

Administrative Creativity in Local Government

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ADMINISTRATIVE CREATIVITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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The development of new problem-solving strategies is an important challenge in public administration. In recent years, one approach for creating new strategies has been the “laboratories of democracy” concept in which organizations are given leeway to deviate from existing procedures and experiment with new ones. A second approach is that of identifying “exemplary organizations” whose efforts and accomplishments serve as models for other jurisdictions. Such models and successes elsewhere may facilitate the development of new strategies in jurisdictions. However, all organizations must develop strategies that are specifically tailored toward their problems, capacities, and work cultures. Solutions that work elsewhere may not be appropriate to local conditions and challenges. Organizations must be creative by bringing forth novel and useful ideas and strategies in their jurisdictions. They must assess their own conditions, propensity, and ability to adopt new strategies to deal with issues confronting them.

This article examines processes through which senior management teams in local government create and begin implementing new ideas. It addresses the following questions: Through which processes do senior management teams facilitate the adoption of new strategies? Are any strategies especially important, or is a combination of strategies required? What are the characteristics of jurisdictions that are especially creative in adopting new strategies? What are the consequences of administrative creativity for municipal productivity improvement efforts?

Local governments are the focus of this article because they are often at the forefront of responding to many challenges. Senior management teams are especially important, because their support and leadership is critical to the adoption of new strategies and administrative innovations. This article reports on the results of a survey that was

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administered during spring 1997 to all city managers and chief administrative officers in cities with populations over 50,000.

Administrative Creativity

Administrative creativity is defined here as those processes through which new ideas are generated and accepted by organizations. Although individuals play important roles, administrative creativity is viewed as a group process in which ideas are suggested, evaluated, accepted, and adopted for further implementation by group members. Like other researchers (e.g., Epstein, Greenberg, & Thier, 1992), we distinguish between the leader's role as a creative manager and as a manager of creativity, focusing on the latter: the administrative leader as "a facilitator of the creative process, working to generate creative content in others" (Gamache & Kuhn, 1989, p. xi). An important role for managers of creativity is to see that the group's ideas are evaluated from multiple perspectives. This process creates opportunity for refinement and consistency of ideas. Administrative creativity is thus defined as a process rather than result or outcome (e.g., the number of adopted innovations): This article examines such results in connection with the efficacy of processes of administrative creativity. The existence of group processes is important, because organizations in which senior managers frequently address new challenges and brainstorm solutions are able to respond to complex challenges in collective and well-informed ways. By contrast, jurisdictions in which senior managers do not regularly participate in generating new ideas are more likely to fail to discuss and deal with important challenges, apply preexisting strategies that fall short, avoid dealing with problems, or rely on omnipotent executives to dictate solutions that are likely to be resisted at some level, at some point.

Processes of administrative creativity are defined by four separate, necessary activities. The first is the contribution of information and knowledge about problems and solutions (Cohen & Eimicke, 1995; Gamache & Kuhn, 1989; Isaksen, 1988; Rainey & Watson, 1996). Leadership is needed to keep information streams flowing that, in turn, help group members form new perspectives and reach consensus on problems and solutions. Problems must be understood from a variety of different perspectives and potential solutions evaluated against a broad range of factors that determine their feasibility and potential efficacy. Participation by many different managers helps improve the quality of decision making. The second activity is consensus building and defeating divergence. The political nature of innovation is discussed by various authors (e.g., Gortner, Mahler, & Nicholson, 1997; Rich & Winn, 1992; Starling, 1988; Stillman, 1996; Wooldridge, 1995), who note that people sometimes oppose ideas. Processes of administrative creativity depend on generating support for new ideas among team members and those who are likely to be affected by new efforts, as well: people give and take in persuading and being persuaded. Efficacious consensus building is a critical activity because individual creativity and new ideas often come to naught when they lack support among group members.

The third activity is initial implementation. Many authors note the importance of quickly moving from idea generation to practice, so that initial ideas can be tried out

and feedback readily assessed (Anderson, 1994; Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Rosen, 1993; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993). Implementation involves getting actors to cooperate and collaborate with each other on new ideas. Finally, the fourth activity is planning, which is mentioned by several authors (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; Burnside, 1990, 1995; Burnside, Amabile, & Gyskiewicz, 1988; Taylor & Gyskiewicz, 1993) as a necessary activity. Planning is an abstract process: Planning or strategizing is necessary because creativity and consensus building are complex activities and actors must ensure that they are mindful of myriad factors that can cause failure. Such abstract conceptualization is critical and different from activities of sharing new ideas or engaging in political negotiations. Leaders must think through the requirements for success, evaluate the new ideas for consistency with existing missions, and develop new missions.

These four activities work in unison to generate and begin implementing new strategies. For example, when people are given new information and provided resources and support to respond to new ideas, they are more likely to implement new strategies than when resources, information, and support are in question. This study uses four composite measures of administrative creativity: (a) processes for developing and sharing new information related to problems or solutions, (b) activities that build consensus and defeat divergence (i.e., politics with a small "p"), (c) activities relating to planning and conceptualization of strategies and tactics associated with developing and implementing new ideas, and (d) initial implementation activities. The specific measures of these activities are discussed further, and methodological considerations are examined in the methodology section.

The ability to engage in such processes depends on contextual factors. For example, cultures of openness and accomplishment are more likely to produce commitment to efficacious new strategies than cultures of complacency, conformity, or cynicism. When people feel unsafe or fear retribution, group processes are unlikely to produce necessary insight, initiative, and commitment. Leaders need to ensure that the culture in their jurisdiction, and that of their senior management team specifically, supports creative problem solving. The importance of culture helps explain why some cities are known for their innovative strategies. Other factors include administrative conditions, such as discretion to fund new programs, mandates to improve performance, support from the city council, and measures of job protection. Community conditions are also important, such as the presence of economic growth and budget surpluses that provide resources for new strategies, as well as citizen trust in government, cooperation among community groups, and innovative neighboring jurisdictions, all of which provide a positive climate for undertaking new strategies.

Casual analysis of the factors suggests that jurisdictions, on average, will have relatively low levels of administrative creativity. This is because traditional, rule-bound bureaucratic cultures foster secrecy, rigidity, and communication blockages. Managers working in such cultures often assume the role of compliance officers and try to minimize their personal exposure. Such cultures discourage openness and creative brainstorming. Although such cultures are believed to be waning in the wake of modern productivity improvement efforts, they are still prevalent. Also, many communities lack positive resource conditions, as they face rising demands and con-

strained resources. Although such conditions create a need for new strategies, the tools for implementing them are absent. Job security for city managers is also limited, which may reduce their level of risk taking. Finally, overall public respect for government is low, which also does not lead to support for government initiatives and innovation.

Methodology

During the spring of 1997, a national survey was administered to city managers and chief administrative officers regarding administrative creativity in their municipalities. The survey was pretested on a group of 30 city managers and, following modifications, was sent to 544 U.S. cities with populations over 50,000. These managers and municipalities were identified with assistance of the International City and County Management Association. The results reported in this article are based on two rounds of mailings and a postcard reminder. The response rate was 37.0%, with 201 useable responses received. Of these, 68.9% were completed by the city manager; the rest were completed by his or her designee.

The survey asked respondents about specific activities that they had engaged in (shown in Table 1). Respondents were instructed only to consider the previous 2 months: This period was identified as striking an appropriate balance between the need for an adequate time period for various activities to occur and a short enough period so that respondents are likely to adequately recall the activities that they were engaged in. Thus, by choosing the 2-month period, we hoped to increase the validity of the findings. The survey was administered during the spring, which avoided problems of low activity during the summer months and pressures of budget formulation that occur for most jurisdictions in the months of August and September. Respondents were asked to answer how often they had engaged in the following activities, using the following scale: 3 = *very often*, 2 = *regularly*, 1 = *from time to time*, and 0 = *never or almost never*. Pilot respondents found this scale to be clear and to present no problems.

The survey items included two terms that were further defined. The term *new idea* is used to identify any significant undertaking that has not been previously tried in a city. The term *senior manager* is used to identify department heads, city managers, and managers who directly report to department heads. Both definitions were unambiguous to survey respondents. The text discusses the measure of administrative creativity, which is an index variable composed of the four constructs shown in Table 1. The alpha measures of internal reliability of the four constructs are as follows: planning, 0.87; politics, 0.7; knowledge, 0.75; and implementation, 0.79. Such measures suggest moderate (i.e., acceptable) to good reliability. The Pearson correlation coefficients of the four constructs are shown below:

	<i>Planning</i>	<i>Politics</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
Planning	1.000			
Politics	.686	1.000		
Knowledge	.622	.624	1.000	
Implementation	.725	.629	.705	1.000

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$. Alpha (4 measures) = 0.88.

Findings

LEVEL OF ADMINISTRATIVE CREATIVITY

Respondents indicate that they engage in a wide range of activities encompassing the four dimensions of administrative creativity (Table 1). On average, respondents regularly bring information from citizens and clients to senior managers (mean = 1.96 and 1.95), and they encourage senior managers to come up with new ideas (1.95). They also seek support from city councils (2.09), senior managers (2.00), and employees (1.94), and they regularly articulate vision statements (1.91) and develop strategies for implementing a new idea (1.91). They also undertake various implementation activities, such as encouraging senior managers to help each other (2.31) and providing resources for implementation (2.07). Further analysis shows that 38.4% of respondents indicated that they regularly engage in the listed activities (mean > 2.0). Although any measure of administrative creativity is somewhat arbitrary, such levels might be called moderate levels of administrative creativity. Only 5.9% indicated very high levels of administrative creativity (mean > 2.5). By contrast, 8.6% of respondents indicated almost absent levels of administrative creativity (mean < 1.0). The remainder, 53.0%, indicated low levels of administrative creativity (mean between 1.0 and 2.0). Thus, whereas respondents engage in a wide range of activities, there are notable differences among cities.

Table 1 shows some activities are undertaken less frequently. For example, few managers report that they very often design strategies for overcoming resistance (7.7%) or persuade senior managers not to oppose a new idea (9.2%). Fewer managers also very often design strategies for identifying community needs (16.3%). Further analysis shows that states in which cities are known for high levels of innovation have higher levels of administrative creativity than states in which cities are not noted for their innovation activity. For example, the average rating of administrative creativity for cities in Arizona is 2.00, Colorado 2.07, and Massachusetts 2.10. By contrast, the average rating for cities in Florida is 1.78, for California 1.67, and for Louisiana 1.48. The low rating of California is consistent with other studies that suggest that large budget shortfalls in that state are an impediment to innovation (e.g., Berman & West, 1995).

Table 2 examines differences of administrative creativity by region, city size, and form of government. Administrative creativity is notably highest in the South, which is consistent with findings from other studies: Population and economic growth combine in that region to create a favorable environment for innovation. Although processes of administrative creativity are more frequent in cities with populations over 500,000, there are only a few such cities in the sample and the difference is not significant. However, cities with populations between 250,000 and 500,000 do have lower levels of administrative creativity. Finally, processes of contributing knowledge and information are more common in council-manager cities, but processes of politics are more frequent in mayor-council cities. These findings, too, are consistent with other studies (Dye, 1997; Svara, 1994).

Respondents who indicate high levels of activity in one area are also likely to indicate high levels in other dimensions. This is indicated, for example, in the correlations that are shown in the methodology section. However, activities that tend

Table 1. Administrative Creativity: Strategies

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Very Often</i>
Planning and strategy		
I articulated a vision for this municipal government	1.91	29.9%
I designed a strategy for implementing a new idea	1.91	24.7%
I evaluated new ideas for consistency with the organization's vision	1.69	17.4%
I designed a strategy for increasing communication and trust	1.63	11.7%
I designed a strategy for identifying community needs	1.47	16.3%
I designed a strategy for overcoming resistance to a new idea	1.37	7.7%
Politics		
I sought city council's support for a new idea	2.09	35.9%
I sought senior manager support for a new idea	2.00	25.4%
I sought employee support for a new idea	1.94	13.6%
I worked around dissidents to gain support for a new idea	1.49	12.2%
I bargained with managers to encourage support for a new idea	1.23	11.2%
I persuaded a senior manager not to oppose a new idea	1.16	9.2%
Knowledge		
I encouraged senior managers to come up with new ideas	2.33	48.7%
I brought information about citizen needs to the attention of senior managers to encourage a new activity	1.96	27.8%
I brought feedback from service users (clients) to the attention of senior managers to encourage a new or corrective action	1.95	24.0%
I collected information from other cities regarding a new idea	1.81	21.2%
I gathered information about some general trend and discussed it with senior managers to promote a new idea	1.77	16.7%
Implementation activity		
I encouraged senior managers to help each other	2.31	51.3%
I brought together four or more senior managers to discuss a new idea	2.17	40.6%
I provided resources to support the implementation of a new idea	2.07	30.5%
I acknowledged a senior manager for implementing a new idea	1.94	21.9%
I encouraged senior managers to be flexible in attaining their goals	1.86	24.0%
I rewarded a senior manager for implementing a new idea	1.17	11.8%

Note. Scale: 3 = *very often*, 2 = *regularly*, 1 = *from time to time*, 0 = *never or almost never*.

to score somewhat lower are politics and planning. Although the trend is not universal across all or even most cities in the sample, some cities that score low on these items identify high levels of knowledge and implementation activity. A possible explanation may be that the culture of these cities is more oriented toward accomplishment and making decisions based on facts than cultures that emphasize politics and that give rise to the need for strategies to overcome resistance and build trust. This possibility is examined in the following section.

ROLE OF CULTURE

Previous authors have identified different types of organizational cultures. This study builds on Bardwick's (1995) work in corporate settings, which identifies three distinct organizational cultures, based on the primary mode of operation: fear, entitlement, and revitalization. Specifically, cultures of fear are characterized by high levels

Table 2. Administrative Creativity by Region, Size, and Form of Government

	N	<i>Administrative Creativity</i>	<i>Planning</i>	<i>Politics</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
Region						
North East	17	1.76	1.59	1.74	1.90	2.01
North Central	37	1.66	1.52	1.56	1.81	1.77
South	52	1.86	1.78	1.67	2.02	1.99
West	66	1.77	1.63	1.60	1.97	1.91
Size						
>500,000	10	1.89	1.77	1.87	2.04	1.88
250,000-499,999	18	1.70	1.60	1.63	1.77	1.80
100,000-249,999	45	1.75	1.63	1.55	1.96	1.83
50,000-99,999	99	1.79	1.65	1.64	1.96	1.97
Government						
Mayor-council	48	1.79	1.71	1.77	1.86	1.91
Council-manager	121	1.76	1.61	1.56	1.97	1.91
Other	3	1.96	11.83	1.72	2.26	2.00
All	172	1.77	1.65	1.62	1.95	1.91

of organizational stress, fear of job loss due to downsizing, greater concern for protecting jobs than for doing them, and frustration or resentment about diminished opportunities or benefits at work. Cultures of entitlement are typified by lethargic and overly comfortable organizations where people are complacent; rewards, job security, and benefits are automatic; looking good is more important than doing good; and pressures to perform are minimal and incentives for hard work are lacking. Cultures of fear and entitlement are hypothesized to be negatively associated with administrative creativity because they reduce openness and drive for improvement. Revitalized cultures are those where employees are empowered and energized by challenging and significant work, where they are judged by and rewarded for accomplishments, and where risk taking and learning are encouraged. Such revitalized cultures are hypothesized to increase administrative creativity in local governments because they are consistent with exploring new options and increasing responsiveness.

Table 3 shows the operationalization of these measures. Respondents were asked to assess statements about the work environment in which they and other senior managers operate. Although these measures are based on single respondent assessments, we nevertheless believe that, on average, respondents are able to provide valid assessments about the culture in which they operate. The measures of internal reliability for these assessments are shown in Table 3. On a Likert-type scale of 7 = *strongly agree* to 1 = *strongly disagree*, respondents indicated average ratings for entitlement cultures of 3.29, 3.17 for fear culture, and 5.19 for revitalization. Scores of greater than 3 for entitlement and fear suggest moderate levels of entitlement and fear, because respondents who only "somewhat disagree" with the presence of entitlement or fear imply the presence of these conditions. Respectively, 41.7% and 42.9% of respondents indicated such conditions. Scores higher than 5 suggest the presence of very high levels of fear and entitlement. These were reported by, respectively, 3.6% and 0.5% of

Table 3. Organizational Culture of Municipalities

	<i>Mean</i>
Entitlement culture	
Often ineffective people aren't fired	4.31
There are too many rules and regulations in this organization	3.99
My time at the office is consumed with shuffling paper, getting signatures, writing reports and going to endless meetings	3.38
Employees are more worried about making retirement than about serving the customer	2.90
Employees have so much job security that they don't have to earn their rewards	2.85
Employees just act busy, rather than doing meaningful work	2.19
Fear Culture	
Employees express frustration that promotion opportunities have decreased	4.45
People are careful what they say around here	3.75
People pay a price for their mistakes	3.60
Employees talk about fear of losing their jobs	3.40
Employee cynicism is high	3.21
There are too many 'yes-people' in our management team	2.99
There seems to be a lot of confusion and rivalry among managers	2.81
There is a general feeling of mistrust among organizational members	2.80
Employees have no control over what is happening to them at work	2.70
People can easily lose their jobs around here	2.15
Revitalized Culture	
Our work is challenging	5.96
People who are productive and add value, don't have to worry about losing their job here	5.79
Most senior managers enjoy new challenges	5.44
Most senior managers are driven by the need for accomplishment	5.32
Most senior managers look forward with optimism	5.27
Most senior managers are willing to see things in a new light	5.12
Senior management has a passionate commitment to our citizens	5.11
Most senior managers are creative	5.10
Risk taking is encouraged in our organization	4.81
Employees are highly motivated to achieve goals	4.71
Employees feel empowered	4.53

Note. Scale: 7 = *strongly agree*, 6 = *agree*, 5 = *agree somewhat*, 4 = *don't know/can't say*, 3 = *disagree somewhat*, 2 = *disagree*, 1 = *strongly disagree*. The alpha coefficients of these scales are as follows: entitlement ($\alpha = .62$), fear ($\alpha = .70$), and revitalized culture ($\alpha = .87$).

respondents. Scores higher than 5 for items of revitalization suggest a moderate level of such cultures, because respondents who only "somewhat agree" with these statements imply the presence of conditions that are not revitalized. Such levels were identified by 35.8%, and 8.8% indicated average levels of greater than 6, which suggest high levels of such positive cultures.

It should be noted that these cultures are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Entitlement and fear cultures often go together, and some level of fear may be present in cities that indicate only mild levels of revitalization. Such hybrid forms of culture suggest tensions for their members, and such tensions are, indeed, not uncommon. Analysis shows that 61 (of 201) respondents indicate cities in which at least moderate levels of fear or entitlement are present, but not moderate or high levels of revitalization

Table 4. Correlation Between Administrative Creativity and Culture

	<i>Administrative Creativity</i>	<i>Planning</i>	<i>Politics</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
Fear	-.202**	-.281**	-.068	-.146*	-.177*
Entitlement	-.222**	-.285**	-.071	-.249**	-.201**
Revitalization	.283**	.296**	.134	.257**	.263**

Note. Pearson correlation coefficients shown.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

as defined above. Likewise, 39 respondents indicate moderate or high levels of revitalization and no moderate or high levels of fear or entitlement. By contrast, 92 respondents indicate mixed cultures. Only 9 respondents provide low scores for all three cultures, which suggests that 95.5% of cities can be classified according to this scheme.

Table 4 shows the relationship between culture and administrative creativity. Both fear and entitlement cultures are negatively associated with administrative creativity, as well as with three of the four activities: planning, knowledge, and implementation. That is, respondents in cities that identify high levels of fear or entitlement are less likely to engage in activities with their senior management team that seek to explore new solutions than cities in which these cultures are not present. By contrast, revitalized cultures are associated with increased use of processes that increase administrative creativity. It should be noted that the phrasing of the creativity and cultural items is very different (actions versus values, self versus others). The presence of different cultures does not affect the level of political activity. However, cities that have low levels of politics and high levels of knowledge and implementation activities do tend to have lower levels of fear (2.90 versus 3.29) and higher levels of revitalization (5.35 versus 5.19). They do not differ significantly regarding the level of entitlement.

In addition to culture, other factors are also hypothesized to affect the level of administrative creativity in cities. The survey included measures of mandates, budget growth, job protection, council support, citizen trust, community cooperation, public complaints, and neighboring jurisdictions. However, only city manager mandates and citizen trust (both $p < .05$) and public complaints and innovative neighboring jurisdictions (both $p < .01$) are associated with administrative creativity. A multiple regression with these variables is shown in Note 1. This regression shows that, controlled for these variables, as well as size, region, and form of government, revitalized cultures remain positively associated with administrative creativity ($p < .05$). Fear and entitlement cultures are no longer significantly associated with administrative creativity. However, both are negatively correlated with council support, citizen trust, and cooperation among community groups (all $p < .01$): The latter two are positively associated with administrative creativity. The adjusted R^2 value is 0.21, which suggests that variation in administrative creativity is not easily explained.¹

CONSEQUENCES OF CREATIVITY: PRODUCTIVITY

Many challenges of public administration are dealt with through productivity improvement strategies. For example, complex problems of drug abuse, homelessness,

Table 5. Productivity Improvement Strategies in Local Government

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Agencywide^a</i>
Public-private partnerships	3.35	19.8
Strategic planning	3.28	32.3
Performance measurement related to budgeting	3.23	42.1
Contracting for service delivery	3.17	21.0
Reorganization	3.05	21.4
Citizen surveys	2.96	26.5
Empowerment	2.90	26.0
Interpersonal skill development for managers	2.86	23.5
Multiunit work teams	2.84	26.2
Customer surveys	2.84	22.6
Customer/client service improvement effort	2.72	25.5
Community-based strategic planning	2.56	23.5
Labor-management committees	2.37	17.9
Performance measurement separate from budgeting	2.36	17.4
Benchmarking	2.23	10.7
Management by objectives	2.19	25.9
Process reengineering	2.14	9.2
Downsizing	2.08	17.9
Continuous improvement (data-based, with measurement)	2.06	16.1
Program evaluation by external consultants	2.06	7.1
Total Quality Management	1.71	11.8

Note. Scale: 0 = did not use, 1 = had some discussion or activity, but little or no follow-through, 2 = undertook a pilot project, 3 = ongoing applications were conducted in one or more departments, 4 = at least one department uses the strategy agencywide, 5 = all departments use the strategy agencywide.

a. Percentage of respondents indicating that all departments use the strategy agencywide.

and transportation are often addressed through community-based strategic planning processes, through which multiple agencies, jurisdictions, and private actors join together in the search for collective action. Other challenges deal with increasing the responsiveness of existing services, and these efforts often use benchmarking, reengineering and customer surveys. Thus, productivity improvement strategies are important to dealing with problems of local government.

Table 5 shows the use of productivity improvement strategies in local government. This table shows that public-private partnerships, strategic planning, performance measurement related to budgeting, contracting for service delivery, reorganization, and citizen surveys are the most commonly used productivity improvement efforts. On average, 27% of cities use each of the strategies on a citywide basis. Some newer strategies such as Total Quality Management and Continuous Improvement are used less frequently—a reflection of the fact that the diffusion of these popular new strategies is still taking place. Further analysis shows that productivity improvement strategies are somewhat more common in city managers cities (mean 2.65 versus 2.55), and cities in the South and West (respectively, 2.71 and 2.73 versus 2.48 for other cities). There are no notable differences by city size.

Overall, administrative creativity and productivity improvement are significantly associated ($r = .533, p < .01$); cities in the West scoring low on administrative creativity and high on productivity improvement notwithstanding. In fact, administrative crea-

Table 6. Multiple Regression Predicting Productivity Improvement Strategies

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Constant	-0.495	1.027	.630
Administrative creativity	0.826	0.149	.000**
Fear culture	0.179	0.120	.140
Entitlement culture	-0.084	0.103	.417
Revitalized culture	0.271	0.111	.017*
South	-0.081	0.187	.667
West	-0.071	0.178	.692
Northeast	-0.291	0.245	.237
Size	0.275	0.078	.001**
Form of government	0.277	0.159	.084
Public complaints	0.099	0.077	.198
Used by other governments	-0.053	0.078	.499
Professional development seminars	-0.005	0.078	.951
Council support	0.186	0.228	.416
Job protection	0.042	0.071	.558
Budgetary surpluses	0.058	0.138	.675
Mandate	0.196	0.150	.193

Note. Dependent variable: productivity improvement. R^2 (adj) = 0.402, df = 127.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

tivity is positively associated with all of the strategies listed in Table 5 at the 1% level of significance except the use program evaluation and managing by objective (both $p < .05$) and contracting and public-private partnerships (both not significant). Table 6 shows the results of a multiple regression, predicting productivity improvement. It shows that administrative creativity is significantly associated with productivity improvement ($p < .01$), as is the presence of revitalized cultures ($p < .05$). Productivity improvement is also positively associated with city size ($p < .01$). Other variables are not significant, including those such as public complaints, use of productivity improvement strategies by nearby governments, budget surpluses, job protection, council support, and mandates to increase productivity improvement. It should be noted that although cultures of fear and entitlement are not significant in the multiple regression, they are correlated with productivity improvement: The Pearson correlation coefficients for entitlement, fear, and revitalized culture with productivity improvement are, respectively, $-.301$, $p < .01$; -1.85 , $p < .05$; and $.315$, $p < .01$.

Conclusion

This study defines administrative creativity as group processes through which new ideas are generated and accepted by organizations. Processes of administrative creativity are defined by four separate, necessary activities: the generation and contribution of knowledge, activities of consensus building and defeating divergence, planning for success, and initial implementation activities. It finds that senior management teams in local government vary in their administrative creativity and that administrative creativity is significantly associated with the use of productivity improvement strate-

gies. Such strategies are used to address many complex problems that confront local governments. This study also finds that administrative cultures of revitalization are positively associated with administrative creativity.

These findings suggest the importance of increasing administrative creativity among local government administrators. In this regard, the findings of this study suggest that, at the present time, we do not fully understand the factors that cause senior management teams to act with administrative creativity. Certainly, the presence of revitalized cultures is significantly associated, but many other variables that have been suggested are not found to be significantly associated. In the interim, then, the best advice that can be given is that local government managers work toward increasing the climate of openness and objectivity in their jurisdictions so that processes of administrative creativity are likely to bear fruit. They might also consider using rewards for entrepreneurship and otherwise stimulating initiatives to deal with important challenges. However, further research is needed to better understand the processes of building administrative creativity in local government.

Note

1. The following results were obtained (*t* statistics in parentheses):

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{ADMCREA} = & .245 - .114 \text{ ENTIT} + .121 \text{ FEAR} + .194^* \text{ REVIT} - .009 \text{ SIZE} \\
 & (.324) \quad (-1.61) \quad (1.31) \quad (2.39) \quad (-0.16) \\
 & -.065 \text{ SOUTH} + 0.023 \text{ NORTHEAST} - 0.003 \text{ CMFOG} + 0.143^{**} \text{ COMPL} \\
 & (-0.46) \quad (0.01) \quad (-0.28) \quad (2.67) \\
 & + 0.074 \text{ CITTRUST} + .158^{**} \text{ INNOVJURIS} + 0.078 \text{ MANDATE} \\
 & (0.69) \quad (2.79) \quad (0.72) \\
 & -0.178 \text{ CNLSUPP} + .000 \text{ JOBPROT} + 0.169 \text{ BDGTGRWTH} \\
 & (-1.18) \quad (0.00) \quad (1.45) \\
 & + 0.08 \text{ COMMCOOP} \\
 & (.659)
 \end{aligned}$$

$$R^2 (\text{Adj.}) = 0.21, df = 106. * p < .052, ** p < .01$$

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