this topic prior to accepting the position. The relationship became a leading source of frustration for the directors.

We had some conversations and I didn’t seek specific commitments on specific points. We didn’t have a contract in the usual sense of that word. I assumed some things that turned out not to be correct about how the Governor’s office would run. I say I assumed them, I think I read some things into what he said.

My comments were essentially, as director I expect to manage and run the organization. So that’s what I do. I don’t do a lot of letter writing to the Governor. I don’t do a whole lot of contact with the Governor’s office. I try to run as efficient and as clean a shop as I can run. And on key issues I definitely keep them abreast on what’s happening.

The original, and this is sort of the commitment I think to all the cabinet officials, not just me, was the authority and responsibility for running the agency—with keeping the Governor’s office advised, working with them, working with the Governor’s assistants in the program areas. The model was to be that we would all work as a team. And that turned out not to be the case. There were several teams.

In addition to the roles of directors relative to the roles of the governor’s staff, two of the directors spoke of their requests for open communication from the governor’s office on performance concerns:

"Look, I would hope that you of all people would communicate with me directly. If you don’t like something I’m doing, you come right out and tell me that. If you want something done, don’t beat around the bush, tell me you want it done." And that’s been a big problem. You can’t tell
everybody, and obviously playing games over at the legislature always gets you into those sort of issues.

(continuing) And, the Governor's office, politically the biggest problem that I have had, looking at all these various groups, is the Governor's office. When it comes right down to communication, my biggest problem has been with the Governor's office.

I said, if you've got a problem with me you call me up and we'll talk about it. And I'll reciprocate.

Ethics

Although conversation on the topic may have occurred, respondents did not mention discussions concerning ethics in office or other employment standards as pre-employment conditions. Such conduct may have been assumed on the part of both parties. Following circumstances of ethical difficulties in the agency, outward appearance and the capability to conduct the business of the agency in an ethical manner became an important criterion in the selection process. Minimal ethical standards became an eligibility criterion or qualification.  

Summary

Overall, there was variation in the clarity of expectations at or near the point of hiring on the issues of personnel authority, policy orientation and support, intended length of stay, and the relationship with the governor's office. The topics of authority in the personnel area, general or specific policy priorities and directions, political intervention in hiring decisions, relationships with stakeholders and regulatory philosophy, the structure of the relationship with the governor, and expected length of tenure were each areas of discussion for the directors in the development of their
conditions of acceptance of the position. Agency budget priority relative to other agencies was a topic infrequently mentioned by the directors when summarizing agreements with the governor, but the question was not specifically asked.

On the basis of their experiences, the directors offered advice concerning what should be negotiated prior to accepting the position. Successors with clear-cut agreements in these areas experienced smoother transitions than those who did not negotiate these areas prior to their tenure. These agreement areas and the variables impacting their importance are summarized in Table 17, above.

**POSITION ACCEPTANCE REASONS**

Director's responses formed consistent patterns of reasons for accepting the position as director of an agency. The reasons listed below were not mutually exclusive, nor did the reasons directly relate to success or long tenure in the position. Comments typifying the particular rationales are presented beneath each type. The first reason for accepting the position of director of a department is a means of public service or personal commitment to agency:

I always thought, boy, if I was director here's what I'd do. I think I could really make a difference.

I probably decided that given where this state was . . . that the Governor was saying that he wanted to do, given what my previous experience was, given the fact that I didn't need to move anywhere . . . it seemed like an opportunity that was time limited and that really might be real interesting. And actually we might actually do something that made a difference.

For some, the director's position was a personal challenge:
Always to a certain extent, I’m sure as you are periodically, wondering whether you might not do better than the guy in, or the woman in, the seat, in the job. You know, so here I am. Finding that out. I suppose.

I’ve always thought that I could manage an organization, decide what the objective was, get it done and get it done on time and on budget and all that kind of stuff. But you really don’t know that unless it’s your chair. You can sit and second guess the other person all you want but you don’t know what it’s like. And so when he called, that was an invitation to test whether or not I was right about myself.

For some, it was a dream job or capstone to a career:

I’d love the opportunity but this is like one of those dreams, it would never happen. You know, it’s like, geeze, I’d love to be a movie star and go to Hollywood and all of that. It’s about as ridiculous as that. And so I never really thought there was any basis to it. But you always kind of think about it.

That goes back to the story with me and the interest in the department. . . . I was concerned over about what was going on . . . there were just kind of generic ideas that I had for a long time, relative to this department and operation if I ever got the opportunity.

The number of positions available at a given time impacted the acceptance conditions and reasons for the directors. The agency most preferred by a potential appointee may no longer be available, having been filled or promised to someone else. Those wishing to participate in the governor’s cabinet might accept a position other than the one most desired—or perhaps they had no specific agency in mind.9

I was on the search committee, so it was personal contact; he just asked me one day when we were about finished naming everybody. There were some agencies left, a few, two, three or four and he asked me if I wanted to do [this agency].
Another reason for accepting a position was respect for the governor's request. This reason factored particularly into the situation of midterm cabinet appointee shuffling. Several of the successors in this situation, usually those with generalist administrative skills, expressed an obligation to the governor to honor his request to move to another cabinet assignment:

When the Governor asked me to go to the Department, I really didn't want to go. But I felt I serve at the Governor's pleasure; I appreciated very much an appointment to the cabinet and if he wanted me there, then I felt I should go. But in retrospect, if I had to do it over again, I would not have been so accommodating to the Governor; I would say, I like [where I am], I think we're accomplishing a whole lot, I'm going to stay. I didn't do that.

The reason was that I was asked to work there, which I declined on three separate occasions. It's a little tough to say to a Governor, "no".

Summary

The directors' reasons for acceptance of a cabinet appointment were presented for the purpose of presenting as complete a story of succession as possible. These reasons were not mutually exclusive, but seemed to fall into coherent groupings. The acceptance reasons variable could be used in further studies of the executive succession process; for example, linking acceptance reasons with extended tenures. Preliminary review of the acceptance reasons with tenure in these findings indicates that the acceptance conditions most likely to result in an extended tenure are the ideal or dream job, or policy change, or long time interest in the department. Directors interested in revitalization or policy change appeared after moderate to extended tenures to reach a point at which the implementation of these changes had become routine and the individual was ready to
move on to another challenge. Such analysis is entirely preliminary.

Lacking from the discussions with most directors was the notion of the political payoff as the reason for acceptance of a position offer. This potentially reflects the limited sample participation of appointees of political orientation.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter on selection processes, which is primarily descriptive in nature, summarizes the context differences for the successors as they begin their transitions to the position of director. Included in the description are summaries of the topical areas of appointment types, candidate search processes (differences by timing, other variables, roles of predecessor in the selection process, insider or outsider appointments, relationship of search process to orientation of successor: roles of stakeholders in the selection processes), qualifications, acceptance conditions, and acceptance reasons. The reliance on the thick descriptions of the experiences of the predecessors and successors in the research sample, is a reminder of the specificity of individual contexts and the ideographic nature of the research question. The chapter is provided as a context leading to transition process experiences of directors, the focus of this study.
Chapter IV Notes

1. Two distinctions arose from what was expected. The self definition of agency inside successors was murky, a point which is discussed in chapter six. Second, when directors were in more than one category (reflecting the polythetic nature or the sampling matrix and typology), variations in identity with these categories emerged from the original sampling framework. The sampling framework was generated abductively; the descriptions which follow arise from the data in the sample.

2. The sample did not include many non-regime political appointees. An example of such an appointee would be a director selected at the request of a key political figure from the legislative branch.

3. The most explicit recognition of a representative appointment by one of the research consultants occurred relative to her experience in another state:

   So I got involved in the (governor's) campaign and landed a post in his administration. My boss hired me, I think he hired me to take care of women, sort of as a constituency.

4. Directors indicated that discussions with predecessors were most helpful if the meetings occurred over several sessions. This allowed discussion of policy issues. The usefulness of various transition dialogues is reported extensively in chapter six.

5. As described earlier, in Ohio, agency directors are generally asked to leave their positions on or about the inauguration date.

6. Specific techniques for becoming a quick study are presented in Chapter six.

7. Either males were reluctant to say to the researcher that the issue was discussed, or there was a difference in the discussion content with the governor between male and female directors. Each individual appointee at the end-of-term was known to the governor, associated with the administration in prior years, which is another possible explanation for the apparent gender differences, as is a possible reluctance to discuss this topic with the researchers. These possible gender differences pertaining to the relationship of work responsibilities and family considerations were not a focus of this research, and the findings described here are preliminary. However, the tentative pattern suggests that questions concerning gender differences in this area should be investigated in a more systematic manner in future research efforts.

8. Governor Celeste commented on the ethical problems during the early years of his administration in television interviews prior to departure.

9. This section has presented only the reasons for accepting positions. Several of the appointees also declined specific agency leadership positions.
CHAPTER V

TRANSITION PREPARATIONS

"Throw the Keys in the Basket"

How would I characterize this succession process? I would say in general it's very ad hoc. Unstructured, that's really it.

Transition in government is only a little bit different than transition anywhere else. Nobody plans for it very well. The thing that makes government a little bit different is that on a date certain every four years there is an election period. So you know that there is a transition coming. Once that transition occurs, initially you don’t know what’s going to happen next.

From these former state agency directors’ descriptions of transition as an ad hoc, disorganized experience, certain questions followed: what types of transition preparation activities are possible in transitions at the state agency level, and what types of related activities occurred in the agencies in this sample? The answers to these questions are the primary focus of this chapter on transition preparation activities. Also considered in this chapter are the roles of acting directors in the transition preparation process.

Transition preparations occurred in various levels of activity through the actions of predecessors, successors, and agency personnel. These actions transpired over a much broader period than immediately prior to a certain transition date. Included in these actions were: 1) the presentation of the director's office and the contemporary issues in
those offices, 2) preparation of executive level and agency line staff to receive the successor, 3) the winding down of policy initiatives, 4) technical preparation of transition documents at the departmental and sub-departmental levels, and 5) the "embedding" of policies. In addition, there were personal transition-related actions by the predecessor, which included the decision when to leave the agency and the avoidance of the so-called "lame-duck syndrome."

On the part of the successor, the actions from the appointment to the first day and the interaction with staff and predecessor during this period was also a part of the transition preparation process.

Formal planning for transition varied widely based on the timing of the succession event. This chapter begins with a few comments on preparation for succession events coinciding with changes in the governor, and the implications of the timing of the event for transition preparation.

VARIATIONS IN TRANSITION PREPARATION

Timing of the Event Relative to Gubernatorial Changes

Addressing the former director's comment presented in the start of this chapter concerning the public sector condition that on a "date certain" the executive succession event would occur, because of this certainty, constitutionally based transitions perhaps offer the most opportunity for formalized transition preparation. However, no matter what the timing of the succession event, predecessor beliefs and values concerning the preparation for a transition event impact the extensiveness of transition preparations.
Transition preparations varied according to the interest of the predecessor in assisting a smooth preparation process. The potential for transition preparation and cooperation in the case of a lame-duck governor is illustrated in the comments of this career executive:

From a political point of view, you know, some people are more inclined to throw all the keys in the basket and walk out the door (emphasis added). But from the responsible position, recognizing our duties to the state and the public, I think that’s in the best interest of everybody. And I hope that’s the way that this administration will go out. And do it on the basis that continues the flow of programs. And that we work together with whoever.

In another example of how a predecessor’s positive orientation toward a cooperative transition influenced transition preparation activities, one long-tenured incumbent with high external credibility described her intent to meet with state legislators of both parties to describe "where I see this transition, so that whatever party comes in, the department has some buffer."

It should be noted that one political tradition in this midwestern state is the tendency for the new governor to replace existing cabinet officers, rather than to consider the retention of "holdover" appointees. Therefore, most incumbent directors realize that their tenure is of a fixed duration. The choice concerning transition preparation is at the discretion of the director. Whether to act in the above manner and assist in the transition process or to "throw the keys in the basket and walk out the door" is at the predilection of the director. Here are the comments of one constitutional-in-timing successor who experienced a complete lack of assistance from his predecessor:
I have come into one job where there was zero transition because it was a change of administration. And I never, to this day, I've not met the person who was my predecessor on that job. He didn't leave a note on his desk. Zero transition.

These two cases in the circumstance of a lame duck governor further illustrate the decision responsibility at the level of the individual director to help in the agency leadership transition, particularly at the constitutional change of positions.

In the particular circumstance of a gubernatorial incumbent who is eligible for re-election and who is defeated in the election, a less comprehensive transition preparation would be expected. One non-director study participant experienced a prior administration in which this had been the case:

That wasn't a transition that had a lot of thought given to it. That was a very bitter campaign and [he] came out of nowhere to win it. And the director who would usually give direction to the agency on these kinds of things, he was not particularly inclined to set up a real smooth transition function . . . he was more concerned about what he and others, myself included, was going to be doing, so he didn't spend a lot of time thinking about the transition.

Yet within the study sample, a range of transition preparation activity was demonstrated in the actions of the predecessors under similarly timed transition events. This prior succession experience of a career official shows that attention to transition preparation is possible in the circumstance of a defeated incumbent governor:

I think that when I left [my previous assignment] I did that with my successor there. Of course, he had been around a long time. I tried to have all files in place and everything labeled for him. We sat down and talked about what the key issues were. And from everything I gathered, that successor was quite pleased that he didn't walk in cold and that things
were fairly well organized and that he could pick right up and go. And I think that’s good.

Summary

Agency executive succession events timed with changes in the constitutional term of office of the governor present the opportunity for formal transition preparations, particularly in circumstances of lame duck governors who are constitutionally ineligible for reelection. In these cases, the potential for formal transition preparation is at its height. Still, in gubernatorial changes, the transition preparation process before the arrival of the successor at the agency is replete with obstacles to cooperation based in changes in party, hostile political campaigns, and other difficulties related to the involuntary relinquishing of leadership. The actions and intentions of the predecessor toward the importance of transition readiness influence the extent of cooperativeness in the transition preparation processes before the arrival of the successor in succession events of any time period. Attention is turned now to an exploration of the range of activities of the predecessor in preparing the agency for transition.

PREDECESSOR TRANSITION PREPARATIONS

Presentation of Director’s Office and Contemporary Issues of the Department

Predecessors who were concerned with transition preparation could be characterized by their consideration of one question in their preparation process: In what state of readiness do I want the agency to appear for my successor? This question and its related actions could be considered by a predecessor interested in a smooth transition process regardless of the timing of the succession event.
One component of this readiness question involved the tidying up of activities handled in the director's office. For example, one director who left the agency in the middle of the term described his transition preparation:

He had a fairly clean slate when I left. I mean I had enough time to pretty much clear the decks. There weren’t things pending that I could dispose of. And I made a special effort to get rid of the things that I thought he’d have difficulty with. I tried to clean up as much of the legal stuff as I could. I didn’t anticipate that he would find that a lot of fun.

A later successor to the same agency explained his approach in preparing for the gubernatorial administration change:

Basically talk about what we can hope to accomplish in the last nine months realistically. What we need to clean up. And that’s all a part of transition . . . basically leave a clean agency here with no major management issues or anything.

A second component of agency readiness was the state of activity within the agency at the time of transition. The executive of one high-performing agency in the research sample wanted to make certain that the agency staff remained focussed during the transition period. This predecessor described the reason for staff retreats that were held in the six months before his departure:

I wanted to be sure that the [successor] found an agency that was in motion. That knew what it was about. Where there was an agenda. There were some agreed upon goals, major themes around which these were fashioned, and that a person could step in and that would keep running just fine as new directions were considered. And with a new leader obviously there is going to be a new imprint on that. I wanted him to find an organization that was up and running in the meantime.
Similarly:

Hopefully, I'm leaving the department that we've hit a plateau, it's in an upward mode, and my successor will be able to come in and stand there, get their breath for a few minutes and decide which steps they want to continue up that ladder.

A related concern was the maintenance of the executive's meaningful activity before departure:

I was determined not to be a lame duck. I didn't want to put this on the table and then sort of walk away. My view of how you avoid being a lame duck is you do things. You keep a constant series of initiatives flowing. There are two ways to become a lame duck. One, you do it to yourself by not doing anything, or other people do it to you by taking away the initiative.

(Continuing) Well, I wasn't about to do it to myself and I decided that I wouldn't let anyone take the initiative away and the best way to do that is to keep them too busy to take the initiative away from you. So we came up with a stream of things that had to be done.

Departing directors who chose to strategize the state of their agencies at the point of the transition appeared successful in doing so. This orientation led not only to the maintenance of activities in the executive office, but as shown in the concerns of the predecessors, to the involvement and preparation of executive staff for the forthcoming transition.

**Preparation of Executive Level and Agency Line Staff to Receive Successor**

An important staff-related transition preparation action in which directors participated was the **provision of assistance to employees** in dealing with the transition. Study
participants in non-director and director roles commented repeatedly on the anxiety that staff experienced prior to and in the early weeks and months of the transition (see the transition consequences chapter of this document). These observations are consistent with other studies of transitions (Gaertner et al. 1983; Durant 1990).

Directors attempted to raise staff recognition of the actual likelihood that they would be replaced by the successor. Employees may act with disbelief that the administration is ending and fail to recognize that, as a holder of an unprotected classification, they will be asked to leave. One former director felt that her early exit would serve as a signal that the administration was coming to an end:

Especially with my leaving now, it allows me to look a little differently when there’s still an interim period here. . . . Well, this really must be coming to an end, she’s leaving. I’ve talked to all the division chiefs. About what their timing is and what they hope to be doing and things like that. . . . Absolutely. We’ve talked about all those things.

What we’re trying to do is to be as realistic with people as possible as to what the transition is going to be.

There are some who want to stay through the next administration. And I think they’re in positions where they could do that, too. The ones who are really more political I guess, are . . . ready to move on. I’ve had a tough time convincing [one senior staff member] he may have to.

For the forthcoming transitions related to gubernatorial changes, predecessor staff preparation actions also focused on developing a recognition that the initiatives and the tenure in office were ending:

I would suppose that staff is seeing the end in sight so that there is a certain sense of uneasiness, great expressions of loyalty, if you will, people saying, we don’t want you to leave," and I’ve tried to prepare
them in saying "death is inevitable, and don't worry about it, I mean the world will go on, and all those good things and so on."

In midterm events, or other non-constitutional-induced succession events, when staff replacement is less of a certainty, some predecessors attempted to shift staff loyalty to the successor. These actions are considered in more detail in the transition process chapter of this document. Briefly, the following conditions were observed:

One concern of the directors was to obtain commitments from staff to stay and work with the administration until the end:

We talked about that in senior staff meetings. And I urged people individually and in a group to stay in place. I had hoped people would not bail out. Although we're starting to get toward the end of the administration, too, some people are getting a little concerned about their future. But I urged people to stay in at least through a transition period so that my successor would have the benefit of a good management team.

They might be worried about job hunting but they've all committed themselves to stay the duration. I've asked them and they're here. I think they feel strong enough about where we are and what we're doing that it's not a security issue right now.

Another concern of the director is to motivate staff to keep working until the end of the administration or, in cases of non-constitutional changes, for the duration of the director's tenure. For agencies with field offices, this involves activities to signal increased presence in the field to demonstrate maintenance of activity by the director and the administration. This reflects the opposition end of the tension winding down of policy initiatives versus maintaining initiative and productivity.
The Winding Down of Policy Initiatives

Transition preparation also could necessitate reducing activities or limiting new initiatives. The orientation of clearing the slate of issues was found repeatedly as directors prepared for the end of their tenures prior to a change in gubernatorial administration:

My staff said to me, don’t put one more thing on our plate. And they were right, so I took it off. So I’m trying to be restrained in not trying to be in this frenzy of getting everything done and saying okay, what can I do and not do.

I fully decided to lighten up on some things because I don’t think it’s worth my energy to do anything else.

One director in the sample did not construe the ending of his tenure as director as coinciding with the change in governor. He worked actively to increase the likelihood of continuation beyond the term of the current governor. This was reflected in his approach to policy initiatives as well:

Our plan for transition, this is a commitment that I made to the Governor as well to the staff is that we have programs and initiatives that have to be put on line and we’re going to continue working on them like there’s eight years ahead or four years ahead or whatever. You can’t stop it. And that’s what we’re about to do. And that’s what we’re doing. There’s no, well let’s get this thing, kind of cap it. We’ve set some things that we have to have done this year as kind of an interim goal statement. Plus we’ve established a five-year goal plan. It’s a strategic plan, that’s being put together right now. But nowhere in that does it say now we stop and rest and just watch things happen.
Preparation of Transition Documents

There was a transition book, that I'm certain. If I recall it was a big thick book. With a lot of useless stuff in it. It was either useless or I didn't know how to use it, maybe that's a better way of putting it.

(Continuing) I think there was a lot of program description stuff that was the same sort of stuff somebody had done four years before and then four years before that and four years before that. You learn a little bit from that but mostly you learn that your eyes are getting tired as you work on it. There was a lot of detail, as I recall.

There was a transition notebook that was available. Which was nice for people to do but it wasn't very useful.

They had a book. If you read the whole thing, you wouldn't walk away knowing a lot more.

He was delighted with that [the transition book] and used it a great deal during the first six months. He finally gave me back his copy heavily annotated, he gave me back my briefing book. It was written, just marginally written throughout and I knew he used it a lot.

Despite the views of most these former successors on the questionable value of formal transition documents to their transition process, written transition documentation was generally prepared for transitions that occurred at the change of a gubernatorial administration, and sometimes for transitions that occurred within a gubernatorial term. The successors had suggestions for what might have been of value in a transition book to their quick study process during the early weeks and months of the transition. The comments of the successors provide the setting for consideration of formal transition documentation in this section.

For some directors, transition documentation was more than the preparation of a formal document which included "a lot of detail." Written documentation to help in the
transition occurred in three formats. One of these formats, the **improvement of agency documentation**, related to the presence or absence of manuals explaining departmental procedures and the value placed on the existence of these manuals by the predecessor. The customary design for **formal transition documents** was an informational document, covering in broad terms the various areas of departmental jurisdiction, generally prepared within some months prior or after a succession event. A variation on the formal document was **memos written by the predecessor on specific issues** and left behind for the successor’s use. Each of these formats is presented below.

**Documentation of agency procedures**

In responding to questions concerning transition document preparation, successors recalled their experiences entering the agency, some finding little documentation regarding agency functions at the time of their appointment:

If it hadn’t been for the staff in these areas, you walked in and that was it. There was no personnel record or support of things other than what the remaining people in the various areas were willing and able to discuss with you or to remember or in a lot of cases tried to forget. Or didn’t care if you knew or not.

Before I got here, there were hardly any written policies governing hardly anything. And you know [another department] has these huge binders worth of policy manuals. We [had] hardly anything at all written down about who does what, who’s responsible for what and how decisions are being made and that kind of thing.

When asked about transition preparations, these directors mentioned their initiatives in improving the documentation of procedures and the production of operational manuals:
There's a lot of that kind of policy development activity going on [through the coordinating council] that will leave behind a set of written policies. And see, it's really strange how primitive this is, at least to me it is.

Operating procedures and manuals are fairly decent in place. There's not exactly one-hundred thousand percent, but there's more than we've ever had before.

Even if a formal transition document was not being prepared, improving documentation within their department was seen as helping in the transition.

Informal transition memos

The second type of written documentation included the preparation of memos and informational items for use by the successor during the transition. These efforts sometimes supplemented a formal transition document. Other predecessors prepared such memos when formal transition documents were not deemed to be necessary.

I provided her with some memoranda outlining specific issues and questions that I thought she needed to be attentive to early on.

(Continuing) I did provide [my successor] with a lot of material that I thought was important for her to know and understand, and the stack that I left on her desk was probably about yea tall. There were two parts to it; one was the internal administrative things, personnel kinds of issues, plans that I had for raises for people downstream, and the information about the strategic planning process and about a couple special projects that were ongoing. That was one part of it, the other part of it largely were documents about cases that had been decided. Opinions that we had issues or some memo that I thought was significant, to give her background, because I thought she was going to need that to deal with the follow-up.

Despite stating that he didn't produce a formal transition document, this departing predecessor instructed his line managers to prepare summaries for his successor:
Individual departments put plans together for educating the [successor] on what was going on in their department, and what the key issues were, and what kind of decisions she might have to make about the department.

Similarly, an end-of-term successor told of the materials that were prepared for her:

[My predecessor] sent out a memo before I came, telling the staff to prepare a briefing for me which highlighted their major programs, the budget, major issues, staffing concerns, about four or five items.

Such summaries of departmental issues were also included in formal transition documents, which are considered next.

**Formal transition documents**

One tangible facet of transition preparation at the departmental level was the readying of a formal transition document. In reviewing the variations in type and preparation concerning formal transition documentation, it was found that certain variables influenced the production and content of such an official document. These variables and their relative influence on the likelihood of transition document preparation are summarized in Table 18. Selected variables are considered below.
Table 18
Transition Document Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience and Interest of Predecessor</th>
<th>Formal Document Preparation (1)</th>
<th>Informal Documentation (2)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional Timing</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governor's Involvement</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departmental History- High Turnover Rates of Executive</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-Site Overlap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Announcement of Successor While Predecessor Still in Office</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Successor Familiarity with Agency</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographic Origin of Successor Away From State Capital</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predecessor View as Continuation of Tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successor Request for Documentation</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of Acting Director/Trusted Ally</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency Activity Level High</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Production of Transition Handbook
2. Production of Issue Specific Memoranda
+ Increases Likelihood of Document Production
- Decreases Likelihood of Document Production

The preparation of a formal transition document was one area where the experience and interest of the predecessor in orchestrating the production of a document influenced the completion and extensiveness of such a document. A comprehensive transition document was prepared by this predecessor, who departed less than a year before the end of the governor's constitutional term:

The one thing that I did not get from [my predecessor] that I am leaving for MY successor, that I would leave it in virtually the same way for that person if I were going out the end of the term . . . I've got my book over there. It consists of a lot of things that, frankly, I said, gee, I could have used this when I came in.
As seen in the above quotation, production of the formal transition document was one sphere where those who had received insufficient information and who would have valued more made the effort to prepare a more comprehensive document. The difference in content and thoroughness of the documents prepared for constitutional changes was influenced by the interest of the predecessor in the assignment. The departing director mentioned above continued her description of her efforts:

So I said, what could I have used? Well it would have been very helpful for instance to have, I did have organizational charts, but a few things, for instance, the boards, I didn't know in detail what boards he was on, how often they report. He had told me a couple of little things . . . the point being that there was nothing to give me that says, here are the boards, the ex-officio positions or other things that you chair or do on a regular basis. Salaries. Plus guidance on directions regarding salary inputs or compensations.

Other directors were less personally involved in the production of formal transition documents:

I asked some folks to put some transition materials together and I know that was done.

In these cases, the document reflected less of the predecessor's personal experience in what would have been helpful in the transition process, relying more on staff interpretations of what is useful or appropriate. As seen in Table 18 above, the production of formal transition documents varied by director, department, and timing of the succession event.
Predecessors could also influence transition preparations at lower levels of the organization. At the level of departmental division, the predecessor can request that individual briefings be put together for lower level transitions within the agency. One midterm successor who entered the organization at the constitutional change of office in a sub-cabinet position described the materials that were available to her:

I know coming in as legal counsel I had a whole little five- or six-page summary from my predecessor about, these are things you have to do every year, and these are the things that you do every six months, and these are the things that you’ve got to watch out for. Everybody had those kinds of things and it worked fairly smoothly.

The relationship of the transition to the constitutional cycle of the governor was an important determinate in the production of a formal transition document: documents were more likely to be prepared during gubernatorial changeovers, particularly if the governor directed the preparation of a document within each agency. Still, it was predecessor interest and value placed in the project that ensured a high-quality document.²

I didn’t prepare a transition document as such. If we had been changing administrations, I would have been more inclined to do that. As it was, I had kind of hoped to see this as a continuation, and so I didn’t see a formal transition document being necessary.

As expressed in the above quotation, if the predecessors perceive the transition as an extension of tenure rather than a separation or departure from their direction, then formal transition documentation was less likely to occur and informal transition mechanisms prevailed. Such a view of the tenure as an extension of self could occur
within the middle of the term when an outsider was selected, particularly if the predecessor was involved with the selection, but was more likely if an insider was selected. While the insider is less apt to need a briefing due to agency familiarity, depending on background of the inside successor in terms of general agency knowledge, such a document would be of more or less importance. The predecessor quoted above with extensive interest in the preparation of the formal document who asked "What could I have used?" was an inside successor with multiple years of experience in the agency. She continued her comments on the need for such a document:

All right, I knew a lot about the department, I knew a lot about the people, but there were a lot of things that I didn't know.

In another agency with a change in the director at approximately the same point in the governor's term, the preparation of a transition book for use at the forthcoming constitutional term of office transition was left up to the end-of-term successor:

You’d have to ask [my successor] about that. I’m really passing it on.

In a similarly timed succession event, the departing predecessor took charge of the preparation of a comprehensive transition book, which was available to her end-of-term successor, and also intended for use in the constitutional term executive succession event. Influencing this difference were the level of agency activity, the timing of the naming of a successor, the predecessor's attention to detail, and the predecessor's values and experiences concerning the preparation and utilization of the transition document. The perceived value of these transition documents in the transition preparation process
appeared to be related to the attention that successors gave to such a document during their transition.

Related to the timing of the event was the amount of on-site overlap anticipated between the successor and predecessor. The possibility of less formal communication reduced the perceived necessity of a transition document.

Successor familiarity with the agency including prior experience and focus in the agency, and the successor's geographic location in the state capital reduced the importance of the transition document, if the successor was known.

[Successor 2] of course was on the scene. [Successor 1] was not . . . while he'd been as a citizen watching what was going on, he was not intimately familiar with what was going on. [Successor 1] of course was much closer to the scene. And didn't feel like he needed that.

The relationship between the predecessor and successor influenced the perceived credibility and value of the document. Relating this relationship to the directors' background characteristics presented in the previous chapter, the transition document could be dismissed by successors who did not respect their predecessors or their staff:

I simply haven't seen the benefit of reading these things that people write about their own organization because their view is normally tilted one way or another.

This relationship variable is considered in more depth in the transition process chapter of this document, along with consideration of the value of the transition document to the successors.
Agency history was another important variable concerning the importance of the predecessor in the development of a transition document. In agencies with a history of high executive turnover rates, the process of transition documentation could become a bureaucratic function.

The agency staff, the mechanics, they know automatically. A change in director, you put together a briefing manual, each program puts together their briefing documents. [an assigned employee in the public information office] assembles it into a book and it's on the new director's desk the day he walks in the door.

Another agency/transition circumstance affecting the preparation of formal transition documents was the presence of an interim or "acting" director. For some departing predecessors, the existence of an acting director, particularly if someone recommended for the position by the predecessor, made preparation of a formal transition document less important:

[You didn't really have to put together a kind of a briefing paper or something?] No, I didn't do that. [Cause the acting director already knew what you were doing?] Right, right. Yea, [the acting director] was kind of the bridge between myself and [my successor].

No. I'll tell you why I didn't, and this isn't typical, is because she was there and she was practically running the agency, so she knew all that. Now when she got ready to leave, then we did the transition books, what are the major units and what are the immediate problems that have to be addressed and who's running it, we did that.

As shown in the above quotation, transition documents were generally not prepared when an inside candidate served as acting director and it was known in advance this would be the case. If a transition document was not prepared by the predecessor, the
incoming successor could request remaining staff to prepare a document. This responsibility tended to be assigned to the former acting director, if there was such a position:

[The successor] asked me when I first met him if I would prepare a briefing book for him. And I worked very hard on that and presented him a briefing book on all the major issues, the major people, personalities and everything. And he was delighted with that and used it a great deal during the first six months.

He followed with the request from another successor’s tenure at the same agency:

He wanted something a little different. All of our people were asked to prepare papers that would set out the major functional responsibility which they had. And I supervised the gathering together of that.

Despite the sentiment by most the directors interviewed that the transition book received was of little value to their transition process, these directors indicated that they planned to produce such a document for gubernatorially-based agency transitions, when a request from the governor and the transition team required that they do so. Still, the production of a formal document was limited in circumstances of middle-of-term succession events. The directors, when discussing the ineffectiveness of transition books, had suggestions for information that would have been useful in their transition. There was information that they suggested would have been of value. These suggestions and the items generally contained within a transition document are considered below.

**Contents of Transition Documents**

Appendix D reproduces the table of contents from an exemplary transition document prepared for use by one departing predecessor for the end-of-constitutional term
transition. The document was used as a model for other agencies in the transition preparation process. The table of contents from this transition book serves as a model for a comprehensive transition document.

Successors were asked what should be included in a transition document that would be of value to the transition process. Suggested items are included in the transition document table of contents contained in Table 19. Some highlights from these discussions follow, generally on the topic of what was omitted or what problems existed with written material contained within such a document. These concerns related to the usefulness of a table of organization, the usefulness of a listing of legal cases, and some comments on what was generally omitted from formal transition documents.

Table 19
Transition Document Contents

| Table of organization                  |
| Lawsuits, legal issues                |
| Table of organization and the informal players, internal and external |
| Memos on emerging topics              |
| Board and Commissions, members and functions |
| Executive Orders                      |
| Campaign promises; what were the commitments that had been made |
| Financial Information                 |
| Who attends meetings                  |
| Personnel staffing levels and employee ceilings |
| Listing of unclassified positions     |
| Long Range Plans                      |
| Formal mission statements             |
| Legislation: history of current legislation |

Table of Organization

Most of the formal transition books included the table of organization for the agency, but this director struggled to obtain the formal table of organization:
I asked for a table of organization, which is difficult, I think, in public service; I’ve found out they’re not always available, I mean there’s some resistance to laying it out there.

There were limits to the usefulness of the table of organization, as they provided limited information on the informal operations of the agency:

There was a table of organization in the book. Tables of organization are like many things, a nice graphic representation of what ought to be. But it isn’t real; I mean organizations seldom function the way the chart says.

Concerning the informal table of organization that is not presented in a formal document, directors had the following comments on what should be included:

You ought to have who the major actors and actresses are in the top management, middle management positions.

When I transitioned out of [the agency], I left lists and went over the lists of key people and players, both internal and external, who I felt the new director really needed to know about, who were real resources. And I also left them the lists of the problem people, inside and outside.

Other directors said they handled the treatment of the informal organization and personnel in transition discussions between the predecessor and successor, if such a discussion occurred. However, occurrence of transition discussions was more to the discretion of the successor.

Legal Issues

Although briefing books included a summary of cases that were prepared by the department’s legal office, directors found the listing of cases to be insufficient in warning of the potential consequences of some cases. The directors planned to change the format
of information that was provided their successors based on the experiences related below:

In looking back over the questions, they weren't bad questions, but the answers that were provided, I was in no position to make a judgement on that kind of information. Like one of the questions dealt with a kind of litigation that you had. Well for heaven sakes, the department has thousands of internal cases and thousands of cases out through the system. And you don't have any idea of being specific enough about which ones will have immediate revenue ramifications for the state. And it turned out that there were two or three clinkers in there that were really problems that in the space of six months, both from the federal level and from the Ohio Supreme Court . . . that we were looking at fifty and seventy million dollars worth of refunds back to various taxpayers because of those cases. I didn't understand that. What the question should have been much more specific like "what revenue implications do you see any of these cases having?"

One area that I specifically noticed, which I was really shocked by, I had said well, "What type of lawsuits are the departments engaged in?" There was nothing constructed at that point that could even give me an idea. So I had the attorney that we had at that time put together for me, she's still doing it, on a monthly basis, the lawsuits. Twenty pages. So I thought that was significant. Right?

Similarly, the implications of the interface between the agency and the federal government, and the consequences of compliance with changes to federal law and recent state and federal court decisions were important to another successor. This director was surprised by a legal issue with financial consequences for the agency to which she was assigned shortly after her arrival:

[You ought to have] any explosions that are about to happen, like the debt or the audit or major federal programs that are going to impact the agency, or state laws that have just been changed and turned the agency around.
Although not systematically studied in this research project, the need for briefing on legal issues appeared particularly acute if the legal representatives were among the employees dismissed early in the tenure of the successor, or if trust did not emerge in a timely manner between legal counsel and director. The assignment of attorneys to the agency by the state attorney general could serve to reduce this problem. A legal background of the director also appeared to elevate the importance of pending legal cases to the director's attention.

Financial Issues

An important issue for successors who assumed office with terms coinciding with changes with the governor was the preparation of the department's budget, and in off-budget years, an awareness of any pending financial difficulties. One director attributed his difficulties to a lack of ability to get a quick handle on the finances of the agency:

The other thing that takes place at that same time frame are the budgeting exercises. That's one of the other kinds of dilemmas. You come into the office and you're working with your predecessor's budget. And then you have to figure out what you want to do about that. If anything.

In the above case, the inability to grasp quickly and resolve financial issues set the stage for negative relationships with external actors and resulted ultimately in an inability to secure funds for the agency.

Financial information was one obvious component of a formal transition document: "The major problems of the budget, certainly you ought to have the budget in your hands when you walk in there."
Summary

Directors were interested in the implications of basic information relating to personnel, legal issues, and finances. Directors who were interested in written information about the department found background data on the department to be helpful:

I think anything that I could have looked at would have helped. I mean, there was some programmatic material, but not a hell of a lot of stuff. [I would have liked] some kind of chronology of how the organization got to where it was, how it changed, its missions. I saw bits and pieces of mission statements throughout but there was no connection to any of them nor was there any background information; it was a mission statement, that's all it said. Just a sense of history of the organization, how it got to where it was, I mean I had to assume a lot.

Variables influencing the transition preparation process include the timing of the appointment of the successor, the values and priorities of the predecessor in transition preparation, and the existence of a revolving door, i.e., short tenure and multiple directors in the agency producing routinization of transition process procedures. The circumstances concerning the decision to leave and the timing of the decision to depart influence the type and extent of transition preparation that could be done by the predecessor. Generally, transitions initiated in the middle of the term by the predecessor permitted sufficient time for some type of transition preparation to occur (not necessarily written) if the predecessor desired to do so. Only when the predecessor departed suddenly in the midst of scandal or was incapacitated was there a lack of time for transition preparation activities. Beyond these circumstances, if the predecessor desired, transition preparation activities could occur.
Timing of Transition Document Preparation

Most of the incumbent directors, before a known gubernatorial change, indicated their intent to begin preparation of a transition document for the forthcoming gubernatorial transition no sooner than six months before the constitutionally based transition. Losing momentum by focusing on such an activity was a concern of directors.

However, as indicated above, directors viewed other activities as contributing to the transition process. Included in these activities were the development of procedures manuals, and the viewing of long range plans and strategic planning process documents as intensive briefing books. Exemplary of this viewpoint:

We're trying to complete the plan which we think is a briefing book. For a decade, so that ought to be a good briefing book for somebody. I believe this is probably the first such plan in a long time.

The building of a plan is one part of a strategy for embedding policy initiatives before a new gubernatorial administration and a new successor.

THE EMBEDDING OF POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

One public sector characteristic, the assuredness of agency executive turnover at the constitutional change, induced in the broader research team the notion of embeddedness, a concept which was affirmed in the research process. The intent of embedding was to protect a set of initiatives, policy or managerial, from immediate change after the departure of the successor. Embedding was intended to contribute to more lasting policy change, particularly following a change in strategic direction of the agency. Several
common "embedding" actions were identified in those agencies considered high performing and undergoing systemic change.4

These common steps for the embedding of policies include an acknowledgement of an extended transition period, getting changes to program structures in place, using extensive stakeholder involvement to broaden the base of support for policies and sometimes using a grant award or change to the financial structure thereby building the stakeholder base, completing changes to permanent law and implementing changes in rules, involvement/linkage of initiatives to federal mandates, and securing funds in the biennial budget. The internal aspects of embedding strategies involve the building of staff competencies and support for policy change, and include the possibility of influencing the selection of the successor through the development of leadership skills and sharing of policy agenda in a potential inside successor. These actions are portrayed in Table 20.

Particularly in the circumstances of a gubernatorial change, directors were interested in embedding or institutionalizing their policy initiatives before the change in administration and a possible change in political philosophy. This was enhanced by the outgoing Governor's desire to identify the policy achievements of his administration.5 Concern for lasting policy change was noticeable when a director did not complete a full eight year term, attempted major policy changes or agency performance improvements, and the governor's final term was expiring, possibly forcing the self-perceived premature departure of the director. Two directors represent this concern:
I think that they are, certainly in the Governor’s administration, there were kinds of peaks of various agencies, they had their major initiatives, and then they had a reasonable length of time for implementation. So this next transition has some considerable concerns for me, because we can only push this as far as we can, and then who knows what the commitments are likely to be at the next administration?

It’s kind of an eight year window, eight to nine year window. It would be tragic if the window is shut on us at the end of this year, because then the process would start all over again and it’ll take another two years [to get started].

Table 20
Embedding Strategies

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<th>General Conditions</th>
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<td>Acknowledgement of extended transition period</td>
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<td>Sufficient tenure to accomplish initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<th>Development of Internal Organizational Capacities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Building of staff competencies</td>
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<td>Develop potential inside successors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building internal support for policy directions</td>
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<td>Structural changes in place</td>
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<tr>
<td>Necessary changes in legal authority complete</td>
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<tr>
<td>(permanent law and administrative code changes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secure financial base in biennial budget</td>
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<th>Externally Focused Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Development of plans with public input</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extensive stakeholder input and advocacy (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusion of grant structure: decentralize fund control beyond successor</td>
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<td>Involve initiatives with federal mandates</td>
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<th>Constitutional Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholder lobbying of gubernatorial candidates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influence selection of successor where possible (indirectly and directly)</td>
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(1) Clients, legislative leadership, organized constituencies, board members.

Patterns in actions to manage the issue agenda of the agency were visible for directors interested in assuring their policies and initiatives would continue beyond their tenure. Typical of this strategy as it relates to the ending period of transition:
Let's get some things in place, let's set up some things and do some things that even if we don't finish them, the next administration is going to be hard pressed not to. Build support for things.

It should be noted that a discussion of policy initiatives and embedding was a secondary interest of the research. Policy embeddedness was anticipated to tie into transition preparation, and was often viewed in that manner by the directors. Strategies for the embedding of policies are now briefly identified, and will be the subject of further research. These strategies can be exemplified through portions of the research transcripts.

Working to secure support of gubernatorial candidates through stakeholder participation was another embedding strategy. In times of gubernatorial transition, directors and staff attempted to meet with gubernatorial candidates, or urged members of constituent groups to do so. At the constitutional change, this is mirrored by the uncertainty of agency status as a priority in the governor's office.

Basically my message is "Hey, you're organized, you've got a hundred . . . clubs around the state. You want to see these programs continue, now is the time to contact these candidates. Send out your questionnaires, not only to gubernatorial candidates but your state senator or your state representatives. Do your spade work now, get them committed to these programs and we have a much better chance of seeing that they're in place and carried on."

Let's mobilize our constituency now. Because one of the things I've done here in the last year and a half is we've set up a constituent affairs person, who basically works with all the citizens and environmental groups around. She has everything computerized, all their addresses and everything. And if we need to mobilize them in a couple of days time we can do it now. The legislature basically crumbled to citizen pressure. So we keep that tool in our pocket.
The maintenance of constituent support is affected by leadership turnover in these organizations, causing the director to redirect attention to the rebuilding of constituent support.

Constituencies. Actually, this one is kind of interesting. This one is not doing as well, in fact it seems to be falling apart. There's been some key people change, the family exec is leaving, the consumer network exec was fired, and they've just got a new one, but he's not on board yet. [Another] exec was fired, so we have some changes that are goin on there that we're gonna have to rebuild, and people are real aware of it, and workin on it.

The development of policy advisory boards, developed around cross-departmental issues or singularly around department agendas was another tool for the carry over of policy initiatives beyond the tenure of a single director or gubernatorial administration.

An example of an inter-agency policy task force follows:

They're going to propose some structural arrangements for connecting business on a continuing basis with the state's technology related strategies including a science advisor to the Governor as a regular post. One that each Governor would appoint himself. Kind of like the President has a science advisor. But some formalized connection between business and government and the development of technologies and technology issues. . . That the structure of connection be made permanent. I think it would be healthy if that were to be the case.

When there has been support for the efforts of a director from an outside constituency group, emphasis was on trying to accomplish as much as possible with the current director in place, prior to a disruption of momentum caused by a new director. Stakeholders can provide continuity in strategy during a change in directors or administrations. However, in the extreme, "the tail can wag the dog."
There seems to be an emerging expectation that, since we don't know what's going to happen next year, let's start all of these things so that somebody is going to know about them and hear about them and there'll be pressure brought on the next director to continue them. And I am basically saying wait a minute. I don't have the staff, I don't have the energy available, and this is not the last chance you will ever have.

I've even seen some external forces that want to fight with you and beat you up all the time, saying at least we know who you are, we fight with you on these issues, but you're a known quantity, and so they're now a little uncomfortable about that.

The other thing that we have worked very hard at is trying to bring the service providers, advocate groups and other interested parties into the system, so that there is a buy in, this is not the Director's system, it is not the department system, it is the system. And hopefully we will bring the legislators in that also. So when we walk away talking about institutionalizing, that the people across the street have a sense of where they ought to be going, and the legislators where the system is headed, what is best, what can happen that will best serve the people.

Plans based on considerable public input and formally adopted by the department were of use in the embedding of policies.

We've tried to utilize the external and what we've come out with, the plan, I agree with, so it's my perspective, but I didn't write it, I mean we [had] a process of hearings across the state. Oh parents, we've probably listened to 500 or a 1000 people . . . this is what we think the strategies ought to be in a general fashion. It's going to be hard to throw it out because this is what the people agreed upon.

When focussed internally, embedding strategies encompass the building of internal organizational capacity. One internal focus involved the development of institutional capacity. A second focus on personnel capacity included the development of a potential inside successor as well as general leadership and management skills:
I've always thought that people who build an agency or develop a team and then, if they left, it fell apart, then there's something about not building a succession and not getting down into the depths of the organization. So you're really not creating lasting change. And I know that, I know that the organization is going to change when I leave, but I don't think that it's just going to fall apart. I think people are too good.

The model advocated for private sector succession is years of on-the-job training for a handpicked inside successor (Feinberg 1990; Hall 1986). As described in the chapter on selection processes, the public sector predecessors in this sample often felt their role in the selection of the predecessor was limited. Still, it is possible to develop within agency personnel the skills to assume the leadership of the department, should political circumstances allow. This is particularly true for mid-and end-of-term appointments. Several predecessors discussed their interest in the development of leadership capacities in individual staff members—a topic that overlaps with the predecessor's involvement in the selection process of the successor:

The first conversation I had with [this senior staff member] at the beginning of my time was that I thought she ought to spend several years thinking systematically about why she should not be the next [executive]. That was literally our first conversation. Because I just sensed that she has that kind of capacity and I think that in this last several years she has been trying to fill in some of those things that she did not have experience in.

His successor also adopted this mentoring and staff development strategy:

I hired him to replace me some day, I didn’t know what I would be doing. . . . I think everybody should hire their replacement. If you are not building the organization in that way, you are not making the kind of contribution you should make.
Another successor spoke of her capacity building efforts in the agency:

I've built a very good team, I think, and I take credit for building them, but I take pride in them. They are really the people who have done it. And there are four or five people in the department all of whom could run the department.

The embedding of policies required a general recognition on the part of the director of an extended transition period, and sufficient tenure to accomplish initiatives. The adoption of a transition preparation orientation throughout the director's tenure helped in the institutionalization of policy and administrative accomplishments. Embedding strategies included internal and externally focused activities. Predecessors began preparation for transitions at different times, sometimes early during their tenure.

The truth of the matter is, I started preparing for the next administration probably two years ago, and maybe in an unconscious fashion, but I know that change is inevitable. I have a certain value system, which I hold near and dear to my heart, and what I would like to see happen is that value system would be implemented by my successor. You can do that in a number of ways, you can do it through law, you can do it through rules, you can do it through your staff, you can do it through programs, the implementation, and that will be very, very difficult politically to change. And we've done all of that, I mean, I don't know what else I can do.

As shown in the last quotation, the transition process can be viewed as much longer than six months or at the point of notification of departure. Rather, the transition period becomes intertwined with the policy process.
PREDECESSOR'S DECISION TO RESIGN POSITION OF AGENCY DIRECTOR

An as yet neglected component of the predecessor's transition preparation action is the decision to leave the agency. With the average tenure of those in this study approximately three years, in line with the tenure estimates provided by Olshfski (1989), the decision to leave is in most non-constitutional circumstances, the incumbent's:

Most times, unless you have a cabinet person who is not very good, they really drive when they decide to leave. Not too often does the elected person say, you're out of here. Unless something is really kind of rough.

Before conducting the research interviews, it was expected by the researcher that departure circumstances of the predecessor would play a role in the theories-in-use of the successor. Those who had already left their positions gave differing reasons for departure, but several themes did emerge. These data are consistent with survey data on federal and state executive appointees' departure reasons as presented in Mackenzie (1987) and Hamilton and Biggart (1984), and are summarized below.

One contributing influence in the predecessor's determination to leave is the notion of completion of agenda. Another concern is the personal toll or costs paid while serving as a cabinet member, including financial considerations, physical health, and mental burnout. Implicit or explicit disagreement with the governor concerning policy direction or political considerations also could be a factor. Job opportunities, the need for a new challenge or some unhappiness with the present assignment caused others to move on. The prospects of retirement and departures associated with end of constitutional term changes were the remaining non-dismissal reasons for resignation and moving on. The
motivations were not mutually exclusive. Examples of departures for these various circumstances follow, concluding with generalizations concerning transition implications of these various departure circumstances.

**Agenda Accomplished**

One reason directors leave is a feeling of completion of agenda. This director explains how she knew when it was time to leave:

> [My journal] . . . I ran across it, it was fascinating to read what I had thought about this job, what I thought I wanted to accomplish and stuff, and I thought then . . . when I get ready to leave here, I really want to share this with somebody, because it’s an interesting insight . . . So when I told staff I was gonna leave, I read it to them . . . [it] was a good way to tell people why I was done.

A director who left much earlier in the administration, said he felt he had accomplished what was possible, given the constraints that he perceived concerning the relationship with the governor’s office, constituents, and other executive agencies.

> I also had a sense that I had done what I was going to get done for the next couple of years. The channels of communications, the processes within the Governor’s office had pretty much solidified, the opportunities to get decisions made on program and on budget and personnel ceilings. In the latter two cases were not, were not positive and were not bright.

This second example demonstrates an assessment that further progress on the agenda would be fraught with stumbling blocks, leading to the assessment that it was time to leave.

**Maintaining the Challenge and Job Satisfaction**

The idea of maintaining the challenge caused several to move on:
I was bored. I really don’t think the same person should sit on top of a big organization for a long time. It needs somebody else to come in and look, get bored. I think that I probably would have stayed [in my previous assignment] a little longer than I should have. In the government, maybe two budgets. I did three, it was one too many . . . it was kind of like overdose at that point.

One thing led to another, and it worked out, and I had a lot of years of government, so it just came with a good time, and it’s worked very well.

The job offer is very interesting. I mean less work in a way, bigger benefits.

**Personal Consequences of the Position**

Reasons concerning the personal effects of holding a position began with concerns of family financial responsibilities:

I would have liked to have stayed another year or two, but I just couldn’t afford it. But the way things look now, I should have left a year earlier.

I had three kids in college at that point which was not of life’s greater experiences [creating a financial drain].

A second personal consequence related to general burnout of the director and its consequences for the management of the agency:

I knew it was time to leave a long time ago . . . I had a conversation [with the Governor’s chief of staff] in which I said, "this is hard, and I think that I’m getting to the point that I’m not as effective as I used to be."

It’s tiring, but I guess you peak at that frustration somewhere early on, maybe the first year . . . then you feel like, we’re now operating and moving ahead, and then after a while, you get burnt out from maintenance, and I just think your creative ideas get fewer and fewer as you get more exhausted, and then it’s time to go.
In this state, there is an orientation that the directors' positions require residence in the state capital, necessitating relocation or the separation from family, or commuting, another factor adding stress to the circumstances of the position:

What it almost is, you're asking everybody who is a cabinet person to live in Columbus. And then you really get the lack of the give and take and the lack of that there is a state outside of Columbus. And if you're saying to cabinet people, you have to be in Columbus, what you're saying is that everybody leaves [their home counties] and they come here and I don't think that's healthy.

(Continuing) . . . Traveling back and forth every weekend, the expense of maintaining two households, [make it difficult]. I don't know half the time where half my clothes are. I don't know what I'm doing when I come in, you've got to have a lot of flexibility with your friends back home who are willing to say, we're willing to put up with you being this non-interested person in our lives and being totally focussed on something else for eight years . . . . There are no travel expenses for cabinet people. I do have a state car. But there's always the question of that because I drive it home. I'm waiting for somebody to yell at me for that. There are those little things that make you able to do this, but people become more and more demanding and what they end up doing is saying, they want a clone, they want everybody out of a cookie cutter.

[My predecessor] was not intimately involved in the organization. He literally did not take over the directorship because for one thing he only worked in Columbus a couple of times a week. Sometimes he didn't come down here at all. He worked out of his "Cleveland office." So that in and of itself tells me how much of a commitment was made to the organization.

Another consideration in deciding when to leave was the predecessor's original commitment to the governor and concern for timing that was appropriate for the governor. Several of the directors had made an initial commitment to stay in the administration for a certain period, either until the end of the constitutional term, or to the end of the first term and into the second term. Typical of this:
He had lost two or three cabinet officers, and I said, "Governor, I feel that I'm committed to you for four years, and if you don't want me to go, say so, and that's the end of right there." . . . So he asked me to stay, and I did. And I worked till October a year into his second term.

I said, "If I were going to leave before the end of the administration, when would be the time to do it? From the Governor's point of view?" [She describes why it was prolonged] So there's some ways in which I really was ready to leave much sooner.

Similarly, dissatisfaction with a specific agency assignment led some directors to look for a new position within or outside the cabinet:

He [the Governor] knew the reasons I didn't like the department, I don't want to say I didn't like it, it just wasn't my cup of tea.

The decision to leave the administration and what many considered to be a top level, career-capstone position, was tied to the decision of what to do after the position. This was particularly true for directors who were not eligible for retirement following their service as director. Those who were eligible for retirement tended to stay until the end of the constitutional term, although some moved to private sector positions before the gubernatorial administration end.

The question "what shall I do now" led to a consideration of the personal consequences of public sector executive succession in career management. An emergent finding of the research project was the extent to which non-retirement eligible office holders viewed the transition very much at a personal level, with a personal transition paralleling transitions at the agency level.
Successor Preparation Activities: Activities from Appointment to First Day

Moving to the transition preparation activities of successors, differences existed between successors in how they used the weeks from appointment to the first day on the job. A constitutional change appointee who arrived several months into the administration made active use of weeks from the appointment announcement to the first day on the site to begin preparation for the new assignment:

I did some very specific things. For one thing, before I came over, and was announced as Director, and there [was] three weeks or something between that, and coming over. . . . Three of us sat down on a Sunday, before the Monday when I took over, and we did things like talk about how they were gonna address me, how I was gonna address them, how we were gonna answer the phone, just some processes that we were gonna do between the three of us to look like we were in charge, you know to make sure that we knew what we were doing, so we kind of talked about it between the three of us before.

Where an acting director has been serving, particularly without expectation of assuming the position, clear differences existed in how to use this time, in terms of involvement in agency operations:

There was a big problem brewing with [a constituency group] and some things out there, I even came in one day before I took over and I knew I was coming out and met and sat down with [the assistant director] and the folks from the [the affected area], so that I met them.

As soon as I was selected I started coming in here even before I left [my previous employment]. And I was even making trips to Chicago and everything . . . it was about three weeks I think. . . . They told me today, I mean two days later I think I was on a plane to Chicago. Because the big issue in the Governor's mind was the loss of [federal] authorization. And how do we stop them from taking it away from the state.
I just stayed out of the business and it was not an easy decision because, when you’re going into something it’s nice to be involved. On the other hand, number one, I had responsibilities that I felt I should bring to a closure. I also have a philosophy that you only have one boss and, as far as I was concerned, until the end of the work day on November 14, [the acting director] was the boss and I wasn’t going to sit down and interfere with his decisions. He called me a couple of times and discussed issues with me and the way that I would always respond is, it makes sense to me, you know, whatever you think is best, do it.

As described in the chapter on the selection processes, one of the major transition process difficulties, particularly in midterm events, was the lack of the appointment of a successor in a time in which the leader would be available to assist the successor on site. During the period between being named to the position to their arrival at the agency, directors ranged from high involvement in agency matters, some used the time for study and decisions about management issues. Others had a hands off approach until their arrivals at the agency. In general, it was difficult to capitalize on long term announcement of intentions with additional time for the predecessor.

Predecessors viewed the potential transition period as beginning when the governor was notified of their intent to step down, but found that the actual transition did not occur until the successor was named and the communication between successor and predecessor began:

Well, I didn’t believe that we had a transition period until the Governor announced who my successor was going to be. . . . It took a long time for the process to happen. And when he ended up selecting [my successor], there really was less than ten days, and he made that announcement in less than ten days before my [tenure] ended. . . . After the selection, [my successor] went on vacation, so we lost a week that I think could have been useful in transition. I tried to be available after I left, but that’s a difficult position. I frankly have stayed away from the [agency].
Due to delays in the selection of a successor by the appointing authority, the provision of elongated, advance notice by the predecessor did not appreciably help the transition process in running smoothly.

**ROLES OF ACTING DIRECTORS**

Of the sixteen agencies included in this study, six had acting directors during the study period. While studying transitions, several roles related to transition processes surfaced for acting directors. The roles varied based upon the dimensions of organizational conditions, and circumstances and characteristics relating to the assistant director. The organizational circumstances include the organizational structure as it relates to the appointment process, the timing of the succession event relative to constitutional changes of office in the governor, and specific organizational circumstances such agency crises, multiple transition events, and agency performance—whether high, medium or low. Circumstances relating to the background of the acting director include the individual’s experience in transitions, interest in obtaining the position and experience in the agency, whether broadly based or narrowly focused in specific areas of the agency. The roles of acting directors, their orientation, timing, and constraints are summarized in Table 21.

As seen in Table 21, one role for an acting director is placeholder. These cases occurred toward the end of a gubernatorial administration, or at the beginning of a new gubernatorial administration, in which the director was relieved of his duties and an acting director named to serve until a permanent director was appointed by the new governor. This was the case below; when the successor arrived on the scene, the interim
director had been appointed "with the understanding that he would be acting until they appointed someone."

[the acting director] was very helpful. He knew I was coming, it wasn't that he expected to have the job or wanted the job; he wanted to go back to do what he came from doing, which was in the department, and he did. In fact he stayed in the department for two or three years after that and then he finally retired. But he was a very big help to me.

Table 21
Roles of Acting Directors

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Action Orientation</th>
<th>Timing/Circumstance</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Placeholder/Caretaker | Fulfills legal requirements  
|                     | Holds the course: limited policy activity  
|                     | Holds for consideration of permanent leader | End of term, beginning of term; expected tenure of limited duration | Limited personnel changes (1) |
| Activist           | Moves forward with policy initiatives  
|                     | Role negotiated at appointment | Alignment of political, economic circumstances for agency advancement | Selection of own staff |
| Triage Agent       | 'Cleans house' of personnel problems  
|                     | Attention to organizational crises or crisis avention  
|                     | Sets tone for ethical approach | Following scandal, mismanagement, crises | Limits on permanent staff hiring  
|                     |                                                                 |                                                                 | Policy advancement |

(1) Dependent on length of appointment

This director commented further on the acting director's role during this interim period:

Actually, I'm not sure that there's a whole lot more I wished that he had done. In some ways, he had been very clear that he was just keeping things together, he had been very clear that he had not set an agenda . . . Now that doesn’t mean there weren't projects going on, there were things going on; this department actually had a lot of good people before
I came, and they were doing things. But it wasn't like he was off trying

to get something started or going. So in some ways, it was almost a

blank slate, in that sense, in the sense of developing a vision and a
direction and a set of goals and objections.

A director with a long career in state government and multiple situations in the role
of acting director explained that the caretaker role also can occur in the middle of the
governor's term:

When you do it midterm, as an interim, you know my feeling is I am here
as kind of caretaker, to keep things moving, deal with the programs as
they come up but don't take any long-range actions, reorganization, things
like that, for the new director is coming in a few months. I'm not going
to start shifting people and upsetting programs only to have someone else
follow me and say hey, I liked the old way and we're going to shift
everything back. But, keep the programs going and keep the jobs moving
forward and deal with the things on a day-to-day basis that you have to
deal with, but just hold the line until the new man or woman is in the
seat.

He then expressed his sentiments on the job the interim director did before his own
arrival at his current assignment:

The time [the interim appointment] was out here, he did some hiring I
wish he hadn't done but other than that he didn't take any major long-
rangle changes, organization or policy wise, he held things together.

Another variation on the placeholder is someone selected by the predecessor whose
main task is to shepherd particular issues that were of interest. This director describes
such a case:

[He] was acting director when I arrived. [My predecessor] had left.
Some of the things he told me were helpful, it was incomplete. [The
acting director] really didn’t operate on an agency-wide basis as best I could tell. He had a number of specific things that he was watching for [the former director].

The phenomenon of a placeholding acting director can relate to the constitutional circumstance, the background and experience of the acting director, and the negotiated expectations with the appointing authority.

The role as placeholder can be contrasted with that of the activist interim director. Organizational and political circumstances and the years of experience of this interim executive led him to accept the interim position only under the condition that he be allowed to be an activist in his approach to leading the organization while an executive search was underway.

I described to you the opportunity that I saw in my first insistence that I would not just mind the store, that we had to go like gangbusters to get that next budget into a state where we could say this is a great opportunity there.

A third role for an acting director relates specifically to organization circumstance, notably organizations in decline or crisis. In one case in the research sample, an outsider is brought in to perform triage on the agency and to set the climate after a scandal. In this case the acting director was an experienced executive whose tenure in the organization was approximately six weeks. This director speaks of the role the acting director played before his arrival at an agency in crisis:

He is a physician and so he is accustomed to triaging and that’s exactly what he did, he had some tough problems to deal with during that interim period of time, some tough decisions to make, he fired a couple of people
that needed to be fired, he set a tenor of no-nonsense, which is both good and bad, it scared the devil out of staff. On the other hand he went about starting addressing some problems.

The existence of an acting director in most cases shifts the transition preparation responsibility to the acting director, who serves as a bridge to the new director. The role of acting directors in the transition process is considered in more detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Descriptions provided by the directors present transition processes as an unplanned activity. Summarizing the activities involved in transition preparation considered, actions of the predecessors began with the presentation of the director’s office, technical preparations at the departmental level and sub-department levels, including the preparation of transition documents and other types of documentation. At the policy level, a winding down of policy initiatives to reflect feasible accomplishments occurred before departure, and the embedding of policies important to the predecessor occur before any shortened transition period.

One of the major differences between public and private sector transition events is the certainty that a transition will occur. This is certainly true for events that are related to a constitutional change of office, and tenure averages imply that directors should prepare for the eventuality of their departure within a few years of appointment. With this certainty comes the opportunity for the embedding of policy.

The transition story continues in the next chapters, when the new director has arrived at the agency.
Chapter V Notes

1. The winding down of policy initiatives also occurred when directors gave the governor advance notice of their intent to depart the position of director in the middle of the gubernatorial administration.

2. The exception was an agency with high executive turnover which had routinized the production of such a manual, exemplified below.

3. This led the larger research team to undertake follow-up interviews with the agency directors on the topic of embedding of program initiatives.

4. Olshfski (1989) reports a long term orientation on the part of state executives in New York, New Jersey, and Tennessee, despite the short tenures. These executives were identified using a critical incident methodology which samples executives with reputations as effective administrators. The use of a strategy of embedding is consistent with her finding.

5. One director described the Governor’s request: "There is a thing that we’ve called accomplishments, which is something that the Governor had asked us to put together, the Governor’s office had asked all the departments to put together." The effort later became a political issue when the new Governor took office and the accomplishments documentation was not complete, the printing bill remaining to be paid.

6. One of the limitations of the present study was the inability to speak directly with those whose departure circumstances were under conditions of distress or crisis. For this reason, the involuntary circumstances are not discussed in this section. Even those for whom the going was rough, internally or externally, but were not publicly fired, gave personal and voluntary reasons for their departure. Those who were very publicly fired or resignations accepted under extreme circumstances were not participants in the study.

The closest description given by a director on involuntary succession events: "There probably are other factors I can’t think of right now, burn out, getting a better job, you may slip up or have to go, trying to think of why other people left in that administration. You might get fired, you might just get outright fired or asked to leave, or asked for you resignation. For whatever reason, some bigger than others I suppose."
CHAPTER VI
THE TRANSITION PROCESS—GETTING STARTED

It's a period where not everything but almost everything is new. It's a period of some confusion.

Intensive learning.

Any time you go into a new environment, you try to get the lay out of land so you don't step in the camel dung.

These statements represent the state agency directors' characterizations of their first weeks at their departments and their activities during this period (in non-crisis situation agencies). Narratives of the first weeks in office related to personnel efforts, attention areas, and tensions in entering the new job.

Primarily, the first weeks are a time of learning for the successor. The priority of the new director, in non-crisis oriented agencies, is gaining a sense of the competencies of agency personnel and any issues that require immediate attention. In the first weeks, directors familiarize themselves with the agency, meet agency stakeholders and begin building an inner circle or management team. This includes the topics of transition discussion with predecessors, how to be a quick study, transition obstacles, and insider and outsider transition processes. Transition process issues concerning personnel, the determination of a transition period or benchmark, and metaphors used in speaking about
the transition process are discussed in Chapter seven.

Several of the directors were inexperienced in senior management and in state government positions. Use of time in the first weeks differed according to the experience, background, and objectives of the incoming director and the organizational context.

TRANSITION DISCUSSIONS

One area in which there was considerable variation among transition experiences was the amount of contact between predecessor and successor. This variation corresponds to the timing of the succession event, the selection of an inside or outside successor, and the existence of a relationship between the predecessor and successor. Discussion between predecessor and successor potentially contributed to "getting the lay of the land," which according to the director quoted above was the important first step in arriving on the job.¹

Besides predecessor-successor relationship variables that impacted the occurrence, quality, and respect for information provided in the transition discussion, other research concerns related to formal transition discussions included the following questions:

1. What circumstances facilitated transition discussion between predecessor and successor?
2. What topics were covered (process, timing and content issues)?
3. What type of information was (or would have been helpful)?
Considered now are the primary influences concerning the relationship between the predecessor and successor as they relate to these questions about formal transition processes.

A key dimension in the formal transition process was the relationship between the predecessor and the successor. In preliminary interviews with former agency executives, this dimension emerged as a construct that might be important in the transition process.\(^3\) The theme continued to surface in the general interviews with the twenty-three agency directors in the full sample as well: the question "Did you have any transition discussion with your predecessor?" elicited general comments about the successor's relationship with the predecessor and the approach of the predecessor in the role of director. The comments are organized by the researcher into several components that are identified below.

**Successor and Predecessor-Related Influences**

This category included characteristics of the predecessor and successor and qualities of the relationship between successor and predecessor. Specific considerations relating to the predecessor that affected the interaction between successor and predecessor included the degree of willingness and availability of the predecessor to help in the transition process of the successor, personality of the predecessor, convictions of the predecessor related to transitions, and the degree of defensiveness toward one's own tenure.

Variables related to the successor included the personality of the successor (high confidence, degree of politicalization, valuation of the views of others), the successor's
substantive experiences, prior experiences in government and familiarity with the agency, respect for the predecessor, and the level of respect for the predecessor’s views. For example, the perceived level of involvement of the predecessor in the operations of the agency, the appreciation of the substantive knowledge of the predecessor, and the level of satisfaction with the performance of the predecessor each appeared to be related to an unwillingness or disinterest in contacting the predecessor. In addition, the presence of an existing relationship between the predecessor and successor enhanced the possibility of discussions between predecessor and successor. These variables and their tentative relationships are summarized in Table 22, the evidence for which follows.

Contact with the predecessor

Because of the preponderance of agency outsiders who were selected as successors, the opportunity to learn the views of the predecessor occurred on a more limited basis than if insiders were selected, and an in-house transition period followed. In most circumstances included in the research sample, it appeared that the successor controlled the degree of contact with the predecessor (assuming the predecessor remained in the locality). Limitations to the potential for initiation of contact by the predecessor were described by this director who departed in the first term of the gubernatorial administration:

I spoke with him. And I made the same perfunctory offer that folks make to one another under those circumstances. It’s a little bit delicate. It’s difficult to know how much help somebody really wants. The answer is usually, I think, not very much. I really believe that’s the case. Folks I think tend not to want, in those circumstances, to have their predecessor hanging around telling them a lot of things that might be on his or her mind.
Table 22
Variables Influencing Occurrence of Predecessor-Successor Transition Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Impact on Likelihood of Discussion</th>
<th>Quality of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREDECESSOR AND SUCCESSOR RELATED</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing (and favorable) relationship between predecessor and successor</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for predecessor (includes substantive background, perceived effort)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predisposition for or against transition discussion</td>
<td>+,-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insider selected as successor</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATIONAL AND POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency in crisis prior to arrival</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-high performing agency prior to arrival</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of acting director</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm, end of term succession event</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional succession event</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIMING OF PREDECESSOR</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local availability of predecessor</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap in tenures in timing of appointment</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Increases opportunity/likelihood for transition discussion
- Decreases opportunity/likelihood for transition discussion

From the predecessor's viewpoint, transition discussions revealing the failings of one's own administrative efforts could be viewed as problematical, at the least producing an awkward situation, as suggested by these former directors' comments: "It's a fool me once, shame on me situation." Similarly, "It's stuff you don't want to talk about."
The occurrence of a transition conversation between predecessor and successor did not assure its value to the successor. While the successor appeared to initiate a meeting between leaders, the predecessor influenced the quality of the content of the dialogue. This successor commented on the worth of the content shared during his meeting with his predecessor:

Anecdotes, knucklehead kind of stuff, it's not of any value.

[continuing] My predecessor had been there for a considerable amount of time, but talking to me was not a priority. So he gave me an hour one afternoon. Which was a little disappointing because he really didn't have very much information on what the agency was doing. I don't think he was unresponsive, I don't think he was capable of answering the questions. Not because he wasn't bright, it was just because he wasn't involved in the agency efficiently. He didn't know what was going on.

This insight on transition discussion also illustrates the importance of the perceived level of predecessor involvement, a topic discussed subsequently. Other comments on the worth of talks with the predecessor are as follows:

I just wanted to hear what he had to say. Which was kind of general statements about where he felt the agency was and gave me some sense of perspective about some of the key people in the agency and that was it. It was a real quick and dirty conversation, it was almost like he felt rushed to get out.

I had, I think 45 minutes with the previous executive and that was not the first day on the job, actually it was inauguration day I guess, the day before that I went in there. It was a friendly conversation, not very enlightening, I must say, but at the end of this conversation he said to me, "Your biggest problem is going to be the $110,000,000 questioned costs from CETA. And we have a serious audit problem around this, a certain audit firm has been working on part of this and we've already paid them huge amounts of money and they can't finish and they need huge, huge amounts in addition." So that was what I basically knew.
These valuations of transition discussion quality were not limited to changes of
director tied to political changes; the directors quoted above experienced their transitions
throughout the gubernatorial administration. Different were transitions in which the
predecessor participated in the selection process at the end of the term: selection of an
insider, or an "inside" outsider produced transitions with extended dialogue between
predecessor and successor.

Unlike almost any other cabinet officer, [my predecessor] and I had a full
week, every day together where we overlapped and she's still available to
me whenever I need to talk to her. Which I do. At least probably once
a week right now I'm calling her.

Respect for the predecessor

A personally and politically sensitive theme in the research interviews was the
successor's respect for the predecessor, a consideration that influenced the occurrence
of transition discussion. This topic was not initiated by the researcher, but the issue of
the views of the predecessor repeatedly emerged in assorted comments of the successors
in interview topics such as the state of the agency upon their arrival, morale issues, and
the occurrence or non-occurrence of transition discussions between predecessor and
successor.

A lack of respect for the predecessor's actions at the agency often coincided with
differing leader background characteristics of predecessor and successor. These
differences were generally more than mere leadership style differences. For example,
successors who were characterized in the research sample’s professional background
category appeared to have limited regard for the predecessor who viewed his/her role
from a political or representative orientation. This is illustrated by this middle-of-term predecessor in explaining why she didn't contact her predecessor:

Although [my predecessor] said that she was available should I need to talk with her about anything, I never contacted her because I just was mostly appalled and I really found myself in a situation where I did not want to hear her explanation for it . . . I mean I couldn't imagine what she was going to tell me.

This director continued her description of her predecessor's tenure:

The leadership of this department was not substantive in terms of, the expertise was not a substantive expertise, the expertise was either politically based, or based in what I call the frills around what [the clients] need as opposed to the guts of what is necessary.

Another midterm successor exhibited a lack of respect for the predecessor's opinions on substantive issues of concern to the agency, which he felt was compounded by the qualifications of the senior staff:

All the deputies he brought in were also people who knew nothing about the [agency policy area], were friends of his and acquaintances and it was clear one of the complaints the [agency policy stakeholders] had was, whoever takes over has to clean house.

Such sentiments on the effectiveness of predecessors in their roles as directors were not limited to the basis of substantive expertise:

[My predecessor] may have had good intentions. I have no problem with [him] personally. He and I are on a friendly basis and there's no question that he had a heck of a lot more knowledge about the [subject area] than I do but I just believe that his approach to management is not appropriate in the public or the private sector.
Another director, who viewed herself and was viewed by others as a generalist problem solving manager, spoke of the reason she had little contact with her predecessor:

This was very obvious what was wrong here. It just was real obvious. And I think I spent a couple of hours with [my predecessor] but he’s not a manager. I’m into more operational stuff, I read all of his stuff, he is not an operational manager. I mean, he had a bunch of managers who weren’t managing.

When perceptions and levels of respect are more positive, the potential for valued discussion between predecessor and successor occurs. A positive reputation as an "old pro" in this level of government on the part of the predecessor could enhance the possibility of transition discussion and the legitimacy of it:

As far as the chiefs are concerned, whether the new director is a Democrat or a Republican, I've been around long enough and I know enough people on both sides of the political aisle and I also have a sufficient interest in how this department runs after I leave, that I’m going to sit down with my successor and evaluate each and every chief... I'm going to pass that on and I think my rapport, whether it be with a Republican or a Democratic successor, will at least carry some weight with them and that they'll listen.

The comments above highlight the importance of respect for the predecessor's actions while in the capacity of director as a precondition for communication between predecessor and successor. Under conditions of gubernatorial change, this enabling respect for the predecessor may be overcome by political considerations, further limiting opportunities for transition communications.

I lost some things because [my predecessor] and I couldn’t figure how to make that communication happen. Probably more my fault than it was his
in retrospect. I was preoccupied with a lot of other things and part of the
tone of the administration was sort of actively hostile to the folks who had
preceded them and that tended to create some barriers to cabinet people
talking to one another.

The skepticism with which some viewed the information provided by the predeces-
sor, particularly at the gubernatorial change, may be warranted:

I want to sit down with him right away and begin to indoctrinate him,
where we're at, what we've accomplished, what's in the mill now, things
I think he should be aware of, the direction he should, I'd like to see him
take. That he keeps some things going on, that's the institutionalization
process.

Without an existing relationship between the outgoing and incoming directors, the
nature of the transition could be hostile--but the presence of an existing relationship
between predecessor and successor could enhance the possibility of transition discussion
and the legitimacy of it. This director contacted two predecessors earlier:

Well [an earlier predecessor]'s a personal friend of mine. So, I have
consulted with [him] and in fact I just recently consulted with [him] about
transition.

The other party described this relationship:

If [he] calls me up and asks me a question or what's my views on
something, I'm sure to tell him. We worked together. I know him better
than a lot of folks at [the agency].

Another director spoke of his roles as a predecessor and as a successor transferring
to another agency assignment. His comments about the relationship to his middle-of-term
successor are presented first, followed by his comments on his relationship with his successor in his first agency assignment:

He was very cooperative and I called him occasionally after he left and we had a good relationship.

We had a good relationship, we talked a lot about what I was trying to do at [the agency] and we had a few [meetings].

Apparently based upon the existing relationship between predecessor and inside successor—and with reasonable timing in the appointment announcement, the circumstance of the inside successor presents the opportunity for a comprehensive transfer between predecessor and successor:

I also know that person well enough that they could pick up the phone and call me and say, why did you do this, or what about this or a few other different things, and we would have a different understanding.

Under conditions of direct gubernatorial appointment of successors, the more extensive consultations with predecessors occurred where the predecessor was interested in helping and the successor was willing to seek assistance. This situation arose most often when an insider, or an outsider who was in the inner circle of the predecessor ("inside" outsider), was selected as the successor prior to the departure date of the director. These most nearly approximated non-hostile transitions as they are advocated in the private sector (Hall 1986; Feinberg 1990), with a gradual sharing of power and information. The key appeared to be a working relationship or respect between successor and predecessor. Under these circumstances of cooperation, briefing sessions between
predecessor and successor occurred over longer periods of time, often structured as daily briefings. This situation was held as the ideal by several ex-directors:

I think it would be helpful to be able to spend a little time with one's predecessor, ideally a week or so. Watching what goes on.

And we spent the week basically doing that [briefing] with each division chief. And then we allowed ourselves a couple of hours a day of unstructured time where we could just go over issues and what we did, the very first day we made a list of concerns. The other thing that we did is that we have a consultant to the department who's been helping us on long range planning in the [policy area]. And he was scheduled to come in that week. So I had about two and a half to three hours with [my predecessor and the consultant]. Which was just terrific.

The views of the predecessor on the amount of contact necessary in transition situations appeared to influence the contact between predecessor and successor. The executive of a board structure organization, whose successor was an insider, made these comments. Here, the predecessor's own experience as a successor coming into the position influenced the relationship:

[my predecessor] called me several times, and we chatted about how she's dealing with some of the issues that were new to her and welcomed some background on it. She's a pro. She doesn't need help. I never felt I needed help when I [was in that situation]. I really didn't. I felt I was fully prepared for it. I think she's fully prepared for it too.

This approach was shared by his successor:

While I know that [my predecessor] is there for any conversation that I would like to have with him, my sense is that he believes that it would be better for me if I would just go ahead and do the things that I am to do. . . . He said to me to do it the way that I am most comfortable. Go with your strengths.
The personality of the successor has an impact on the occurrence of transition discussions. For example:

I guess we had one or two or three phone calls. [My successor] temperamentally is not the sort of fellow who would spend a lot of time asking other people how to do things. He pretty much knows what he wants to do I think.

The experience of the successor with transitions and the successor's familiarity with the agency and state government influenced the perceived importance of working with the predecessor. Considerable experience within the agency or within state government could reduce the perceived need to meet with a predecessor or narrow the focus of discussion from policy issues during the meeting. For example, when these midterm successors met with their predecessors, background influenced the discussion topics:

That goes back to the story with me and the interest in the department. I had my own ideas and certainly in a number of areas and this was because of my long term interest.

No, I talked to him on the phone. [My successor] didn’t seem to think, given his time in the legislature, and given his time in state government at the cabinet level, that he needed a whole lot of information.

As addressed in the chapter on transition preparation activities, prior transition experience could increase awareness of the potential for and usefulness of transition discussions, or shape sentiments that such discussions were unnecessary (based in the personality of the successor).
Agency Circumstances

Level of agency activity related to the gubernatorial cycle but also stood alone in influencing the transition discussion. The amount of time and the amount of discussion between predecessor and successor related to the activity level of agency initiatives. This director contrasted her experience at the constitutional change, in which an acting director had been appointed, with her end-of-term replacement by a returnee:

Now see, here’s an interesting example. I told you how much time [the acting director] gave me, a brand new person who didn’t know shit from shinola, in some ways, and as much as [my successor] already knows about the department, we spent nine and a half hours last Saturday briefing her, we’ve got another whole group of meetings tonight... we have several policy meetings that we are scheduling to get her up to speed on things. Now I realize, the circumstances are a little bit different, cause we’re not in a visionless kind of operational mode. But she already has ninety percent of the information. All we’re trying to do is get her caught up from where she was two years ago, when she left here.

Besides the level of agency activity impacting transition discussions, where there has been a circumstance of scandal or a resignation under pressure, the nature of the discussion, if any, differs. Directors assuming leadership positions in the midst of crisis or scandal generally did not speak with their predecessors. Resignation under pressure need not result in a public crisis for the actions of the successor to simulate a crisis in terms of reluctance to speak with the predecessor. Recall the middle of term director, who said she mostly was "appalled" and "really found myself in a situation where I did not want to hear her explanation for it."
Timing of the appointment

Directors repeatedly commented that meaningful transition assistance was only possible if one's successor is named prior to his or her departure. The first element in timing is whether the predecessor is aware of whom the successor will be before departure. Predecessors saw the lack of timely appointment as a great problem in the succession process.

The timing doesn't seem to be very positive. The decisions to appoint someone to a position even once a vacancy is clearly announced, not only a private indication that a person wants to leave but a public announcement. . . . And that timing has an impact and I doubt that there's a whole lot of difference between private and public sector on the last point.

At this point, I will not, it doesn't appear that it will be likely that I’ll be able to work with my successor. Because I don’t think that that's going to happen before I leave because of the matter of timing of a few things . . . so I’m doing a lot to keep my assistant director involved and up-to-date and current and things like that.

Directors consistently note that transition timing is not in their control. For example one director suggests using a family therapy model in assessing transitions. Here, the focus is on what is within your control:

I think you might want to look at it almost from the kind of family therapy view. There's so much you can't control about it. You have to make a conscious effort to look at it from the perspective of what you can control and what you can’t control. And being an active player in those things that you can have some influence over and that you control and maintaining your professionalism in that light and when you walk out the door you're going to have to let go of some things.

Directors felt that the length of overlap and potential to work with the successor would be enhanced with timely successor selections.
The existence of an acting director

The roles of acting directors in transitions was an emergent topic in the research effort. These roles were described in the transition preparation chapter as interim caretakers, shepherd of issues, triage agent, and change agent. Acting directors impacted the transition between permanent directors in several ways. The interim caretaker is the circumstance in which a long-term employee pinch hits as the assistant director:

[He] had been acting just about everything there was to be, I mean he was sort of the workhorse manager, and anytime there was an empty space, whether it was deputy or commissioner, or director, or anything else, he was always asked to be acting, and he would be acting, and then go back and do his thing. It was a very positive relationship; yeah, he was a big help.

In agencies in which there was an acting director, the importance of a conversation with the previous director was felt to be diminished. Acting directors could serve as "a bridge" between directors:

If you’re writing a paper on managerial transition in government, one of the things that you might want to consider doing is talking to the acting directors. People who have served that role because in government they all too often are the transition. It’s not often from director to director because there isn’t immediate succession. There’s often a gap . . . so the transition really occurs with someone in the agency who is not transient. And that’s how the transition in government typically happens—at both the local and state level. I would suggest that’s probably the way it happens at the federal level as well.

When asked if she had any discussion with her successor, another director related why there was no discussion with her successor, who arrived at the agency sometime after her departure:
I have not for, for no particular reason, it just hasn't happened. I think 'cuz [the acting director] was there and so she really did that transition thing to help.

The presence of an acting director who remains in the agency also affected the quick study process of a new director. In addition to the structure of the selection process providing a time for transition and quick study, the contact between predecessor and successor could be handled differently in situations of a prolonged acting director:

[The acting director] and I had met back when I was over at [the other agency] for the six months in anticipation of coming here. [We met] more or less regularly and talked about things internally here and some things that he was doing and some things that I should be aware of that should be carried on and that sort of thing.

**Improvements to transition discussion processes**

There was great interest on the part of the study participants in suggesting potential improvements to transition briefings. Rather than having the predecessor control the agenda of discussions, one suggestion was that the successor attempt to direct the substantive content of a briefing with the previous director. This involved consideration of the topics that would be of value to the successor before the meeting:

I probably had a few notes, but I think it would be good to have that structured in somehow; if I were doing it again I would think that every new cabinet person should have a set of questions that could be asked, should be asked.

A second suggestion involved the ideal model of overlapping tenures.
Given time, you'd like to review pretty much to review the whole run of the agency's business. It would be very helpful, this is just my orientation, I just find it very helpful to know what's coming at me that's going to need attention in the next three minutes, three hours, three weeks, three months and work backward from there. And that gives you some sort of sense of what the priorities are.

Some predecessors whose views were not solicited by their successors expressed that their successors might have benefitted from a sharing of their experiences. This sentiment occurred even when the individuals did not seek their own predecessor's viewpoints. This led to the following suggestion:

It might be helpful if there were some third party and by that I mean, at least in this case, somebody outside the Governor's office. What I was thinking of is a circumstance in which somebody leaves state government and if you feel that your successor is equivocal about wanting to know what you know. I think there oftentimes is a desire to pass on some information that could be helpful, but no way to really do that very effectively. And if there were a mechanism there for getting that information and getting it in a form in which it would be useful to the Governor and to the incoming cabinet officer, I think that would be very helpful.

This predecessor suggested institutionalization of transition information as a means to alleviate the repercussions of successor-originated contacts. This predecessor felt he had something to say and was not consulted by his successor.

And I think if you have that kind of mechanism in place at all times . . . then [the predecessors] would have had a mechanism for communicating something to their successors and to the Governor's office. At least you're aware of it, you can do with it as you like, evaluate it and do with it as you like.
Another predecessor had a more fundamental suggestion for improving the transition process: select the successor who is recommended by the predecessor. He felt part of the problem was that the predecessor’s suggestions go unheeded by the appointing authority, possibly resulting in the selection of a less qualified person as executive. This advice was not universally agreed to by the directors. Although circumstances where predecessor input on the successor was sought often did not result in the predecessor’s recommendation being followed, as indicated in the previous chapter, most directors felt the appointment was the governor’s decision.

**In Summary**

Over twenty variables affected the occurrence of transition discussions between predecessors and successors. These are grouped into four areas as follows:

1. **Successor and Predecessor related factors and characteristics.** These include the presence of an existing relationship between the successor and predecessor, the personality of the successor, defensiveness and the unavailability or unwillingness of the predecessor to assist, desires of predecessor, feeling of responsibility in the predecessor, the successor’s experience and prior experience in government, respect for the predecessor, successor’s familiarity with agency, the perceived level of involvement of the predecessor, and the existence of a previous relationship between predecessor and successor;

2. **Insider-outsider differences in the selection of successor.** These variables include the involvement of the predecessor in the selection process, the background of the successor and the timing of the succession event;
(3) **Timing of the departure**, overlap of predecessor and successor, the relationship to gubernatorial terms, and the presence of an acting director; and

(4) **Organizational circumstances**. These variables include the level of agency activity, the timing of the event relative to the constitutional succession of the governor, the political context, the appointing structure and agency performance.

Briefing opportunities between agency directors, predecessor and successor, and the length of briefing appear to be shortest at the constitutional change of office. Briefing opportunities are enhanced when the transition timing permits overlap of predecessor and successor. The most in-depth briefings occurred when an insider was selected. Interest of the predecessor and the need for a "political insider" successor to get up to speed produced one of the more intensive and ongoing transition relationships occurring in the study sample.

Constraints on the conduct of transition briefings between directors included the general political climate in transitions occurring at the constitutional change of office, lack of regard for the predecessor, organizational crises, and unavailability of predecessor. These relationships are summarized in Table 22, above.

**Importance of Transition Briefing**

As seen above, at least one director in the research sample viewed state agency leadership transitions as occurring not between directors but between permanent agency staff, as embodied in acting directors. In this manner, transitions could be viewed at the institutional level:
I don't know how you could get a transition as a matter of fact in the public sector from the individual you're replacing. But I know in my case in both departments I had I felt a hundred percent cooperation from staff. And that's really where the transition takes place. I had no problem at all with the transition.

This contrasting description was most often found to be the case in the transitions studied in this research sample in circumstances of gubernatorial changes, when there has been a timing lag, or in cases of a shadowed dismissal of the predecessor.

We did not have a lot of records, files, literally no background whatsoever, from transition from the prior administration here . . . I can attest for this being the division chief at that time, that gave me any working knowledge. I mean if it hadn’t been for the staff in those areas, you walked in and that was it. There was no personnel or record support of things other than what the remaining people in the various areas were willing and able to discuss with you or to remember or in a lot of cases tried to forget. Or didn’t care if you knew or not. So, it was a very different type of transition.

The transition briefing and transition documentation are key avenues of communication between predecessor and successor. Documentation is a means of insuring contact when the factors previously discussed, which reduce the likelihood of transition discussion, are present.

**Topics of Transition Discussion**

Of the three direct modes of communication between incoming and outgoing directors, formal transition documents, informal policy memos, and discussions, the first two were considered in depth in the transition preparations of the predecessor presented in the prior chapter. The substance of transition discussions between predecessors and
successors will now be considered in a similar manner. The focus of the research inquiry concerning transition discussion concerned two questions: What do predecessors want to convey to their successors? What do successors want to hear from their predecessors?

Three formats for dialogue between predecessor and successor were present in the research sample: the one shot meeting (judged least helpful by the successors), ongoing meetings over time beginning before the formal succession event and dwindling after the formal event, and meetings between predecessor and successor that continue throughout an extended transition period after the new director is on the job. This insider succession event represents one of the most extensive processes:

We spent a considerable amount of time just meeting and talking, a couple hours and then I'd run off and beef up and then we'd get together a couple of days later and spend another couple of hours together. And to help get me up to speed on some of the things that only she was working with.

It went on after she left as well. After she left we also had a couple of meetings afterward. Because what I tried to do is make a list of things that came up that I wanted additional input from her.

Successors who continued dialogues with predecessors generally did not seek their predecessor's opinions on issues, but general context and background.

He tries to refrain from giving advice and I try to refrain from asking it. I occasionally will say, "Well in my shoes what would you do?" And sometimes he's on target and sometimes not, so you know.

I had talked with him, not about day-to-day issues, [but] about a relationship, a role, general stuff like that. But never a day-to-day decision.
One topic area during the research interviews considered what successors would like to hear from their predecessors. Directors, after reviewing with the researcher their actual transition discussions, were asked what they would have liked to have discussed with their predecessors-successors. Replies reinforce the importance of staff to the successful transition. The content area nearly universally valued by predecessors and successors was personnel. Personnel review occurred in the selection of insiders or outsiders: if a transition discussion occurred, personnel situations were reviewed. Personnel review was an area in which predecessors often preferred verbal exchanges, although some directors were willing to leave lists of "key players" in friendly transitions.

I can't guarantee anybody's job. Though I think the successor would be inclined to keep the chief if I said, "Hey, this is a good guy, he's not political, he's a career professional, he came up through the ladder, he's doing a great job, his program is a good program," that you would give him a better or more consideration to keep on then if I say, "Hey, this guy has been a goof-off and a dud and I think you ought to find somebody else to do the job."

The main thing I wanted to cover was people. . . . I didn't want it to be said that I didn't try to evaluate everyone objectively. So I did sit down with [my predecessor] and one of the main issues was going over each one of these individuals . . . So that was the primary thing I spent time talking to [him] about.

He gave me some oral comments about a couple of [personnel] problems.

A most formal analysis of personnel originated with a transferring director who had received limited documentation as an incoming director early in the administration:
In contrast, when I transitioned out of [the agency], I left lists and went over the lists of key people and players, both internal and external who I felt the new director really needed to know about, who were real resources. And I also left lists of the problem people, inside and outside.

These and the comments below show a desire of the predecessors to grasp and discuss the informal organization with their successors. Departing directors were sometimes specific with recommendations concerning personnel evaluations. However, these recommendations were rarely acted upon by the successors.

In the best of all possible worlds, your predecessor would tell you principal issues and current status. He would or she would display for you, organizational structure, administrative arrangement, who's dependable, where the bodies are buried, what are constituent attitudes about various policies. I mean there's a whole range of things . . . . That was just something I had to start from scratch. So the real work is finding out how the organization really functions. And the most valuable thing to me would have been if my predecessor would tell me that. Here's how the organization really works. Nobody did.

My predecessor was recommending that I do the same thing that she had done which was put together a small group of people and use a lot of outside people. . . . It was against my grain not to involve people. So I decided that even if it took me a little longer, we were going to involve everybody. And yet I don't disregard [my predecessor's] specific advice on who could contribute the best.

In addition to specific personnel issues, predecessors provided background to their successors on proposed reorganization plans. Seldom did this advice appear to be taken. Successors wanted the opportunity to assess the situation for themselves, and rarely analyzed the situation in an identical fashion to their predecessor.

One of the recommendations I made to my successor was that . . . of hiring an executive director, someone to come in and give them the actual
operation authority to run the day-to-day operation of the [agency] . . .
[if I were staying] I would have brought someone in.

Another major area of transition discussion between successors and predecessors included the identification of "key players" or stakeholders external to the agency. These discussions sometimes included suggestions for the establishment of informal relationships with stakeholders:

We talked about dealing with the [regulated] companies on an informal basis and talking to people and how you do that, and whether it's valuable or not.

Rarely were introductions provided to stakeholders by the departing director, an activity that was possible when on-site overlap occurred between predecessor and successor. One exception occurred when the successor was selected in a timely manner and a week's overlap between successor and predecessor occurred. This activity came the closest to the "passing the baton" model of the private sector (Vancil 1987). Stakeholder relationships and background were one topic of ongoing discussions, if they occurred, between predecessor and successor.

We also had kind of a nice transition in that she had some kind of [reception] for legislative people who had been real key players for her. So I went, she and I went together to see the Speaker and [specific senators], so I had some kind of a nice way to introduce me and it looked nice for the administration. Here's the new director with the old director and she expressed some confidence in me which was very nice for me.

Other transition topics included the predecessor's accomplishments and agenda, sense of priorities, forthcoming issues at the departmental and division levels, philosophy of
regulation, and ongoing strategic planning processes. Of these topics, "issues on the front burner" was the metaphor used to describe current and forthcoming issues:

So what I gave [my successor] was my key issue folders and it was by topic and basically said "here are the things that are front burner right now and issues that are going to come up, and you really need to know about them."

We did two things. One is that [my predecessor] had a whole assortment of files that she kept as her working files. She made those files accessible to me. And I took time to go through them at least . . . to be familiar with what those files were and what the issues were, that kind of thing. . . . But not only policy issues but personnel issues, administrative issues, things that only she was involved in. Legislative issues, that whole kind of thing.

Wide ranging discussions, I provided her with some memoranda outlining specific issues and questions that I thought she needed to be attentive to early on.

As seen in this final quotation, a primary service of the outgoing directors to the successors was the identification of potential problem areas so that the successor could direct attention and resources accordingly. This required a sense of responsibility toward a smooth hand off by the predecessor. The "throw the keys in the basket" approach to agency transitions identified in the transition preparation chapter did not include such a briefing.

This former director summarized his expectations for a thorough transition discussion: "You'd like to review pretty much the whole run of the agency's business." This didn't appear to be a realistic goal if the structure of the dialogue occurs within a one- or two-meeting session, which is the most meeting time many successors could expect during a constitutional change of administration. Lack of transition talks highlight
the importance of transition preparations through written documentation at a point when
dialogue between predecessor and successor is structurally set to be minimal.

**Summary—Predecessor and Successor Dialogue**

When mutual respect does not exist between predecessor and successors, advice is
rarely sought or heeded. Where fruitful dialogue does take place, the predecessor
communicates urgent or front burner issues, background on stakeholders and assessment
of agency personnel.

In the previous chapter on transition preparation, the question of utility of formal and
informal transition documents to the successor was addressed. In general, successors did
not feel that the available material was particularly helpful, and they offered suggestions
for how that material could be reshaped to be of substantive worth to their transition
process. Similarly, transition discussions were reviewed in this chapter. Transition
discussions that were limited to a single setting were not considered extremely helpful
in orienting the new director to the agency. Ongoing discussions over extended periods
of time are preferred to one shot briefings. Often, discussion between predecessor and
successor was limited. What then is necessary for the first weeks of the transition?
What efforts are necessary during this period?

One process that was identified as important throughout the stories of transition was
the need to be a quick study; this varied if the director was a returnee to the agency and
had basic familiarity with the subject matter, was an insider, or was otherwise
professionally aware of the agency’s issues. Whatever the degree of urgency attached
to the effort, each director described the importance of quickly learning about the
agencies. To the extent that transition documents, memos, and briefings accelerated these
efforts, they were judged to be helpful. If directors were not experts in the agency
subject matter, the ability to be a quick study was an underlying requirements for success
as agency director.

LEARNING THE ROPES: HOW TO BE A QUICK STUDY

One consequence of outsiders being named agency directors was that the directors
arrived with limited knowledge and confidence in senior agency staff, resulting in an
emphasis of "putting together my team" of trusted managers who are loyal to the
appointing authority. Reinforcing this dependence on a managerial team is the need of
many new directors to begin at ground zero in learning the issues, stakeholders, and
personnel of the agency. The process of learning the ropes, becoming a quick study, was
emphasized in the qualifications for agency director named by many former directors.
Recall the statement of the former directors of two agencies:

I wanted somebody who was smart and who I thought could be a quick
study, because I don't think you get a lot of time to get up to speed. And
so I was looking for someone who not only had just raw intelligence, but
was a quick study—someone who listens well and picks up and is willing
to listen to a variety of people.

My feeling about going into agencies or into any organization is that you
have an obligation in fairly short order to begin to really know and
understand the programs, the issues that you're dealing with. And to me
that is your own crash course and you do it in two ways. One is really
in-depth interviews and knowledge transition from the key players in the
department. Probably before that is identifying who are the key employ-
ees in the department and some, your organizational chart pops them out
at you, but then in all organizations I think there are people who are what I call players who may not be managers. . . . I feel there is a real obligation to the manager to become knowledgeable.

The ability to demonstrate becoming a quick study increased confidence of inside and outside stakeholders in directors' abilities. An inability to show results of being a quick study produced problems for directors in this sample.

When they're talking to you they have a certain amount of respect that you've done your homework. They don't leave shaking their heads. . . . And I've had a lot of feedback on that from staff people, it's characteristic of the kind of feedback I get about it. In a meeting recently with external type stakeholders and organizations, the comment was made that I surprise people because when I come to meetings I don't travel in groups. I don't bring people with me and then I in a short time can answer the questions that are posed to me. And I just think that is a major key creditability issue about managing in the public sector.

(Continuing) While I really believe that management is a generic skill, I think part of the generic skill and the duty of the manager is to do that homework about understanding what you're dealing with.

The importance of understanding the issues and becoming a substantive quick study was emphasized throughout the relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

**Director Qualifications: Relationship of Background to the Quick Study Process**

As seen above, getting up to speed quickly is an important part of the process of taking charge of the agency. Relating to the appointment types and backgrounds of leaders, insiders, returnees, and those with substantive backgrounds in the area of the agency would require less energy in becoming a quick study and getting up to speed with agency issues. The incoming director without specialized content of the agency
substantive area was at a disadvantage:

For six months I read every single word. Because I kept thinking that even if I'd read it before, it would sink in better if I just kept on reading it.

This is one program with a bunch of regulations. You just have to learn them.

Familiarity with substantive background reduces or accelerates the quick study pressures concerning policy issues. Directors with strong policy qualifications in the agency in which they are assigned have a lessened pressure in learning substantive issues, but still may require getting up to speed in the workings of state government, agency personnel, and stakeholders. The following quotation demonstrates such dynamics.

There were just kind of generic ideas that I had for a long time, relative to this department and operation if I ever got the opportunity. Those were in my head. [Other divisions], I was somewhat familiar with some of the programs but I didn't have the same kind of initiative. I had to learn.

Lack of senior management experience added work to the quick study process. As one agency director said, "I've never been in charge of an agency with 3,300 employees before, but I'm sure not too many people coming into this job have had that experience before." Part of the orientation to the position of agency director was the adjustment to senior management, let alone leadership, role.

It [my previous experience] was [in] such a much smaller agency, that I was actually doing things more. I write very little here, that I start from scratch and write myself. For example, most things are done, even
letters, most things are done for me, which I found weird in the beginning, people writing for you.

It's a new job and it's been a difficult job to get organized and to realize what things really are important and need to be dealt with and which ones aren't. I've never had so much help in my life and it's hard to organize the help.

Directors portrayed differences in importance, style, and process of being a quick study. Some of these differences related to the appointment of an insider, outsider or returnee to the agency, appointment type (political, representational, professional), and experience within this level of government. First to be examined are the differences that were found between insiders and outsiders in their quick study processes.

Insider and outsider differences in the quick study process

Insiders, relative to outsiders, could be expected to have a reduced amount of quick study learning upon assuming the position of director, as illustrated by the comments of this incumbent director speculating upon her successor: "unless of course somebody internally is appointed . . . who can actually pick up the ball and run with it and for whom therefore would be able to minimize the amount of downtime." Yet, insiders who received appointments as director still noticed a large difference in the scope of the job from previous positions.

I suppose the biggest down side, if you want to put it that way, was getting myself comfortable with some of the technical side of things that I really didn't spend that much time with . . . I think that was the biggest part for my self-comfort, I had to very quickly get up to speed with areas that I hadn't been familiar with and come across as an expert with it but also represent those people, whether it was dealing with legislation or
whether it went in to the facet of representing the division chief to give them support and come off like I knew what they were doing and what I was doing.

I had been primarily involved only from the administrative standpoint . . . and so I recognized there were points where I definitely needed to do significant beefing up. But at least I had my feet wet. And I understood a lot of what the basic issues and that kind of thing.

Similarly, returnees' advantages resulted from a knowledge of personnel and relevant stakeholders, general substantive background awareness, and the amount of time required to "get up to speed." The role of the new director in his or her prior tenure at the agency influenced the review required. If the incoming director's experience at the agency was limited in scope, the adjustment could be similar to that of a promoted insider's shifting scope of responsibilities. This returnee described how his role as a former agency employee helped him in the selection process:

I think a big part of what got me [that far], was the fact that I did know the agency. I think that I did know enough and it's not just enough to go in and talk about what the problems are but knowing the structure and the people you're going to have to deal with. You can talk about how you would get from recognizing a problem to implementing the solution . . . I knew the environmentalists that I had to deal with outside the agency. I knew a lot of the industry people. I knew where there were problems and I knew where we had strengths. I knew what I needed.

**Appointing structure of the agency and the quick study process.**

The possibility of a planned succession event is one consequence of a board appointing structure, where there are set or continuing terms for the executive. While other circumstances can preclude this, such as death of office holder or change of chairman due to political change, the announcement that the office holder will not seek
reappointment can lead to a transition with greater overlap and preparation time.

I had really six months before I took the job to become familiar with the issues because of the way the [nominating] process works. When I first became aware that [the chairman] was not going to seek reappointment, I met with him, and I met with a number of people that I knew who were in the [agency subject area] who I thought could give me a sense of what was happening in the area, what the issues were, what direction, what the arguments were to go in various directions. I talked with [my predecessor] at length, I talked with [a commissioner], I talked with ex-commissioner. I think that gave me a great sense of where things were at that point in time and what the upcoming issues were.

The nature of the appointment process in a board-appointment setting can stretch the period available for learning. The structure of the organization’s appointing authority influences the transition process by extending the period of time that the successor has for study. One layer removed from political influence, transition processes for boards and commissions move closer to the insider promotion model for the private sector (the tenures of the leaders could potentially be longer, as well).

Summary

Becoming familiar with the agency involved actions of quick study, including learning policy issues, relying as described on personal experience, external stakeholders and their views, predecessor’s views, information obtained in the selection process, and views and presentations from agency staff. If the successor was a newcomer or returnee to the agency, state government process issues and changes were a necessary part of the quick study routine.

The initial general priorities upon entering the agency were influenced by organizational and environmental conditions, as well as the orientations of the successors.
For example, if state economic conditions were faltering, budget area responsibilities of directors were at the forefront. Depending upon the severity and extended time frame of the financial situation, the attention of the executive could be circumvented from the operations of the agency. The director below focused her energies externally during the state's fiscal crisis in 1983, and never felt that she caught up with the internal management issues of the agency:

I'm sure I've picked up more things all along but I still don't think I know enough about how the department runs.

Faced with the situation of unfamiliarity with the personnel of the agency, with limited understanding of the issues, directors took the pulse of the agency, diagnosing people and problems that required attention while deciding their agendas. Each director had techniques that were comfortable and helpful in their transitions. Some of these quick study strategies are reviewed below. An incoming director could use one or many of these strategies or variations. Directors who had assignments in different agencies used the same learning model in each location, perhaps modified by experience and situation.

**Specific Quick Study Techniques**

Considerable variation in quick study techniques surfaced in the research sample. Some successors relied on outside consultants, actively soliciting external views of the agency and its operations. Others obtained candid insider perspectives. Some used the selection process itself as a quick study technique. The four quick study patterns found
in the research sample include specialized techniques, the use of external views of the agency, the use of internal staff views, and the use of the selection process. The quick study strategy patterns are described below.

**Strategy 1: specialized techniques**

The use of a consultant was one formalized approach to making sense of the organization. This occurred in an agency in the sample following the constitutional change. Consultants were engaged to evaluate the agency, personnel, and programs.9

I gathered together some people I knew who were either in public management, private management, or audit firms and formed a steering committee, advisory committee sort of group that began to psych out the agency for me. We then paid a staff member, whom they selected, to get a good look at what was going on. So they looked at all the major areas in the agency, major units, and gave me a report in about two or three, maybe about five months on what they found and where the problems were and made some recommendations on organizational change or ways to restructure that might help the agency function better in their eyes from what they found, how it was organized. So that was my introduction to the [agency].

(Continuing) I thought that would be more objective, and they didn’t really make recommendations on personnel much, as I recall. They just talked on how archaic the systems were and what was really urgent to be done and what could wait, things like that, like an audit firm would do, or a management firm.

Another specialized quick study technique of directors was to "follow the paperwork." This administrator used the same problem-solving strategies in both of the organizations to which she was assigned:

The generic approach basically is to say, okay, time out, tell us, what are the major problems? What are the things that you really see the organization really has to do? . . . You get all of the material, you get
people to walk you through the process. In government or in any highly processed procedural kind of organization, unless you know what that process is, how the hell are you going know?

Following another sort of paperwork was the technique of these directors:

I began to learn about the department by asking that all mail came to my desk so that I could read it. And what happened was I would work with the legislature until seven or eight at night. And I would come back here and then I would start to go through the mail. And I would read until ten thirty or eleven every night. So I learned a lot about how the agency functioned simply by making myself read what came across the desk. And then I felt more comfortable in having people sort things as we went on.

Just some dialogue. Things were in such disarray at that time, what I had to do was go through the stack of papers.

Another generic technique, "Following the money," was used in multiple agencies by this director:

The best way to do that in my view is to follow the money in an organization. As Woodward and Bernstein said, "follow the money." And I think in any business if the new executive going in will follow the money, you'll find out what's going on in the institution, be it public or private. So what I would do, what I did initially for about ninety days, seven days a week, was read purchase orders. Literally read 'em. And what it told me was what people do in the agency. That sounds pretty blah, I know.

**Strategy 2: Get external views of the agency and its operations**

Although each director used different sets of strategies for becoming familiar with the agency, most strategies included feedback from external stakeholders. New directors deliberately sought the views of external stakeholders after arriving at the agency, and sometimes, through the selection process, before arrival. This director accelerated the
process of seeking outside views of the past performance of the agencies to which he was
assigned:

My first week was really a week of interviews. But the first interviews I did weren't in the agency, they were outside the agency. I took about ten or twelve people to dinner one night; I'd been in the agency for about two weeks. I spent a lot of time reading stuff and I just took some people to dinner and took some notes, and I just asked them what they thought about the agency. Nothing specific about it, sort of a random kind of conversation which I thought would be an agency expense. As it turned out it wasn't, it was personal; you can't do that in state government.

(Continuing) They were constituents of the agency. And in each case I had a legislator who was on a committee that influenced what happened in the agency. I was just asking what they thought of the agency, what kind of service did they think they got, what kind of service did they think they deserved, was it at variance with what they got?

Part of the first couple of weeks was trying to get an assessment of what was going on as well as trying to develop kind of an early strategy, and that was difficult. . . . I tried to touch base with some external constituents, just to get a feel. I talked to a number of members in the legislature, because I knew the reputation that the organization had over there was bad, and I wanted to know how they felt and why felt [that] about it.

Agency directors also used external agencies and universities to accelerate the learning process:

I spent a day at the . . . [university] getting briefed on the basic [technical issues of the agency]. I just took every opportunity I could to fully discuss whatever we could discuss, from whatever avenue I could discuss, whatever avenue I could find to learn, I tried to take advantage of it.

Quick study processes appear highly personal, relating directly to the leadership styles of the directors. Those comfortable with outside feedback solicit information in
the views of outsiders; others turn to internal documents for clues on agency operations. These strategies hasten understanding of issues and required actions. The role of agency insiders in the quick study process is now examined.

**Strategy 3: Get internal views**

Directors relied upon internal staff members for issue briefings, with various levels of formality to the briefings. Structures for these meetings included interviews and retreats, listening daily to staff members, and issue briefing sessions.

Well I'm a good listener and you just pick it up. I mean it's very apparent. I don't think you really have to look for it.

The staff let you know, [the problems] you know.

We had a second tier of interviews inside the agency going down one tier from the policy-type people to technical-type people from various organizations. And we did one-on-one interviews with them and took notes. And then I started working.

I would take a particular subject that I wanted to know more about and be beefed up about and I'd have staff come in and let's talk about the whole thing, and then more detail to enhance my understanding.

The first thing I did was I brought all the managing officers and executive staff and superintendents, regional administrators, central office division chiefs, anybody and everybody who had a label of being a big shot in the agency. And we went to [an off-site location], and for three days I did kind of an in-house consultant stchick, where I facilitated a process with my staff of trying to first of all, in as economical a fashion as possible, find out from them where they were as far as the mission of the organization, the direction of the organization.

As a quick study technique to broaden the range of issue familiarity, one strategy used by inside successors was to consult with the agency experts, a problem this insider felt would be no different for an unfamiliar outsider.
I have a lot to learn in that regard and I have a good teacher . . . within two thirds of the organization I would recognize an issue that would red flag immediately for me. I'm beginning to see tints of pink but...what's the real implication of this kind of a change, what does that really do? It's the kind of question that no matter who would be [the executive], if they came from outside the organization, they would be behind the eight ball.

Staff input in the quick study process varied from the highly structured planning retreat to informal talks with staff. All staff input contributed to the quick study process of the director, who can assess staff abilities and learn issue content simultaneously.

**Strategy 4: The potential for the selection process to jump start the quick study Process of the director**

One distinctive circumstance in the sample occurred in a midterm succession event. An extensive search and selection process had been undertaken for this cabinet position, and the successful candidate for director parlayed the members of this search committee, who had been carefully selected as participants, as a semi formal advisory board. Participation in the selection process had been structured with agency stakeholders, agency employees, governor's office representatives, and other cabinet officials. A subset of the selection committee members continued to meet at the call of the director, serving to legitimate early actions:

After I was selected and had started, I took time out to sit down with various people on the committee and talk to them about the process they went through. And they all felt very serious about what they had done and how they had done it. . . . And they passed on a lot of useful information to me. You know they basically went and met with hundreds of people and they took extensive notes on it. . . . They told me all about it [the selection process].
While many directors sought external views of the organization, most directors could not use their selection process so resourcefully. This utilization of the selection committee members builds and goes beyond the findings of Birnbaum’s (1988) study of the use by university presidents of information obtained in the selection process as a part of their orientation to the position.

**Summary**

The importance of being a quick study is increased for directors entering the position without a strong substantive background in the major policy areas of the department. For directors in this situation, the passing of a test or tests with employees or constituents served as benchmarks that the transition was complete. The tests occurred while giving testimony to the legislature, giving speeches to outside groups, and meetings with agency employees and stakeholders. Examples are presented below:

You are required very quickly to get up to speed, . . . I’ve always prided myself and I’ve done that here, okay, you give me a briefing, you give me what I need to know on this and I’ll ask you for the details as I need them, but you give me this so that when I go over there to testify I’m going to feel very comfortable. Because I don’t like to have to call on a bunch of people. So that’s also how you establish your credibility with many people, your division chiefs or other people. I’ve had several initially say to me, you know you obviously were a very quick study because I just gave you a quick briefing on this and you went into that and you held your own. And that establishes my credentials with those division chiefs at that time based on some very complex technical issues that I necessarily haven’t had a lot of background on.

. . . Because I was the director, I had to take the lead at the legislature in testimony and everything, answering questions as well regarding our . . . laws and some policy decisions. Plus, at one point I was asked, "Well are you speaking for the Governor and the administration on this?" So you need to be fairly comfortable in what you’re doing. Sometimes you’ve got to wing it too.
These tests highlight the importance of the quick study process to the transition experiences of the directors. The tests varied according to successor backgrounds, the background of the predecessor, and the related expectations for the successor.

For all the focus by the directors on the quick study of the issues, and various techniques for becoming oriented to the issues of the agency, the directors were unanimous in their views that at some point, the new director must have the confidence to act. No amount of study and consideration could replace action. This underlying principle, shown in the quotations below, most of whose speakers were successful directors and were not paralyzed by the need to know more before acting.

Part of the learning process was that this is something you have to go alone.

It comes a point where you’ve just got to, you can’t absorb it. You’ve got to live it, you’ve got to do it. You know you’ve got to make the decisions.

In fact I’m absolutely convinced that in the public sector it is more important to grab hold of the reins of leadership and do something than it is to be right. You can more afford to make a mistake than you can afford to do nothing. I’m absolutely convinced that this is the case.

The quick study process can be summarized by the requirements of getting organized, learning agency processes, learning substantive content, learning state government, learning personnel, learning organizational culture, policy, beliefs, and the traditions of the agency. The quick study methods used by the directors are summarized in Table 23, including circumstances of utilization from the sample.
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TRANSITION OBSTACLES

Influence of Predecessor on Successor

Recall that views of the predecessor by the successor were based in the degree of political orientation of each director, a general managerial orientation versus a substantive policy orientation, and timing of the succession event relative to the constitutional change. These variables translated into impressions of the perceived competence, energy, and commitment of the previous director. Not only did they influence the willingness and value placed in transition meetings, as evidenced above, but influenced the perspective through which the successor considered the management and policy initiatives of the predecessor.

Even without judgments by the successor about the predecessor’s general characteristics and performance on these dimensions, predecessors influenced the actions of the successors. For example, this successor described the difficulties of an earlier predecessor in the agency. Failings attributed to the previous director influenced the context in which the new director, two leaders later, entered and the standards against which he felt he was being judged by insiders and outsiders to the agency.

The other thing he probably got criticized on a lot was his management skills. [He] made the job tough for himself. He was a detail person. He tried to read every scrap of paper that came in and he tried to deal with things and at the same time he tried to be innovative with starting new programs. [He’s] a real thinker like that. I think the thing just overwhelmed him; it became too much of a strain on his whole life and people could see that.

I guess if you’re going to walk into a position like this it couldn’t be under better conditions. I hate to be negative about [my predecessor], but the [stakeholder] community was just so fed up with him. Basically I
knew I would walk in the door and that no matter what I did it would look good in their eyes. And I was going to have an extended honeymoon as a result. And I did. I mean it was like how long can I prolong this honeymoon and keep the [stakeholders] saying hey this guy is doing a good job.

The question of the impact of the predecessor on the successor, as initially envisioned by the researcher, dealt with the "demise attribution" or departure circumstances identified in the introductory chapters, in which the circumstances surrounding the departure of the predecessor would influence the successor’s attention. Specifically, it was thought that the attention of the successor would be focused on situations relating to the departure circumstances of the predecessor. The role of the predecessor on the successor as identified through the research process seemed broader and less focused than this initial demise attribution influence.

**Style differences** between successor and predecessor, including areas of management and leadership emphasis or areas of focus, competence, and differences in energy and perceived commitment were considered in the transition efforts. These differences and their impact on the successor's efforts to assume leadership of the agency are typified here.

Because let’s be real, I’m different . . . and I do things different than what [my predecessor] did. That does not mean that they’re any less efficient. It means that they’re different. And people have difficulty with differences.

Another director contrasted herself with her predecessor’s relative focus internal or external to the agency. This context was important because of the expectations and the
relationships that she found within and outside the agency:

[My predecessor] was very good to me in the fact that he was not very well known in the legislature and with the Trade Associations. So I had an opportunity to stamp my own mark on those. My mark is there. My predecessor is going to have to live with that one way or another which could be good or bad, but they don’t have the opportunity to do what I did, which was to kind of use a blank page.

This director contrasted herself with her predecessor on internal issues:

[My predecessor] didn’t put a lot of need into labor relations area and as a result of it, we got behind in some things.

In the above circumstance, the successor elevated initiatives concerning labor relations. In a sense, the prior director’s orientation became a part of the larger strategic management approach of analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the agency. Whether conducted in a formal or informal means, consideration of the previous directors’ strengths and weaknesses became a part of the situational assessment that undergirded the transition process for many directors.

Not only the immediate predecessor, but the cultural profiles of the lineage of predecessor characteristics influenced the process of taking charge. Specifically, this was the case for directors who did not match the historical profiles of the agency directors. One director gave a history lesson on the departmental chief executives:

There’s a composite of [previous executives]. For the most part [agency executives] have been here for a long time. It wasn’t uncommon for them to span governors. So the department was used to somebody being there for a long time. They were not used to somebody like me, but they were used to a long tenured person.
Meriting separate consideration is the difficulty of following the popular leader. Circumstances of long tenure, charismatic style, high energy, or policy success in the predecessor made overcoming the successful or popular predecessor a great concern to successors entering as agency director immediately after the tenure of such a predecessor. Contributing to this difficulty are the issues of predecessor continued contact with the agency, and the successor’s need to gain employee acceptance of differences in leadership styles, and attempts to "overcome" the strengths of the previous director.

I’m actually kind of proud of this but I hate to say it out loud because it seems so egotistical, but there were some real loyalties that developed between people on that staff and me. And it was important for [my successor] to be able to get those people’s loyalties.

This related directly to the transition problem of gaining staff allegiance, which sometimes was alleviated by the departure of the holdover staff.

What I mean by overcoming the previous director is that [my predecessor] was here for six years, seven years and everybody in the organization, well the whole organization was [her’s]. It was directly her’s. People did things the way she wanted them done. It was her organization, she was director, it’s supposed to be.

(Continuing) When a new director comes in and a director has been in that position that long, you have to overcome that director. Because both are entrenched after doing it this way or that way. I ask for something different or ask why this or why that and maybe do a shift, and not a major policy shift, but maybe a shift in the way we look at things. And the response was, [the predecessor] never did it that way. I said well [she] is not director. So you have to overcome the incumbent. . . . The [staff] loyalty was to the director not to the job.

I think that’s probably where she [the successor], I won’t say she’s fallen down. You know when you contrast someone to [her highly acclaimed predecessor].
It used to be very intimidating to talk to [my predecessor] because he did have such a good grasp. And of course I'm coming in with no experience.

**Personnel actions** of the predecessor could be a source of problems for the new director:

In the two years before I came out here, there was some hiring of some people in key spots, political hires, that from my perspective did not necessarily fit. In some instances I felt the people were brought in, not that they were bad people, but not necessarily have the background for the position that they were given. They were given a higher salary than the job merited. And slotted amongst career professionals, making more money, and that sets a bad tone, morale wise. I had six or eight hot spots that I had to deal with in personnel, and it's sad to say . . . most of those were people that had been brought on board recently, I mean within the last two years, who were creating problems with our own leadership.

Predecessors could influence their successors by making promises to personnel that favorable changes would be made involving their position at the agency. In general, all bets were off on agreements [manufactured or otherwise] when the director departed.

To hedge this potential lack of follow-through by the successor, directors made changes in a last minute flurry of activity—causing the new directors to handle the aftermath.

[Your predecessor] told me this or "are you going to keep to that commitment or are you going to keep to this as well" or you know, "I've been doing it this way," when I found they hadn't been.

[My predecessor] was on the way out the door. She wanted it [personnel move] taken care of. She did it very quickly and the perception here is that it was not as sensitively done as it should have been.

Predecessors could positively impact the successors' relationships with staff as well. For example, predecessors could take action to assure that qualified staff remain at the
agency until the successor has become oriented and by encouraging staff to shift their loyalty to the new director. These predecessors were not always successful in their efforts in the long run—but given the interests of successors in hiring their staff, short term maintenance of senior staff appeared to be the desirable tenure.

The positive impacts of the predecessor were considered in more detail in the transition preparation chapter of this document, with the choice being the predecessor's whether to "throw the keys in the basket." These actions included enabling discussion, transition preparation, and staff preparation. The first example of positive action, from a popular predecessor, urging staff retention:

I urged people to stay in at least through a transition period so that [my predecessor] would have the benefit of a good management team.

To allow the new director to gain employee loyalties, predecessors limited contact with their former employees:

I would really liked to have had more ongoing contact with people but I felt that if I did, [my successor] wouldn't have a fair opportunity to gain those loyalties, that I had to absent myself. And I've tried, and I know that some of those folks probably are disappointed that I haven't called them or talked with them more, but I feel badly about that too. I would have liked to have kept those contacts closer but I just I didn't feel that was fair to [my successor].

I was always a little careful about putting people at the agency in the position of seeming to be conferring, consorting with one's predecessor, you know that's kind of a problem... There were folks who would call me up and say, by God, you wouldn't believe what that idiot's done now. As I'm sure people called [my predecessor] up and told him the same thing. And I'd say, oh really. Sometimes it was kind of interesting and I'd listen. I tried not to encourage it.
I think he has very much stayed away from the relationships, even within the office people that are his friends in this period of transition, allowing me to forge my new relationships with staff members without crowding those in any way.

These comments illustrate the concerns of predecessors for the transfer of loyalty to their successors. The concerns illuminate a critical doubt that occurs in transitions, whether the loyalty of staff is to one person, the former director, rather than to the job. The question was unresolved, and underlies the tension in the situation of the new leader. Some directors held one belief that their staff members would be retained after their tenure but acted upon another belief when it was time to form their team at the beginning of their tenure. This question remained unreconciled and lies at the heart of the tension that is seen in the metaphors of this initial period of the new director’s tenure. This important topic warrants separate attention in this research, and is captured in the section dealing with transition metaphors in the next chapter.

**Disruption of the Transition Process by Crisis**

When transitioning into the agency, directors of agencies in crisis used differing approaches than did directors in organizations without major crises. During the study period, directors entered with responsibilities to solve statewide budget crises, savings and loan crises, and institutional mistreatment of clients by agency sponsored or operated facilities. These comments represent the situations that this set of directors encountered:

You’ve got to keep in mind, I went to the Department on a Friday. [Three days later, the crisis] came down. I like to characterize it as my first full day on the job. The world falls out from under the Department and nobody knows where it’s going to stop falling.
(Continuing) Now transition at [that agency] was obviously an unusual one. So transition instead of taking place the first couple of months, the normal operating procedure really took place, the [staff member] that I ultimately replaced, really ran the shop while I was busy on [the crisis]. But I really didn’t pay any attention to any of that other than [the crisis] probably the first two months.

I really didn’t come in with anything, other than just, the first thing that I wanted to do was clean it up and try and gain some creditability for the system, confidence within the system. How that was going to happen. . . People, I really didn’t care about finances, first of all our systems were such that, nobody could tell you where you were at anyway, and, I just figured the worst anybody could do is throw you in jail. The first issue you had was to take care of the health, welfare, and safety of the people you are charged with serving, which we did.

I would walk down the halls, I’d hear doors close . . . there must be people in there but I didn’t have time to sit down and worry about it, and you come in and there’s stacks of papers all over the place and that was what it looked like to begin with. It’s like anything else, you take one day at a time and one piece at a time and put it together.

I was at the legislature all of the time. So I didn’t understand as much about running the agency. So after my year was done with the budget bill I looked at that we were having some relief and I could get over here and finally learn about running the department.

For directors of agencies in crisis, the crisis necessarily became top priority and transition activities were pushed aside.

Another powerful influence on the transition situation occurred when internal and external problem areas were inherited in a transition. Activities concerning the repairing of negative circumstances of agency performance were important. Included here are repairs to declines in agency performance, repairs to stakeholder relationships, and alienation in staff.
One example of the demise attribution and attention relationship is the management of the agency’s relationship with the federal government, with comments offered by the predecessor and successor, respectively.

If there was an area that I was especially irritated by, it was the extent to which we yield to the mandate of the federal government— in my opinion, which all too often doesn’t do things very well. And who in effect blackmails state governments with their money, and says, if you don’t do this, we’re going to do this, and it’s normally take money away. I really believe that there were a number of instances where the federal government was saying to the state of Ohio to do certain things that we should not do, it was wrong to do, it was expensive to do, it had direct public impact . . . and my recommendation on more than one occasion, was not only no, it was hell no.

The repair of the relationship with the federal government became a priority of his successor:

I knew that was going to be one of my biggest issues to deal with. Federal authorization was something I knew was an issue. The Governor had already pointed that out.

**Structure of Relationship with the Governor’s Office**

The relationship of agency directors to the governor’s office in terms of policy influence and direct access to the governor rather than through governor’s office staff members was a source of great frustration to cabinet members. While this was not unexpected given the structure of the governor’s office, there was a difference according to the personality and perceived role of the assigned "staff liaison" and the agreement negotiated with the governor on the issue of access before appointment. The issue surfaced during the research interviews, although there was no uniform and direct
question asked of the directors about the ongoing relationships with the governor’s office. Most of the comments resulted when asked about frustrations with the position, or things that would have been done differently in hindsight. The discussions elicited stories of particular circumstances in which the directors felt aggrieved. Generally, the cabinet members felt their advice should be sought and heeded regarding policies, rather than relying solely on the advice of in-house gubernatorial policy staff who were generally junior in experience to the directors.

It’s a very frustrating system to work with the Governor’s office because I think the cabinet . . . the Governor should rely on his cabinet to help him set policy. And what he does is he has a whole other hierarchical structure that the cabinet has to work through and that second guesses the cabinet. And not that the Governor shouldn’t get different perspectives, but he has set up two dueling systems and it’s very inefficient and it’s very frustrating for cabinet members as well as frustrating for the people who are advising the Governor when he actually does take our advice and not theirs.

The Governor had a liaison who then tried to just pick out pieces that they needed, and then you had that kind of, I wouldn’t necessarily say conflict, but certainly a rub, because you had cabinet people feeling like this person was going around them . . . so there was some mistrust around that, especially, you know, if you are really turf-conscious, that could present quite a problem. But, that’s the only model I’m familiar with, is you have the liaison to those agencies who have a certain amount of freedom and power to roam around in there and make things happen, and that can go way too far.

I think that early on, there was an intention on the Governor’s part to run his administration in a way that he ended up not doing. The original, and this is sort of the commitments I think to all the cabinet officials, not just me, was the authority and responsibility for running the agency. Keeping the Governor’s office advised, working with them, working with the Governor’s assistants in the program areas. The model was to be that we would all work as a team. And that turned out not to be the case. There were several teams. Which is not unusual.
Establishing a relationship with the governor's office was a part of the transition process. As seen in chapter four, some directors negotiated the foundation for this relationship before the beginning of their tenures as directors. The role of the governor's office staff vis-a-vis agency policy and administration was a thorn for many directors.

INSIDER AND OUTSIDER TRANSITION PROCESS DIFFERENCES

Researchers studying succession events have traditionally used the distinction of insider or outsider, typically treating the distinction as clear cut. The distinction between insider and outsider was murkier than anticipated before the research interviews. Executives who had been with the agency a short time before their appointments were regarded differently than insiders who were career employees. There were multiple perceptions of whether a director was an insider, differing for outside stakeholders, the predecessor and successor, and employees of the agency, and even changing over time. These various perceptions influenced the transition process. This director offered multiple perspectives on his insider status over a two interview period:

My "reputation" such as it was, was known primarily outside of the agency. Not as an inside person in the agency. My expertise is recognized as outside the agency, not the inside. I did not see myself as an insider. Because my reputation and everything was based on my expertise coming into state government. I think those outside also saw me in that same light. Here's a person with specific expertise that has been brought into state government and now he's just using a little expertise internal, rather than being brought in. I don't think I was perceived as an insider at all.

I will say within the organization for the most part, there's always dissension. But for the most part they saw me as a known entity.
A second interview several months later brought this change in perception:

I had to extend myself to them because I was perceived as the newcomer. Here it is, they've been in the agency for years. And here's this new guy coming in and their allegiance was not to me. . . . What I did, to be real honest was to work issues at a lower level than what I normally would simply to try to establish some of the relationships.

During discussion of transition events and processes, particularly in discussions on the expectation of staff toward inside successors, the phrase "known entity" or a similarly meaning phrase repeatedly emerged when discussing the expectations of agency personnel. The dominant intra-agency definition of insider as perceived by the directors was whether they were known before the assignment and had worked within the agency.

The quotations below illuminate these distinctions:

I was already a part of the department, they knew me, I knew them, they knew all of my strengths and weaknesses, they knew where to hit me in my weak side. . . . Because, many of the people that I worked with, as director, . . . they knew my reputation and when they came to see me or I came to see them, they knew pretty well what to expect of me already.

I wasn't one of them. . . . But I think that they were thinking we could have some totally new person that would come in and want to be the director. . . . At least we know her. She kind of knows us. She's not that bad, we'd come to this understanding of who she is and what she is. I think she was a safe choice.

(Continuing) At the time, some people were probably more enthusiastic than others. Overall, I was like a good choice. I was safe, I wasn't totally new. . . . Things that I heard later from people were things that . . . you know, "she's so professional." I don't know what they thought I was going to be, a cowboy?

They don't have to explain things to me. I usually have it down.
The insider or returnee does not start with a clean platter in establishing relationships with employees. Insiders and returnees suffered or benefitted from attributions that employees made about them concerning their prior roles in the agency—they like you or they don’t.

Your reputation does not change when you become director. For those people who respected you and who were in with you, it’s good. And for those people who weren’t, it’s bad. If you’re going to change behavior, you need to let people know that... how you once were before, how the model that you presented to yourself... is not the correct way that management people have to behave. So in a few cases [the returnee] didn’t do that. So consequently, things went wrong, and he was critical of what happened because people either consciously or unconsciously were doing, behaving, the way he has historically performed.

People know [the inside successor], they know her philosophy, and they know she’s gonna continue the same direction, they know how to work with her, cause they have before, you know the people that like her like her, the people that don’t don’t, and they already know that.

Existing relationships of insiders affect the construction of an inner circle.

We joined the department at the same time together and she’s been a tremendous support to me, and I asked her, please stay on when I took this job and she’s a major critical player. She’s knows all the history here.

[He] hired, I think, folks who are the closest to him, people he knew before.

**The Inside Successor Transition Experience**

The orientation of an inside successor relates to timing of the event in the gubernatorial cycle. Inside successors were often named at the end of a gubernatorial term. Consequently, directors’ leadership options include the decision to take full charge
of the agency, continuing or changing the directions of the predecessor, or acting in a caretaker role until the administration end.

The successors of inside origin in this sample were for the most part not interested in implementing or orchestrating major changes in agency operations. Several explanations are plausible. First, the insider transitions were usually not timed with the start of a gubernatorial term of office, when changes in direction are most likely (although outsiders at non-constitutional changes sought policy change). Second, insiders are often a part of the management team which created the direction and therefore do not perceive a need for change, one reason insiders may or may not be appointed. This predecessor described the leading inside candidate in a situation where an outside successor was later brought in as director:

You can count her for your study as an extension of me . . . because that's what I would have done and . . . she carried out all the policies we had mutually all decided on so it was just like a clone actually. I don't say that in a bragging sense, I say that because she had been right there when we devised the policies in the directions that we were taking at that time.

Insiders were sometimes appointed director in conditions in which agency stability was sought, particularly if there has been high turnover of directors. As seen in the selection section, there appears to be a preference for the selection of outsiders at the start of a gubernatorial term.

Some directors perceived limitations on changes in agency direction, such as the situation described below:
How can you do it better than [my predecessors]? Mostly it was just a continuation of the same. In fact, if you looked at the goals and objectives... they're identical to the ones [they] filed. It's always get a balanced budget through, on time, no gimmicks, you know, the GAAP reporting system in place.... And they're the same overall goals for the agency.

The Role and Experience of Insiders Prior to Selection as Director

As it did for successors of outside origin, the role and experience of the inside successor before the change to acting or permanent director affected transition processes. Particularly, experience influenced the hand-off of the agency from the predecessor to the successor. This retiring executive served as acting executive for the agency three times prior to his tenure as executive. His experiences included the responsibilities of agency strategy, political issues, knowledge of the legislature, policy and budget issues.

I felt reasonably comfortable with it because I knew the agency well. I knew the strategies that we were following well. I had been involved with [the executive] closely... so I felt comfortable with that. I knew a lot of the political actors. I knew the legislative people well. At least the ones that dealt with the kinds of issues the [agency] would deal with, I felt comfortable there. During that year I had to take an operating budget through the General Assembly and I had to take the capital budget through the General Assembly... so I felt comfortable with that... I mean it was a challenging job and I was intimidated in some ways by it, but I was comfortable with it, too.

Similarly, this inside successor of another agency spoke on her comfortableness in assuming the position of director:

I knew the people here and I knew the drills and again I was so comfortable with the agencies and what we were working with.
Organizational size and flexibility also influenced the transition experience for insiders. This inside successor last cited also attributed her comfort in the role to the management structure and styles of her predecessors:

Because [the predecessor's management team] were so close, it was hardly any transition when [my predecessors] left and I took the directorship. It wasn’t like we had any different goals or theories or styles, we were so similar in style . . . it really is difficult to identify differences . . . There really wasn’t a hierarchy here per se. The responsibilities between the director and the assistant director were always more dominated by who took the phone call or who was more comfortable with an issue than it was hard, drawn lines about who did what. It’s really hard to call either the [predecessor 1 to predecessor 2] to [predecessor 2] to me thing a transition in my mind. It was just like more of the same.

Out-of-state appointees were distinguished from in-state appointees, primarily in their knowledge of external stakeholders state government procedures. Out-of-state appointees felt there were positive consequences to their status as outsiders.

As it turns out, I think the success was about the fact that we probably didn’t know the rules well enough to know when we were breaking them, if we were breaking them. And then, proceeded to be probably more creative about how we organized ourselves, presented our issues, communicated with a variety and large number of constituencies.

Similarly, for appointees from a geographic region other than the state’s capital, the learning curve is greater, lacking familiarity with the state structure or the people.

Problems of Insiders

Inside successors have different challenges in taking charge.13 These differences are organized for presentation purposes into the following areas: 1) difficulties relating to changes in the scope of the job, including reluctance to give up favorite areas,
2) difficulties related to being viewed as an extension of the predecessor, 3) staff overload as promotional vacancies are filled, 4) internal and external stakeholder views of the inside successor and the changing roles and relationships of the insider. There are additional difficulties for returnees, as well as for insiders who first assume the position in an acting capacity who are later appointed to the position permanently.

These insider adjustment activities replace or supplement the more general agency orientation efforts of the outside-in-origin successor. These challenges are illustrated below.

Scope of the Job

Inside successors identified differences in the scope of the job between their new roles as director and previous roles in the agency:

I knew that it was going to be more administrative than technical . . . I knew the people here in the department. I felt I knew most of the problems. There were a few hidden mines that [my predecessor] said to me "did you find our mines?" I said, "I think I have." So naturally I wasn't afraid of the job, I wasn't apprehensive from that regard.

Going from [assistant] director to director has been a real transition because the scope of the job changed so drastically. As assistant director I had a very defined scope of responsibility. As director, it's extremely broad. And so then your focus has to shift. No longer are you concerned with a particular part of the agency. But now you are concerned with the total umbrella of the agency.

He had a certain amount of knowledge, but the more he's in that job the more he says I'd never believe how much comes through this place.

The prior role of the returnee in the agency may differ in scope from the role as new director. The situation for the returnee was described by this observing predecessor.
[My successor] worked in the agency for a long time before he left . . . so a lot of the technical aspects of the agency, the director is very, very familiar with. Like most people he had to get his arms around some of the more macro-issues affecting all of the agency as opposed to the area he was specifically assigned to.

Similarly this agency returnee in the capacity of assistant director found his previous experience did not help with problems of a substantive nature, but stakeholders or constituents had not changed.

My role was different when I was there before, and the things that I worked on at that point turned out not to be very important in trying to staff a new set of employees at the policy level. . . . [But you did know the constituent groups?] A lot of the people in the constituent groups were still around, too, amazingly. In that way, I guess I profited from having been there before.

The scope of the job change for insiders and returnees included the shift in focus to the external relationships of the agency, including legislative relationships, clients and other stakeholder relationships, and consideration of the broader policies of the entire agency. The inside successors often lacked experience as a chief executive.

Reluctance to give up favorite areas

Inside successors for various reasons were unwilling to give up areas of supervision or responsibility when assuming the responsibilities of the director. This insider hinted that she had difficulty giving up some of her duties upon her appointment as director:

The biggest part, and this goes back to the job that I had been doing, was making that transition from the division to this. And giving up some of the things I really enjoyed.
The successor in this case, part of the agency executive staff, described why the supervision of the budget function was not passed on to her until late in the tenure of her predecessor:

She continued to supervise fiscal. [We] often talked that I guess she couldn’t, she had a hard time giving it up . . . And besides, she wasn’t pleased with the fiscal officer. And so I think she didn’t want to pass it to me or something. I think it had a lot of things to do with that. Or because she was stronger fiscally and had worked with the woman and kind of knew. But what had happened was, she didn’t give it to me. But she did give it to me because every time there was a problem from that moment I came, I got it . . . and it wasn’t until about a month before she left, that she said, "I really should have given you fiscal. And I can’t explain why I didn’t. But I’m giving it to you now."

In a second example, the perceived importance of a project influenced the decision to maintain direct involvement:

I had a strong, and have a strong working relationship with the [stakeholders]. I met with them every month. They’ve never had anybody direct in the [agency] before. I had one of them come to me, and say I am not going to call you anymore, because you need to become the acting [executive]. That would be wonderful for me but not fair for you. So he has, and I have, with one exception turned everything that I was doing over . . . but symbolically, I had to stay in that activity, it is important.

Staff overload

The promotion of an inside candidate to director creates a vacancy on the executive staff. If the inside successor first assumes the position of director in an acting capacity, one problem is staff overload. This results from the inability to permanently fill staff vacancies until the director’s position is finalized.
[My replacement] is absolutely overloaded and just burning the candle at both ends, he's exhausted. But I can't do anything about it. Because the decision may well be to hire an executive who's somebody else and in that case both of us roll back into our former positions. That gets very long for him personally, very, very exhausting. And this is the transition adjustment.

I was just doing an enormous amount of hours. And you can only maintain that level of output for so long. Superman I'm not. You can only do it for so long. And it begins to wear and tear on you . . . and if you are so inundated in taking care of the day to day operations, so inundated in some of the more routine kind of functions, it does not free you up to be able to do the things that only a director can do.

Whether the acting director's former position is filled on a temporary basis or the leader bears the burden of two responsibilities, there is additional stress in absorbing the loss of a staff position while learning the role of director. Acting directors who were interested in mentoring seemed to fill their previous position temporarily, an act which altered pressures relating to the doubling up of work responsibilities.

**Internal and external stakeholder relationships**

Insiders had to surmount staff perceptions that they were limited in their knowledge of agency-wide policy issues, which became an important hurdle to overcome:

One thing that I think is very misleading, most of the time when folks say administrative, they see as a separation from the administrative and the policy. And there can never be a separation from the administration and policy. If you're going to perform the administration functions, the only way you can do that is with an understanding of the policy.

Even though [my predecessor] tried to brief me . . . [I knew] that I was going to be, shall we say, tested, for a while, which I was.
Staff also must make adjustments in accepting the new role for the promoted insider. Some insiders minimized the disruption to staff and the significance of staff adjustments in the circumstances of an inside successor:

His relationship to his staff began to change. And remember, we were colleagues before as well. He became much more... never unapproachable, but one little step back, as one might expect. And it was just perfect.

By the time [predecessor 2] left we had just started to hire some analysts because some people had started to transition out. But the bulk of our staff was still the long termers. . . . The bulk of our people were long-term people who had seen directors and assistant directors come and go. So they were pretty blase about the whole thing.

Agency staff felt there was more difference in styles than did the insider successors:

Their personal styles were real different. I think the staff felt the change... [one] has a more open style and a lot more tolerance for personnel problems and [one] doesn’t... Things like space planning and whether you get another staff person or not. [One] at least had the appearance of being always very open to listening to everybody’s point of view.

In summary--General themes relating to successor background differences: Insiders, outsiders, and returnees

Personnel-related themes emerging from the analysis of similarities and differences of successor background characteristics (insider, outsider and returnee) and transition processes follow. First, the building of an inner circle is impacted by existing relationships between the inside or returnee successor and departmental personnel. Staff adjustments were generally easier if the candidate was favorably viewed, and general staff apprehension about the transition was reduced, but still present.
Concerning the successor’s orientation to agency activities, the learning curve or quick study requirements were anticipated to be shortened, and the possibility of extended transition discussion between predecessor and successor was enhanced. Finally, there was variation in the definition of an insider. These differences and similarities are summarized in Table 24 below.

Outsider and insider successors alike can lack a history of the agency, dependent upon their prior work assignments. The history of relationships, background information on issues, and personnel were common discussion topics between predecessors and successors of all backgrounds. Directors felt insiders experienced less of a learning curve, resulting in less down time for the agency than would an outsider.

Table 24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope of Job</th>
<th>Staff Issues</th>
<th>Stakeholder (internal and external)</th>
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<tr>
<td>First senior Executive experience</td>
<td>Staff overload if appointed in acting capacity</td>
<td>Insiders viewed as extensions of predecessors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reluctance to give up previous responsibilities</td>
<td>Inner circle influenced by friendships and existing working relationship</td>
<td>Overcoming predecessor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended transition briefing period with predecessor</td>
<td>Staff assessments more quickly done</td>
<td>Perceived in former role relationships, substantive and political knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understands state government if long tenured</td>
<td>Less anxiety, &quot;known quantity&quot;</td>
<td>Lack of clarity in perception as insider, outsider, returnee</td>
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Predecessors related differently with insider successors, particularly if their advice on the appointment was heeded by the appointing authority. Differences in the briefing procedure were noticeable. However, the existence of a prior working relationship with the successor appears to account for this inside status extended to "outside insiders."

Finally, one perceived consequence of the promotion of an insider or returnee was the improvement in morale of the agency personnel in terms of career potential.

I generally felt that there was a lot of support. I think what I heard from people in the agency is they were all pleased that finally, one of their own got selected to run the agency . . . because I virtually worked at all levels. I think that's one reason that I've been accepted in the agency as much as I have is because people look at me and they say, "Well, God, he was where I was fifteen years ago." You know, at the lowest level that you can be in this agency. "And he actually worked his way up through all these levels, and worked in all these programs. That he really knows how I feel."

The inside successors in the sample described different transition experiences than did the outside successors.

**Common Problems of Transition**

Study participants were asked to identify pitfalls, squeaky points and common problems of transitions. There were five general areas of concern that were discussed with this question: 1) The impact of the predecessor including overcoming personality factors and the impact of the predecessor on the organization, 2) overcoming embedded behaviors and styles, 3) acceptance by employees, 4) an inability to get an inner circle in place in a timely manner; 5) and the costs of long tenure. This latter comment caused a reconceptualization of what is sufficient tenure, and how tenure is perceived. A common theme in the pitfalls discussions related to the power of the position. Other
themes included ethics, getting good information and not being shielded, qualified personnel, staying focused in light of the power, the development of trust by stakeholders, and relationships with the legislature.

Initially when I came on I was not well received. And a lot of folks had very strong allegiance. I was following the director who had been here five or six years. Had very strong allegiance within the agency and that allegiance to be real honest was not transferred.

MOVING FORWARD: PERSONNEL EVALUATION

So far, transition processes have been considered in terms of the relationship of the predecessor and successor, including transition briefings and the preparation of transition documents, the impact of the predecessor on the successor—both actions taken before departure and acts after departure, and the need to be a quick study upon arrival in the agency. Throughout these areas, the impact of constitutional timing and the type of appointment—insider, outsider and returnee—and appointment qualifications have been considered. Agency circumstances were also shown to be important.

A major area remaining for consideration in the transition process is the development of relationships with the agency staff: assessing staff, making decisions to fire and hire, and communicating changes in direction. From the perspective of staff, transition brings uncertainty. To other senior staff, who may have been candidates for the position, transition begins on the heels of disappointment. The development of staff cooperation and an inner circle is the subject of the next major section of the reporting of this research.14
Chapter VI Notes

1. This particular director did not however believe that contact with the predecessor was a vital part of "getting the lay of the land."

3. Preliminary interviews were undertaken with directors and senior staff from the gubernatorial administration prior to that in office in 1983. These preliminary interviews served as practice sessions for the researcher as well as provided the opportunity to test in a preliminary fashion certain constructs. Also included in this preliminary round of interviews was one individual who served in an assistant director capacity in the gubernatorial administration that began in 1983.

4. However, this director also held the belief that the real transition to the agency did not occur between predecessor and successor:

I don't know how you could get a transition as a matter of fact in the public sector, from the individual at least you're replacing. But I know in my case in both departments I had felt a hundred percent cooperation from staff. And that's really where the transition takes place. I had no problem at all with the transition and with the other people you've interviewed you'd have to speak to that. But I just had no problem with it.

5. This was a situation in which the director left the agency during a period of high media exposure due to questionable ethics in purchasing procedures in the agency.

6. One question surrounding the extensiveness of the transition discussion extensive processes of study (as opposed to being a quick study)-- it is not the intention of the writer to intimate that a long period of transfer of a successor and predecessor leads to a successful tenure. It may be just the opposite: successors with a need for extensive study may not be prepared for the leadership position. There are interpersonal issues involved such as confidence. The question is "if you need all this help, are you qualified to be director?"

7. Frances Buchholzer, on her appointment as director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, quoted in the Cleveland Plain Dealer January 24, 1991.

8. This is consistent with the findings of Beyle (1985) at the gubernatorial level, in which addressing the budget crisis of a state was found to circumvent or delay policy initiatives.

9. The use of consultants for agency and program review held potential damage for director-staff relations. The story below was told by an end-of-term director who was a staff member in another agency at the beginning of the gubernatorial administration.

[The director] trusted his staff and I remember one time when the consultant came in to do some work with [our program] and we were honest enough and probably stupid enough to tell them everything . . . that was wrong with our system. And
then they produced a report that was fairly negative that went directly to the director without having staff have a chance to say anything. We were really worried about what was going to happen. We went in and briefed him on it and he said, he sensed our anxiety. He said, "why would you ever think that I would trust an outside consultant more than I would trust my own staff. And that was wonderful to hear. It was just, you didn’t know because you didn’t know him.

10. This was corroborated in interviews with long tenured staffers in the departments in which this change in profile occurred.

11. Agency directors worked with policy staff assigned in the governor’s office. Later, the structure included a chief of staff.

12. Recall that these intentions represent the views of successors and not necessarily the appointing authority. Generally the views of the successor were influenced by discussions with the Governor and other discussions during the appointment selection process.

13. It has already been noted that the definition of insider can vary considerably by the person making the attribution.

14. I entered the field with the presupposition, based upon experience and observations of transitions based in discussions of agency strategy, that transition experience patterns varied on the basis of timing differences and the other variables that were the basis for the purposive sampling criteria. However, I was uncertain as to what these differences were and what difference they would make. Differences in constitutional timing were observed as exerting considerable importance in the staffing process by the directors who had experienced transitions at varying points in time.
CHAPTER VII
GETTING ESTABLISHED

[What were the squeaky points in the transition?] Trying to work with . . . my immediate staff in the organization, not knowing where they were coming from, if they trusted me, and me trusting them.

The biggest problem I had was I didn’t have anybody around me I could count on. Under normal situations, a new director walks in the door, you can pull the deputies together and say I’ll give you two weeks, if they’re not gone already. And on the other hand, everybody needs to evaluate, there might be someone here who’s either worth something to me in the long run or maybe in the short run just to make the transition. There may be others I just want out the door.

(Continuing) And there were a couple of people that . . . I knew at least in the short term were going to be of some use to me. But most of the people that were here were just going to get in the way.

The assembling and review of executive staff was a high priority of all successors, including those in agencies in crisis. Not only was this reflected in the transition discussion between predecessors and successors, but it remained a concern until the executive was relatively satisfied with staffing. More than any other transition-related activity, the alignment of staff served to define the benchmarks of transitions. This chapter continues the review of the transition process with the topic of successor-staff relationships. The chapter concludes with a summary of the metaphors used by directors as they spoke about their transition experiences.
ESTABLISHING THE EXECUTIVE TEAM OR INNER CIRCLE

Staffing Differences by Timing of the Succession Event

All directors saw the need for loyal staff, although there were differences in whether that could be achieved through the persona of the predecessor's staff. Successors of inside origin were not necessarily unanimous in their beliefs in this area. The first succession event timing difference typified here is the greater flexibility in hiring available to directors in terms of relative constraints on staffing changes occurring at the constitutional change:

From my experience in two cabinet positions, one starting at the beginning of the governor's term and one midterm, I would rather start at the beginning of the term and be responsible for the people that I place in responsible positions and feel that loyalty toward me. In the private sector you have some of that same thing when you're promoted to a directorship or a vice-president or something like that. Maybe not to the same extent, but I've observed that as well. And there's a shift of personnel. As a matter of fact, in the private sector it might be easier to shift the personnel than it is in the public sector in midterm.

(Continuing) [The Governor] didn't say anything. I mean, basically I could have done anything I wanted to . . . initially you go in, you're pretty objective in the way you view the department, you select your own staff because the unclassified employees go. And you replace those and you feel that you have a cadre of loyal people that are helping you manage the department. Whereas when you go into another department you have employees who are loyal to your predecessor. And many of them are well placed politically.

Staffing at the sub-cabinet level is one of the key attention areas following a gubernatorial change of office. Staffing requirement differences related to the increased political requirements of a constitutional change in office:
It's not like at the start of administration where the Governor owes people and they have to say, okay, well, now we owe these people this and that and we've got to put you into a slot here and there. And that's very different—they didn't owe me anything, but those things do take place in the first year to two years of any administrative change.

One of the critical problems with the transition is figuring out who the sub-cabinet level candidates are. Who is good and who will perform and there's that kind of a question of sort of looking at the available talent. Most of those folks, they have to be politically acceptable. Some of them will be old friends, supporters of the Governor or will come recommended or sponsored by people who are close to him. So within that group there will be some duds and there will be some folks who are really good. And the question is how you figure that out.

The sub-cabinet appointments are critical to the directors' fast start. Locating a good team in an environment in which other agencies are also seeking key appointees has its own frustrations. The process is characterized as haphazard and potentially disorganized by study participants who experienced a constitutional transition.

In 1982 [my assistant director] formally applied to be a deputy in the department. I never saw that application. I never knew of his interest in this position. I never knew anything about that except that I had met him, been impressed with him, and when I was told you need to have two people to be your right and left hand, I knew two people in the department, and I saw [one of them] on the street and said "Would you be my deputy?" And he laughs and talks about how crushed he was, this was a career job that he wanted. He went through this whole process only to have, he never used these words, but this dingbat say to him on the street, "Do you want this job?" instead of sitting down and asking how he felt about policy, going through the regular job interview.

Immediate replacement of staff during gubernatorial-based transitions is aided by vacancies and an awareness by current job holders that the positions are appointed.
There were a couple of them [vacancies] that were open . . . and they just hadn’t filled it, waiting for the new person to come on.

The staff selection process at the gubernatorial change of office was the source of a recommendation for transition process improvement:

If the application process were different, it would be easier to identify the good people to make those decisions quickly and get them behind you.

For some directors, the haphazard manner of filling staff positions occurred despite the timing of a transition event.

It’s a matter of having openings occur through retirement or whatever. I pretty much grab the people I know.

Staffing impediments differ for middle- and end-of-term appointees. For most midterm appointees, the lack of ability to bring in directly a management team is one constraint to becoming established in the agency. Directors who negotiate at the time of hiring for discretion in the personnel area can minimize this problem.

In some ways it’s more difficult . . . part of the team is there and they’re your people and in place and you’ve got to mold them into your team. Sure you could come in and throw them out too. But because they are our people, Governor’s people, supporters, from my perspective, I’m reluctant to do that, I want to work with them and mold them into my team.

(Continuing) I felt more constrained to be coming in and cleaning house, and bringing in all my own people. I wanted to work with the people that [my predecessor] had brought in. And I’ve pretty much done that.

I think there’s a difference . . . in the respect that if it’s a midterm, those around you are in place and maybe you as a director, I’m speaking of
myself as a director, your key lieutenants are already in place and you’re not thinking about replacing them. Whereas when you come in at the beginning of a gubernatorial term, for example, everybody knows that the unclassified employees are going to go and you’re going to hire your own staff that you feel are loyal to you so there’s a much greater transition at the beginning of a governor’s office than there would be any time midterm.

In midterm transitions, most directors took at face value constraints on removal of existing personnel, and did not negotiate the replacement of personnel.

**Immediate or Gradual Removal of Staff**

At the constitutional change of office, the question of gradual versus immediate turnover of staff at the sub-cabinet level was less problematic, but present, the primary distinction being the definition of gradual. In this state, persons in non-civil service protected positions expect to be quickly asked to leave. Arrangements within agencies ranged from a suspicious “fire the holdovers immediately” to the example of a seasoned political leader who described the exercise as working beautifully, getting full cooperation:

In my case when I went to the Department, we counted up all the unclassified employees and contrary to some political advisors I went to all the people, either on a personal basis or one of my key lieutenants and basically said, "You know you got your job by political appointment and you understood that and I understand that. At the same time I understand you have personal problems, in some cases there will be retirements involved, some cases you need some time to look for a job. We want to cooperate with you and we want you to cooperate with us in the transition." We had absolutely beautiful cooperation. As a matter of fact, the employees, they knew before I got there that they were going to lose their job.
But I think that you have to have a little compassion for those people. They knew they were leaving because [the Governor] was lame duck in our case. But still they really appreciated and I was pleased some of them came back to visit on occasion cause they make friendships. It was just a good transition.

One director firmly held the view that personnel changes should be made quickly, regardless of the timing of the transition:

After initial interviews in the agency, it was clear to me that all of the chiefs in the Department weren't capable of operating at my standards. There was no uncertainty about that at all. I believe you take small losses early. So I was willing to have the inconvenience of not having a chief in a position rather than having a chief in the position who wasn't capable. The argument often is, keep the person who is not competent until you find someone who is, I think that's a dumb suggestion and a dumb way to go about doing stuff. I think if your toe is sick, you don't want to mess up your foot, get rid of the toe. So I just kind of fired everybody in the first week or so after I interviewed them, and asked them about the organization and the things that they should know about the organization, they didn't. It was just, it's been nice seeing you, when would you like your last day to be?

Some directors taking charge at the constitutional change felt that slow and easy is preferred to immediate and indiscriminate firing discussed above.²

I think it's important not to come in and fire people willy-nilly and create a lot of apprehension about job security, in any case. That's very important.

I thought it would be very necessary to have continuity here, to make sure that people with some institutional memory survived the transition and I came in with that very basic idea that I needed some staff people here who had an idea of what had gone on before, so they could help train me to do what I needed to do. I also just from a common sense standpoint have always felt that I need to know what is happening now before I can plan for change for the future.
(Continuing) I tried to make the staff here understand that I was not coming over here with a hatchet, I was not coming over with the idea that I had to be immediately surrounded by all my own people for loyalty or whatever respects. And that what I wanted to do was work with the people who were here and see how I felt they were doing in their jobs and whether or not they were providing me with what I needed and I would not know that until I’ve worked them.

I think there’s a way to do it [make personnel changes] that you can ease into it as opposed to coming down like that. I think that in state governments or in political arenas it’s even more important that your key players be politically loyal to you. To you meaning whoever the guy that’s responsible for running the show. I firmly believe that.

While the directors in nearly all circumstances overwhelmingly expressed a belief that changes in personnel should occur gradually, definitions of gradual in terms of the replacement of employees varied across directors. Some directors allowed from 90 to 120 days for employees to find a new position, others allowing up to two years or more.

My philosophy about going into an agency is that I don’t believe in going in and wiping out everybody. One, you need their knowledge. Over time you will figure out whom are the ones you really have to get rid of. You might even know it the first week, but it just is not a good thing within an organization to come in as an outsider and wipe out people, everybody, you know? So I wouldn’t do that.

Over about a twelve-month period... everybody had changed jobs. I brought in, well, actually I took a little while longer than that. The last change-over didn’t occur until ’86 with the public information officer, I finally got somebody who was my person there.

In addition to concerns about loyalty and building one’s own team, reasons for staff replacement include sending a message of change. Replacement of staff can be a part of a larger statement, a symbolic change in the way the department will operate in the future, or tied to a deliberate change in strategy. These directors wanted to pursue
strategies of deinstitutionalization.

We made changes, uh, to people. I already knew a couple of the people, and I knew that I didn’t want them to stay. Some of them, I didn’t want them to stay, because, I wanted people that I knew, or that I had recruited to be in particular positions. Some of them I didn’t want them to stay just because I wanted the message to change, that leadership was gonna change, so it wasn’t like there was anything wrong with them, it’s just there’s something about bringing in your own team, and that’s not any different from any transition in any corporation or anything else. So it wasn’t necessarily that people were bad people, and some of that was expected.

Most of the people we’re bringing in now, the new people, all have community backgrounds, sometimes they’ve done both but none have been superintendents before, they might have been program directors or something, but almost everyone of them came in with a community background . . . and, they are 100% behind it.

The directors usually explained that the replacement of staff was "nothing personal" against the individual, just that there was a need for staff who were loyal to the new director, who had the same work and policy understanding as did the new director. Even directors who said they wanted to work with the existing staff usually replaced key personnel or were pleased when there was a "voluntary" departure of a senior staff member of the previous director’s staff.³

One director who did not make sweeping changes used the phrase "voluntary transition" to describe the process of building an executive team without dismissals. This transition occurred in an agency that was not directly appointed by the governor.

So my own perspective was I needed to be here for awhile to see what was going on before I could decide what direction I needed to go. . . . What I think I found was that most of the people here were very competent at what they were doing; they were not here for any particular
political reason. And the ones that were here more on personality than on personal qualification aren't here anymore. The ones that were truly qualified and that I worked with well, and that seems to be the majority of the staff, are still here and the ones that, where there was more of an emphasis on personality and needing to work with a particular individual, those folks moved on. And I have only had to ask for one resignation because all the other ones have fallen out naturally, and that resignation was on the front page of the paper.

(Continuing) The people that I had serious doubts about my ability to work with them and serious doubts about how they would fit into the way I wanted to run the agency, had also the serious doubts that they wanted to work with me and they made voluntary transitions and it worked out very well.

Alternatives short of dismissal of employees included mutually agreed upon reassignment to other roles:

We put him over in the planning section and he's still there. He wasn't vindictive or anything like that.

There were a couple of people who were at top levels who came to me and said "Look, I know you're going to want to bring in your own person; what I would like is this, and I would like x amount of time to look for a job; I'll do anything in the meantime." There's one guy there who was a . . . deputy-director level or commissioner level, and he said, "Look, I have a law background, I'll do whatever work you need done for awhile, just give me time to look for a job." And we did. We made a very amicable arrangement, he worked for us for about six more months, did some good stuff for us, but in a different role. While he was looking for a job, and I went ahead and filled his position. So there were things like that.

Given restrictions on firing of personnel present in most middle-of-term appointments, considerable energy could be spent in getting a person relocated and finding a suitable spot, unless an agreement with the governor was reached prior to accepting the position.
When I realized that it was time to seriously consider whether or not to make some personnel changes, also known as cleaning house, it was too late. I could not have replaced people in enough time, given the transition period.

But it seems to me that the way you really put your mark on any organization is to bring your own staff on board. People who view the world the way you do and who are going to do the implementation work that needs to be done without having to go through an enormous amount of retreading, teaching people to think differently.

In constitutional and middle-of-term transitions, style differences and comfortableness with staff, and the element of trust in the predecessor's appointments, contributed to the directors' desires to assemble a new executive staff. While questions of loyalty loomed greatest at the constitutional change, they existed in most transitions.

The biggest issue, I think with any new person coming in, is that you've got to immediately know who you can count on and whether there is anyone you can count on. Cause it gets pretty lonely if you've got to do this on, by yourself. That was what [one of my predecessors] was faced with. When he came in '83, he walked in the door, there was nobody here. Just a bunch of leftovers. And it's like, who do you depend on?

(Continuing) I was going to be dealing with people who were left behind by my predecessor, some of who I felt just were of no use to me and couldn't help me in any way. In fact might be working against me. So I had concerns there.

As demonstrated above, even in midterm transitions, political loyalty remained a concern. This politically experienced director addressed the situation directly, in an unthreatened approach, with what he felt to be good results:

The ones that were very loyal to the [previous administration] particularly, I sat down with them and I said "Hey, look. I'm not playing politics here. I haven't played politics before. All I want from you people is a
good day's work for your pay. . . . I'm not going to give you any problem, you don't give me any problem, and we'll have a good relationship." And they didn't give me a problem whatsoever.

One surprise to many first-time successors was the low numbers of appointed (unclassified) positions. This raised the question of how many positions were needed to take hold of the agency as a new director:

The Secretary of State's book listed how many, listed numbers of classified, of unclassified employees, and I think the [agency] had two. It was one of the smallest numbers in the state government, one or two.

I was told that I would not be able to hire. And in order to hire one person I had to make sure that I moved somebody else out. They didn't give me an increase in personnel ceilings. On the other hand there's a whole bunch of people around here who would work at the pleasure of the director. And I guess that I didn't understand that I could have been "displeased" earlier.

Transitions that occurred at the end of a governor's constitutional term-of-office presented different patterns. End-of-term appointees tended to avoid staff replacement activities. These placeholder-successors felt that they could live with style differences in staff, and reevaluated the performance requirements held by their predecessors:

I wasn't about to begin to take action and challenge and take steps to get rid of a deputy . . . I could pick a new person but I'm still learning all the departments. . . . They're not terrible. They're not doing anything illegal. They've got a few problems. But maybe we can work together. So I didn't take that action that [my predecessor] had been saying, I'm going to get rid of this guy. I've done this, this and this to do it. If you want to do it you can pick up, it's your call. I didn't want to do that because that was going to make my life much more difficult.

I've tried real hard to include him in things and kind of repair some of the damage that was done there.
An important consideration in staff retention and cooperativeness is staff interest in the position as an inside candidate. A transfer of loyalty or a retention of loyalty to the position rather than to the predecessor is required. These successors, one an insider and another a transfer from another agency commented on the difficulties of establishing relationships with staff insiders who were also candidates for the job:

There’s always persons, within the agency and outside the agency that you have to interact with that are disappointed because you got it and they didn’t. How are you going to deal with the employee motivation factor? Your management style and approach to problem resolution, those kinds of issues.

In the case of a couple of other commissioners, they weren’t anxious to have a smooth transition because they were still smarting over not getting the job.

**General Themes on the Building of an Inner Circle**

Themes pertaining to the building of an inner circle included delays to the process associated with organizational or system crises; the difficulty in developing the inner circle due to restrictions in hiring, greatest at the midterm appointments; difficulty in locating qualified candidates at the constitutional change of office, the replacement time required by the state system of hiring as a constraint; and the change in background and qualification for inner circle membership as defined by the successor.

One theme in previous studies of executive succession (as reviewed in chapter two) is that the executive role constellation or inner circle members changes following a succession event. These changes have generally been measured by changes in the table of organization.
During the interview process, differences emerged between the formal and informal inner circles. The inner circle was usually something different from the organizational chart, and solely to use the table of organization to represent the inner circles of the directors would likely result in an incomplete portrayal.

The greatest omission from the inner circle resulted from its title. Sometimes, the "inner" circle was importantly comprised of consultants or friends with substantive expertise who were located outside the organization. The question of whether it would be accurate to use the table of organization was asked of this director.

There was actually another person who was really part of the inner circle, but didn’t even work in the department, who was an old friend of mine, a professional friend, a colleague of mine, and had become something of a personal friend, but I met her through [the policy network]. She works for the University . . . and served me as a consultant from the beginning; I asked her to come in to help me both structurally, and she helped me think through a lot of the organizational issues, and she also helped me think through some of the process issues, because we set up some things like a planning council. . . . We did some retreat work, and we did a lot of conceptual thinking about particular directions we wanted to take on particular issues, and she would come once a month for two to four days, and just be here, and really got in, very hands on, but as sort of, what she likes to call an "inside outsider."

The pattern of using outsiders in the inner circle was repeated in other agencies.

[My predecessor] was recommending that I do the same thing that she had done, which was put together a small group and use a lot of outside people.

In general, changes to the table of organization occurred following a succession event. In addition, inner circle membership changed over time:
Staff Assessment Strategies

For directors opting for gradual changes of senior staff, trust and comfortableness of working relationships emerged as two of the highest priorities for staff retention. Several strategies were used for the assessment of staff. These strategies are identified below.

It is apparent from the emphasis placed during the discussion between directors that the predecessor is an early source of personnel information to the successor. Similarly, acting directors and agency employees were asked to play this role.

[The acting director] was good about talking to me. Of course I think [he] was a little reluctant to be totally open about it.

I strongly believe that if you have a good opinion of yourself, and you have a good respect for your judgment, you probably don’t even have to do this, but you just ask ten people you respect, ask them who they respect and who they don’t respect and then you have a gut idea, your list is there.

You know there are people willing to tell you what’s going on in the department so you get a quick handle on who the good guys are, who the bad guys are, who’s the guy’s gonna knife you and stuff like that.

Agency stakeholders provide feedback on agency personnel, as well as apply pressure for the removal of employees. External pressure for replacement of holdover staff potentially influenced staff retention:
Externally some people have been critical that I have not wiped out the whole top management staff. There are two people I would like to move and will be moved eventually.

Sometimes you bring people in from the outside, sometimes you promote from within. Our licensees have never ruled that for us. But if I want to put somebody in a job that for some reason they felt very strongly opposed to, and I wasn't aware of that, they would go to the Governor.

I met with a lot of people. There were people at the Attorney General's office who were helpful. The committee themselves, I met with members of the committee on a regular basis initially, because in fact some of the deputies had applied for the job and they had interviewed and they had gotten to know them, and so they had some insight into it also.

I didn't see a need to make a lot of changes. That also was offensive to the environmental folks, who wanted me to turn the place upside down and kill some people.

Many of the directors stated they withstood the external pressures for removal of employees.

Performance monitoring is another source of staff retention information: general working relationships, projects, and participation in staff retreats. On the negative side, performance failures that are visible to the director provide input into retention decisions:

It took me about six months to figure out the budget situation. The reason it took me six months was that the first three months my budget fellow was trying to figure out the situation. The first time I went down to budget hearings, I asked the fellow who was the division chief at that point, "Well what kind of questions are they going to ask me?" And his response was, "Damned if I know." It was clear at that point that I needed to replace him. And I did.

I tended to kind of watch the quality of the work that came in. Try to figure out whose work it was. That's another game, too, that goes on. Essentially it showed me who was effective and who wasn't. And that takes a few weeks.
One problem of outsider successors coming to the agency and making staffing decisions was the limited number of personnel known to the director before arriving at the department:

I knew two people on this department of then about nine hundred people when I took my job.

This is contrasted by a returnee with substantial knowledge of departmental personnel. Insiders and returnees have the inside track on personnel assessments.

It was a little easier for me because I knew some of the people here that were deputies at the time. And then there were others who I didn't and who I immediately sat down with.

He knew the personalities.

In summary, for constitutional and middle-of-term transitions, style differences and comfortableness with staff, and the element of trust in the leader's own appointments, contributed to the director's desires to assemble a new executive staff. Replacement of key individuals can be a part of a larger statement, a symbolic change in the way the department will operate in the future, or tied to a deliberate change in strategy.

**Initial Signals to Staff**

Upon the first few weeks of arrival in the agency, directors' initial meetings with staff had four common themes: 1) importance of loyalty; 2) clarification or change in mission, conveying of organizational direction, and general reassurance; 3) expectations of working levels; and 4) sometimes, but not always, assurance of job security and an indication of changes approaching in the management team.
These themes intermingle in the following recaps of messages delivered from directors:

1) **Importance of loyalty**

Getting staff expectations to the forefront was a priority of some directors in the first weeks. This inside successor stated his expectations:

The first thing that I did was to call in my deputy directors, the ones that report directly to the director. I notified them of the appointment. Also let them know that I wanted a unified management team. If they had some concerns about my appointment, now was the time to speak, not down the road running around moaning and groaning. If you’ve got an issue, let’s hear right now so we can address it and put it behind us.

2) **Clarification of mission and general reassurance**

You send an early signal to the people who are for the most part career professionals. They’ve been doing what they’ve been doing for a long time and a lot of them think that their way is the only way. . . . We’re looked upon as kind of political animals, this guy who’s appointed by the Governor, if you can demonstrate to them that you really do have an interest in this department and what you’re doing and want to work with them to improve it, I think that helps to set the tone for the agency and I really think it helps morale.

It seems to be important to tell people to keep doing what they were doing, that I was generally supportive of what they were doing. I didn’t want everybody, everything to come to a halt.

(Continuing) The message that I wanted to communicate [was] that "what you have been doing all of these years is not as bad as everybody says it is." And I’m supportive of it and that we’ll make some changes, but we’ll make changes when they need to be, not for the sake of change.
3) **Expectations about Working Levels**

It’s important to establish some expectations so people don’t think that they’ve got a four-year vacation coming. There is a stratum of folks in business and government . . . who given the opportunity will do less than nothing for as long as they can get by with it. And it’s almost a game.

Staff meetings were used symbolically by one director in introducing a change in management intensity in an otherwise lethargic agency. She instituted a working lunch staff meeting, which was designed to say:

On the first day itself, I had [the former acting director] go ahead and run the staff meeting at 8:00, and after he ran the staff meeting, then he said "okay, what do you think we should do," and I said "First of all, staff meetings are going to be at noon, not at 8:00, starting next Monday, and bring your lunch, because we’re going to work through lunch," and said some other things just to try to again to convey difference, that it wasn’t going to be the same, that we were going to work, which is probably an awful message for people to work through lunch, but the point I was trying to do was informality, and the message I was trying to give was informality, and sort of working over lunch, but we would work hard, and change the time around a little bit, so there were some ways in which we made some conscious efforts about that.

4) **Assurance of Job Security and an Indication of Changes**

First of all I talked with every senior staff member and just told them that I want to work with you. And if we can’t work well together I’m not going to tell you to pack your bags, you’re out of here. I’m going to tell you that I don’t think we’re working together and I think we ought to look at alternatives and I give people time to make changes. And I think that gave everybody a big, everybody started breathing a big sigh of relief.

Through messages such as the above, directors clearly saw potential to positively shape and influence the expectations and behavior of staff.
Staff Anticipation of Transition

The general finding that transitions cause apprehension among employees (Gaertner, Gaertner and Devine 1983) held true in circumstances of transition in this state. Two themes were evidenced in the director's descriptions of the organizational climate during their first weeks as director. First, staff were fearful for their jobs, with the most extreme anxiety occurring in changes related to gubernatorial elections. These descriptions of the climate in the organization upon the successors' arrivals depict the professional apprehension:

I tell you, generically they all expect to get fired because they're not of party and so they're waiting to see what you're going to do. So, they're very cautious.

The expectation I think was that I would come over here and get rid of the whole senior staff and start over. And I had no intention of doing that and as I say, things have worked out just fine... So I think that the expectation was that I was going to come over with a hatchet. People understood after a while that I really, really wasn't going to do that and people calmed down.

You almost have to work in government to appreciate the apprehension that people feel. Because it's throughout the government. It's less so I guess in an organization such as [a] Board.

The second theme in the directors' descriptions of the organization upon arrival also concerned staff. Agency staff seized the opportunity to correct perceived wrongdoings, an act that occurred regardless of the timing of the succession event.

Of course during that process [meeting with staff] I heard of all the terrible things that had happened in the previous fill in the box number of years.
The issues are too big for me to be caught up in personal vendettas. It's a new day, I cannot address what has happened in the past. If there are wrong doings there, we will try to address them as we go forward. Nothing is going to change overnight.

A culture within the organization emerges concerning who stays and who goes in a transition, with differences across the agencies.

There has never been, aside from whatever the [agency executive] does in jockeying around with the change of Governor, there has never been any political repercussions on staff. Now as I told you, one [requested firing] didn't come to pass because the executive declined to it. But the fact that the [agency executive] declined to do it is meaningful I think. But I cannot think of, in all of the years I've been there, a single time when someone has come or gone from the staff because of a political imperative. So and I think the staff members know that. The staff is a professional staff and I think that they all feel the security of a professional.

The history has been that they've been unprotected and every time there's been a change in administration, there's been a bunch of heads to fly.

Variables such as staff experience in transitions and organizational culture influenced the transition process within the agency.

[This employee] . . . he's been here for twenty years, he's lived through thick and thin, he understands how to survive. But there are other folks who had not lived through a transition and they were very, very antsy about what was going to happen. There was a talk and a lot of gossip. . . I don't deal with gossip, I just get people in and tell them the truth. And if they don't believe me, they don't believe me, and if they don't believe me, they shouldn't be working for me.

I was always the senior person in that staff in terms, in longevity . . . and that helps a lot. Because people watch you and if you're not obviously distressed, there's some soothing in that. I worked very hard each time when I was acting [executive] to try to reassure people that the issues of the new [executive] coming were issues of whence from here rather than issues of somebody coming in and being hypercritical of
what’s already happened. I mean I’ve never seen anybody come who was hypercritical of what had happened before.

The perceived uncertainty of continued employment and concern whether they will continue to have an interesting role to play with a new director generates employee apprehension of the forthcoming changes, even in agencies in which the executive appointment structure lies outside the governor’s direct authority. The apprehension in employees caused by the director’s attempts to identify an inner circle that balances styles, policy emphases, and administrative expertise, is one consequence of transition.

**Staff Adjustments to Change in Role and Style Orientation of Directors**

Directors who participated in this study did not always perceive the magnitude of staff adjustments required by changes in leadership. This was particularly true for some insider successors with moderate to long tenure in the agency, who felt that there was little adjustment required by staff. Interviews with senior staff showed there were adjustments that were required to take place despite the background of the successor; these adjustments involved the style of the director, the director’s relative level of involvement, and the director’s prioritization of issues.

Also included in these style differences are the orientations of the director to focus internal or external to the agency, which seemed to correspond to interest in the details of the organization.

Staff members interviewed expressed a need for adaptation to differing leadership styles. These changes included differences in staff meeting structure and organization: staff meetings varied in time, content, format and attendees. Senior staff meetings
become a part of the surface culture of the organization. The predecessor's approach to staff meetings was felt long after departure--staff meetings carried symbolic meaning about the way things were done prior to the new director. For example, this executive described a weekly staff meeting held by her predecessor that she replaced with informal meetings of a smaller group and later reinstated. She referred to this meeting as "the way it had always been done." The predecessor, in an earlier interview in which he described the agency culture upon his arrival three years prior, said there had been no staff meetings at all; he began senior staff meetings, which became the way we do things around here.

The normal process was a staff meeting with senior staff every week and an administrative staff meeting basically to deal with administrative matters that I would not attend every week. That's the way [my predecessor] had run things. I fell away from the two meetings, first of all I thought it was inefficient in that if something was important enough that they needed a meeting to discuss it, I probably needed to know about it. So we combined into just one meeting and I fell away from the weekly meetings, but now, got back on track with those.

Another style change adjustment on the part of staff was the type of communication for presentation to those external to the agency:

People have to figure out what your style was, because in the beginning, I sent a lot of letters back, and I said, "This sounds like a bureaucrat. Make it sound like a person." Or, they'd be writing a letter to a client, and they would say, we don't do that here. And you know, I would say, "No, you don't tell them we don't do it here, you tell them who does it, tell them where they can call, tell them you'll call them next week to make sure they got it." So there were some ways in which they got very frustrated, early on.
A critical adjustment for staff to the new leader was the orientation and understanding of new priorities and emphases within the agency. An inability to make these required adjustments contributed to senior staff turnover. For example, this successor spoke of his predecessor’s staff:

It’s not that they aren’t good people, you may not feel comfortable with their style. I mentioned one specific person not by name, but the assistant director who had just been named to that position not too long before. His style and my style just didn’t mesh at all. And I replaced him and he fought that and went to [my predecessor] for support and didn’t get any. It wasn’t that he wasn’t a good guy, but he was counting paper clips. You know you’ve got a job to do. What’s the major job of the Department? Not to cut costs. Obviously to run a department where you’re not wasting money but the most important thing is for good regulation. They obviously hadn’t been doing that.

The importance of staff adjustments to style differences is highlighted by the number of directors’ responses relating to style and comfortableness in dealing with staff as reasons for staff replacement. Changes in style and expectations, in the view of the directors, contributed to increased anxieties during the transition period.

STAKEHOLDERS AND THE TRANSITION PROCESS

Establishing relationships with stakeholders is another part of the transition process. The stakeholder relationship potentially begins with the director’s selection process, if stakeholder participation occurs. Stakeholders could suggest candidates, participate actively in the selection process, and provide feedback on proposed candidates. Poor stakeholder relationships can contribute to the departure of the predecessor and influence the initiation and form of the selection process. Stakeholder relationships with the new
director also could be negatively affected by non-appointment of a stakeholder-advocated candidate:

As far as the constituencies, I think there was a fairly high degree of skepticism on the part of most of the organized [advocate] groups from the very beginning. Some very polite things were said in the newspapers, but underneath there were some folks who were, I wouldn't say actively hostile, but they were pretty close to that from the very beginning. And that may have had to do with disappointment that their person didn't get to be appointed.

Once the successor has been appointed, the director begins the task of building stakeholder relationships. Demonstration as a quick study is one approach to establishing credibility. Seen in the previous chapter, the relationship of the quick study process to stakeholders is briefly considered again below:

In a meeting recently with external type stakeholders and organizations, the comment was made that I surprise people because when I come to meetings I don't travel in groups. I don't bring people with me and then, I in short time can answer the questions that are posed to me. And I just think that is a major key credibility issue about managing in the public sector.

The governor's policies and rapport with stakeholder groups also impacted the relationship of the successor with stakeholders. If the governor's relationship with specific stakeholders was less than satisfactory, the successor's initial contacts with the group could be impacted:

It took awhile for business to accept the fact that he [the Governor] really wanted to make Ohio more productive again. I suppose that had a pretty big effect [on my relationship].
Directors' poor relationships with stakeholders were relayed to the governor's office. This former member of the governor's staff described the impact of one director's stakeholder relations on the governor's office:

We had serious problems right off the bat with constituencies. I was up to my ears in that for several months early on. I think it's good to have a good representative group but you also want to have people that will be able to do the job well.

Successors stepping into agencies in crisis paid extra attention to the stakeholder relationships, in circumstances where stakeholder relationships had gone awry, typified by the statement, "We started drawing lines with providers and expectations."

To establish positive relationships, directors scheduled heavily meetings with stakeholders in the first months of their tenure. Stakeholder meetings were sometimes initiated by budget or substantive policy issues, which were a means to establish relationships with stakeholders. In other circumstances, the directors made a deliberate effort to meet with as many stakeholder groups as possible.

It came to be a very basic issue. That they [legislative members] didn't know anything about this organization, they didn't care anything about this organization, because no one had ever talked to them about this organization. So it wasn't a matter that they had negative feelings about it, they didn't know anything about it. So that was real fundamental. So I decided at that point in time, the more opportunity that I had to invest in walking to the statehouse and talking to legislators, that would serve a purpose.

I just talked to them a lot, and I talked to labor groups and I talked to business groups, and I went to all the times they invited cabinet people and talked to them and I went individually, one-on-one, and then, of course, and the advisory council.
The predecessor's relationship with stakeholder groups influenced the relationship of the successor with the stakeholders, positively or negatively. Recall the successor who experienced an "extended honeymoon—that no matter what he did it would look good in their eyes." A successor might follow up on the relationships built by the predecessor:

[My predecessor] had a good relationship with the association, but as far as I'm concerned it wasn't good enough. And I have put a lot of extra energy trying to take what she had, because it was my understanding it was much worse when she first came on and she built it up to whatever it was. And I've put a lot of energy just taking up where she left it and taking it to another plane. And I think we've been successful in doing it.

The background of the successor was an important starting point for stakeholder relations. This included work experiences, political history, and policy area experience of the successors. Directors explained how their background influenced their initial relationships with external stakeholders:

It was helpful to me, because I am a parent, which lent the system some immediate credibility, at least somebody was in there who understood what parents want. On the other hand, many parents I've met are not very objective people, and place undue limitations on their children and would on the system. So you have to be careful of that.

There were some constituencies, like the legislature. There is a respectability for people who have been elected before. If you were a member of that body, there is an automatic [willingness] to give you all kinds of credibility. . . . Even though I hadn't been elected to that particular office the fact that I had stood for election, they were willing to give me, "you understand me better than somebody else." If you came out of the constituency in one form you had some status of a different kind.

Lack of one or more credentials traditionally held by the director of a particular agency was a detriment to successors in establishing relationships, making the quick
study process more important. The quotation shows the importance of subject matter knowledge in the building of stakeholder relationships.

Even though we started out a little stormy 'cuz I didn't quite know enough, we ended up over the years in a very good working relationship.

The frenzied appointment schedule of meetings with agency outsiders in the initial period of establishing stakeholder relationships does slow down for directors. After an initial push to establish a favorable relationship, the intensity of the directors' efforts in stakeholder management reduced over time:

About the fourth year I started cutting back; I thought, "Well, I've seen all the constituents there are to see," and so-forth, so I didn't do as many night meetings and that sort.

**Stakeholder Involvement with Agency Personnel Selection**

Stakeholder participation in the selection of agency personnel included input in the initial transition period on "holdover" employees (see staff assessment strategies, earlier), referrals for jobs, and review of potential candidates. Similar to stakeholder participation in the selection of directors, many directors chose to review key appointments with stakeholder groups. Directors described the participation of stakeholders in the hiring of senior staff:

It depends on the position. And it depends on what I am looking for. For instance, the chief counsel position opened up and we went after people that we knew had good reputations. But in most cases I don't bounce it off too many constituents if at all.
I can appoint in theory whoever I care to appoint, certainly that there is the support of the Governor’s office and I’m not an absolute fool I would think that is the point that we do a lot of constituency work here and things. I want that person in any of those positions, especially the division chiefs, to be able to work with the constituents.

(Continuing) When I was replacing a superintendent, for instance, and I knew who I wanted . . . I went to the industry and I said, I’m going to be interviewing people. Send me people that you feel that you’d like me to interview and who might make a good superintendent. Which I do to all the constituency groups. Because if they don’t want you here, they can certainly make it very uncomfortable and get you out. So if you find something that is not workable to you, I want you to tell me why and I want to know validly what the circumstances are. Because you maybe know something about him that I don’t know.

We want their recommendations. But it certainly has to be understood that this person is going to work for us, for the department, and they’re not going to be here as emissaries of the association . . . she took a couple of the candidates and had them meet those folks just to get input, as to how they felt about them.

He was past president of that organization. So he’s well respected in the counties, plus having been a county director himself, he has an understanding of what the county issues and perspectives are. So he has an element of trust among his membership.

The greatest amount of pressure comes from those who have vested interests. Let me give you an example . . . the greatest pressure I got while in state government came from [a certain lobby] when selecting a [senior position]. The lobbying was very intense—both in the agency and in the legislature, both House and Senate. And in the Governor’s office, on the part of the various associations that are affiliated with the [program area]. And they did a remarkable job of influencing the candidate selection process. More impressive than I would have ever dreamed was possible.

These descriptions show that agency stakeholders exert influence in the hiring of agency staff. However, directors usually insisted the final decision was their own.

I want to make it very clear they work for us and we make the final selection.
Make no mistake. Our constituency groups do not tell me who to hire and who to fire or who not to hire.

Timing of the agency succession event relative to the gubernatorial term influenced the role of stakeholders in agency staffing:

This is not the start of an administration. It’s not like at the start of administration where the Governor owes people and they have to say, okay well now we owe these people this and that and we’ve got to put you into a slot here and there.

As identified earlier, in addition to influencing the selection of candidates, stakeholders potentially act as a constraint or an impetus on firing of incompetent, disloyal, or disfavored employees.

Ongoing Relationships with Stakeholders

A theme emerging from directors’ discussions of stakeholders was "firm but fair," which had apparent origins with political leadership:

The [Governor’s] two pieces of advice to me were to be fair and to be timely. That the business community complained about how long it took to get anything resolved in the department. And that there was an element of fairness that was extremely important. That was advice that he could have given to and hopefully gave to every cabinet person.

As the Speaker [of the state House of Representatives] would say, whatever is fair. Fairness is the key.

Now, when I sit down with an [advocacy] group or industry group, citizens, they come in with more of a neutral attitude. They’re not coming in thinking, boy he’s just terrific or he’s just terrible. It’s all right, he’s a fair guy.

What you need to know as an outside entity and what your concern is, that if I have an issue, that I can at least get it heard. And so I’ve tried
to establish that rapport and let that be known on the street, if there is an issue, a serious issue, then I'll hear it. We might not agree. . . . What my whole goal and focus is, regardless of what I'm doing, is to establish myself as one that's going to be fair, call it down the middle. And if I disagree with you, I'm going to tell you I disagree with you. If there's a stink going on, I'll let you know, look. You know I'm not going to be able to side up with you on this one. And we agree to disagree.

I really was amazed when I went into the department that one of the first meetings I had was with a group of [stakeholders]. And you know, everybody gets upset when they get [citations] or enforcement . . . I figured they were coming in to give me some advice on how they wanted things enforced. They wanted a little lax here, a little lax there. It was just exactly the opposite. They wanted more enforcement, they wanted stricter enforcement and they wanted consistent enforcement. The good operators and the big operators said, hey, we follow the rules . . . we want our competitors to do the same. It blew my mind.

(Continuing) Now just to carry on that, [the] department was [primarily] a regulatory department. The industry wanted good regulation. They didn't want those bad apples. They wanted you to weed out those bad apples because most of their institutions were good, and it reflected on them. So the industry was extremely cooperative and supportive.

**In Summary**

Stakeholder involvement potentially begins in the selection process for director. In transitions, stakeholder roles include participation in the quick study efforts of the director, selection of key staff, suggesting policy direction and supporting or opposing initiatives. Stakeholder promotion for policies is an important component of the embedding process, preparing for the next change in directors. Influencing the initial relationship with the stakeholders are the director's background and level of agency policy understanding, the governor's relationship with the stakeholders, and the predecessor's relationship with stakeholders, as well as agency policy direction.
Working with external stakeholders was one skill that agency directors said they enhanced during their tenure as directors, particularly those who did not have this high level experience before their appointment.

I guess if anything, [what was learned] was . . . how to work with other constituents. I never had to work with judges, like I had to work with them in this environment. I worked with judges in the adult system, but not the quantity . . . . I worked with most of the major counties' administrative judges but in this arena the judges are probably the most powerful group of people to deal with outside of the legislature. And that was a new experience. I've worked with the legislature more extensively, and that was a big piece.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS ON THE TRANSITION PROCESS

Personal Aspects of Transition

The movement into and out of the director's position included personal transitions. The transition in at the constitutional change involved the thrill of the inauguration, especially for those who came from a political orientation. This included family involvement in the ceremonies:

That was crazy. January 10 was inaugural day and one of the things that was bad for me was that my mom and my husband were here and it was kind of a family day. And you felt yourself leaving the family to come over here to actually tend to business. And it was one of those whirlwind things where you don't even remember what happened.

In circumstances where the job was a leap in the career ladder, there were concerns that the job would be too big:

When I got the job I guess that was one of the fears that I had was uh, God, is this job really too big for me? You know, am I really going to be able to cut it? And so I was concerned about that.
I had originally applied for a deputy position because I didn't think I understood enough to be a director.

[describing a journal written during the transition.] A week after I'd been director, in which I was talking about, I really feel confident that I can do this, and then I would put little parentheses (I hope that's just not naivete), things like that. I don't think there was a point at which I was really doubting that I could do this, and then it fell away. I think those things come and go.

I didn't even apply for this job initially because I believed that was probably not what I wanted to do and I didn't know enough about the agency... the acting director was not the same. Don't ask me why, but it wasn't. And then after a few months I thought, hey, I'm doing it. This isn't so bad.

The personal transitions of the directors extended to the transition out, including the decisions to leave the agencies.

**Establishing Priorities**

Variables influencing the establishment of new agency directions were identified during the research interviews. These included information obtained from stakeholders in the selection process, timing in budget cycle, agency crises, campaign promises of the governor, issues arising from long-standing interests or philosophical beliefs of the director, unfinished initiatives from previous administrations, party philosophical issues, federal initiatives or requirements, stakeholder orientations, and the embedded policies of the agency. On the whole, these cases deserve specific and detailed writeups. Such cases deal with questions of a broader nature than executive succession and transition, and are left for later research initiatives.
Constraints on the Impact of Acting Directors on Transition Processes

The unique roles of acting directors in transition preparation have been previously identified. Through transition discussions, acting directors participated in the handing off of the agency to a permanently appointed director. Acting directors could watch particular initiatives for the predecessor as an extension of the predecessor during the interim period. Other roles included the important task of triage agent for agency problems and personnel concerns, the role of placeholder, activist, a connection or bridge to the new director, setting the climate of professionalism following a scandal, or reconsidering policies of the predecessor before the arrival of the successor. Profile characteristics of acting directors include the agency oldtimers, who know the agency well; a career development activity for a promising executive; or an experienced manager from the outside who is sent in to hold the fort together to prevent unraveling in the interim period between permanent directors.

Study participants who had filled the role of acting director identified sets of constraints in moving the agency forward in the role of acting director. First, acting directors, because of their possibly temporary status, were unable to make their desired structural changes to the organization. Secondly, interim directors felt that they did not really share full cabinet status.

When you are in an acting role you can take on things that you want to do, but organizationally you’re hampered. Because you can’t put it together the way you would like to put it together immediately because it disrupts people and the goals and all of that.

I have been invited to cabinet meetings as acting [executive] so I think that is a view of the Governor’s office of how important the [policy]
connection is. That you can't lose the momentum even though there may be uncertainty in the [executive's] office.

You know what you want to do but you can't . . . fully shape it yet. You can do some things the way you would do them anyway and all those involve relationships . . . but to actually fully engage it, you can't. And that's frustrating.

We're getting more and more things that are starting to come on to that agenda without the capacity to really gear up for them.

**TRANSITION PERIOD DETERMINATION**

Studies of executive succession and transition processes in both the public and the private sectors have used various definitions of transition period, generally ranging from six months to two years. The participants in the present study of executive succession in the state agencies of Ohio did not singularly define the transition period. There appeared to be multiple definitions, based upon the amount of time needed to make personnel changes, the amount of time required to solidify relationships with external stakeholders, and the amount of time necessary to make policy changes, as well as a more common conceptualization of a "honeymoon" period.

In this section, each of these definitions of transition period will be examined. The first condition to be considered is the situation in which the transition period is defined by **staff alignment**, an important task of the first months of a transition period.

Over about a twelve-month period, everybody had changed jobs. . . . Actually a little longer than that.

I think the biggest thing has happened this week. I finally got staff that I can trust with a focus as mine of trying to do something of substance within the organization in the next eight months. That's a major accomplishment.
Some benchmarks dealt with circumstances of acceptance by employees, even occurring after departure from the agency.

Probably as superficial as this may sound, one event I remember as finally being more in touch with the folks I didn't know in the bureaucracy was a going away deal for somebody that had taken a better job out of state. And so we had this going away thing and he was one of the middle managers. And so that seemed like there was a certain amount of acceptance of the new administration. That was probably three or four months [in my tenure].

I think when it was confirmed in both cases was at the going away dinner. In both cases. I don't think I really realized it until then. When I left [the second agency], that confirmation of it got done well has really happened at the going away dinner and since then. Most of the chiefs in the agency call me and they ask about things associated with the agency. They call for lunch. That's very unusual for it to happen after the fact.

Initially when I came on I was not well received. And a lot of folks had very strong allegiance. I was following the director who had been here five or six years. Had very strong allegiance within the agency and that allegiance to be real honest was not transferred.

Some directors intuitively fixed on a specific period:

I think it's a six- to nine- month sort of thing. Under average circumstances. Probably could be done more quickly.

I think in these types of positions in government you have six months. And then those are other people's problems that you're in the process of resolving. After six months, nobody has any memory, those are your problems and your responsibilities. And it's your fault that it isn't fixed. They have very short memories in the political operating environment of government.

Associated with the comments on the definition of a transition period, directors told stories relating to benchmarks or a specific moment when they realized that they were
accepted as the organizational leader. The incidents sometimes involved issues of self-confidence in assuming the role of director:

You came at a very good time. Because I think last week I finally realized how much I had learned and started to feel confident in my own decision-making abilities. . . . The fact that I knew basically everything that they were talking about already and the value of the seminar really to me was to put what I already knew into a different perspective. All of a sudden, about the second day of the seminar, I decided that I probably was up to speed.

Every now and then I get a glimmer that I think I am able to run this agency. But I just think that they let me think that so then I go on doing it and they still take over again.

Task accomplishments also serve as benchmarks for the transition period. This director worked for policy changes within a short period.

Well you see it's interesting because I've come to think about this period of time [my tenure] as divided into six-month kind of chapters in a story. And we did some reorganization, minimal stuff. I wasn't wanting to get particularly disruptive about it, but realign the functions in more appropriate places. But the first six months was about putting together the budget initiative. The second six months was about selling the budget initiative. The third six months was about planning for implementation, and the fourth six months and where we are right now is in continuing the planning in some areas and the implementation in others. And the last six months is going to be budget work, the transition work.

I didn't have benchmarks, I had certain things that I wanted to accomplish, I suppose, and that really had more to do with people or circumstances and an image that I felt that we wanted to have and to lead and some of those things as I was getting into this that I wanted to accomplish. That was not a benchmark to say I really arrived. . . . But it was more of what I wanted to really see come along in this department.
This director viewed the transition period as a part of the policy cycle:

I think it took us almost two years to get to that point. In studying this issue of continuity, to some extent, it takes almost two years. It's kind of an eight-year window, eight- to nine-year window... 

Some directors responded to the question concerning the definition of a transition period by recalling a critical event which served as a benchmark for the transition. These stories were similar in subject matter. Exemplary of these stories is that of a show of support for the director by the governor in front of external stakeholders:

I think one was when the Governor had the psychiatrists out to the residence, which was maybe a year in or something, which was an attempt to say, in a nice way, "I really don't care whether you like it that she's not a psychiatrist, she's the director," and it was a very nice way to stroke them and tell them they were important, and he meant that, but also at the same time say, "You know quit gripin' about the fact that she's not a psychiatrist."10

Some were also unable to identify a specific period. An inside successor said:

No, I didn't have an exact benchmark. I can really say I didn't, because again being in the department, I just expanded some of the things I was working on. I didn't really feel, I can't look back and say that there was one thing that I felt, oh boy, I'm through this honeymoon period, etc. In these jobs the honeymoon period is very short.

Still going on [three years into the administration].

It's ongoing, even till today. We're still transisting.

I've never really thought about this as transition. I always looked at it as just another headache, another hurdle, whatever there is that I've got to get over to get the job done. And I didn't really look at it as a honeymoon period.
Another successor's benchmark dealt with an end to the *honeymoon period*:

[The congressman] called for my resignation and I mean, it was, at that point in time, that I really started to see that, boy, the honeymoon was drawing to a close here. The Governor was upset but basically he said "Hey, that's politics."

This successor identified many benchmarks, but didn’t relate to the notion of a completed transition period:

Complete, huh? I feel like I'm always in transition. I can't relate to the word complete, but there are benchmarks. I think one of them was when we established the planning council, we finally got that structure in place. I think one was when we did the reorganization, I think one was the forums we did.

The most dramatic and concrete of the critical events or benchmarks in the cases studied occurred with the situation of an insider succeeding a highly successful predecessor. Both the predecessor and successor mentioned this event, a fire which destroyed the offices, as a key in the transfer of allegiance:

I think she and I had almost the same thought. Well now there's the issue that you take over and that's your attempt, now that's your operative, now I'm going to draw the staff to you. She took the leadership in that recovery process, which was a calamity, God, it was a mess.

He [my predecessor] was there, and he was kind of sitting back off to the side and a reporter came to talk about the fire. And [he] said "You're the one who talks to them." And from that point on, I mean, this is your job. "I'll help you however I need to," but that was symbolic I think to the staff, too. He was there, but it was evident what he had done.
Although directors differed in their concrete specifications of a transition period, from the view of the external stakeholders some finite period appeared to exist.

I don't think there's a point in time when it's ever too late to assert leadership. I think the question would be, is there a point in time that you just say there won't be any specific direction? And I think that everybody's just about to that point. Doesn't look like she's going to provide that leadership like her predecessor did, in fact we know that.

In Summary

The types of benchmarks which are used by directors as signals that their leadership transition is complete are listed in Table 25. While some directors saw transitions as an ongoing process in the leadership of the agency, others related the transition to specific events signifying acceptance by agency personnel, getting their staff at the agency, or other areas of personal emphasis or difficulty. The study was inconclusive in determining a specific transition period. Transition periods were not characterized on a single dimension and particularly were not characterized in a single time frame. Conceptualizations of transition periods dealt primarily with critical events and in the telling of these critical events, directors became energized in their storytelling.11
METAPHORS OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS

One of the emergent patterns during the data analysis was the consistent use of metaphors by the directors in their descriptions of their succession experiences. When disbursed throughout the text, metaphors lose their dramatic impact. This section consolidates the metaphors around specific transition actions. These organizing actions include staff anticipation of transition, establishment of senior staff, the quick study process, the development of an issue agenda, and, more generally, the transition experience. The metaphors used by the directors in describing their leadership transition experiences are presented first, followed by consideration of the implications of these metaphors for organizational life.12

The primary metaphors utilized by the directors in describing leadership transitions reflected death and dying, and military and war. Nautical metaphors, family metaphors
(primarily by female directors), education and sports metaphors were also used. These
metaphors and their primary subject areas are displayed in Table 26. There were
differences across the directors as to how metaphorically they spoke, and some tended
to use sports or war metaphors more than others. Table 27 organizes the metaphors by
metaphor type.
Table 26
Metaphors of State Agency Executive Transitions
(By Transition Action)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSITION ACTION</th>
<th>METAPHOR GROUP</th>
<th>METAPHOR EXAMPLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anticipation of Transition Event</td>
<td>War and Death</td>
<td>There was a bunker mentality that emerged.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Things sort of come to a halt while everybody hunkers down in the trenches to see what the outcome of the election will be.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There is a certain sense of uneasiness, great expressions of loyalty if you will, people saying, we don't want you to leave and I've tried to prepare them in saying death is inevitable and don't worry about it, I mean the world will go on.</td>
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<td>There's a way in which the transition immobilizes you.</td>
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<td>Evaluation of Employees</td>
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<td>Everybody was scared to death of their jobs, so it gets back to that morale issue. . . . If you read body language and vibrations, they were scared to death.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>And I'm sure the staff is on pins and needles right now.</td>
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<td>There are people willing to tell you what's going on in the department so you get a quick handle on who the good guys are, who the bad guys are, who's the guys gonna knife you and stuff like that.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I didn't see a need to make a lot of changes. That was offensive to the stakeholders who wanted me to turn the place upside down and kill some people.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who's dependable, where the bodies are buried.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There was the supposed bloodletting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think if your toe is sick, you don't want to mess up your foot, get rid of your toe.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One of the problems was for reasons that I don't quite understand yet, and maybe I will at some point, a reputation was acquired, as sort of a hatchet person of sorts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>So I think that the expectation was that I was going to come over with a hatchet. People understood after a while that I really wasn't going to do that and people calmed down. When he came in '83, there was nobody there. Just a bunch of leftovers. It's like who can you depend on?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>And so it was very obvious in staff meeting that there has been a change of guard.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They're afraid that they're going to lose and the sad part is they are going to lose but it's for the wrong reason. They could be winners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSITION ACTION</td>
<td>METAPHOR GROUP</td>
<td>METAPHOR EXAMPLES</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Employees (continued)</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Key people and players, both internal and external who I felt the new director really needed to know about, who were real resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think there are people who are what I call players who may not be managers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The team, I mean the group of people that we built, is really like a family and like a team.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You can argue all you want, when we're in the huddle, but once we go out on the field, everybody better be playing out of the same playbook. I feel very strongly about that, and I communicate that from the interview on up.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It's just there's something about bringing in your own team, and that's not any different from any transition in any corporation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I did kind of musical chairs with the division chiefs during the last three years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>The transition work, when I realized that it was time to seriously consider about whether or not to make some personnel changes, also known as cleaning house, it was too late.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There tends not to be quite as much of the housecleaning at the state government level at this point.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I felt more constrained to be coming in, with cleaning house and bringing in all my own people. I wanted to work with the people that [my predecessor] had brought in. And I've pretty much done that.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You will not function like a new broom who sweeps clean.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Throw the keys in the basket and walk out the door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Assessment</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>It's like a doctor talking about a diagnosis on a cancer patient, what would you do as far as triaging that particular patient?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[The acting director] is a physician and so he is accustomed to triaging, and that's exactly what he did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarizing with Agency Issues</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>I think part of the generic skill and the duty of the manager is to do that homework about understanding what you're dealing with.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They [agency personnel] have a certain amount of respect that you've done your homework.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I don't think you get a lot of time to get up to speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSITION ACTION</td>
<td>METAPHOR GROUP</td>
<td>METAPHOR EXAMPLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Policy Agenda</td>
<td>Cooking and Building</td>
<td>I mean to start the new one from scratch and try to cover all the bases in the constituents. That was just something I had to start from scratch. I mean we had all the right ingredients to make a policy change. Here are the things that are front burner. We just had to put it on the back burner and keep it as status quo and come to the reality, we cannot do everything. People who view the world the way you do and who are going to do the implementation work that needs to be done without having to go through and enormous amount of retreading, teaching people to think differently. One of the foundations for the budget initiative. The infrastructure did not exist. And we’ve been building, the real challenge has been to build the policy base, to build the infrastructure and to do the whole budget process as well as new implementation in this short a period of time. We put together what we call the swat team, a group that met to make sure that everybody knew what was going on, trade gossip, figure out what to do next.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Rules</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>You don’t take the field until the other team’s, until the previous game is over. I know, I’ve seen them run the plays, so I know there’s a play book there somewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Experience</td>
<td>War</td>
<td>There were a few hidden mines that (my predecessor) said to me, did you find our mines? I learned probably quickly the first ninety days. Which battles I should take and which I shouldn’t. This whole activity from the two and a half years that it will be in total is like being shot out of a cannon. I mean it’s kind of the way it feels. It’s not like you’ve worked your way up through the ranks and you know all about it before you take office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Transition</td>
<td>Nautical</td>
<td>One of the things you can’t do is you can’t turn your boat when you’re in the port, it doesn’t turn then. And it causes the big waves and everything bounces up and down, you know what I mean. You go out a ways and turn your boat around and then come back in slow and steady.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 27

**Dominant Transition Metaphors**  
*(By Metaphor Group)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Activity</th>
<th>Metaphor Group</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembly of Staff, Staff Assessment</td>
<td>Nautical</td>
<td>Coming on board, At the helm, Rocking the boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Direction</td>
<td>Nautical</td>
<td>Even keel, Tight ship, Emerson experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Weeks, Agency in Crisis</td>
<td>Science, Medical, and Nature</td>
<td>Triage, Take pulse, Get ducks in order, grapevine, leaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Direction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winding Down</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crawl into a fetal position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Study Process</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Did our homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Stresses, Decision to Depart</td>
<td>Home and Family Life</td>
<td>Family therapy; Children leaving home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Management: Starting Up or Winding Down</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>Piece of cake, Front burner, Back burner, Getting creamed, On my plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Mother superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation of Management Group</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Key players, Get on your team, huddle, Don't take the field, Winners, Contenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Charge</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shuffling the cards, My cards, Make our pitch, False starts, Lasso them in, Arena, Game plan, Hurdles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winding Down, Starting Up, Staff Assessment</td>
<td>Theater/Music</td>
<td>Part/roles played, Same script, Change the tempo, Orchestrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Study Process</td>
<td></td>
<td>Know the drills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Assessment</td>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Heads to fly, Hatchet man, Kill some people, Pull gun and shoot you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departure Circumstances</td>
<td></td>
<td>Political assassination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Charge</td>
<td>Machine</td>
<td>Well greased machine, Fix, Input, Tools, Plug into, Signal, Road blocks, Hot spots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Roles</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>CEO, Board of directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>Product, Bottom line, Business as usual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Establishment of Senior Staff

As seen earlier in this chapter, new agency directors focussed early in their tenure on the assessment of personnel and the establishment of a senior staff. The statement "When he came in '83, there was nobody there. Just a bunch of [the previous governor's] leftovers. It's like, who can you depend on?" portrays the urgency in the mind of the predecessor to find staff who are trusted and loyal to the incoming director. War and sports metaphors dominated the discussion of this activity. One set of metaphors reflects the successors’ perceptions of the agency as they entered:

There was a bunker mentality that emerged.

Things sort of come to a halt while everybody hunkers down in the trenches to see what the outcome of the election will be.

Correspondingly, the war and death metaphors were most intense concerning the assessment of personnel and the potential replacement of employees. Some metaphors dealt with the emotions of the employees. Metaphors concerning war, death, and violence also communicated the process of evaluating existing employees. These metaphors were not concentrated in changes relating to gubernatorial elections: they occurred in transitions throughout a single gubernatorial term. Included are the metaphors of being scared to death, being knifed, bloodletting, bodies buried, and hatchets.

There are people willing to tell you what's going on in the department so you get a quick handle on who the good guys are, who the bad guys are, who's the guys gonna knife you and stuff like that.
The expectation was that I was going to come over with a hatchet.

I didn’t see a need to make a lot of changes. That was offensive to the [stakeholders] who wanted me to turn the place upside down and kill some people.

Who’s dependable, where the bodies are buried.

Sports metaphors were also dominant in the descriptions of this period, particularly when discussion moved from the assessment of existing staff to the selection of new staff members. These metaphors included teams, huddles, players, and winners and losers:

They’re afraid that they’re going to lose and the sad part is they are going to lose but it’s for the wrong reason. They could be winners.

A specific nautical metaphor, "Bring your own staff on board," was frequently used to describe the process of forming a senior management staff. Similarly, "I had hoped people would not bail out," was a reference to departing staff.

One unusual variation of "singing out of the same hymnal" (which was not mentioned), "It’s been a real joy to have this trio going between us," was spoken by a director who had experienced considerable delay in replacing senior staff with people of his own choosing.

The third set of metaphors that addressed the change in personnel was based in housecleaning, preparing the house for the new company:

The transition work, when I realized that it was time to seriously consider about whether or not to make some personnel changes, also known as cleaning house, it was too late.
There tends not to be quite as much of the housecleaning at the state government level at this point.

I felt more constrained to be coming in, with cleaning house and bringing in all my own people. I wanted to work with the people that [my predecessor] had brought in. And I've pretty much done that.

You will not function like a new broom who sweeps clean.

In summary, the three dominant metaphor groups concerning the assessment and possible replacement of the predecessor's executive staff were death, dying and war, nautical, and housecleaning.

**Becoming Familiar with the Agency (Quick Study Process)**

Another important activity of the executive is learning about the agency and its problems. In addition to discerning the personnel loyalties and abilities, a new director must attend to any problems before they become crises and establish credibility with internal and external stakeholders. For directors without substantive policy background applicable to the agency to which they are assigned, development of an understanding of agency policy issues is a vital step in a successful agency transition.

Two sets of metaphors dominated this activity. The first set was medical metaphors, applied in succession situations following an agency crisis or turmoil:

It's like a doctor talking about a diagnosis on a cancer patient, what would you do as far as triaging that particular patient?

[The acting director] is a physician and so he is accustomed to triaging, and that's exactly what he did.
Directors without substantive background specific to the agency used educational metaphors to describe the process of becoming familiar with agency issues:

I think part of the generic skill and the duty of the manager is to do that homework about understanding what you're dealing with.

They [agency personnel] have a certain amount of respect that you've done your homework.

These examples reflect the predominance of the directors concerning the orientation to the agency that were medical and educational in focus.

Developing an Issue Agenda

The development of the successor's policy agenda, both establishing and winding down, were most often talked about in terms of cooking and construction metaphors:

Start the new one from scratch and try to cover all the bases in the constituents.

That was just something I had to start from scratch.

We had all the right ingredients [to make a policy change].

Here are the things that are front burner.

We just had to put it on the back burner and keep it as status quo and come to the reality, we cannot do everything.

The metaphors of the directors concerning the development or the accomplishment and winding down of policy initiatives were more positive and less threatening of employees. The metaphors reflect construction, building or creating activities.
Experiencing the Transition

These same groups of metaphors were used to describe more generally the transition processes experienced by the directors. One director used sports metaphors to describe the timing of the transition following a gubernatorial election:

You don’t take the field until the other team’s, until the previous game is over.

I know, I’ve seen them run the plays, so I know there’s a play book there somewhere.

Identifying somebody internally who can actually pick up the ball and run with it.

I certainly was not a key player prior to being in this position.

War metaphors were often used to convey the situations of directors early in their tenure:

There were a few hidden mines that [my predecessor] said to me, did you find our mines? I learned probably quickly the first ninety days. Which battles I should take and which I shouldn’t.

An important step in the tenure of a public agency executive could be the preparation of the staff for transition to the next director. Once more, the metaphors of death and dying were prevalent:

There is a certain sense of uneasiness, great expressions of loyalty if you will, people saying, we don’t want you to leave and I’ve tried to prepare them in saying death is inevitable and don’t worry about it, I mean the world will go on.
The final metaphor placed in the introduction to chapter four, "throw the keys in the basket and walk out the door," signified the element of choice that rests with departing predecessors in assisting or not assisting the next director in assuming the leadership of the departments.

The Importance of Metaphors in the Study of Transitions

Gareth Morgan in Images of Organization (1986:12) suggests that metaphors can be used to read and understand organizations: "Metaphor implies a way of thinking and a way of seeing, exerts a formative influence on science, on language and how we think, as well as daily expression. Metaphors frame understanding." Indeed, in the cases of the state agencies studied, in conditions of leadership transition, the dominant metaphors of death, war and sports communicate a hostile, competitive and deadly environment, even in situations in which partisan political change was not a factor.

When the transition metaphors of the executives are appraised, it appears that organizational employees have good reason for their anxieties prior to and early in the transition process. Considering the usefulness of the metaphor in life, Lackoff and Johnson (1980:5) wrote:

Because we can conceptualize situations in metaphorical terms, it is possible for sentences containing metaphors to be taken as fitting the situations as we conceptualize them. We talk about arguments that way because we conceive of them that way—and we act according to the way we conceive things.
The metaphors of transition enhance understanding of the transition process for organizational members. They clearly describe a hostile, threatening, and competitive situation during the initial stages of the transition.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This second chapter on executive transition processes focuses on the relationship of the executive with agency staff and external stakeholders. Issues of internal focus include decisions on the timing of staff replacement (gradual or immediate), the decisions on who stays and who goes, initial messages and signals to staff, staff anticipation of transitions, and staff adjustments. Establishing stakeholder relationships, personal aspects of transition and the establishment of priorities are also considered.

Throughout this chapter, distinctions relating to constitutional timing of the succession event revealed different conditions, as did the circumstances of the agency (degree of crisis, which, as seen, displaced the transition process in the attention of the director). Staffing decisions were characterized by haphazardness at the beginning of the constitutional term by most respondents in that situation. It was viewed as a constraint by those changing places or coming into the agency later in the constitutional term, unless the replacement of staff was a negotiated item in the acceptance of the appointment. During a middle of gubernatorial term succession event, more effort was placed in the evaluation of staff by the predecessor, since party politics were cast aside somewhat at that time; ironically, loyalty to the governor became a constraint on staffing changes for midterm succession events.14
A pivotal choice in staffing initiatives is the gradual versus immediate change in staff. While most directors expressed an interest in pursuing gradual changes in executive staff, lack of a unified and qualified group of senior managers hindered performance during the interim period.

The greatest discrepancies in directors’ actions and behaviors identified in the research process were noted in the behaviors and beliefs of directors coming into the job with expectations and hopes for staff following the director's departure.

Meeting with staff was a clear priority for directors in the first few weeks of their tenure. Mirroring the structure of using staff in the quick study process, the directors were more or less deliberate about this: some structured meetings or retreats with executive and line staff while others met more informally on an as-needed basis. Messages to staff included the importance of loyalty, clarification of mission, conveying of changes in direction and performance level expectations. Changes to agency structure occurred in an effort to work with existing personnel, and these structural changes are addressed in the consequences of transition.

Other focal areas occurring simultaneously with staff review and alignment include the development of stakeholder relationships, attention to agency conditions such as disasters and crises, attention to the governor's priorities, policy initiatives, budget, and the satisfaction of other general governmental requirements such as budget submission and personnel review.

Staff adjustments to leadership styles and priorities were considered in this chapter from the view of staff as well as leader perceptions. Staff adjustments are manifested
in staff meetings, which became a part of "the way we do things around here." Some successors were blinded to the consideration that even insiders necessitated adjustments on the part of staff. Often, the staff adjustments were understated by successors.

In addition to the importance of being a quick study addressed in the previous chapter, staffing concerns emerged as an important priority of most directors (except those at the end of the term), as communicated by the number of mentions, the impact on management, and the length of mention and vitality in relating the issue in the research process.15

Directors were asked to identify common problems of transitions. There were five general areas of concern that were discussed with this question: 1) the impact of the predecessor including overcoming personality factors and the impact of the predecessor on the organization, 2) overcoming embedded behaviors and styles, 3) acceptance by employees, 4) an inability to get an inner circle in place in a timely manner and 5) the costs of long tenure. This latter comment caused a reconceptualization of what is sufficient tenure, and how tenure is perceived. A common theme in the pitfalls discussions related to the power of the position. Other themes included ethics, getting good information and not being shielded, qualified personnel, staying focused in light of the power, the development of trust by stakeholders, and relationships with the legislature.

Based upon the patterns found in this study of executive transitions, models emerged for the development of inner circles under various organizational and environmental circumstances, and these models will be presented in the final chapter.
Chapter VII Notes

1. This study occurred prior to the Rutan v. Illinois Republican party decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that party affiliation "could not be a factor in hiring, promoting or transferring" employees in Illinois State Government. Ohio operated under a different system. The court did not eliminate all positions that could be named at the pleasure of the governor and agency directors (Katz 1991).

2. In an attempt not to misrepresent the situation, this comment is offered. Although this was the only director in the study to speak so bluntly or casually about the dismissal of employees, other directors appeared to have acted in the same manner. However, the amount of time allowed for the rearrangement of personnel was extended. Finally, the limited number of political-in-orientation directors in this sample may have resulted in an understatement of the immediate and indiscriminate replacement actions.

3. The replacement of employees and the building of a management team was an area in which several of the study participants had difficulty seeing themselves from an outside perspective. The first director commented he didn't understand why he had a reputation as a hatchet man, yet had this to say:

   So I just kind of fired everybody in the first week or so after I interviewed them, and asked them about the organization and the things that they should know about the organization, they didn't. It was just, it's been nice seeing you, when would you like your last day to be?

   Because they knew that there was a date certain, so if you think you're good, fine. And I'd ask you, I'd say are you good at that, are you good at what you do? Answer comes kind of slow?

Another director expressed his hopes that staff in his inner circle would be able to keep their positions following the change of administration, yet described his experience when arriving at the agency:

   The biggest problem I had was I didn't have anybody around me I could count on. Under normal situations, a new director walks in the door, you can pull the deputies together and say I'll give you two weeks you know, if they're not gone already. And on the other hand you know, everybody needs to evaluate, you know there might be someone here who's either worth something to me in the long run or maybe in the short run just to make the transition. There may be others I just want out the door.

4. The definition of inner circle was fine tuned during the research process. While there was a clear definition in the succession literature (Helmich 1975 "person promoted from the executive staff of the predecessor, or Simmel 1959, "one who is intimately acquainted with the informal behavioral structure of the executive staff"), I suspected that the inner circle
would have a working meaning to the directors. A formalized operationalization based upon
the table of organization held little meaning for the directors. When considering a question
about the inner circle, study participants referred initially to the formal table of organization,
then with prodding, elaborated to specific people. Since the flexibility to hire and fire
personnel was limited, the table of organization was not a good indicator of those in the
inner circle, particularly if the tenure of the director was short. The definition which is
now preferred emerged in the dialogue with this director, who volunteered her own
interpretation of the inner circle.

I would suppose that the deputies were the first part of the inner circle with free
ingress and egress. So I guess my inner circle is any hot issue at the time, I feel
free just to go and talk to somebody about that.

5. This is similar to the notion of the "kitchen cabinet" often utilized in political circles. One
executive who had a legislative background utilized the metaphor of the kitchen cabinet in
speaking about her inner circle.

6. This section is based primarily in the directors' views of staff perceptions, and more
limited staff views. Validation was sought between directors' views and senior staff
members interviewed, particularly in cases in which the staff apprehension was minimized
by the directors.

7. A limited number of staff strategies surfaced for prospering during a change of directors.
This included "I just tried to do my job." This is not an inclusive listing.

8. For ease in the writing of this section, the term stakeholder is used as a singular entity. In
reality, stakeholder relationships are comprised of many single group and individual
relationships with the director and the agencies. Attention is focused on three groups of
stakeholders: the legislature, the governor, and organized policy constituent groups and
clients. One of the directors who participated in the study provided this definition:

One of the things that I've learned in government is because of what I call the
operating environment, it's not just your agency, it's the legislature, it's the
Governor, it's all the external constituencies.

9. In discussion of the first weeks, two directors suggested that they would like to refer back
to their calendars, and in the two instances in which calendars were obtained by the
researcher, scheduled meetings with stakeholders were greater in the first months.

10. This quotation also demonstrates the difficulties associated with a lack of credentials
traditionally held by director in establishing relationships with agency stakeholders. See
"Stakeholders and the transition process," above.

11. It appears that the desire to identify a specific transition period relates more to executive
succession researchers' interests in identifying a period in which to study the consequences
of transition than it does to the actions of the consultants in the roles as director. Particularly, researcher’s interests in identifying a set time period in which transition occurs relate to the measures of structural change or organizational performance that are prevalent in private sector succession research. In these studies, numbers of structural changes, measures of employee turnover, or financial performance measures require a finite period in which to measure consequences of the transition event.

12. The metaphors contained within this paper address only the transition process aspects of the interviews. Metaphors dealing with broader scope issues of agency management are not considered in this document. Within the area of transitions, an effort was made to be inclusive with regard to the groups of metaphors utilized. The diversity of individual metaphors necessitates that some specific metaphors are omitted. The guiding principle of selection was to present an accurate picture of the transition process from the viewpoint of the agency director.

I found it difficult to write about metaphors without the use of metaphors. Where they are included in my writing, the selection is deliberate.

13. The presentation of these metaphors is modeled after that found in Hirsch and Andrews (1983).

14. The context and culture of the state should be noted in discussions of staff flexibility following constitutional changes of office of the governor. In addition, a recent court case has had the effect in Illinois of reducing the number of positions that could be filled by the Governor (Rutan v Illinois Republican Party 1991). Directors felt that the advent of collective bargaining in the state of Ohio would further reduce the flexibility of directors in assembling their own staff. However, directors in some agencies had already experienced such constraints through court intervention. Unclassified positions remain at the discretion of the director in this state.

15. Since some of the issues surrounding the quick study have already been discussed, quick study concerns will be addressed only in the context of staff issues.
I didn't want everybody, I didn't want everything to come to a halt. I felt that after the elections and even in the anticipation of elections there tends to be a great slowdown in decision making. Things sort of come to a halt while everybody hunkers down in the trenches to see what the outcome of the election will be. And it takes months before an organization begins to function again. It's very, very conservative and self protecting during times of uncertainty.

When you are in a department like ours that has been in the middle of a very specific set of changes, you can't just stop. And the kind of personal disruption that does to staff, the way in which it immobilizes, even in this transition, even in the one I'm involved in right now, where everybody's there, everybody's on the same wave length, there's a way in which the transition immobilizes you.

One of the things that you should know and if anyone tells you that it's any different they're kidding you, in business and in government, what you did as a director or what you did as the head of some operating division, is not particularly relevant to the person who succeeds you. In large measure they don't care and frankly you were a dumb ass in many ways. Which is okay. But this new person's view is different than yours. And their way of doing things is different than yours. The stuff that's embedded in the apparatus and works is embedded and works. And that's okay. But the other stuff is stupid and why did he do that anyway? I would have never done it that way. So I'm going to change it.

In this chapter, the consequences of succession events and transition processes are described. Succession events produce disruption to the personnel and workings of the agency. This theme was heard from all study participants, predecessor, successor or
senior staff, in all types of transition circumstances, midterm, end-of-term, or constitutionally based. "Disruptive" seems to describe best the consequences of transition.¹

The disruption occurs in the loss of time while the new director is learning in the quick study period and new routines are being established. Transition changes routines of employees and senior staff due to required changes to roles and policy emphases. Transition results in diversions to the attainment of policy objectives and agency mission:

Important things don’t get done because people aren’t making decisions because they don’t feel safe making decisions because they don’t know what the rules are.

They are likely to want to appoint somebody who is one of their folks, as opposed to identifying somebody internally who can actually pick up the ball and run with it and whom would therefore be able to minimize the amount of downtime. So there will be a lull, who knows how long.

CONSEQUENCES AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

Changes to Organizational Structure

Managerial decisions concerning internal issues such as organizational structure and personnel decisions were subject to change by the successor. Observable consequences of transition were turnover in senior staff and changes to organizational structure, consequences that would be expected from studies of public and private sector succession events (Carlson 1962; Helmich and Brown 1972). Substantial evidence on the purpose of changes to organizational structure by successors materialized throughout the interviews. Discussion of organizational structure centered on changes made and the reasons for such changes, the relationship of organizational structure to strategy and
policy initiatives, constraints on desired changes, and strategies for managing these constraints. While successors could make minor changes to the structure of the organizations, the procedural restrictions of the public sector played a significant role. Directors often described constraints in making the desired changes to the structure in the time that they desired to make them. Major changes require a longer term perspective, which does not match the reality of the tenure of the directors.

In this section, the types of and reasons for structural changes made by the directors in their tenure will be explored, to be followed with a discussion of the constraints on the changes and methods, successful and unsuccessful, used to make these changes.

So when you think about transition, the thing that you want to do in state government particularly . . . is take the things that you really believe be right and institutionalize them so that they become a part of the culture and the fabric of the agency. Because your successor is going to think you were a dummy. And how could he organize a place like this? Well that’s not the way it ought to be, it ought to be along program lines, not along this other thing, right?

Except for end-of-term placeholder successors, changes to the structure of the organization were made by nearly all the directors. Structural changes were defined by the directors to include minor adjustments in the table of organization, the addition of personnel in special positions, changes in the centralization or decentralization of field offices, or a complete revamping of the organization to align with policy initiatives. Included as changes are the reassignment of functions, duties or reporting relationships of organizational units or individuals within the organization, and the addition or deletion
of positions or persons within the organization. Some directors indicated they would have liked to have made more structural changes or liked to have made the changes earlier in their tenure.

Changes to organizational structure could facilitate changes in strategy, and serve a symbolic purpose as well. This director made several adjustments to the structure during her tenure, the first shortly after her arrival to the agency:

We ended up reorganizing twice, once about a year in, and then once about a year later. We did it kind of in two stages, cause we were trying to reorganize to fit the vision, the vision was trying to get people to stop thinking about hospitals and communities separately. Trying to get them to think about it all in one, and we had to do some shifts in the organization to get that in that direction, but the first cut at it didn’t totally work.

(Continuing) There were some ways in which we had to kind of shake it up to get it moved, and then we moved it back, to quite frankly something that looked more like it did a little bit the first time, but we had to go through the, shakeup, to get people’s heads switched around, so they could then get the new organization in a different philosophical headset.

A second example of structural change occurred when a retiring predecessor asked the question "How do I want to leave the organization?" Organizational structures can serve to continue efforts of particular importance to the predecessor into the next executive’s tenure.

Organizational development was a notion that came out of the idea [that] we were playing with a lot of really structural changes. I thought in the work that we were pressing forward, that needed attention, some systematic attention within our staff. And the issues kind of cut across other peoples’ assignments . . . I wanted [a particular staff member] to take the lead in [this policy area].
Changes in structure reflected changes in attention and priorities, as well as changes in style. Each of these successors was an insider.

That was an area that [my predecessor] and I disagreed with the most. He didn’t like it and didn’t feel it was necessary, because that was his style... And I felt that for reasons of the personalities I needed to add another attorney. I had determined that in the divisions a long time ago. I said If I were director, here’s what I think this department needs. We need another attorney to take care of those areas of those divisions who don’t have attorneys, like the smaller divisions, and we need help and assistance in labor relations because you just can’t get it done. And so I did add that structure.

There were a couple of things that I knew were problems that we had to address. For example, I appointed a person over contracts. Things like that. I immediately took action to get some things in place that I was aware of that were real issues.

Qualifications of administrative staff also relate to changes made in the organizational structure. Span of control was one reason given for restructuring and adding administrative staff:

It was like just a couple of managers and they had extremely broad responsibility. What I did was put an additional level of supervisors into the organization, especially in those key spots to be able to provide a clearer direction and intensity to address those issues.

We restructured, that was one of the first things we did because at one time they had a person over both Developmental Centers and Community Services. It’s an impossible job, I mean either one of those is all one wants to handle, and so the first thing I did was to make the decision to restructure.

Another concern is the need for cooperative, not competitive or divisive, structures, so a structure is sought that fosters cooperation and non-competitiveness. Often, this is a reversal of the structure that may have been in place before the successor’s tenure,
leading to another reason for changes in structure, a change to make a statement that
things are changing. These quotations demonstrate these points.

I think I talked about this management structure I had set up where
basically all of the division chiefs would report to me. Which was
contrary to the way it had been done here in the past where division chiefs
reported through deputies to me. When I think about it now, I did that
because I didn’t have deputies I had confidence in. But I did know the
chiefs. The chiefs were constant, I knew them, and I felt I’d rather work
directly with them than work with these deputies. It’s not probably the
way I put it at the time. But I see that now and the reason I say that is
that over the last six months I have made a transition and I made the final
installment today, announced to the chiefs this morning that every
program now in the agency reports through a deputy.

We’re really working at trying to do some consolidation in that sense.
I’m also finding out that there’s just not sufficient communication between
the deputies. And the way we’re structured, the way the agency is
structured, right now at least, it’s structured for division . . . and what
I’m really trying to do is turn down on that barrier because I see if we’re
going to be successful in the future we’ve got to eliminate that.

Such changes are often seen in centralization/decentralization issues, and reflect
style differences and philosophical beliefs, but may otherwise be in response to problems
relating to the extant structure.

It used to be every [policy area] and every division director for themselves
across the street [in the legislature]. We said no. Now there’s some
division directors who think that they are not as successful working in a
centralized [system] as they were in using their own networks across the
street, and they would like to go back across the street. I think that’s
something that the new [executive] is going to have to look at and
evaluate. And make some decision on.

Field offices are targets for restructuring following a change in leaders:
We always had five districts and under [one predecessor] they did an efficiency review and eliminated it and then I think it was under [another predecessor] that it was reestablished . . . the district chiefs have a more direct link now to the rest of the agency in a direction that they're supposed to go. Basically I changed their position descriptions.

These types of changes serve to make the statement that the new leader is "in charge." Immediate changes to the organizational structure may reflect new views on agency problems, the need to build one's own team, individual styles, and to "recognize what works for me."

Depending again on the size of your agency, the complexity of your staff, if you're going to be out dealing with the legislature and the public and your constituency groups, then you really need a strong assistant director to run the agency. Because you can't do both. Or you need an assistant director who can do that while you're running the agency. You can choose I suppose according to your style. But both sides of it need to be covered.

We didn't have hardly anything at all written down about who does what, who is responsible for what and how decisions are being made and that kind of thing. So we created two entities within the department. Mostly this was designed because I knew that if I didn't do something like this they would expect me to make every single decision in the place. And I needed to also create a decision-making structure that would be in place regardless of who was the director.

Structural changes are sometimes made to circumvent restrictions on personnel resulting in deliberate or emergent changes in reporting relationships, status and access for personnel, beginning to send a signal that a "voluntary departure" would be desirable.

We had technically good people sometimes that weren't good in management. The other thing you'll notice is, I did kind of a musical chairs with division chiefs at one point during the last three years. You know it's frustrating because in state government you really can't get rid of people.
And therefore all you can is take the senior managers you have and keep rearranging them, trying to see if you can make something work.

Again my whole attitude was that you don't want to fix anything that's not broken and I needed to be here to figure out what was broken. The only organizational changes that I made, they certainly were not major ones. I pulled out my personal correspondence writer and speech writer out from under our media director. That was not done for an organizational reason, it was done because I thought the media person was good and I thought the speech writer, letter writer was good and they had a terrible personality conflict which could not be resolved in any other way. So I made that change. And from an organizational standpoint it was not a good decision to make and eventually when the personalities have all mellowed out or changed then we can change it in another direction.

(Continuing) I did away with a number of the people who were directly supervised by the [executive]. I think he did a lot of hiring by personality. If he liked somebody and he thought they could be useful, he put them on and if he didn't have any place to put them, he put them in his staff. First of all I don't have time to be a front line manager. I've got to be here and make the big decisions but I don't have time to be managing ten different people who all report directly to me.

Structural changes are important in the building of one's own team and the trust that must evolve between the successor and employees within the agency. This is particularly true in midterm events, in which the personnel in unclassified positions may be considered as a given, but specific job responsibilities may be more flexible.

**Constraints on Structural Changes**

The civil service constraints on firing and job reassignments of employees and the existence, as well as administrative limits on numbers of employees represent real barriers to organizational change and specifically changes to the structure of the organization (Perry and Rainey 1988; Rainey 1989--discussed in more detail in the public-private sector succession literature review). Directors spoke of making the best
of opportunities arising from retirements and voluntary resignations. Creative options used by directors included the use of temporary assignments:

Maybe what I should have seen was that I wasn't going to have the time to do the things with the management structure that I wanted to and should have earlier on made the assignments to two deputies. I mean it was pretty clear to me. For instance when we expanded our program, I put [a trusted senior staff member] on a temporary assignment to get that program set up. And then after six months, I pulled him back out of it. But that should have been clear to me that, hey, that is what you're going to have to do if you're going to make things happen down there. I think that's one thing I would probably would have done sooner. Now here I am with eight months and I have that system basically in place. But it should have been done two years ago.

One of the consequences of transition, "bloodletting," particularly associated with gubernatorial changes, was anticipated by many directors to be impacted by the enactment of collective bargaining by the state in 1984. Public employee collective bargaining rules and restrictions were a topic of great mention from the incumbent directors. Collective bargaining was viewed by most participants as a constraint on the director's ability to make personnel changes while taking charge of the agency. However, personnel regulations in the state were sufficiently restrictive prior to and in the early stages of collective bargaining to cause reinstatement of personnel who were fired during the transitions under study.

Another important constraint on the successor's abilities to make changes to the organizational structure, also recognized as a public-private difference is the statutory provision of the agency. There was variation in just how actively to pursue statutory changes to structure and how to act while these changes were in process. In addition,
there was variation in how tightly the structures were specified in state law. These two
directors typify the extremes of legal restrictions on agency structure:

The agency's structure is mainly set by statute. The director doesn't have
flexibility to just go about and do that. I changed the structure somewhat.
I added another attorney and I added in fact, I added one more human
resource person with a labor relations background which I felt was sorely
needed, and I'm adding another one, as a matter of fact.

Before the [legislative] act, which didn't pass until '88, the law specifical-
ly said what offices we had to have. We changed them anyway. So we
had by law a commissioner, who by law had to be a psychiatrist. So we
did a medical director, and then we had one of the deputy directors be
named the acting commissioner for purposes of the law, so anything that
said the commissioner had to sign, the deputy director signed as acting
commissioner under the law, and then if it was a medical issue, we had
the medical director sign. So we reorganized, even though the law said
we had to be this way.

The directors indicated that changes to organizational structure were important
signals to those internal and external to the organization about the priorities and direction
of the new administration. One executive reorganized the senior staff by adding
positions responsible for external affairs and program excellence to signify the
importance of constituencies and the emphasis on program excellence which were to
become the trademarks of his tenure. Structural changes can be a significant asset to
bolster strategies. But, beyond the executive staff level, most directors in this state lack
flexibility in making changes to the structure of the organization without legislative
authority.

*Internal state government review procedures* required for changes in personnel and
positions are another public sector constraint. Directors found this internal mechanism
to be problematic, notably causing delays and a misapplication of energies in getting desired changes completed.

I think it was a good change for the [former assistant director] and for the department I think it was a good move. And the downside on that was it took me longer in months to get his replacement than I had anticipated only because of the timing of things. If that had been able to be done right away, I would have bought a few more months to have [my new assistant director] get a few things done.

Sometimes the involvement of the central review agency caused a structure different from what was desired by the agency. Typical of the stories heard about central agencies:

When I came on, we made a proposal to the [central personnel agency] and [they] sat on it for a long time and came back and basically said we couldn’t do what we wanted to do. And so we restructured it and shipped it back over there and then they made some suggestions and we presented it to the commissioners and said look, I tried to do it the way we’ve all agreed it should be done, [they] won’t buy off. We’ve got to do it the way they want to do it and here’s the way they want to do it. The commissioners balked. They did not want to go with the way that [they said] it had to be done. And in the meantime the Governor laid down a new rule about no new positions. So we are hamstring from all directions. . . . Too late now.

A director who did not feel these restrictions were problematic attributed this to superior abilities in managing the relationships and in restricting requests to items that were justifiable:

In my years in the cabinet, I really had no major problems with the system because I could work with the system. I would go to a cabinet meeting and hear other people complain about the personnel officer, the [hiring] freezes and all of this stuff. I don’t think I had a problem that I
couldn’t cope with administratively. It was frustrating because of the hoops you had to go through to accomplish it. But we didn’t have any problem. And again, there are people that try to exaggerate or make sell their point; in doing so they go overboard and they lose credibility. . . . I just did not have a problem.

Changes to Senior Staff

As identified by Kotin and Sharaf (1967), the addition of personnel is the quickest and easiest manner in which to impact the agency structure. The creation of new roles or positions allows the development of a new team during a transition period. The addition of personnel is a response to civil service restrictions in the removal of classified employees, or during the period given to holdover employees as they search for new employment. Budget constraints and failure to negotiate the hiring of additional personnel exacerbate this opportunity.

While changes in the formal organizational structure are restricted by personnel ceilings and statutorily imposed forms, changes in interaction patterns between the successor and agency staff do occur. While directors discussed formal changes to the organizational structure, and these to some extent could be documented, emergent changes to the informal structure from these structural changes were important. The informal changes impact the interaction patterns of the administrative staff. These might best be traced by following the specific individuals who remain or change in the "inner circles" of the directors. As presented in the previous chapter, the inner circle membership changed for directors in all types of transitions.

Turnover of key positions, both immediate and gradual as the inner circle is created, is dependent upon the tenure of the successor. While there are very few unclassified
positions, changes in top personnel occurred more often than not, and even if an individual remained in the position, the inner circle could be changed to exclude the position. "Better luck next time" could have been the motto of one executive staff person in an agency that saw multiple directors in the single gubernatorial administration.

**Losses in Inter-agency Cooperation**

Another of the consequences of succession is the slowdown in policy activity due to the time needed for the rebuilding of relationships both internally and externally when executives change. This is particularly true at the constitutional change, and is a difference between changes occurring at the constitutional term of the governor and midterm and end-of-term transitions.

First of all you have to learn your area and then you've got to learn what everybody else does and then you try to figure out how you can do something together and by that time it's over.

In terms of interdepartmental, you really have to make a very conscious attempt with an organizational structure that's going to approach the problem. And we've not done that here.

I think we've really learned how to play ball together, literally, in terms of kind of working it one against the other, and the relationship between [two agency areas], and good sense of how you do that, where you draw the Governor in--it was getting pretty good. Too bad. I guess we'll have to break somebody else in, and they may not have the same perspective, and it really was working very well.

**Differences in the Timing of the Succession Event**

Differences in constitutional timing were observed as exerting considerable importance in the transition process by the respondents who had experienced transitions at varying points in time.
In some sense it's very different because it's only one disruption within a much larger picture of continuity and regularity. So if you changed cabinet officials, if you're changing state government from top to bottom at least in the executive branch, changing all the cabinet heads, I think it's much tougher than if you're only changing one. Cause you at that point, you have one person, assuming that person didn’t come from a cabinet agency. It's even easier if that person comes from within the cabinet cause it's a matter of moving from one slot to another.

(Continuing) The lines of communication are in place at that point, people know in the Governor's office pretty much what their roles are, what their functions are, everybody understands who does what. Folks know where the press secretary's office is. All the first round learning that you have to do when you're in the early phases of transition. It's already been done. And if the person comes in from the outside, somebody can sit down in the course of the day and explain it all to them. If you're coming in a transition with everybody else, you have to live through it. There's nobody, somebody can explain it to you as of today, but they can't tell you what it's going to be like tomorrow. After six months it's something that isn’t going to change that much more, usually. Or if it does, the change is in place fairly easily.

This leads to a consideration of succession differences by timing of event. As intuitively expected, succession events present the most severe disruptions to agency performance when linked to gubernatorial changes. For the new successor, coming into an agency at the change of a gubernatorial administration, the succession event may deliberately be disruptive. The new governor may view his or her election as a mandate for change, and particularly for those directors with a more political background, actions may be rooted in the need to make the statement that the old is gone and the new is in:

There's a tendency for incoming administrations and I think this one is no exception, not to say everything that came before was bad or anything that came after was good, so there was a little tension built into that.
Because the transition is known in advance, effects of anticipated transitions are experienced by predecessors as they assist in the winding down of agency initiatives (see chapter five). Most predecessors in office before an administration change reach a point at which they identify potential accomplishments that can be completed before the change in administration: these expectations and the timing of the decision varied widely across directors in these circumstances.\(^3\) On the transition-out side, directors attempting to complete accomplishments were frustrated by the perceived response of the civil servants, who in anticipation of a change in director, were perceived to "hunker down" and deliberately slow their efforts for a lame duck administration. Included also in these slowdown methods are goofing off by lame duck political appointees.

Right now you reach a point where the team starts to fall apart, knowing changes are coming up and people are starting to look around and that sort of thing. So now the big challenge is to kind of hold everything together and keep moving forward for these last ten months.

There's almost this kind of curling into the fetal position, going into the shell. And if that's all that happens that would be harmful in one respect but it would be a lack of any kind of motion. But then you see all kinds of other frenzied emotions about people either wanting to get things done, wanting revenge, wanting to position themselves, that kind of stuff.

Incumbent directors during a lame duck administration also experienced difficulty in filling positions on a permanent basis. Even incumbent directors located in non-gubernatorial appointed agencies had this difficulty. The use of acting appointments in senior staff positions was one approach used to minimize this problem.

If I tried to fill it at this point in time it would be not possible to do . . .
I guess it's five, six months ago now, when I asked him to serve as acting
legal director, [he] did not want to take on the legal director job . . . my thought about filling that position at this point in time is that I would not get the kind of applicants that would make it worthwhile to go through the process because of the uncertainty about the changes in the election.

**Consequences of Multiple Succession Events**

The distinctiveness of multiple succession events within an agency throughout a governor's constitutional term was affirmed by the directors in this study. These impacts are described below:

It was the three of us, and I would say that this is going to be the fourth director coming in eight years which is sad but true. [X] was here two years, [Y] was here not quite three, but almost three if you want to go the calendar years. And I was in the job two years. We're very, very different, the three of us.

They had . . . the first director, after we split the department and then that was about two years or less, and then [the second director] came in and then they had an interim director and then myself, so, they had really related to four people in roughly four years, so you had one a year, with little continuity . . . you had problems with the initial organization, first of all. Secondly then you have a very substantial change when the Governor came in and saw how [one director] operated and so on, so they needed somebody to hold their hand. But there weren't many staff, most of them had quit or gotten fired and so it was kind of a challenge to put it together.

There was this other dynamic there, is that "here we go again, this is the third, fourth director in five years . . . and how long is it going to be before he gets up and leaves." . . . People will get in this mode of another transition, we will just do our thing and wait until they leave. And again if you look historically at the leadership, there's been some questions about competency, mission, whatever.

As seen in the above quotations, directors believed circumstances of high succession rates impacted the agency personnel, who may institutionalize transition coping skills such as those already seen in the routinized preparation of a transition document, and
also at the personal and program levels. The programmatic consequence was described by this director, a seasoned administrator:

It hurts the program. You're starting out, you've got your leadership in place and the Governor has some specific goals that he wants to reach down the road a couple of years, and bingo, something happens and you've got to bring someone else in. When it's a new person, he has to be indoctrinated with the Governor's goals and he reorganizes to some extent and you're bound to lose in the transition. And hopefully you don't lose a lot but there's no question that there is a loss and then you've got to make up for it and start forward again . . . If you get a second change, that makes it even worse . . . a few false starts and you are bound to lose things in the process.

The effect of high executive turnover on staff is negative--employees can become frustrated with the politics. Changes in directors bring related changes in reporting arrangements of senior staff. Continuing reorganization means the career civil servants frequently change reporting superiors. These changing relationships cause apprehension for employees.

I'm not sure they recover entirely. That does generate down through the ranks that the new leadership began and new changes and more memos coming out and all this sort of thing, that it has an effect on employees. They always like to see stability, with the changes out here. When I came in of course, [my predecessor] had only been here for two years and I think in that two years he had three chiefs [of a major division]. And then I come in and move one out and put [another in] and [he's] been there ever since. And I think employees like to have stability, they like to think that things are in place and know who they can go to. Every time there's a change, everyone gets a little apprehensive, what's this gonna mean with this new person switching things around.

Revolving door agencies produce staff with experience in transitions. The consequences of the transition to employees prompted more than one director to comment
that you had to experience a transition to understand the related anxieties.

**Opportunities of Constitutionally Based Succession Events for Non-Gubernatorial Appointment Agencies**

As discussed above, independent agencies could have trouble in recruiting senior staff, as well as in narrowing the recruiting pool for the executive position, due to uncertainties relating to gubernatorial transitions. More notable is the opportunity for policy leadership by a board when most agencies are in a state of flux due to the transitions that are occurring in the individual agencies.

That’s the key to the transition I think for an agency like the [Board]. If you know where the state is going or wants to go and . . . you’ve already done your thinking about what [your] role ought to be, you can make a hell of a sale at that transitional time. Because the new Governor wants something. And if he’s not getting it from somebody else, an agency like the [Board] can walk in and win. Because it is a planning agency, its instincts are for planning. A lot of the stuff that we grabbed and went with in that brief period were following major themes that we had developed in our most recent master plan.

**Summary**

Transitions which occur at the end of the gubernatorial term are generally characterized by deliberate slowdowns of agendas related to the expectation of change, departures of key staff, and general anxiety about the transition. Succession events occurring in the middle of a gubernatorial term share the transition consequences concerning the lame duck syndrome, as well as the learning curve and start-up delays as the director gets up to speed with the issues, personnel, and stakeholders of the agency. Staff anxieties about the transition are also perceived by the directors.
Effect of Transition on Agency Performance

For purposes of this study, agency performance was characterized in the following categories: agencies in circumstances of crisis, high or low performing (using Quinn's 1988 competing values model of organizational performance), inactive, and maintenance. Organizational crises preempted the transition processes internal to the agency as the director's attention focused on the crisis areas. In high-performing agencies in which performance was linked to a transformational leader, the transition that followed usually produced a slowdown or decline in performance. With a charismatic leader's departure, if the agency members supported the successor, the new director could continue the direction of the agency, if with less enthusiasm. Inactive or maintenance agencies were ripe for renewal. It was important to act rather than to hesitate; "the window of opportunity" to demonstrate leadership and the success of the administrator is limited.

Performance-related issues of executive transition in state agencies include 1) reestablishment or redirection of the agency's activities that have been on hold following the transition; 2) decline or improvement in employee morale, (as noted by other studies in the public sector [Gaertner, Gaertner and Devine 1983], employees exhibit apprehension due to uncertainty in job stability and policy direction); 3) ability to avoid scandal and improprieties in agency management decisions.

There was consensus among the directors that turnover at the top could be good for the organization. Specifically, a long tenure can produce staleness and difficulty in dealing with stakeholders:
My view of that was it was a good change. She had been [in the agency] a long time and she was getting a little jaded and a little impatient with some of the constituency groups. And so I thought that was a good healthy move. And I thought it was healthy in the administration to recognize that she needed a change and help facilitate it.

You get on a track, and that's why you need to change directors, no matter what the department, this one and every one else. You get on track and sometimes you just can't open up and broaden up to do what needs to be done. I use the term they're "processed out." I mean, you can only handle so much.

Financial costs of constitutionally initiated transitions

The financial resource commitment to the transfer of gubernatorial administrations is limited in Ohio, and utilized for transition expenses of the governor's office. Agency expenses for transition are not recorded and are assumed by the agency. The transition is indirectly funded through the agency budgets:

It's buried in the agencies' budgets. I think part of doing what you do is documenting what you do and that should be going on, on an ongoing basis. Perhaps one is more cautious when one knows that a stranger is going to be reading this document rather than you, so you put in an extra paragraph or an extra chapter or you're a little more careful in terms of documentation. I think that's what's buried in every agency's budget in terms of the accountability and the paper trail. Accountability in the sense of leaving a paper trail of what happens and why it happens and what should happen next.

PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES TO AGENCY DIRECTORS

One surprise to the researcher was the response of directors to the topic of transition preparation (see question 2.4 Appendix B). Personal consequences were discussed both for the incoming successor and departing predecessors. The director's decision to leave
the agency was discussed in the earlier chapter, transition preparation. Those who had already left described the personal transition that occurred and those who were anticipating leaving expressed concern over the next move in their careers. Departing directors, besides preparing the agency for transition, showed concern about the transition to be made personally from the role of state agency director to citizen. There were differences in concerns depending upon career stage. The major areas of discussion were the change in pace from the position of agency director position to another position or to retirement. Those who were in earlier career stages were concerned about what the next move in their careers might be. It is this topic that will first be addressed.

For directors who attained the position in mid-career, the decision to leave related to the question of what to do next. Unlike findings of transitions at the federal level (Mackenzie 1987), employment restrictions on positions following tenure did not usually impact employment opportunities. A major concern for the directors was the location of a position that was neither a perceived loss in status or lacking in challenge following their experiences.

My biggest concern is, what it is that I want to do . . . there’s a lot of opportunities out there. I can honestly say, here’s a job where I can make a big difference and I can see that I’m making a difference . . . what I want to do when I leave here, is where else can I get that feeling of accomplishment? I’m not sure . . . people feel, in order for me to move up from this job, you’ve got to become [a] federal [agency] administrator.

One of the things you can’t do is you can’t turn your boat when you’re in the port, it doesn’t turn then. And it causes the big waves and everything bounces up and down. You go out a ways and turn your boat around and then come back in slow and steady.
[I] took a month off. And kind of rested and caught up and began to look around. I thought that I should not to be talking to people about employment while I was still on the job.

[I wanted] to not have anything on the plate so I can think about what I want to do next, and I don't know what opportunities are gonna come up, or what I might like to do, but I am real clear that, I believe in perspective. I believe in taking some time to get some perspective and I believe in the analogy of filling the bucket back up.

Former directors spoke of allowing time for "detoxification" before deciding what to do next. This included directors returning to jobs from a leave of absence:

I had a strange feeling I'm going to be very bored, very discouraged . . . this has been a very intense job and process and I've been on a very heavy schedule, on a very tired schedule . . . where you're detoxed, when you're drying out. I have loved this job. . . . In not leaving this because I'm not happy. It's not like I want to leave or am anxious to get out.

I learned to cook, I became very interested in gourmet cooking, so I took some courses and . . . it was a very good distraction. And I traveled some . . . [a departing director should take] at least a month, longer if possible. It depends on, I suppose the complexity of the agency you had and the heat around it, how big it was and a few of those other factors and your own personality too would interact with it. But it is a decompression, I'll tell you.

Position options for those anticipating departure due to the end of the gubernatorial administration included moving to another state to a similar position, acting in the policy area at the federal level, joining policy advocacy groups, returning to private practice law offices, moving to local governments or the offices of statewide elected officials, and seeking employment in universities or in private industry.

Many directors indicated that they had developed a real appreciation of the public service and were interested in staying involved in the policy area as a volunteer on
initiatives or areas of interest. This included those who would be retiring following their
tenure as director and those who would be staying in the state and working in another
position. Directors held different views on the value of the position of director as a
career enhancer in terms of future employment opportunities.

Transition Consequences When Moving into the Position

Consequences for directors coming into the position were financial (divestiture of
stock, reduction in income, resignation of private sector positions), personal (uncertainty
of success in role, adjustment to the public sector openness and emphasis on process,
demands in terms of working hours, geographic relocation or separation from family, and
issues relating to the power of the position). A description of the experience follows:

[I] began to get a sense of the fact that this whole activity from the two
and a half years that will be in total was going to be like being shot out
of a cannon. I mean it's kind of the way it feels.

This was particularly true for those who were coming into the position of agency
director without significant experience in another agency of state, less so for insiders to
the agency. Their adjustments related more toward first time experience as the chief
executive of a large agency, although outsiders also indicated surprise at the pace and
complexity of managing an agency of state. Based on this, directors felt the public
perception of appropriate tenure should be reviewed:

I think it's [the average tenure] a fine thing. I mean it's like "how dare
you leave public service?" I mean once you've given two, three or four
years of your life, I mean it's like, it's a negative to leave, it's mixed up,
traditional thinking on this, on this point I think.
On the other hand is there a sense of loss of public service? "I think I've given at the office."

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Changes in structure which enabled or were responsive to strategy changes were made, varying with the level of legislative change required to allow the change in structure and the aggressiveness of the director in proceeding with changes. Structural changes which did not require statutory authorization often involved solely the director's staff. Directors lamented the difficulty in making the timely changes to the structure that were desired due to constraints of operating in the public sector. Finally, most of the directors used multiple iterations of organizational structure changes, reflecting the need to capitalize on voluntary resignations. Changes to the administrative structure occurred gradually and also reflected the director's learning the organizational and personnel problems and attempts to solve or minimize these problems.

This chapter considered some of the consequences of transitions which surfaced in the study of transition processes. While the study primarily concerned transition processes, some consequences of transition surfaces in the study. These included the disruption to agency personnel, the down time while the new director gets up to speed, and changes in agency structure. In addition, agency directors spoke specifically of problems of high turnover of leaders and the effects on agency personnel. Finally, directors considered the personal aspects of consequences. Performance consequences were not measured with a degree of specificity. The consequences of executive succession in a public agency is an area for further study.
Chapter VIII Notes

1. While this inquiry was designed to examine the processes of transition rather than to measure the consequences of it, certain consequences were observable throughout the study. This chapter is based, as are other chapters, on the dialogue with directors on transition processes. If one were to design a study to measure transition outcomes, more concrete performance measures would be identified, and an attempt would be made to find a substitute for private sector studies reliance on "return on investment." In addition, the structural changes that are identified in this chapter in terms of changes to the table of organization would be analyzed for timing of changes in structure and personnel. This chapter takes at the word of directors the fact that changes in personnel and structure were made. Verification occurs to the degree that tables of organization were collected and noted as different over the course of the study period. Once again, the focus of the study is the variations in transition processes of directors.

2. In Ohio, employee ceilings or firm limits on numbers of employees in agency divisions limit this strategy.

3. In fact, one director in this study followed a completely different format, continuing his policy efforts and strategizing a tenure spanning governors (successfully done).

4. The performance levels of the agencies were generally agreed upon by a collaborative inquiry team engaged in the study of the state agencies of Ohio, based upon knowledge of the transition interviews and the overall strategic management of the agencies. With the exception of high performing agencies for which feedback may have been given during interview "small talk" following the completion of the formal interview, these performance level assessments were not shared with the directors in the study, with the exception of high performing agencies. Further, evidence in the form of quotations from the directors was not sufficient to justify performance conclusions. Rather, performance assessment was inductively built from the succession stories and case data as a whole. These interpretations were reviewed with individuals familiar with the cases.

5. $50,000 was housed in the state Office of Budget and Management.

6. The question was intended to consider consequences of the transition on the organization.

7. In the last year of the study, post-employment restrictions created a highly publicized issue for a director. Ohio's ethics laws have been substantially revised and tightened during the study period.
LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS OF STATE GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVES:  
A NATURALISTIC INQUIRY OF CASES OF STATE AGENCY  
EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION IN OHIO  
VOLUME II

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
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By

Janet Elizabeth Foley Orosz, B.A., M.P.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1991

Dissertation Committee:
Robert W. Backoff  
C. Ronald Huff  
David Landsbergen

Approved By

Robert W. Backoff  
Adviser  
School of Public Policy and Management
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CHAPTER IX
THEMES FROM THE OHIO STUDIES OF EXECUTIVE TRANSITION

This chapter reviews major themes of the transition experiences, organized by the topics of successor selection processes, transition preparation, transition processes, and transition consequences. The objectives of this chapter are to review the transition patterns, and to identify the interrelationships between the chapters. Crosscutting themes of the role of agency stakeholders in executive transitions and the role of the governor in the transition process at the agency level will be discussed. The theoretical and applied contributions of this research will be considered in this closing chapter, and directions for future study will be identified. Before moving to these tasks, a review of the study objectives and limitations would be useful.

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the events, processes, and patterns relating to executive succession events and transition processes at the level of state agency director. For each succession case, the nature of the succession event was studied, including what gave rise to it, how the selection and transition processes worked, and what actions of the predecessors and successors influenced the transition process. The transition processes were viewed through the temporal lenses of the appointments process, preparation, and transition period, with an emphasis on the first
few months' tenure as agency director.

Approached from a perspective of grounded theory in which patterns are sought within and across cases, the study is framed in the actions of the predecessors and successors in the transition process. A preliminary taxonomy of public sector succession events led to the selection of succession events for study with the intent of distinguishing possible differences in transition process types. The sample was selected on the items of gubernatorial timing, cross-cabinet balance (successor background), and successors' experience within the agency. Through the study period, these anticipated differences in patterns were more clearly distinguished.

A characteristic of the process of grounded theory and data collection is the iterative reconsideration of concepts, including the testing of preliminary frameworks against those arising in a grounded manner in the field (Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990). During this iterative examination, it was found that most of the directors revealed their self-views of placement on appointment-type dimensions. These included Political (insider, outsider to the gubernatorial regime appointee), Representational Appointees (constituent, minority/female), and Appointees of Professional Backgrounds (general or specific expertise). Since government is a system of the "in-and-outers" (Mackenzie 1987), the insider/outsider successor distinction used in past studies, public and private, of executive succession was expanded to include returnee to the agency.

Consistent with the principles of grounded theory and naturalistic inquiry, the research effort was based in the experiences of the agency directors. Verbatim transcripts of interviews with twenty-three current and former state agency directors were
produced, and evidence from interviews with the directors is used throughout the text of this document. The use of quotations as evidence allows judgments by others about the validity of the conclusions drawn by the researcher, and presents the experience at the level of the directors' actions (Hummel 1991). The reliance on the thick descriptions of the experiences of the predecessors and successors in the research sample is a reminder of the specificity of individual contexts and the ideographic nature of the research question (Denzin 1989b).

The timing of the succession event relative to the gubernatorial administration importantly influenced the consequences of the event for the agency; yet, midterm succession events resulted in many of the same changes as did constitutional, beginning-of-term succession events. The transition processes were found to differ on the insider/outside/returnee and substantive successor background distinctions. These patterns are reviewed below.

**REVIEW OF TRANSITION PATTERNS**

**Appointment/Selection Processes** (chapter four): Directors were asked the question "How did you come to the position of director of agency x?" The question elicited background on the appointments process and self-views of successor background. Topics in chapter four in addition to the self-identities in successor background characteristics (appointment types) and candidate search process differences, include the roles of predecessors in the selection process, insider or outsider appointments, relationship of search processes to the orientation of the successor, and the roles of stakeholders in the
selection processes. Chapter four closes with consideration of the qualifications for the position of state agency director as perceived by the directors, position acceptance conditions, and acceptance reasons for taking the position as director.

The selection process provided an understanding of context of the transition experiences of directors, and potentially could be used by the director in his or her orientation process during the early weeks and months of tenure. Selection processes potentially served to enhance the clarity of the successor's understanding of current organizational circumstances, valued information when moving into a position. Executives who participated in a comprehensive selection process that included the participation of stakeholders and agency members generally arrived on the scene with enhanced knowledge of the agency, and a head start in establishing preliminary relationships with stakeholders.

Some directors indicated that at the outset of their terms they negotiated with the governor guidelines concerning control of the personnel function in their agencies. Differences in these agreements varied based on agency condition, orientation and experience of the successor, and timing of the succession event relative to the constitutional change in the office of the governor. These agreements were important in accelerating the development of a management group that could act with the trust of the director, identified as a transition benchmark. Lack of pre-agreement on the director's ability to replace senior staff prolonged the attainment of this transition benchmark.

Additional agreements with the governor prior to appointment concerned general and specific policy priorities and decisions, relationships with stakeholders, regulatory
philosophy, the structure of the relationship with the governor, and expected length of
tenure. Successors with clear-cut agreements in these areas were advantaged in the
transition process. The importance of negotiating position acceptance conditions also was
felt later in the transition process, particularly in the realm of senior staff replacements.

Also influencing the quality of the transition process and potentially the success of
the director in the position were the director’s understanding of the policy issues of the
agency upon arrival at the agency. The resultant demands during the transition period
were more efforts in the quick study process and a requirement to prove a grasp of the
subject matter with agency internal and external stakeholders. The selection process,
when conducted in an extended fashion with the participation of agency stakeholders,
could accelerate the transition process and the establishment of relationships with agency
stakeholders (a pattern in line with the Birnbaum’s [1988] study of university presidents).
Timing of the selection process and the selection of a successor had implications for the
amount of face-to-face contact between predecessors and successors.

The distinctive characteristics of the public sector described by Perry and Rainey
(1988) and Ring and Perry (1985) influenced the selection process activities. The context
factors of degree of openness to the external environment and organic law contributed
to the high turnover of the executives. Procedural constraints of policy ambiguity,
diverse interest groups, artificial time constraints, high ideals and performance measures,
unstable coalitions, and less dependency between career and political officials affected
the agreements on policy direction with the governor, participation and review of
stakeholders in the selection process, influenced the thoroughness of the selection process
based upon timing of the event, and produced successors without experience in agency policy matters, or short on the important political experience.

Advice for practice concerns the negotiation of personnel replacement authority prior to arrival at the agency, and the creative use of agency stakeholders and other participants in the selection process for policy advice in the early stages of agency tenure.

**Transition Preparation:** Chapter five reported the process of transition preparations initiated by predecessors. The chapter answers the questions, what types of transition preparation activities are possible at the state agency level, and what types of related activities occurred in the agencies in this sample? The chapter subtitle, "throw the keys in the basket," reflects the variation in transition preparation that occurs across succession experiences. Directors could choose to walk away without providing assistance to the successor, or to prepare for the transition well before the departure date.

Transition preparation by predecessors varied widely based on the timing of the succession event and on individual beliefs concerning the value of transition preparation. Those valuing preparation asked the following question: "In what state of readiness do I want the agency to appear for my successor?" Epitomizing an interest in preparation is this executive's response:

I wanted to be sure that the new executive found an agency that was in motion. That knew what it was about. Where there was an agenda. And with a new leader, obviously there is going to be a new imprint on that. I wanted him to find an organization that was up and running in the meantime.
Consistent with Olshfski's (1990) conclusion in her study of effective state executives, the relationship between predecessor and successor is uncertain across succession events of all timing (unless a true "insider," someone on the staff of the predecessor is selected). Even then, the selection decision on the successor is generally timed so poorly as to limit opportunities of the predecessor to work with the successor, unless the meeting is deliberately created by the successor. The choice to take action in preparation for the transition and to establish a relationship with previous directors remained at the discretion of the individual directors, predecessor and successor respectively.

Executive transition preparations occurred in various activity levels through the actions of predecessors and agency personnel. These actions transpired over a much broader period than immediately prior to a certain transition date. Included in these actions were: 1) the presentation of the director's office and the contemporary issues in those offices, 2) preparation of executive level and agency line staff to receive the successor, 3) the winding down of policy initiatives, 4) technical preparation of transition documents at the departmental and sub-departmental levels, and 5) the "embedding" of policies.

The embedding of policies requires a general recognition by the director of an extended transition period, and sufficient tenure to accomplish initiatives. As Olshfski states in her (1989) study of successful state executives, with the short tenure of executives, "It is a wonder anything gets accomplished at all." The adoption of a transition preparation orientation throughout the director's tenure helps in the
institutionalization of policy and administrative accomplishments. Embedding strategies include internally and externally focused activities. The embedding strategies identified in this study are presented in Table 28, originally appearing in chapter five. Further research on these preliminary embedding strategies is appropriate, requiring longitudinal follow-up of outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement of extended transition period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient tenure to complete initiatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of Internal Organizational Capacities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building of staff competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing potential inside successors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building internal support for policy directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural changes in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of procedures manuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary changes in legal authority complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(permanent law and administrative code changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing financial base in biennial budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Externally Focused Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of plans with public input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive stakeholder input and advocacy (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of grant structure: decentralize fund control beyond successor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve initiatives with federal mandates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circumstances of Gubernatorial Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder lobbying of gubernatorial candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of legislative support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence selection of successor where possible (indirectly and directly)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Clients, legislative leadership, organized constituencies, board members.

In a short-run view of transitions, differences in the preparation of a formal transition document also occur. Most often, such documents are prepared during changes of gubernatorial administrations. Conditions enhancing the production of formal transition documents include the experience and interest of the predecessor, timing of the event in
a gubernatorial change, governor's office coordination of transition documentation efforts (improving the likelihood of document preparation but not quality), and successor request for formal documentation. Some midterm successors prepare transition documentation as well, especially relying on more informal, less structured written communications for their successors. Informal documentation occurs in situations where the predecessor is favorably inclined, the successor is named while the predecessor is still in office, there is on-site overlap of predecessor and successor, the successor is familiar with the agency or is viewed as an extension of the predecessor, an acting director is present, and agency activity level is high.

Importantly, many successors found formal transition documents to be of limited use in their transition experience. In part, this depended upon the temperament and experience of the successors, but document content was also an issue. Successors were interested in the implications of facts, a perspective not often provided. Outgoing directors who initiated the preparation of a formal transition document based upon the perspective "What could I have used?" produced the most extensive and potentially useful documents.

The roles of acting directors in a transition, from the viewpoint of the "permanent" directors were also outlined in this chapter. These roles, placeholder/caretaker, activist, and triage agent varied according to action orientation, timing relative to gubernatorial term, and constraints on the acting director. Acting directors impacted the transition preparation process by serving as a bridge between permanent directors.
While the predecessors participating in this study generally demonstrated a lack of activity in preparation for a transition in circumstances of non-gubernatorial-related transitions especially, interest in transition by the predecessor yielded differences in the quality of transition preparation. One important condition was to begin planning for the event on a time horizon long before immediately prior to the transition event. As seen in Table 28, directors viewed many organizational activities as contributing to the transition process, including the development of procedures manuals and the development of participation-based long-range plans. As existing studies do not speak to the transition preparation activities of predecessors beyond the preparation of the transition document in circumstances of gubernatorial related transitions, this chapter breaks new ground in the study of executive transitions.

**Transition Processes: (chapters six and seven)** These chapters describe the transition process from the perspective of the agency executive. One executive set up the transition process for public agency executives as follows:

> I don’t know how you could get a transition as a matter of fact in the public sector, from the individual at least you’re replacing. But I know in my case in both departments I had I felt a hundred percent cooperation from staff. And that’s really where the transition takes place.

The lack of opportunity for predecessors to share with successors meaningful information about the agenda and functioning of the agency characterized many transition processes in the sample, constitutional or midterm in timing of the event. Transition discussions held in a single setting were often all that were possible, and successors
judged these meetings to be of limited assistance. Essentially, the setup of a meeting is at the discretion of the successor, if the predecessor is no longer working in the agency. Suggestions for improving the possibilities for and quality of assistance from the predecessor were given by some successors: others showed little interest in the value of such efforts, having limited regard for the views of their predecessors. The need for contact with the predecessor is tied to the requirement in the public sector to learn quickly the operations, issues, and stakeholders of the agency. The hand-off from predecessor to successor is one opportunity to accelerate the quick study process, especially concerning issues "on the front burner" and personnel situations.

One key to a successful transition was the ability to be a quick study, if the executive did not possess a substantive background in the agency policy area. Familiarizing with the agency involved learning policy issues, agency personnel, external stakeholders, the political environment, and state government procedures. Successors identified the following quick study approaches: use of external views of the agency and its operations, internal views, the selection process, and special techniques. Being a quick study was viewed as essential to the transition process and was also identified by the directors as an attribute for a successful director. This is a logical extension of Olshfski's (1989, 1990) finding that state agency directors often arrive on the scene with little or no background in the policy areas of the agency, showing the implications of this lack of background for the transition process. The requirement to be a quick study is accentuated by the short tenure of the political executive.
The assembly of a cohesive management group was a high priority for successors. Themes pertaining to the building of an inner circle included the desirability of gradual or immediate changes in staff, the difficulty in developing the inner circle due to hiring restrictions and time constraints, and the effect of the timing of the succession event on the ability to replace key personnel. Messages to staff in the first weeks included the importance of loyalty, clarification of mission, conveying of changes in direction, and performance level expectations. The ability to evaluate and change, gradually or immediately, senior staff differed according to the timing of the agency succession event relative to the gubernatorial term, those arriving midterm and end-of-term perceiving less flexibility in making personnel changes. As the assembly of a cohesive management group served as a benchmark for the transition period for many directors, the lack of ability to make changes prolonged the transition period.

The transition period was not characterized on a single dimension nor a singular time frame. Conceptualizations of transition periods dealt primarily with critical events and in the telling of these critical events, directors became energized in their story telling. Directors did not uniformly identify a distinct ending to the transition period. This highlights the importance of viewing transition as a process rather than as an event, and the ideographic nature of the transition process. Directors were asked "When did they feel that the transition was complete?" answering with stories of the completion of staff changes, personal confidence gained, task accomplishments, critical events of internal or external focus, intuitively assigned time frames, or an ongoing transition.
While researchers studying transition outcomes select a period of months or years in which to measure transition consequences, at the level of action, transition adjustments were individual. Some public-private differences noted by Perry and Rainey (1988), Rainey (1989), Rainey Backoff and Levine (1976) and others likely contribute to this pattern. The inability to form immediately a management team, having to rely upon voluntary departures, the importance of external stakeholders in accepting the new director, the external political environment and its requirements, and the short tenure and compressed time frame are all public sector characteristics influencing the extensiveness of the transition period. Additionally, the careerist-appointee relationships as identified by Ingraham (1988) and Gaertner, Gaertner and Devine (1983) enter into the transition period adjustments.

Other focal areas during the first few months included the development of stakeholder relationships, attention to agency conditions such as disasters and crises, attention to the governor's priorities, and policy initiatives. Successors suggested that changes to organizational structure were important signals to those internal and external to the organization about the priorities and direction of the new administration.

Circumstances relating to the timing of the agency succession event and agencies in crises brought the greatest distinctions in transition processes. Table 29 presents selected transition characteristics by timing of the event, and in the circumstance of an agency in crisis. These distinctions yielded differences for the transition-related actions of the selection of the successor, the replacement of personnel, quick study requirements, and stakeholder relationships.
The transition processes differed according to timing of the succession event within the gubernatorial term of office (constitutional-in-origin), with variation on the transition actions\areas of structure of the search committee, the likelihood of an insider appointment, the ability to replace senior unclassified staff, and transition process issues of need for quick study, policy initiative potential, budget and financial requirements, stakeholder expectations, intergovernmental relations, major transition problems, and transition assistance. These differences are summarized in Tables 29 and 30. Some characteristics of these events follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Action</th>
<th>Selection of successor</th>
<th>Replacement of personnel</th>
<th>Quick study requirements</th>
<th>Stakeholder relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional</td>
<td>Higher percentage of appointees with political backgrounds</td>
<td>Difficulty in locating team member replacements quickly</td>
<td>State government, budget, actors Internal issues Policy issues Personnel</td>
<td>Influenced by agency history, campaign promises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>More appointees with policy backgrounds</td>
<td>Constraints on replacement of personnel: gradual replacement</td>
<td>State government, budget, actors Internal issues Policy issues Personnel</td>
<td>Influenced by relationship with predecessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Term</td>
<td>More insiders selected Selection process abbreviated</td>
<td>Vacancies filled with acting positions or left vacant</td>
<td>Demand for quick study declines</td>
<td>Directed towards forthcoming transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Crisis</td>
<td>Outsider appointment or transfer (no insider)</td>
<td>Personnel replacements occur</td>
<td>Demands of crisis take priority</td>
<td>Reestablish credibility, establish boundaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 30
Transition Process Patterns on the Basis of Constitutional Timing of Succession Event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start of Term</th>
<th>Use of Extended Search Committee</th>
<th>Likelihood of Insider Appointment</th>
<th>Ability to Replace Senior Unclassified Staff</th>
<th>Need for Quick Study</th>
<th>Policy Initiative Potential</th>
<th>Budget/Financial Requirements</th>
<th>Stakeholder Expectations</th>
<th>Intra-Governmental Relations</th>
<th>Major Problems</th>
<th>Transition Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>New, Dynamic</td>
<td>Lack of trust, disruption</td>
<td>Formal assistance from Governor's office (seminar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transition coordinator; Document produced; Limited assistance from predecessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>High(^1)</td>
<td>Medium(^3)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium/High(^4)</td>
<td>Medium/High(^4)</td>
<td>Patterns developing &amp; becoming fixed</td>
<td>Overcoming predecessor</td>
<td>Limited formal transition assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Document less likely</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistance dependent upon predecessor/successor timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Term</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High(^4)</td>
<td>Medium(^3)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium(^7)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Stable, breaking down</td>
<td>Maintaining organization focus: complete policy initiatives</td>
<td>Assistance more likely (if insider selected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Limited if any transition assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Two term (eight year cycle) for governor
\(^2\) Unless transfer of Directors occurs
\(^3\) Insider or cabinet transfer
\(^4\) Unless crisis/corruption in agency
\(^5\) Caused by voluntary departures
\(^6\) Dependent upon arrival in relation to budget cycle
\(^7\) Preparation of outgoing budget
\(^8\) Depends on departure circumstances of predecessor
The psychological, political, and fiscal environments play a role in the nature of succession events of a constitutional nature. First, transition processes linked to gubernatorial transitions produced situations in which change for its own sake was sometimes advocated. The degree of trust of the predecessor is diminished in the constitutional change, particularly if there is not an existing relationship between the two directors. During circumstances of incumbent gubernatorial defeat, which was not the general condition of this study, one participant who had been in office in such a condition described the focus as trying to get jobs for the incumbents, rather than on assisting the incoming governor and cabinet officials. The circumstance of a lame duck governor, in which it is known that on a "date certain, a transition would occur," presents the greatest possibility for a cooperative transition at the agency level.

Another circumstance unique to succession events tied to a gubernatorial transition is the staging of general transition meetings sponsored by the incoming governor. Impeding the usefulness of the transition meetings are the problems of delay in directors’ appointments, the general quality of the advice offered, and the selection of topics. Superstition can reduce the preparation time for the transition by delaying the start of transition process until the election is won.

Differences in the selection processes for the position of director exist at the constitutional change as well. While there is the possibility of directors’ retention into the new gubernatorial administration, in Ohio the departure of executives is the norm. Variation by state would be expected. The constitutional change of governor was associated with the greatest percentage of cabinet officials with origins outside of state
government, particularly if there has been a change of political party. The patterns relating to executive transitions occurring with a change in gubernatorial transitions are as expected from studies by Beyle (1985, 1989) and Rogers and Halachmi (1988).

The staff loyalty question is elevated in succession events timed to the gubernatorial transition. Study participants felt that party change would be a variable that impacted the transition process, both in the numbers of positions changing and the general tenor of the transition. At the constitutional term of office, the term "holdover" was readily applied by the study participants.

Midterm succession appointees were generally of a less political nature. There was less preparation of transition documents, more possibility that transition discussion could occur between predecessor and successor, although that was not necessarily the case; the transition discussion initiative was generally on the shoulders of the successor. It was surprising to see that for succession events occurring in the midterm as well as beginning of the gubernatorial term, directors expressed a lack of trust in holdover staff members, and an interest in replacing senior personnel with appointees of their own choosing and from whom loyalty could be assured, although procedures for the assessment of staff competencies varied between directors.

At the end-of-term, a less comprehensive executive selection process occurs, with insiders or "outside" insiders receiving appointments. Similarities between transition types include the need to assess personnel and to find a working inner circle. The disposition of personnel shifts to the side of retention and working around the predecessor's staff during end-of-term events. The time available for agency assessment
is compressed, and rather than developing a new agenda, key initiatives of the
department may be selected for winding down and completion.

In speaking about their transition experiences, directors used metaphors that reflected
the intensity of transition situations for organizational members. Metaphors of death and
violence predominated discussion of the initial transition period when staff were let go
or evaluated and the director established a senior staff. The metaphors reflect a
transition in which anxiety prevails for organizational members awaiting the change in
directors.

In summary, the transition activities of successors focused on the following areas:
1) the need and ability of the director to be a quick study in terms of agency content and
knowledge of the state political system and bureaucracy; 2) the quality of the hand-off
between predecessor and successor; 3) the establishment of a senior management team
or inner circle, and 4) the establishment of relationships with stakeholders. The
definition of a transition period was transition-specific, including the accomplishment of
certain policy objectives, the hiring of key staff, acceptance by agency employees and
external stakeholders, and a feeling of confidence in mastery of the agency subject
matter. Directors expressed the sentiment that "you had to experience it" to understand
the apprehension in an agency surrounding a succession event of an agency director.

Transition Consequences (chapter eight): While the study primarily concerns transition
processes of state agency executives, some consequences of transition as perceived by
the executives surfaced in the study. These included disruptions and changes to agency
personnel, down time to agency policy accomplishments while the new director gets up to speed, and changes to agency structure. Some difficulties encountered by the directors in achieving desired consequences relate again to public-sector characteristics (Perry and Rainey 1988; Ring and Perry 1985). Specifically, changes to agency structure were impeded by statutory limitations and specifications of agency structure. Changes to senior staff and the formation of a management group were impeded by civil service restrictions and the timing of forthcoming gubernatorial elections. In addition, agency directors spoke specifically of problems of high turnover of agency leaders (more than two directors in eight years) and the effects of succession events on agency personnel and on the advancement of agency mission. Directors considered the personal aspects of transitions, and the difficulties in moving from the position of agency director to a position of less responsibility and authority.

The consequences of executive succession in a public agency are areas for further study. Each of the areas above could be systematically and comprehensively studied. Crosscutting themes of the role of the governor and agency stakeholders in succession events and transition processes are the subject of the next sections.

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR IN AGENCY EXECUTIVE TRANSITIONS

Agency directors who participated in the study of transitions had a substantial amount to say about the impact of the governor and the governor’s office on their tenure as director of the agency. The predecessor’s and successor’s relationship with the governor was one theme throughout each chapter. This section reviews the relationship with the
governor as it relates to the transition process within state agencies. Again, patterns were evident in these discussion points across the directors concerning the governor's role in the transition processes. For purposes of organization, these comments will be discussed according to the role of the governor in the selection process, in transition preparation, the transition process, and transition consequences. Evidence for these conclusions is contained within the corresponding chapter. Particularly in the transition process section, the directors' comments on the governor's office were not constrained by the identified interview topic of agency executive transition, but broadened to the operation of the department. It is the present research agenda that places these comments in the context of transitions. Consequently, this context does not include the entire content of discussions on the governor's office.

For the most part, beyond attempts to be certain that a research question on agreements and acceptance conditions with the governor were covered in the interview process, the comments on the role of the governor were initiated by the directors and were a consequence of the open ended interview. For example, a remark on the governor's office may have surfaced as a response to a question such as: "What were the greatest frustrations concerning your tenure," in questions about the success of the director's policy initiatives, or in response to the global question, "How would you characterize executive succession events and transition processes in the state agencies of Ohio?" Responses to these and other questions on transition may have included observations about the role of the governor. The governor's roles in state agency transitions are summarized in Table 31, below.
In the selection process, directors’ perceptions of the role of the governor centered on the following areas: friendship with the governor, level of the governor’s personal interest in the agency for policy or political reasons, impact of the gubernatorial term of office, the role of the governor in the selection process, agreements with the governor made at the time of appointment, lessons in the appointments process, and performance assessments.

The impact of a gubernatorial change was a broader context variable for the transitions. The governor’s involvement in transition preparation at the agency level occurred primarily at the constitutional change of office. In the transition preparation process, variables impacting the process include again the governor’s interest (as relayed through the office of the governor) in the transition process. The governor could direct a cooperative transition, provide no direction, or provide an atmosphere of non-cooperativeness in the transition at the constitutional change of office of the governor.

The directors’ relationship with the governor’s staff, the governor’s relationship to the cabinet in terms of policy advisors, and the organization of the governor’s office are variables that operate at a level broader than the transition process, but have substantial impact on the directors’ abilities to move forward in their transition and agency adjustment and redirection. The level of the governor’s commitment and interest as a policy advocate for the agency was an important variable, as were the governor’s ideas on agency roles. The governor was considered a part of the operating environment by the agency directors, and therefore played a role in the transition process, as did the balance of power between the governor and the legislature.
The governor's office was sometimes perceived as a stumbling block in obtaining resources, making untimely decisions on replacements, and in other matters. Finally, pre-tenure agreements with the governor on the role of policy and politics in specific agencies played an important part in setting the tone of the agency administration and the transition process.

In the transition consequences area, again, the timing of the transition in terms of gubernatorial elections influenced the transition outcomes. Changes to issue agendas
were discussed as outcomes of the transition influenced by the governor and the operation of the governor's office.

This section only approaches this relationship with the governor's office from the perspective of the directors. Additional research with alternative perspectives from the governor's office should be compared with these patterns.

THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS

Throughout the transition study, stakeholder participation in the transition process was mentioned by the directors. These areas of participation have been identified and discussed in chapters four through seven. Again, stakeholder participation in the transition process was not a topic asked specifically, rather, as the transition stories unfolded, external stakeholders were a theme that repeatedly emerged. This section summarizes the role of stakeholders in the selection process, transition process, and transition preparation phases of transition. The order of the topics reflects the non-linearity of the succession events and processes. Table 32 shows these stakeholder influences. The extent of the involvement of external stakeholders in the succession event and the transition process reflects the public-private difference contextual variables of degree of openness to external environment, procedural constraints of diverse interest groups and unstable coalitions, and structural constraints of responsiveness to constituencies (Ring and Perry 1985).

Attention is focused on three groups of stakeholders: the legislature, the governor, and organized policy constituent groups and clients. A director who participated in the
study provided this description of the public sector operating environment:

One of the things that I’ve learned in government is because of what I call the operating environment, it’s not just your agency, it’s the legislature, it’s the Governor, it’s all the external constituencies.

Stakeholder involvement in transition begins with the selection of the candidate, with attempts to influence the candidate pool. Stakeholders participated formally or informally in the selection process of a successor. In many cases of constitutional or midterm appointments, if the position was of importance to the governor and there were recognized stakeholder groups, candidates for the position were requested to meet with the stakeholders prior to the appointment. This served the purpose of providing an opportunity for director and stakeholders to get to know each other. For those who chose to view this process as a part of the transition preparation process, these meetings were an opportunity to learn some expectations of the position. In cases where a transfer of cabinet personnel occurred, contact with stakeholder groups could be minimal. At the other extreme, in cases of a formal selection committee, stakeholder input into the selection process could be quite structured.

Variations in the formalization of stakeholder involvement in the selection process occurred. At the constitutional term of office, there was a compressed period in which accelerated yet intensive selection processes occurred. One role for stakeholders was to provide assistance in the solicitation of candidates. Introductions to stakeholders could be accelerated through the participation of stakeholders on the search committees. Acceptance by key stakeholders was sometimes one of the selection criteria for directors.
Table 32

Stakeholder Influences in Transition Processes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Process</th>
<th>Transition Process, Leader-Interaction</th>
<th>Transition Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence desirable successor</td>
<td>Establish Rapport:</td>
<td>Policy Embedding:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualifications</td>
<td>- Influenced by Governor's relationship with stakeholder</td>
<td>- Formalized role in policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence candidate pool</td>
<td>- Professional background of director</td>
<td>advisory committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign commitments (c)</td>
<td>- Familiarity with Director at appointment</td>
<td>- Encourage organization and contact with Gubernatorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support/Advocacy of candidacy (c)</td>
<td>- Agency history-predecessor relationships</td>
<td>candidate (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in screening</td>
<td>- Satisfaction with agency performance</td>
<td>- Encourage stakeholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>committees</td>
<td>- Advocacy/Support for another candidate</td>
<td>participation in plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval/veto of potential candidates</td>
<td>- Participation in selection process</td>
<td>development (buy in of initiatives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Establish &quot;firm but fair&quot; as attitude</td>
<td>- Pressure for completion of policy agenda prior to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Director Quick Study Process:</strong></td>
<td>administration end (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meet stakeholder groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- early in tenure</td>
<td>Succession Event Initiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- As proving ground</td>
<td>- Dissatisfied stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- As information source</td>
<td>initiate pressure to remove Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Agency Crisis:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Draw lines with stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Attend to problem areas/relationships first</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assembling Inner Circle:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Review of key appointments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Campaign commitments (c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Influence dismissal of predecessor's staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Stakeholder process marked (c) concern influences primarily related to succession events timed with constitutional change
Another way that stakeholders take part in the selection process is through expressed dissatisfaction of a predecessor, which may influence the sought after qualifications for the successor, or accelerate the departure of an incumbent director.

While stakeholder involvement is well recognized in public agency management (see Weinberg 1977; Bryson 1988; Nutt and Backoff 1991), this study elicited views of the directors on the roles of stakeholders specifically in the selection and transition process. Unique to this situation was the potential to build on the participation of stakeholders in the selection process. When a comprehensive search was undertaken with the participation of agency stakeholders, directors could extend the introductory connection with the selection committee into their tenure in the agency. One director made extended use of the selection committee's information base by continuing to meet with the selection committee members in the early years of his tenure.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The study of public sector succession events and transition processes has important implications for public managers. The first-time, singular experience of many of the incoming state agency directors reflects the high turnover rates and low tenure rates in the public sector. This former director, with experience in state and federal agency executive transitions, highlights the importance of the study of transitions:

What you have is a bunch of amateurs. Folks who have not done this before at the state government level, probably. Trying to feel what it's going to do. It's very wasteful, it's very inefficient, very frustrating, and I suspect there have never been two transitions that have been alike. And the fact of the matter is that it shouldn't be all that complicated. And it
shouldn’t be all that mysterious. And it shouldn’t be all that wasteful. I mean it really shouldn’t. There’s six or seven different ways to do it and it ought to be possible to lay those six or seven models out and let somebody choose. Actually there probably aren’t even six or seven.

Awareness of patterns of previous transition experiences can assist in the learning process of the successors. From the patterns found in this study, predecessor and successor checklists for transition processes were prepared and appear in Table 33. Additionally, Table 34 presents actions and options of directors during transition periods.

Table 33
Transition Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predecessor Leadership Transition Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Assure staff cooperation for successors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Document agency procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prioritize policy changes and embed what you can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communicate with stakeholders about forthcoming problems and issues (governor, legislators, policy groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prepare transition documents and departmental and unit levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discuss transition at all levels of the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prepare top staff for displacement during a constitutional change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Appoint a transition coordinator who is known and respected by the successor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Be available for consultation: offer again, and again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop a successor if departure in the middle of a constitutional term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Allow time for decompression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successor Leadership Transition Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Be a quick study (policy area and state government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop stakeholder relationships (governor, legislature, media, policy groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make adjustments to agency structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Set pace, direction, agenda, and moral tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attend to any crises, if present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assemble management team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meet with predecessor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 34

Public Sector Executive Transition Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELECTION</th>
<th>TRANSITION PREPARATION (Predecessor Activities)</th>
<th>TRANSITION PROCESS</th>
<th>TRANSITION OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointment Process</td>
<td>Transition Documentation (preparation and quality)</td>
<td>Predecessor-Successor Relationship</td>
<td>Tone of Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment committee: moderate to high stakeholder involvement</td>
<td>Informal policy memos</td>
<td>Amount and quality of contact</td>
<td>Continuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor's appointee with little or no stakeholder involvement (political)</td>
<td>Formal Document</td>
<td>Degree of respect</td>
<td>Clean-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successor background: insider/outsider/returnee</td>
<td>Improvements to agency documentation</td>
<td>Policy differences</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing of Appointment</td>
<td>Agency Preparation</td>
<td>Quick Study Areas</td>
<td>Establish Policy Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt (between election and inauguration, or prior to the departure of the predecessor in midterm or end-of-term events)</td>
<td>Presentation of director's office</td>
<td>Policy issues</td>
<td>Strategy Choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later appointment with acting director</td>
<td>Winding down/scaling back of policy initiatives</td>
<td>State government</td>
<td>Staff Replacement/Retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Embedding Level</td>
<td>Establish External Stakeholder Relationship</td>
<td>Level of activity</td>
<td>Staff loyalty obtained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No changes attempted</td>
<td>Level of activity</td>
<td>Timing of activity</td>
<td>Staff anxieties reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in permanent law and funding</td>
<td>Change in administrative rules</td>
<td>Staff adjustments to director's styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in administrative rules</td>
<td>Stakeholder involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gubernatorial support</td>
<td>Gubernatorial support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation/Clarification of Issues with Governor</td>
<td>Negotiation/Clarification of Issues with Governor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal hiring authority: staff qualifications</td>
<td>Staff Prepared for Transition by Predecessor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget commitment</td>
<td>Allegiance change to successor</td>
<td>General fiscal situation</td>
<td>Minor structural changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor's staff relationships</td>
<td>Staff retention likelihood</td>
<td>Location in budget cycle</td>
<td>Changes requiring legislative approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy orientation</td>
<td>Acting director/transition coordinator in place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-cabinet relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successor Activities</td>
<td>Staffing Issues</td>
<td>Personal Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of appointment-to-first day</td>
<td>Gradual or immediate replacement of senior staff (or retention)</td>
<td>Time for decompression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of appointments process in quick study</td>
<td>Set tone (ethical, work levels, etc.)</td>
<td>Career choices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 34, for each area of selection, transition preparation, transition process and transition consequences, reading down the table columns, key action situations and choices are identified. For example, in the transition process, decisions or situation requirements concerning the areas of predecessor-successor relationship, the quick study requirements, stakeholder relationships, role of the budget, and staffing issues were distinguished. The degree of perceived discretion of the directors for a given action step may vary.

The desired relationship of theory and practice is critical in determining the direction of executive succession and transition processes studies. Research that invites action and extends the capacity for reflective action is advocated by researchers and academicians alike (Denhardt 1984). For example, Hummel (1991:39), reporting interview data from practicing managers, writes "The academician's task, as this manager said, [is] to 'ascertain first of all what is it that we're operating on, and how it can be improved.'"

The study of executive transitions, grounded in the interpretations of practicing managers, contributes to the goal of identifying the assumptions that underlie executives' actions during the transition process. The underlying assumptions surface particularly through the metaphors that the directors used in speaking about their transition experiences.
IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Building Theory from Case Study Research

The patterns of transition arising from this study are precursors to the development of transition models. The patterns include the situation of a constitutional change, no acting director; constitutional change, with acting director, midterm event following non-crisis resignation of predecessor; transitions following circumstances of agency crisis; and end-of-term successors. Variations to these patterns occur on the basis of successor substantive background, and agency circumstances. These patterns are compared in Tables 29 and 30 above.

Movement beyond the study of single cases is an important requirement in the inductive generation of case-based theory. Descriptive taxonomies and conceptual categories such as those discovered in this study are important for their use in answering the questions: What are the pertinent descriptive categories and how do they emerge? (Richardson 1990). Consistent use of theoretical samples based in these descriptive categories enhances the development of comparative case studies, an important step in moving from middle range to more general theories (Pinder and Moore 1979).

The conceptual categories and related theoretical sampling are the foundations for determining answers to the questions of who, when, what, how, and where of theory construction (Whetton 1989). The search for similarities and differences in events and processes in various levels and contexts, and the reasons for these differences, enhances the development of comparative case studies and the development of generalizable theory. In the study of public sector executive transitions, utilization of specific
frameworks in multiple states and jurisdictional levels would serve to accelerate the
development of a more universal theory of public sector executive transitions.

Moving further in the direction of the development of a theory of public sector executive transition, distribution of research findings and the sharing of field notes to scholars with interests in executive succession events and transition processes at other jurisdictional levels of government, federal, and local as well as other states will enhance theory building in this area. Continuing the method of constant comparison across jurisdictions and types of organizations enhances the identification of contexts and related differences in processes, thereby moving to a broader level and moving from a mid-range theory of public sector executive transitions to a general theory that incorporates more circumstances. Table 35 provides an example of the beginnings of a cross-state comparison, using Olshfski's (1989, 1990) findings as a base. Table 35 compares the areas of sample selection, research prescriptions, and "findings" in the issues of quick study requirements, the role of the governor, the relationship between predecessor and successor, tenure rates, and transition consequences. The comparison results in the discovery of areas of overlap, differences, and extension of circumstances or processes.

As stated in the initial chapters of this document, the research is undertaken from a perspective of grounded theory, based in the search for patterns across specific situations. This leads to the questions "Are these findings generalizable beyond the state of Ohio, to other political contexts, to other states, or to other jurisdictions?" and "How do these findings relate to the private sector findings of executive succession?" The first question was addressed above in the building of a theory of succession by looking at studies of
other state directors and looking for anomalies and similarities in the findings, moving up in levels of abstraction. The example of Olshfski's work served to illustrate this process. Ideally, a coordinated research effort in multiple states focused on executive transitions at the agency level would most advance theory building in this area (see Beyle 1985, 1989 for an example of such an effort centered at the gubernatorial level).

Table 35
Building a Theory of Public Sector Executive Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERLAP IN FINDINGS*</th>
<th>SUBJECT AREA</th>
<th>DIFFERENCES/EXTENSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointed political executives—state government</td>
<td>Sample Selection</td>
<td>&quot;High performers&quot; versus successor background, succession event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successors unfamiliar with subject areas: electoral, issue, political</td>
<td>Quick Study Requirements</td>
<td>Quick study processes examined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda, interest influence relationship</td>
<td>Role of Governor</td>
<td>Clarity of agreement with Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with predecessor/ successor uncertain</td>
<td>Relationship with Predecessor</td>
<td>In-depth consideration of predecessor/successor relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 to 3 year average tenure</td>
<td>Tenure Rates</td>
<td>3 year average tenure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difference found in likelihood of predecessor policy change</td>
<td>Transition Consequences</td>
<td>Changes made to structure and personnel (in constitutional and midterm changes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive action to manage effectively</td>
<td>Research Prescriptions</td>
<td>Improvements to transition practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of department agenda, frequent change of executives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods—Critical incident: more development of analysis of transcripts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As identified in chapter three, the choice to study succession events and transition processes in the state agencies in Ohio during the years 1983-1989 limits the sample to the transition experiences of directors serving within a two-term governor of one political party, a party that had been outside the governor's office for sixteen of the previous twenty years. While two-term governors are typical for this state, this potentially limits the study. For example, Hamilton and Biggart's (1984) study of gubernatorial administrations in California compares the ideologically different Governors Reagan and Brown from the view of the operation of the Governor's office. Continuation of the Ohio studies of state agency executive transitions into the new gubernatorial administration entering office in January 1991 is a logical extension of the research. A related extension is to study the transition process in a state with different retention norms for directors during circumstances of gubernatorial change.

There are multiple approaches from which to respond to the question concerning the distinctiveness of succession processes in the public and private sector. The first way is to return to the public-private differences literature and to place the transition findings in the context of these differences. These differences have been highlighted in this chapter. A second approach relies upon the distinctions made by the directors in their discussions of public sector transitions. These were emergent statements, sometimes suppositions, on whether the public and private sector processes were distinct. This remains for further analysis. The literature in private sector succession events is not enlightening on process issues, beyond the transition preparation and selection phases of succession (Vancil 1987; Gabarro 1987).
A restriction of the study relates to its placement at the state level. The extent to which state level transitions parallel executive transitions at the local and federal levels is not identified in this study. The study could contribute as background to a broader theory of executive transitions, generalizable to other states and to all cases of public sector executive transition.

Naturalistic inquiry and grounded theory underlie this study of executive transition processes in the state agencies of Ohio from the perspective of the agency directors' roles of predecessor and successor. Approached from the perspective of grounded theory, pattern seeking within and across the transition experiences of the directors gives rise to the specification of transition process activities. While contributing to the development of a clearer understanding of the transition experience from the perspective of agency director, this methodology also bounds the study.

For example, the study reflects the directors' views of consequences experienced by themselves, by agency personnel, and reflections of the change in the structure of the organization, but does not measure in a systematic and linear manner the performance consequences of succession events. A study specifically designed to identify performance and other consequences in a systematic way could be designed post-hoc for the events in this study and for future succession events that will occur in these agencies.

Similarly, the research is not focused at the policy level. The preliminary interview guide was not focused in this direction, and background on beginning policy initiatives did not surface sufficiently in the interviews to enable a detailed analysis of this aspect of taking charge of an agency. Additional research could be done in this area.
Although selected work done in the state of Ohio and more generally on the topic of public sector strategic management is referenced, this study does not measure the implications of executive transition for strategic management. Strategic management provides a context for the public sector succession events and transition processes in the management of a state agency. Leadership change (executive succession) is a variable in the strategic management of a general purpose government agency—a broader framework than the executive succession process (see Wechsler 1989; Wechsler and Backoff 1986; 1987). The midrange theory that is the focus of this research rests below strategic management at the level of a particular organizational phenomenon (see Pinder and Moore 1979). The impact of these and future succession events on the strategic management initiatives of the agency is an area that should be investigated further, and data collected for this study should contribute to that goal.

One important question is the extent to which the metaphors of transition differ for public and private sectors. For example, "bloodletting" has been used to describe changes in corporate leadership as well (see Boje 1991). The metaphors of transition are another area for further investigation. The importance of the metaphors of transition can be seen in this statement by Lackoff and Johnson (1980:5):

> Because we can conceptualize situations in metaphorical terms, it is possible for sentences containing metaphors to be taken as fitting the situations as we conceptualize them. We talk about arguments that way because we conceive of them that way—and we act according to the way we conceive things.

Another boundary of the study relates to the potential of critical action theory research (Harmon 1981; Hummel 1991) to inform the practice of transition management.
Movement of the research on executive transitions into the critical action research approach would advance the practice of administration, and is another important direction for future research. Feedback of the transition metaphors to the directors may lead in the direction of critical action research.

The decision by the researcher to generally limit the perspectives on the issues presented in this chapter to those of the present and former directors, rather than to obtain views of stakeholders and representatives of the governor’s office is another methodological point. Justification for this limitation relates to the emphasis in this research of the interpretations of the directors guiding their actions in the transition process, particularly guiding the theory-in-use of the successor (Wechsler and Rainey 1988). Employee and stakeholder views would be of interest in obtaining additional perspectives on transition events. In part, this choice relates to the criterion of research practicality and the need to call a halt to the ever-expanding nature of a qualitative research project (Fetterman 1989). Further study of the qualifications of cabinet level executives, appointment agreements, and desirable actions from the viewpoint of the governor, if undertaken, could be contrasted with the views of the successors presented here. General studies on state government management undertaken from the governor’s office perspective include Weinberg’s (1977) study of the Sargent administration and Hamilton and Biggart’s (1984) study of California’s Brown and Reagan administrations.

The study’s reliance upon the recollections of current and former agency directors about the selection processes and agreements which occurred relating to their tenures as directors of state agencies of Ohio. As such, they are subject to the difficulties of
retrospective recall and reconstructed evidence. The patterns which unfolded concerning these topics reflected the actions which could be identified from the selective sample. Problems such as self-censure of the identification of socially unacceptable or illegal behaviors possibly could have occurred during the interviews. Items which were considered inappropriate for discussion were likely not released to the researcher. This type of limitation could be reduced by follow-up interviews and by cultivating further rapport between researcher and research consultant.

One weakness of the theoretical sample as outlined in chapter three was the inclusion of a limited number of extreme political types and those who were convicted of crimes committed during office. Therefore, patterns relating to such activities could well be missing from the research project. Such activities are viewed as supplemental and outside the main stream of transition processes. Should access be granted at a later date to such cases, patterns relating to these cases should be compared to the current findings, and a research note on these activities should be prepared. In addition, the lack of participation of former directors whose agencies were in trouble at the time of their departure limited the study of this circumstance.

The limitations of this study, although many, identify areas of additional research opportunities in the study of public sector executive transitions. Careful specification of the limits of the present study adds to its validity in the development of a midrange theory of the organizational phenomenon of executive transition at the level of state agency executive.
Summary

The contribution of this study is the empirical investigation, grounded in the views of the directors, of the executive transition processes that occur on the average every two to three years in each agency. The aim of discovering patterns in the experiences of political executives of all levels of success and agency circumstances, and across all types of transitions, gubernatorial, midterm and end-of-term, offers the potential contribution of improvements to these recurring transition processes at the level of state agency.

The identification of transition process patterns within the state agencies of Ohio and in the future, across other states and jurisdictions, contributes to the development of a theory of public sector executive succession, an objective of this research project. The identification of these patterns improve the specification of the transition experience at the level of the state agency director. The long-term theoretical objective of the research is to advance a theory of public sector executive transitions by systematically considering transition patterns across individual actions over time, within a given organization, across administrations, states or levels of government. The research effort to date describes the patterns found in executive transitions in the state of Ohio.

The research has important implications for practice as well. Awareness of these action/experience patterns could prove useful to those experiencing executive succession events at the state level. Patterns relating to the approaches of successors to leadership beginnings and to predecessors' leadership endings resulted in the development of checklists of activities for predecessors and successors which enhance the likelihood of improved transitions.
Chapter IX End Notes

1. It should be reemphasized that this order imposes a sort of linearity which was not present to as great a degree in the conceptualizations and actions of the directors who participated in the succession event and transition process. This is evidenced in overlap between chapters. The linearity implied by the forced order required for writing should be taken as an artifact of the dissertation production process. This is consistent with a notation from Olshfski (1989) concerning the non-linearity of managerial processes of state executives.

2. Participants felt such meetings were valuable, but often discounted the advice:

   Well I can only answer that and you know I listened to what they told me to do at the retreat and figured well if I do it that way I've got some big problems. So I didn't it, I just didn't do it. And nobody said anything and it worked out uh transition could not have been better.

3. This terminology is imposed in the writing of this document by the writer. Directors who had recent formal business or public administration education used this term as well. Others used the term constituent, particularly if the orientation was political-legislative experience. Stakeholder is preferred because of its broader definition. In most contexts throughout this text, the term stakeholder will focus on "external stakeholder." If internal stakeholders are included, it will be so labeled. Relevant consideration of internal stakeholders occurs primarily in the transition process section.

   For comparison purposes, stakeholders are defined in the following manner for private sector organizations: "All those interest groups, parties, actors, claimants, and institutions, both internal and external to the corporation that exert a hold on it. That is, stakeholders are all those parties who either affect or who are affected by a corporation's actions, behavior, and policies" (Mitroff 1983:4).
LIST OF REFERENCES


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Chema, T. 1989. Class presentation, The Ohio State University School of Public Policy and Management. 6 February.


APPENDIX A
March 2, 1990

Dear

As you may recall, I have been working for some time now on a study of leadership transitions in the state agencies of Ohio. This research (my doctoral dissertation) is part of a broader inquiry into executive-level leadership and management of public agencies organized by Professor Robert W. Backoff of the School of Public Policy and Management. In your former role as Director of , you generously participated in this larger project, enhancing the professional development of practicing and future managers.

As part of our continuing research efforts, the School of Public Policy and Management is conducting leadership transition case studies of selected agencies. Comparative and systematic research on leadership in the public sector is at an early stage of development; few studies have been done of the major set of public sector executives, the agency directors. This research will be the first such comparative study of the transition patterns and succession events involving the change of agency leaders. It will highlight the factors influencing transition management as well as the nature of the process, its consequences, and various agency stakeholders’ interpretations of the processes and events. Given the rates of agency executive turnover and the critical role of new department heads, the practical relevance of this research is quite significant.

Our data collection phase is now underway, and I would like to schedule an interview with you. The interview will cover the general areas of transition experiences, planning, and implementation, and will require approximately two hours of time. Every precaution will be taken to protect your anonymity, if that is desired.

I will contact your secretary to schedule a time convenient to you to answer any questions you may have. Also, please feel free to call Professor Backoff if you would like more information about the project.

I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Janet Foley Orosz
School of Public Policy and Management
Interview Guide

Transition Process (core questions)

1.1 How did you come to the position of Director of Agency X? (Cover relationship with predecessor, governor) Who was involved in the selection process for agency director? What process was used?

1.2 Recalling your first day as agency director, what actions did you take and how would you describe your feelings about beginning the job?

1.3 How would you describe your approach in stepping in as agency director? What were your first actions concerning the role of the director before assuming the formal duties? After assuming the formal duties? What expectations did you have? What influenced your approach to taking charge and leading the agency? How, if it all did the tenure of the previous successor affect your approach? The selection process? Your previous experiences?

1.4 Once you were on board, how did you learn about the agency, its issues, people, and operation? Did you feel you knew what was going on in the Department? How did you learn about the relevant external environment?

1.5 What do you feel were the expectations of agency personnel and outsiders concerning your appointment? On what were these expectations based?

1.6 When you took over as leader of the Department, what resources in place aided you the most? What did you need that wasn't available? What type of transition documents and other written information was available, and what, if any was especially valuable in orienting you to the agency?

1.7 What really happens in the transition (outside the formal provisions and procedures? (What are the squeaky points, and the places where things really worked well?) What interpersonal, intergroup, or intragroup conflicts are there?

1.8 What did you wish you had known at the time (and why)? What would you do the same, and differently if you were to arrive again in an agency?

1.9 How would you describe your first few months in office?

1.10 What actions did you take within the first six months of your arrival in the position as Director to customize the agency to your style and needs--did you make any changes? How did you go about "personalizing" your leadership to the organization, if at all?
1.11 Were changes to the agency structure desirable or necessary? How and when were they made?

1.12 What changes occurred in senior staff? Do you generally get a chance to discuss staff appointments to your agency before they occur? Do you suggest names of possible appointees? What qualifications do you most like to see in appointees? How much holdover from previous administrations or the previous successor was there?

1.13 What positions did you consider to be in the "inner circle?"

1.14 When did you feel that the transition was complete?

1.15 How would you define a successful transition?

1.16 How would you characterize executive succession events and transition processes in state agencies in Ohio? What are your thoughts about transitions, personally on the level of the individual and in relationship to the overall operation of the agency?

New Succession Event (core questions)

2.1 (modify for situation) You have experienced multiple transition situations. What is unique and what is similar about agency leadership change at these different points in time?

2.2 (modify) I'm also interested in your comments about experiencing from two roles transitions involving inside personnel: both your move to Director and the selection of a new successor. How did your previous transition experiences affect your approach to the selection and transition of your own successor?

2.3 Should caution be used in generalizing from your succession experience? Why?

2.4 What would/did you tell your own successor? How did/would you approach the transition? Looking ahead, what have you and your staff done to embed your achievements and smooth future transitions?

2.5 What do you think contributes to the high turnover of agency directors? What do you think could be done to lessen the turnover events?
Leadership and Personal Background

3.1 What experiences did you have when you took this job that were especially helpful in stepping into and continuing the role of agency director?

3.2 Agency directors are called upon to employ a variety of skills in their work. What skills were required, and what type of orientation or training, formal and informal were available to you? Do you feel you had sufficient orientation to your role? What type of orientation should be available? Did you have or create developmental assignments throughout your career? (if insider) Was there an attempt on the part of the agency director or others to "groom you" for the role of state agency director with the provision of developmental assignments?

3.3 Can agency directors be "typed" into categories in terms of their backgrounds, approaches to agency management, etc.? If so, how would you describe these differences? Do you think some are any more or less important to successful agency management? What does a "successful" agency director do that makes a difference? What leadership qualities (characteristics and traits) contribute to success in government? What characteristics should one look for in an appointee for agency director?

3.4 (If private sector experience) Did your private sector experiences prepare you for the role of state agency executive? What differences did you find and how did they impact your actions and interpretations of events and agency management?

3.5 (modify) Where did you work or what did you do immediately following your tenure as director?

State Government and Management Issues

4.1 What do you consider your primary responsibility as agency director? Do these differ from the Governor's expectations or the expectations you found to be held by those in the agency (see above)?

4.2 When you started out, did you have an idea of what you wanted to achieve? If so, please describe it.

4.3 What major policy initiatives did you propose, and how did you go about pursuing this agenda? Who did you involve?

4.4 Describe your relationship to the Governor and his staff.
4.5 Describe the relationship among staff members, administrative appointees, and civil servants in your agency.

Interview Expansion (core questions)

5.1 Have we covered the areas on transitions that you think we should? (and what would you have answered to the question?) Is there something else?

5.2 Are there others in the _______ department who you feel would have a useful or different perspective on transitions? Elsewhere in state government?
EPILOGUE: RESEARCH PROCESSES AND CHOICES

In this appendix, I move to first person narrative to provide more detail on research procedures. This background is presented because of the intertwining nature of the researched and researcher in an inductive, grounded theory research project (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Denzin 1989b; Werner and Schoepfle 1987). This allows review of the patterns from an observational/researcher's stance: anchoring in the process of knowing is one more clue that the reader may use in rendering individual judgement about potential applicability and the legitimacy of the claims of the research.

Data Management and Analysis

Following the interviews, written notes were formulated about the interview, and a summary of the interview was prepared. While transcriptions were initially produced by a skilled transcriptionist, once the draft was prepared as a word processing text, I replayed the tapes and the transcriptions were checked for accuracy and corrections entered. Following this auditory review of the tapes, the verbatim transcripts of the interviews were printed, and a second "text one" entry was made on each interview, reviewing the contents of the interview. Topics covered were contrasted to the researcher's interview schema and strengths and weaknesses of coverage were noted. The overall themes of each interview were reviewed at that time. During this period, a uniformity in the use of metaphors was identified, and the major metaphors in each interview were listed in summary fashion while coding the interviews.
Coding of transcripts was accomplished using Ethnograph software package, which allows multiple coding schemes and accelerates sorting of the data with researcher-inserted codes. Ethnograph produces line numbered text which allows overlapping codes of various lengths. Paper copies of the lined text were hand coded. Data analysis began as soon as the first transcript was produced in April 1990, simultaneous to other interviews (qualitative research is not a linear process) and concluded in September 1990. I initially began with a list of forty codes which I generated after listening to several tapes and prior to the completion of all interviews. The initial code list expanded threefold, leaving the list a handwritten and occasionally unordered list of ideas, concepts and happenings. Texts analyzed earlier in the process were reviewed for emergent insights and the corresponding codes inserted. Nevertheless, there were problems of inconsistency in coding, necessitating additional reviews of transcripts. This reflected the emergent and iterative nature of the naturalistic inquiry. Eventually, the rate of emergent codes declined, a signal that the interviews were producing redundant insights and that it was becoming an appropriate time to draw the interview process to a close.

The codes were entered into the Ethnograph software data base with the help of an informed assistant. The assistant checked coding against transcript contents, the primary check on inclusiveness. For example, if a metaphor was overlooked, it was called to my attention and included in the code set.

Following entry into the data base, lists of key code words were identified and recoding was undertaken to clean up the data base. These key code words were subject to my judgment. Coded transcripts were produced, and transcripts were printed in
accordance with computer-sorted themes. These sorted transcripts became the foundation for the data analysis procedures described in the methods section of this document.

An enhanced researcher text one (set of theoretical memos) was then painstakingly produced while reviewing the sorted transcripts, a process that was several months in the undertaking. Since the themes of the interviews overlapped, this text (a copy of which rests in my safe deposit box) emerged as a listing of over 125 moderately or well developed themes and the transcript details that supported them. These theoretical memos were again raised in abstraction to the major themes which appear in the sections of this document.

True to Fetterman’s (1989) acknowledgement that there must be a stopping point to the research, some of these themes were held in abeyance for future research projects. I satisfied my need to continue the research effort by listing themes for future consideration. The problem, as for all qualitative researchers, was data reduction.

The initial theoretical memos centered around topics, groupings and listings. General headings included such items as transition discussion, benchmarks or transition document (researcher generated), and views of predecessor/successor (emergent in the research process). I finally settled on the concrete procedural headings of selection, preparation, process and consequences as an organizing framework. A major problem continued to be the placement of material within these sections: transitions did not occur in a linear manner. While I rebelled against the organizing strategy’s unrealistic linearity, its simplicity allowed decisions to be made about content placement.
The topic of transition document preparation and contents is used as an example of development of a theoretical memo, building from the level of the individual quotation. After reviewing the coded transcripts, variables related to transition similarities and differences identified included timing, the existence of an acting director, the existence of improved documentation throughout the department as supplementing transition documents, the differences in content across departments, the rate of executive succession within the agency and agency member experiences in the production of a document, successor familiarity with the agency, successor request for a document, and the predecessor view of the transition and willingness to assist. A second topic area related to transition documents was the value placed on the document by the successor, when a document was prepared. There also was a listing of other topic areas which cross referenced on the preparation and utilization of a formal transition document.

A second example of a theoretical memo is the consideration of distinctions between insiders and outsiders in the transition process. Topic areas generated from the interviews included the governor’s appointment philosophy, the circumstances for the hiring of an insider, staff adjustments, benefits of hiring an insider, differences between insider and outsider transition processes from the perspective of the director, conflicting statements of the processes from agency staff, and the distinctions in definitions of an insider.

During this data reduction process, I listened again to each of the interviews to regain a sense of the whole. Inevitably, some interview segments escaped inclusion in the sorted transcripts: these were reviewed and added to the theoretical memos as
appropriate. Similarly, if the context of the quotation was missing because of fragmentation or was inappropriate because of context, the context could be returned or additional evidence located as a result of this review.

Upon completion of the data analysis phase, the data management system was "desk audited" by a member of the broader collaborative inquiry team affiliated with the University. Interview transcripts were selectively sampled and followed throughout the data management system. In addition, earlier in the transcript production, one case was followed in detail, with this member of the collaborative inquiry team noting the differences from tape to written text, noticing how much of the meaning is missed by the reading of even a verbatim transcript. This input was another reason for the audio review of the transcripts toward the end of the data analysis phase.

A remaining issue which should be considered are the choices involved in transcription of interviews and in selecting the format for inclusion of direct quotations in this research document. The issues are separate but interrelated.

**Presentation of Quotations**

As identified in the research proposal stage, direct transcriptions were determined to be required to enhance validity and reliability of the findings to the reader, as well as to allow in-depth analysis of the patterns across cases. The structure of the transcript, however, was another matter. As the research team member noted, there remains a considerable difference in the spoken and written word. We do not speak as we write. While conventions are available to reduce distortion between the spoken and written word, the ethnograph format remains an enabler of distortion (Seidel 1991). The
transcripts produced for this project are in paragraph format—however, the transcripts as a part of text two, include pauses, words uttered while thinking what the research consultants wanted to say, stutters, and phrases. Yet, the paragraph format is forced upon the speech. For someone who has heard the interviews and is familiar with the speech patterns of the individual, the loss is not as great as for one who only has access to the written text of the transcript.3

Another issue is the editing of the quotations to a readable length without loss of meaning. This was a judgment call, given the purpose of the research to develop the transition models in state agencies of Ohio. While the original speech forms are retrievable to the researcher, the quotations presented here have had the speech patterns cleared up, and have even been, in one or two cases edited for conformance with grammatical standards (likin became liking, for example). Speech idiosyncracies that were identifiable to specific individuals were removed from the text. The criteria used to determine removal of these utterances were the impact on the reader’s understanding of the transition experience. What is lost is some of the emotionalism and the difficulty with which some of the words were formed. An example of a statement as it appeared in paragraph form in the transcript and as it was used in the text, follows.

I think, I think it’s important, I think a good transition is one that you know, that stops the things that should be stopped and allows things to continue that ought to continue. Uh, in a perfect world I think uh a good transition will give people in a in a government agency a sense of where they stand and uh some sense of direction, uh some sense of what the new folks who are coming to the department are about, what their expectations are, how they, how they function, that sort of stuff.
I think a good transition is one that stops the things that should be stopped and allows things to continue that ought to continue. In a perfect world I think a good transition will give people in a government agency a sense of where they stand and some sense of direction, some sense of what the new folks who are coming to the department are about, what their expectations are, how they, how they function, that sort of stuff.

This example includes words and phrases that were excluded on the basis of succinctness "I think it’s important," as well as phrasing and speech utterances which add to the timing and phrasing of the statement. Inclusion of these utterances would provide the reader with a better idea of the ease and speed with which the statement was given. Clearly, both types of deletions change the statement. In the interest of clarity of presentation on the topic of succession, I made the choice to present the director’s statements in the above manner. All quotations are presented in paragraph or sentence form, as noted above.

On the Practice of Critical Action Theory

In the proposal stages of this research, I indicated an interest in structuring the research process in a manner consistent with the practice of "critical action theory." This required ongoing dialogue with the directors, and looping back of the researcher’s interpretations to the study participants. The selection of over twenty directors with succession events in sixteen agencies effectively reduced this possibility. Ongoing involved participation in the research process would require a smaller number of cases and more than one interview session. The time lag involved in the preparation of transcripts and in interpretation as well as the dynamic nature of the positions (directors left their positions) negated the opportunities for feedback of findings during the analysis.
While I have had continuing contact with five or more of the directors, the opportunity to feed back on a global scale the dissertation document will only now occur. Researcher-generated transcript summaries and this document will be available to former directors and future study participants. While most have left state service due to the gubernatorial change in the state of Ohio, several indicated an interest in receiving a summary of findings, and perhaps in discussing further the interpretations. One former director was interested in orchestrating a transition conference collaboratively with the University; others were interested in assisting. Some, possibly many, directors responded to the request for an interview as an obligation to the University as a public official, or because they knew me on a professional or personal level. For some, the interview was an opportunity to reflect on their role in transitions or their transition actions. We heard a well thought out consideration of the opportunities and relationships of a non-gubernatorial appointed agency in a change of gubernatorial administrations, a special topic that deserves further consideration, but was defined as outside the scope for purposes of this research. The former executive wanted to express these important ideas. This interview highlighted the potential differences between researcher and research collaborator views. We allowed the collaborator's views to emerge and to direct the discussion.

Returning to Louis's (1998) hierarchy of research (Figure 8, chapter three), the present research effort is located in levels three and four, with the notation that the process is not viewed as hierarchical but iterative, with former directors who expressed an interest in doing so. There was certainly evidence of critical action learning on the
part of the directors on the topic of transition processes; for example, "What could I have used?" was a guide for the preparation of a transition document. Reflective thinking on the topic of transitions was evident throughout the interviews. Another director reconsidered some of the structural changes to the organization that he made shortly after his arrival to the agency:

I think I talked [in a class setting] about this management structure I had set up where basically all of the division chiefs would report to me. Which was contrary to the way it had been done here in the past where division chiefs reported through deputies to me. When I think about it now, I did that because I didn't have deputies I had confidence in. But I did know the chiefs. The chiefs were constant, I knew them, and I felt I'd rather work directly with them than work with these deputies. It's not probably the way I put it at the time. But I see that now and the reason I say that is that over the last six months I have made a transition and I made the final installment today, announced to the chiefs this morning that every program now in the agency reports through a deputy.

**Are Transition Experiences Ideographic or Generalizable?**

Toward the end of the interview schedule, one of the study participants wondered how I would ever make sense of so many different stories and situations. By this time, I was fairly certain that patterns in these ostensibly ad hoc events existed. While many of the directors felt initially that their experience was unique, I found the experiences to be simultaneously similar and unique. There were multiple views of the process, multiple ways to organize, but for given circumstances, these views would unfold in similar ways. For example, one director said, "This would be a special case, because I knew Bob." For analysis and generalizability purposes, this became the variable, relationship with predecessor.
The feeling of distinctiveness of experience on the part of the directors can be similarly exemplified through the circumstance variable of organizational crisis:

Now transition [here] was obviously an unusual one. So transition, instead of taking place the first couple of months, the normal operating procedure really took place, the guy that I ultimately replaced really ran the shop while I was busy on [the crisis]. But I really didn't pay any attention to any of that other than [the crisis] probably the first two months.

How in the hell do you ever get through this, uh, uh, you know, the stories that I relate to you probably would not be applicable in one of a thousand if this was a different department and uh, in total disarray, total disaster, disorganized and uh, you know, if ever there was a challenge, probably in state government, this would have to be it. I don't think that there is any other department that was in, bordering on disaster like this department, and the people we serve, I might add.

Some study participants felt the strategies of their first weeks were unique or ideographic, while others, who have had more than one transition experience, saw generic components to their strategies. For example, an agency in disarray or crisis was a special case in terms of actions taken, and will be treated as a separate condition: even within this condition, there are common actions.

Other directors, especially those who had participated in prior transitions or who had observed other public sector transitions had developed standard activities or formula approaches. The existence of a transition experience served to clue participants in to the patterns or generalizable nature of their situations. In one or two cases, I asked about the conclusion of specificity; this is an example where second order thinking leads to action learning about the transition experience.
Notes

1. Although the assistant did complain that the expanding number of codes was defeating to the process of drawing conclusions! (I refused to let the limitations of the software constrain the number of codes a sentence, phrase, or section could have—we found ways around this.)

2. The audit trail includes the ability to trace quotes to sources, the accuracy of transcription, and maintenance of source materials (Marshall and Rossman 1989; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Yin 1985; Patton 1990).

3. For a contrasting perspective, see Boje’s (1991) attention to speech conventions used in the study of organizational stories. This portrayal results in substantial improvements for the reader’s understanding of a speaker’s phrasing.
APPENDIX D
New Director's Briefing Book
Ohio Department of Commerce
March 9, 1990

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(modified for presentation)

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