Michigan Municipal Manager Perceptions on LGBTQ+ Inclusion: A Narrative Policy Framework Case Study

Christopher R. Surfus
Western Michigan University, chris.surfus@gmail.com

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MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL MANAGER PERCEPTIONS ON LGBTQ+ INCLUSION: 
A NARRATIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK CASE STUDY

by

Christopher R. Surfus

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College 
in partial fulfillment of the requirements 
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy 
Public Affairs and Administration 
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Doctoral Committee:

Udaya Waglé, Ph.D., Chair
Jesse Smith, Ph.D.
Thomas Greitens, Ph.D.
This study explores the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) of municipal managers regarding the LGBTQ+ community in three Michigan cities—Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. The purpose is to understand managers’ beliefs and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community and how policies are implemented and enforced to reduce discrimination. The specific research questions deal with how the beliefs and attitudes of public managers reflect an understanding of and competency on LGBTQ+ issues, how they are affected by the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members, and how they differ from the actual policy provisions affecting the LGBTQ+ community. These questions are examined in the Narrative Policy Framework where the broader political, religious, and social environments affect the way local governments seek to maintain social equity.

This study uses the phenomenological case study lens, where data is collected from multiple sources. Interviews were conducted with municipal managers and data analysis involved coding and thematizing to understand the frameworks of policy decisions. All 12 public managers interviewed from the three cities were aware of the presence of LGBTQ+ employees, with nine of them acknowledging the presence of LGBTQ+ to enhance public services. One half were aware of LGBTQ+ protections through nondiscrimination ordinances, whereas more than half knew of other policies that helped protect them. Only three had no knowledge or awareness
of LGBTQ+ issues. Grand Rapids, the largest of the three cities, provided the most accommodations. Artifacts, which included newspaper articles, meeting minutes, action plans, and any operational document, were examined collectively and not coded like the interviews were. Even though they were not coded, they were still organized in NVIVO separately from interview data because several of the artifacts were news media articles that provided contextual information about a particular topic or current event relating to LGBTQ+ in one of the three cities. Artifacts simply provide information and would not be advanced collectively by identifying emergent themes because the documents are supposed to be much different to provide a broader understanding that informs the policy environment, whereas similarities and differences are examined in interviews and essential to a case study.

Among the factors affecting the environment of nondiscrimination policies concerning LGBTQ+ were religious density (churches per capita), political influencers (like the DeVos family), and corporations (like Herman Miller). Altogether, the lack of awareness and the narratives in the broader policy environment may have helped unfairly define the LGBTQ+ community in a way that is harmful to institutionalizing social rights and benefits.
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I would like to dedicate this work, as the culmination of my 15 years of college education, to the many people that I have met along this journey who have supported my work in one way or another. Thank you to my dissertation committee for supporting me every step of the way. Thank you to Dr. Udaya Waglé, Dr. Jesse Smith, and Dr. Thomas Greitens for your support, encouragement, and believing in my abilities as a student and researcher. Dr. Waglé, thank you for your leadership as the Chair of this dissertation committee and as the Director of the School of Public Affairs and Administration, through the numerous drafts that I submitted to you and for your patience in working with me as I crafted the best possible dissertation. Thank you to Dr. Matthew Mingus for all the professional development opportunities you provided to me, your advice, and guidance as my Academic Adviser. Thank you to Dr. Wally Swan for allowing me to be part of The Routledge Handbook of LGBTQIA Administration and Policy, which has significantly developed my research in this area. Thank you to my Professors, past and present, for helping me learn about business and public administration, and for your support and encouragement on this journey. I am especially grateful to my Professors and colleagues at Western Michigan University’s School of Public Affairs and Administration and Grand Valley State University’s School of Public, Nonprofit, and Healthcare Administration (MPA Program) and the Seidman College of Business (MBA Program). Thank you to all the academicians and practitioners that I have met across the country at ASPA, NECOPA, MPAC, and other conferences that have helped me develop professionally within the field of Public Administration. Finally, I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for their support and encouragement throughout the Ph.D. Program.

Christopher R. Surfus
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

There is a patchwork of laws and ordinances across the United States that affect the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) community, and this creates a disconnect in implementation and enforcement among municipal managers. The identification of the patchwork of laws and ordinances notes that in many states, a gay or lesbian individual can be married on Friday and terminated from employment on Monday simply because of who they love. Additionally, an LGBTQ+ person may have legal protections in one municipality, whereas they are subject to legal discrimination in another municipality because of inconsistent legal codes and policies. Taking this into consideration, it is important for public administrators to be cognizant of the issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community, both in the workplace and in the communities they serve. This study examines all forms of public policy dealing with LGBTQ+ in existence at different levels. This study focuses on how consistent the beliefs and practices of local public managers are to the existing policies designed to protect the LGBTQ+ community, specifically nondiscrimination ordinances in housing, employment, and public accommodations. Up to the present day, there is a limited amount of research on the LGBTQ+ community (specifically at the municipal government level). The “invisibility,” or lack of physically defining characteristics (such as skin color or disability), of the LGBTQ+ community contributes to a lack of awareness on LGBTQ+ issues by public administrators.

When there is a patchwork of laws, or laws that vary on a state by state basis, in the United States on a divisive issue, like marriage rights for same-sex couples before it was decided
by the Supreme Court in Obergefell v. Hodges (2015), this can create an instance where a public administrator’s interpretation is biased, either based on personal views or a misunderstanding of legal interpretations. Rather than focusing on government on the macro-level, this study focuses on individual government employees and their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community (i.e., the extent KAP influences decision-making and enforcement of existing policies). This study assumes that public administrators execute and enforce policies and guidelines, while politicians create actual policies (referring specifically to local government).

To date, there has been much examination to the role of politicians, their views, and the creation of policy in a general sense. There has not been a sufficient examination of the role of public administrators on the fulfillment of policy, how their views/beliefs/attitudes affect policy fulfillment, and a comparison of departments with LGBTQ+ employees and departments without LGBTQ+ employees in relation to policy fulfillment affecting the LGBTQ+ community. For instance, is there an actual effect on policies and decision-making in departments with LGBTQ+ employee representation as compared to departments without LGBTQ+ employees? Identifying the presence of LGBTQ+ employees is challenging because once again, the LGBTQ+ community is an “invisible” minority group.

Statement of Problem

LGBTQ+ discrimination is problematic across the United States, encompassing a variety of policy issues that are all influenced by knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions about the LGBTQ+ community. Up until the Obama Administration, the United States Census did not collect data on LGBTQ+ households in the United States in regard to the American Community
Survey (Wang, 2017, p. 1; U.S. Census Bureau, 2015, p. 2). One of the reasons for this lack of data collection on the LGBTQ+ community is the lack of support for LGBTQ+ rights in general due to LGBTQ+ rights being seen as a “political wedge issue” by many lawmakers, specifically Republicans. In other words, many Republicans saw that taking any position in support of the LGBTQ+ community as “political suicide.”

Additionally, many local law enforcement agencies did not report hate crimes on sexual orientation and gender identity to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (and many still do not). The Federal Bureau of Investigation gained power to prosecute hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity with the passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009. The Shepard-Byrd Act required the reporting of hate crimes to the FBI, and not all police departments did so before this landmark law (Matthew Shepard Foundation, 2015, p. 1). Sears, Hasenbush, and Mallory (2013) identify that only 200 municipalities have LGBTQ+ protections in housing, employment, and public accommodations enshrined into law. There are thousands of cities and townships in the United States without LGBTQ+ protections, and a large part of the lack of protections include political, religious, and cultural dynamics that oppose the LGBTQ+ community to an unjust extent. To compound the matter, many states do not have LGBTQ+ protections, and many LGBTQ+ protections in policy at the federal level are loosely hinged on presidential Executive Orders from President Obama that President Trump or a future President can overturn with “the stroke of a pen.” This information notes that there is still a “visibility issue” that impacts public knowledge of the LGBTQ+ community, in that there is limited data on the LGBTQ+ community. There is limited data on the LGBTQ+ community for two primary reasons. First, some individuals in positions of
authority do not want to acknowledge that the LGBTQ+ community exists, or they want to cause the LGBTQ+ community harm by not collecting data. Second, due to a long history of discrimination, many LGBTQ+ individuals do not openly identify as LGBTQ+.

The lack of knowledge on the lives of LGBTQ+ persons can be emphasized in terms of local government and communities across the United States. LGBTQ+ persons can be terminated from employment, both in the public and private sector, in many cities in the United States simply by identifying as LGBTQ+. The Fair Housing Act does not protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, while HUD funding carries these provisions and a recent ruling on gender discrimination includes gender identity under sex discrimination law for fair housing purposes (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2017, p. 1). This lack of information, compounded with the lack of housing nondiscrimination ordinances and animus towards LGBTQ+ persons by some landlords, has opened the door for discriminatory treatment, including eviction of LGBTQ+ tenants. The rise of “bathroom bills” targeting transgender and queer (i.e., gender nonconformists) individuals has made many cities and states unwelcoming to gender identity and expression diversity. “Bathroom bills,” or bills that require an individual to use the bathroom of their biological gender, specifically target transgender and queer individuals who may identify or express their gender differently. “Bathroom bills,” much like ADA provisions for handicap-accessible entrances and parking spots, are part of “public accommodation” issues expressed as a legal issue.

The lack of information, personal animus, a lack of LGBTQ+ visibility (in terms of physically defining characteristics), and policy discrimination and patchworks contribute to knowledge, attitude, and perception issues. There is an economic cost of discrimination to
society, talent acquisition and retention issues for employers, and personal/health costs to individuals affected by LGBTQ+ discrimination. For instance, LGBTQ+ individuals are much more likely to be diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) than their heterosexual counterparts, largely due to individual treatment (i.e., human behavior) and policy discrimination (Roberts, Rosario, Corliss, Koenen, and Austin, 2012). While it is difficult to control human behaviors in that it is generally accepted that some form of prejudice will still exist no matter what government does to remedy, government can control policy discrimination and learn ways to advance inclusive environments in public workplaces, promote collaboration with LGBTQ+-focused nonprofits, and dictate expectations to private employers.

The need to address housing, employment, and public accommodations issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community due to economic, health, and other costs brings the spotlight to understanding the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of public managers and how departments work on LGBTQ+ issues. Furthermore, it is important to understand how work on LGBTQ+ issues varies across departments (i.e., in different departments in one government unit) uniquely and comparatively. Essentially, are LGBTQ+ issues on the “strategic radar” of public managers in addressing public problems? Enhancing the relationship of local government and the LGBTQ+ community is important in addressing law enforcement issues (i.e., hate crimes prevention and litigation), health issues (i.e., health departments addressing HIV/AIDS, drug addiction, and health issues that affect the LGBTQ+ community), and social equity.

The core of the problem of the lack of protections for the LGBTQ+ community and what the LGBTQ+ community sees as a disconnect between local government and their cause for equality ultimately comes down to financial or economic implications. Marriage equality on the
federal level was ultimately about fairness, but the real issue was the tax benefits of the institution of marriage. Equality is a sense of equal treatment under the law. Some of the equality issues are the employment, housing, and public accommodations nondiscrimination, but really it is about equity. How does the lack of such protections create a “public harm” to the LGBTQ+ community? Why do heterosexuals automatically receive preferential treatment through policy? This brings the pillar of “social equity” into consideration, as this is the mission of public administration in the 21st century. The concept of social equity uniquely connects the cause of public administration with the cause of LGBTQ+ rights. The study of public managers’ knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community provides an understanding of the decision-making that affects LGBTQ+ equality in law and LGBTQ+ equity in implementation of policy.

The purpose of this study is to understand the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) of public managers in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo by identifying what the beliefs and attitudes of public managers are on LGBTQ+ issues, what the extent is in how their personal beliefs impact policy decision-making, whether their KAP is affected by LGBTQ+ departmental staff presence, whether there are LGBTQ+ employees in their department or across departmental units and how this may affect organizational culture and competency, whether the individual public manager is competent on LGBTQ+ issues and how they work with the LGBTQ+ community, and what the factors are within the policy environment that affect each municipality individually and collectively. The primary LGBTQ+ policy applications that involve municipal government include nondiscrimination ordinances with sexual orientation and gender identity language, commissions in local government (i.e., Human Relations Commission)
and LGBTQ+ liaisons within police departments (i.e., hate crimes reporting, work with the FBI on prosecuting hate crimes, and treatment by police), LGBTQ+ affinity groups for employees, presence of gender-neutral bathrooms (i.e., transgender community), and a Chief Diversity Officer within the municipal government to work internally to promote inclusion and conduct trainings. The strategic planning of each city is analyzed in this study through interview questions, whether LGBTQ+ inclusiveness is part of the strategic plan, and how that strategy is communicated at the department level. Additionally, a manager may be supportive of LGBTQ+ equality overall but may not understand the issues facing the LGBTQ+ community and thus this leads to a lack of departmental competency on LGBTQ+ issues.

Now that the core of the problem has been identified, “public administration” should be defined, and Rosenbloom (2015, in Guy and Rubin, 2015) does that by noting that public administration is different from the private sector in that “it has become commonplace that public administration combines management, politics, and law” and that many authors have focused on “red tape, research and demonstration, employee motivation, and other phenomena” (p. 1). Wilson (1887) states that, “the field of administration is a field of business. It is removed from the hurry and strife of politics; it at most points stands apart even from the debatable ground of constitutional study” (Wilson, 1887, p. 209-210). Furthermore, Wilson (1887) states that, “it is the object of administrative study to discover, first, what government can properly and successfully do, and, secondly, how it can do these proper things with the utmost efficiency and at the least possible cost either of money or of energy” and that administration is “government in action; it is the executive, the operative, the most visible side of government” (pp. 197-198). It is important to note that Wilson (1887) was known by other contributors to the field of public
administration, but he did not substantially influence their thinking on administration. Wilson (1887) is often regarded as a central figure in the field of public administration due to the discovery of his work later on in the 1940s, at a time when Wilson was highly regarded as a past President of the United States. Waldo (2007) and Rosenbloom and McCurdy (2006) were more influential on public administration values that led to the New Public Administration and the modern era focused on social equity. Waldo (2007) discussed the relationship between centralization and decentralization, and he discussed what would become the “four pillars of public administration.” Over time in a theoretical sense, especially with the introduction of the New Public Administration, the concept of “social equity” has emerged (Frederickson, 1980). Most notably, within the past 10 years, the National Academy on Public Administration (NAPA) emphasized that “social equity” is the “fourth pillar of public administration” (Frederickson, 2010; Carrizales and Gaynor, 2013). Rosenbloom and McCurdy (2006) expanded upon Waldo’s (2007) thoughts on centralization and decentralization, and they stressed that public administration requires a mix of centralization and decentralization. This is particularly relevant in the modern era in dealing with larger, systemic issues such as racial justice in policing or ensuring that LGBTQ+ people are equitably treated in public policy.

Public administration in the United States affects every citizen and the services they are provided, from bureaucracy at the federal level to the services of a local fire station. The actions of public administrators permeate the fabric of American life at every level of government, and this emphasizes the importance that the actions of public administration are as objective, or based on stated policy rather than perceived policy (assuming that stated policy is free from
political bias), as possible. Of course, it is up to the individual public administrator to interpret policy based on stated policy text, legislative action, or judicial interpretation.

Understanding this definition of public administration, “public managers,” or the heads of departments of local government units, are studied to determine the degree to which public managers are compliant of stated policy on LGBTQ+ issues. This is measured by the qualitative “richness” of their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) to determine “emergent themes” (i.e., trends in data collected) on LGBTQ+ administration in policy. The purpose is to understand how KAP may be playing a role in decision-making on LGBTQ+ policy. The purpose is to not to outline public managers’ views and single them out, as that would be unethical. Rather, the purpose is to understand public managers’ knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions and reconcile them with the existing policies and actions. This study is ultimately about each municipality overall, their policies, and their representatives (i.e., department heads, public managers) in executing policy.

Limitations

The LGBTQ+ community is an “invisible minority,” which means that there are no visible characteristics to easily identify whether someone is LGBTQ+ or not. Surfus (2013) and Horizons Foundation (2011) state that the population of the LGBTQ+ community in the United States is roughly 3.8 percent of the population of the United States (p. 74). This number is likely to differ in terms of local government employees that identify as LGBTQ+, as educational attainment and career development (among other factors) affect whether or not an LGBTQ+ individual works in government. If a city has a higher proportion of LGBTQ+ to heterosexual
employees, this could skew data as an LGBTQ+ employee will more often include the LGBTQ+ community in policymaking and decision-making. Limitations include the meeting minutes and available document/artifact data because the LGBTQ+ community is an invisible minority, and LGBTQ+ issues are not often discussed in city meetings.

Research participants (i.e., public managers, deputy or assistant managers) may provide an interview response that is politically correct, instead of their honest feelings, out of fear of losing their jobs. This can be partially mitigated through informing the participant of interview confidentiality, destruction of recordings after the conduction of research, and activities appropriately determined by Western Michigan University’s Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. As an example, this generally happens in exit polling that is done when issues like same-sex marriage were voted on in statewide elections. Voters would provide a response that is politically correct, but then they would vote differently, and this would affect the accuracy of the exit poll.

This qualitative study provides information on the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) of public managers towards the LGBTQ+ community, which is advantageous in that the study provides an understanding of each public manager on an individual level to identify thematic elements. A qualitative study is a study of lived experiences of an individual or a group of people, and this means that the overarching themes are not necessarily able to be replicated in municipalities throughout the United States, such as with a simple random sample. While the inability to generalize for municipalities across the United States would normally be a limitation, it is not a limitation in this case as this study is interested in the experiences of public managers in working with the LGBTQ+ community. This study is focused on identifying the “themes and
trends” qualitatively rather than “percents and numbers” that, in and of itself, provide a limited understanding. In other words, the relationship of public managers and the LGBTQ+ community can be better understood with words and themes rather than with numbers. Thus, the qualitative methodological tradition was selected to enhance the overall significance of this study rather than to limit its potential. The three cities used in this study may only be representative of each city individually and may not be reflective of other local governments in Michigan and the rest of the United States.

Third, I am a known nonprofit advocate for the LGBTQ+ community with a history advocating for the Holland nondiscrimination ordinance expansion to include sexual orientation and gender identity. This advocacy raises the issue of “selective exposure” as a limitation. However, the issue is mitigated in that I will present the data as it is without drawing conclusions that could create a bias. The information is to be presented descriptively and as it appears in text to avoid “selective exposure” (McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan, 2014, in Sabatier and Weible, 2014, p. 233).

Fourth, the focus on three cities in Michigan may not be reflective of the rest of the State of Michigan outside of West Michigan or the rest of the country. By studying the population of “public managers,” there is an understanding of public managers’ KAP, but a public manager in Kentucky or even Detroit may not feel the same as a public manager in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The thematic analysis is restricted to Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. It is expected that the themes would be similar to other cities around the country, but the addition of more cities will create different or newer, emergent themes. Additionally, each city’s managers will have implicit bias based on a variety of life experiences from where they grew up to where they went
to school, to religious affiliation, or another cultural aspect. Perhaps the most evident example of this is the “public comment” portion of City Council meetings, as individuals and groups have their own beliefs and agendas that may influence an elected official in a way that an appointed official may not be influenced. Finally, the present era in the United States is politically charged and polarized with the 2020 election, the Summer 2020 race riots to address racial inequities in policing. The present era is an “influencing force” on local governments, their managers, and especially their elected officials.

Significance

The significance of this study lies in the fact that LGBTQ+ citizens are a part of society, yet public administrators may or may not have knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions that are inclusive of LGBTQ+ issues. This means that a public administrator may not be aware of specific cultural concerns, thus altering decision-making on policies that affect the LGBTQ+ community. While policy decisions may seem sound, administrators that lack a core competency in understanding the issues facing the LGBTQ+ community can create homophobic and transphobic policies. An example of the effects of homophobia in an application of health policy is provided by Halkitis (2012). Halkitis (2012) identifies that homophobia has had an impact on health outcomes, specifically in application to “substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, negative body image, suicide attempts, increased stress and limited social support among gay and bisexual men” (p. 3). Some of this homophobia has permeated the policy environment with the United States federal government referring to HIV/AIDS at one point as the Gay-Related Immunodeficiency (GRID), which is not only offensive to many in the LGBTQ+ community but
it stigmatizes the community as a whole. Understanding cultural dynamics and how public
administrators’ knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions affect operational, implementation, and
enforcement decisions is important in order to understand the relationship between the LGBTQ+
community and local government. Furthermore, it is important to understand how local
government can minimize policy harm to the LGBTQ+ community.

The significance of this study is that it focuses on public managers in local government,
and there is limited research on their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+
community. This research will provide an understanding of multiple cities and how they
approach LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion efforts, and this can be used to understand the macro-
level policy benefits of advancing LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion. On a larger scale, policies
try to promote fairness and equity, advance or improve outcomes, and create a tangible or
measurable economic benefit. This means that LGBTQ+-inclusive policies attempt to address
fairness and equal opportunity, address a health outcome (parity) as an example, or ensure that
same-sex household income is on the same level as opposite-sex household income (equity).
Understanding public managers’ knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions provides insight into how
they create and enforce policies, and ultimately what really is considered in policy decision-
making as it relates to LGBTQ+ issues. This study is important for municipality leaders in
making decisions to promote diversity and inclusiveness. It is also important to policymakers in
understanding the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of public managers regarding the
LGBTQ+ community because they may want to make local government more inclusive through
policy action.
This study is conducted at the local government level, but some of its findings may be far-reaching to state and federal government. In other words, the findings of the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of public managers regarding the LGBTQ+ community at the local level may provide an understanding of the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of state and federal employees. Given that this is a study of municipal government, a lot of the research is limited in that the findings regarding the LGBTQ+ community are based on the state and federal government levels. This, in and of itself, makes this a different type of study because there are few studies of local government on LGBTQ+ studies. This dissertation is a unique study in that federal findings on perceptions of LGBTQ+ people in public administration were published only in the past few years by Federman and Rishel Elias (2016). This allows for a more refined analysis of the individual public manager in a municipal government and their KAP on LGBTQ+ communities. Collectively, this advances the prior research by Federman and Rishel Elias (2016) and provides a more comprehensive understanding of LGBTQ+ issues in Public Administration.

This body of work contributes to the field of Public Administration in that there are shortcomings in guaranteeing social equity historically, and this study provides for a deeper understanding of municipal managers and their relationship with the LGBTQ+ community. Federman and Rishel Elias (2016) is focused primarily on LGBTQ+ employees on the federal level, but they identify research on “LGBTQ+ employees in state and local bureaucracies” (p. 3). Additionally, Federman and Rishel Elias (2016) note the “Lavender Scare,” which comes from the “Red Scare” of 1950s McCarthyism, in that President Eisenhower referred to LGBTQ+ individuals as “sexual perverts” in Executive Order 10450 (p. 3). Surely, there are instances of this type of degrading and inflammatory language in local and state government, and the 1950s
political environment eventually led to the Stonewall Inn Riots at the end of the 1960s where LGBTQ+ people were treated discriminatorily in policing. Federman and Rishel Elias (2016) has a quantitative methodology, and this study uses an entirely qualitative methodology using the phenomenological and case study approaches. While this would appear to be a limitation in some respects, a qualitative methodology will provide for a more comprehensive understanding, using past studies as a foundation with their quantitative methodologies. Additionally, the qualitative methodology used allows this study to focus on the individual public manager and their KAP, rather than focus on replication across the United States at every municipal government. This allows us to understand how managers “feel” and how they address policy issues on street-level public administration.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature on public administration theory to understand the theoretical grounding that supports a study of LGBTQ+ issues in public administration. This chapter connects the literature on social equity and diversity with the vibrantly difficult history between the LGBTQ+ community and its government. This chapter, understanding the importance of social equity and historical perspectives, uses literature on the Narrative Policy Framework to set the foundation for how narratives can be used to have more substantive understanding of public policy. Examining literature on social equity can help support the study of knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community. Social equity is an area of study in the field of public administration that has emerged within the past few decades, and is considered one of the “pillars of public administration,” or one of the main focal points (such as efficiency and effectiveness) of the field of public administration study, by the National Academy on Public Administration. The fact that social equity has become a field of study most recently within the past few decades merits a theoretical framework with public administration theory including a policy narrative with a qualitative analytical method. It is important to connect public administration theory and sociological study, and diversity research (although not exclusive of other types of research) is one of the ways to provide a foundational framework to understand the perceptions and experiences of public administrators on LGBTQ+ issues. A full review of literature on public administration theory, diversity research in the field of sociology, and a conceptual framework for analysis of public policy is necessary in order to understand how
the public sector can advance social equity through public manager decision-making on policies that affect the LGBTQ+ community.

This review of the literature will be comprised of four primary sections: (1) Public Administration Theory; (2) Diversity Research; (3) Historical Research (4) Public Policy and Practice. The first section will provide a review of public administration theories that relate to LGBTQ+ issues and social equity, providing a foundation for the second section on diversity research. The third section provides a concise overview of LGBTQ+ history, which is important due to the lengthy relationship of government and the LGBTQ+ community (i.e., over the past 60 years, the “ups and downs” or relationship dynamics, and the working relationship in times of crisis like HIV/AIDS). The fourth section reviews public policy theory, such as the Narrative Policy Framework, and how it is applied to LGBTQ+ inclusiveness in public administration.

Public Administration Theory

Waldo (2007) brought forth the Minnowbrook Conference, where his administrative values, focus on centralization vs. decentralization, and the “four pillars of public administration” essentially began and led to the New Public Administration perspective. Frederickson (2005; 2010) discusses social equity and how it is the “third pillar” of public administration, which emphasizes the importance of social equity in comparison to “efficiency and economy” (p. 32). Frederickson’s (2005) theory was influenced by earlier contributors, specifically Dwight Waldo (2007). Furthermore, Frederickson’s (2005) discussion frames equity as a goal for the United States socially, but the reality is much different. Social equity impacts a number of policy issues, but it ultimately involves the “perception of being equal vs. unequal”
and “equality in process and outcomes.” Additionally, Carrizales and Gaynor (2013) state that, “Frederickson (1971) argues that social equity be added alongside effectiveness and efficiency as the third pillar of public administration” (p. 324). Additionally, Frederickson (2005) states that “public administration is the law in action and involves, indeed requires, interpretation of that law and discretion in its application” (p. 32). This is important because the perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community by public administrators do not necessarily reflect the same as the intent of laws, ordinances, and policies. The theoretical underpinning of social equity that Frederickson (2005, p. 31) describes is rooted in Henri Fayol’s “general management principles” as applied to the for-profit sector. Fayol’s managerial principles essentially began with Waldo (2007) and Minnowbrook, noting his focus on efficiency, economy, and effectiveness (which was described as social efficiency by Waldo). The theoretical foundation provided by Waldo (2007) and the Minnowbrook Conference led to social equity, which is the final frontier or most recent pillar of public administration to be developed. Social equity study in public administration has led to the terms of “multiculturalism” and “diversity” as part of a broader definition of social equity. However, Frederickson (2005) noted that in order to have the broader term of “diversity,” in this case “social diversity,” there are three components that frame social equity: “(1) Fairness in the administration of laws; (2) Seek and hire a varied workforce (i.e., qualifying minorities through policy such as affirmative action); (3) Encourage ethical behavior and moral leadership” (p. 33). Denhardt and Denhardt (2011) discuss the concept of the Old Public Administration and how the focus should be on accountability, essentially that the role of the public administrator should put the public will into policy through execution or implementation of policy (pp. 133-135). Additionally, Errigo’s (2016) discussion of Freeman’s stakeholder theory emphasizes that all
stakeholders, not just the public employee, should be valued within public administration. Freeman’s stakeholder theory applies specifically to the private sector, and places the importance of equal valuation of stakeholders, whether these are shareholders or employees. Furthermore, executives, employees, and the business as a whole creates value for customers and shareholders. Applying this private sector theory to public administration, it is up to public managers, deputies, and departmental employees to create value for the taxpayers and citizens, as part of the concept of public stewardship. Stakeholder theory means that all stakeholders should be treated equal and fair in policy implementation (as an input), while social equity means that all stakeholders should be treated equal and fair in policy implementation (as an output). Concisely, stakeholder theory is equality in administration, while social equity is equality in practice. Stakeholders would include the LGBTQ+ community, religious groups that disagree with LGBTQ+ rights, and any individual or group that government acts upon. It is important to study the LGBTQ+ community because this community is still particularly marginalized in many facets of public policy, such as employment, housing, and public accommodations. The LGBTQ+ community is still largely invisible and there are still negative social constructions of this group in public policy. Based on this stakeholder theory, the individual viewpoints “should be free” of having an effect on public policy to avoid the placement of one stakeholder over another in the implementation and execution of policy (p. 35). In application, one municipality may have different ideological leanings that guide its value statements in the mission of the municipality, in policies, or other areas that may not always be fair to one stakeholder or another.

The idea that public policy should avoid placing one stakeholder over another is contradictory in that in public policy, there are “winners” and “losers” (Zahariadis, 2014, p. 29).
This is not the entire purpose of public policy, as public policy is a governmental means for creating equity and fairness to balance out inequalities and inequities created by society. Some of these inequalities and inequities are created through law and policy because one group has majority rule in terms of influence and power simply because of the size of that group. For instance, some cities have mission statements that include references to God or are influenced by religion, which is against the secularist view of government that attempts to provide for equal treatment without influence. This is primarily important when understanding the role of influence and power in a city with a large Christian population where there may be a small population of LGBTQ+ residents (Hudsonville City Commission, 2018).

Diversity Research

Social equity is the mutual area of study that connects public administration theory with diversity research. Carrizales and Gaynor (2013), which is a systematic review of diversity publications in public administration, states that,

Diversity, a term used to better comprehend the broader concept of social equity has increasingly become relevant for public administrators and researchers alike, and has shown to improve the quality of democracy, leading to “more sustainable decisions,” and making a difference in productivity. (Carrizales and Gaynor, 2013, p. 307)

This point on productivity and sustainability notes that social equity through diversity is connected to efficiency, effectiveness, and economy as a pillar of public administration. Carrizales and Gaynor (2013) state that “diversity has been defined in a plethora of ways” and that they define diversity in the “widest net possible” as, “diversity is a set of innate and social
characteristics that differentiate and link individuals and groups” (p. 310). In other words, this is what makes one individual similar or different in terms of physical characteristics like race and factors like ability and disability. Furthermore, Carrizales and Gaynor (2013) note that “an organization’s ability to develop strategies as well as programs and policies to manage and accommodate diversity in their workspaces has become increasingly vital in ensuring a competitive advantage and increased productivity” (p. 308). Riccucci (2002) states (in Table 1.1) that “managing diversity” requires an understanding of various considerations (i.e., behavioral, strategic, etc.) that support a “productive work environment” and contribute to the “organization’s goals and objectives, morale, increasing productivity, organizational change, and managerial practices and policies” (Riccucci, 2002, “Diversity qua Diversity” section, para. 1). Hand (2010) states that diversity is a “necessary response to change” (p. 659). Change is important because the LGBTQ+ community has become more visible and oppressed to a lesser degree over time, and LGBTQ+ employees “come out” in the workplace with the greater visibility and acceptance by society. This has led to LGBTQ+ issues being introduced in the workplace, which has opened LGBTQ+ employees up to unfair treatment, discrimination, and termination.

A review of existing research by Carrizales and Gaynor (2013) discusses the primary characteristics of diversity research, and among these characteristics include research on sexual orientation and gender identity. Carrizales and Gaynor (2013) identifies that diversity research consists of primary and secondary characteristics, and the authors define what those characteristics consist of. Primary characteristics include race, sexual orientation, and gender identity, while secondary characteristics include “malleable factors” such as marital status,
educational background, income, etc. (Carrizales and Gaynor, 2013, p. 308). Additionally, Carrizales and Gaynor (2013) performs a meta-analysis of journal publications on diversity in public administration, noting that the National Academy on Public Administration (NAPA) adopted “social equity” as the “fourth pillar of public administration” in 2005 and that the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), the Association of Public Policy and Management (APPAM), and the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) “share responsibility for the lack of research on diversity issues” in this new field of study (p. 309). Carrizales and Gaynor (2013) found that only 4.83 percent of articles on diversity research in 31 public affairs journals from 2006-2011 were on sexual orientation, with the majority of articles on diversity focused on race/ethnicity (p. 314-320). This further emphasizes the need for LGBTQ+ research in public administration.

Federman and Rishel Elias (2016) is a study on the LGBTQ+ perceptions of federal security and non-security agencies and found that LGBTQ+ status does not have a major impact on personal safety and security, job satisfaction, and diversity issues. The study challenged the perception that LGBTQ+ individuals feel less welcomed in the military than other federal government roles. Federman and Rishel Elias (2016) found that “LGBTQ+ status does not appear to have any major impact on the relative satisfaction of employees within agencies of a particular category” and that in terms of “ethical diversity training (IEDT),” “LGBTQ+ individuals stand to benefit from such training being offered within their agencies, due to the discrimination and marginalization they have incurred within the federal government over the past decades” (p. 9). Furthermore, Federman and Rishel Elias focus more on diversity training and job satisfaction. This is particularly important as diversity training is an organizational
undertaking to influence ingrained perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community, for instance. However, this study is a study of federal government, and it does not look at the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of public managers in municipalities.

From the UCLA’s The Williams Institute, Sears, Mallory, and Hunter (2009a; 2009b; 2009c) and Sears and Mallory’s (2011a; 2011b) studies cover surveys of LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ public employees, identify the number of LGBTQ+ public employees, and present findings on discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in state and local government. Additionally, Sears, Hasenbush, and Mallory (2013) present findings on the discrimination of LGBTQ+ law enforcement officers. The inclusion of Sears, Mallory, and Hunter (2009a; 2009b; 2009c), Sears and Mallory (2011a; 2011b), and Sears, Hasenbush, and Mallory (2013) identify the pervasiveness of the problem, and determine whether the findings of the primary research are supported by the prior research. Sears and Mallory (2011b) found that the rate of discrimination complaints filed by lesbian, gay, and bisexual state and local public sector employees was lower than that of private sector employees overall. (p. 7). This information is useful because it could be used with “LGBTQ+ perceptions data” to be determined in primary research. Based on an understanding of the differences in political environments by geographic region, public employees are likely to perceive the LGBTQ+ community differently in Kentucky (i.e., Kim Davis) than public employees in New York perhaps due to political, religious, or cultural beliefs, and primary research data might be supported by findings from Sears and Mallory (2011b).

Sears et al. (2013) discusses evidence of discrimination among law enforcement officers. While research on law enforcement officers is not the primary scope of this dissertation, the findings provide actual cases of LGBTQ+ employment discrimination that will strengthen
findings regarding such discrimination. Additionally, Sears et al. (2013) identifies that The Williams Institute found that over “200 cities and counties in 35 states have enacted employment nondiscrimination ordinances on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity” (p. 19). There are thousands of cities in the United States, and the quote from Sears et al. (2013) shows only 200 have LGBTQ+ protections enshrined into ordinances. Thus, the problem of LGBTQ+ discrimination is much larger than one might perceive, but it is not indicative that the problem is widespread. This quote is important for background information, as well as defining the pervasiveness of the problem, because the presence of LGBTQ+-inclusive ordinances may allow a city to appear inclusive, when in fact there may be “bad actors” that disrupt the “equity government intends.” In other words, the “equity government intends” means that the ordinance is a statement of the government’s intention of including a population, but “bad actors” within government may be injecting their personal views or creating animus towards the LGBTQ+ community in providing basic governmental services. Additionally, Sears et al. (2013) identifies some key areas for exploration, including the variation of protections of local nondiscrimination ordinances, state statutes, information on diversity training practices, and how law enforcement departments engage with the LGBTQ+ community.

**Historical Research**

Understanding the history of the LGBTQ+ community is important in order to understand the relationship of public administration and the LGBTQ+ community, which provides the foundation for the examination of nondiscrimination ordinances and knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community. Richards (2014) provides historical
information on the LGBTQ+ movement, along with Surfus (2013). Surfus (2013), with historical information supported by Brooks (2015) and Faderman (2016), discusses LGBTQ+ history from the Stonewall Riots to the modern era, and it provides a general history of the LGBTQ+ community rather than one focused entirely on the subject being studied. Richards (2014) covers approximately 60 years of LGBTQ+ movement history and provides the roadmap for how LGBTQ+ issues reached the present-day visibility. Brooks (2015) emphasizes that it was the Vietnam war protests and the chaos at the 1968 Democratic Convention provided the “political energy” for the LGBTQ+ equality movement, which was nearly the same time as Dwight Waldo, the New Public Administration, and the Minnowbrook Conference of 1968, . This turning point represented the LGBTQ+ liberation movement morphing from a radical movement to a national civil rights struggle. The Stonewall Inn Riots occurred as the result of a police raid of the Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar in New York City. The police misunderstood the cultural importance of gay bars to the LGBTQ+ community, as the gay bars represented a place of gathering and community for a marginalized community. It was at the moment of the Stonewall Inn Riots that the LGBTQ+ liberation movement was born into a national civil rights struggle. Over time, the LGBTQ+ community gained more protections enshrined into law. Cordova (2015, in Brooks, 2015) states that,

By 1977, gays and lesbians were confident. In seven years, we’d won the repeal of sex laws and gay protections in jobs and housing in 19 states and 40 cities. Our latest victory was in Florida, where Dade County Commissioners passed a gay rights ordinance.

(Cordova, 2015, in Brooks, 2015, p. 121)
While the LGBTQ+ community had many gains in this era, Anita Bryant entered the
singer, now promoting Florida oranges on TV” and that she pledged to overturn Dade’s “evil
decision” because “men wearing dresses” would be teaching in public schools and it would lead
to “the devastation of the moral fiber of the youth of America” (p. 121). Bryant allied with
Phyllis Schlafly, an anti-feminist and opponent of the Equal Rights Amendment, and John
Briggs, a California state politician. Briggs sponsored California’s Proposition 6, which became
known as the Briggs Initiative, to ban gays and lesbians from teaching in California’s public
schools. The Briggs Initiative was ultimately defeated with 58% of the vote, leading to another
major victory for the LGBTQ+ community in this era. The LGBTQ+ community was successful
in establishing its political power by allying with feminist organizations like the National
Organization for Women, civil rights organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, and
powerful allies like then Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan (p. 122-126). This is
particularly important because it marked one of the first times that the LGBTQ+ community was
able to frame nondiscrimination ordinances as not a Republican versus Democrat issue, but a
nonpartisan human rights issue. Additionally, the LGBTQ+ community was able to develop a
coalition of allies to its cause.

One more significant development in this period occurred: The second openly gay person
was elected to public office in the United States. As aforementioned, the LGBTQ+ liberation
movement started out of the “political energy” created by the Vietnam war protests and the 1968
Democratic National Convention. Harvey Milk became involved in politics because he was
inspired to be a public servant out of the wrongdoings of Watergate. His abilities in community
organizing helped him get elected, and it helped him drive turnout against the Briggs Initiative. Tragically, he was one of two San Francisco officials assassinated by Dan White (Brooks, 2015, in Brooks, 2015, pp. 127-133).

In the 1980’s, the LGBTQ+ community faced setbacks in its movement at the local, state, and federal level due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Reagan Administration did not expand research on HIV/AIDS initially, and it largely ignored the hundreds of thousands of people with HIV/AIDS because it was perceived as affecting gay men. There was and still is a stigma to this condition, which is attributed in part to the negative social construction of the LGBTQ+ community. Larry Kramer founded the Gay Men’s Health Crisis, a nonprofit founded to assist those living with HIV/AIDS largely due to the fact that the federal government was ignoring the crisis (Faderman, 2015, p. 419). Kramer was a very radical and transformative figure in the LGBTQ+ community, and he notably revolted against the Gay Men’s Health Crisis. Kramer then formed the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), which encouraged civil disobedience by the LGBTQ+ community to gain visibility for those dying of HIV/AIDS because the Reagan Administration largely ignored HIV/AIDS and its impact on the LGBTQ+ community (Faderman, 2015, p. 428). This information is largely important to identify an example of the negative social construction of the LGBTQ+ community, specifically men who have sex with men (MSM) – an umbrella term to identify gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men that do not necessarily identify with the terminology “gay” or “bisexual.” In addition to the social construction, it is important to understand the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the role of stigma in perpetuating discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, perhaps in housing, employment, and public accommodations.
In the 1990’s, discriminatory policies against the LGBTQ+ community at the federal level were enacted by Congress and President Clinton, particularly the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell (DADT). DOMA prevented federal recognition of same-sex marriages before any state legally recognized same-sex marriages and it codified marriage as a union between one man and one woman (Faderman, 2015, p. 626). DADT led to the discharge of LGBTQ+ service members who openly identified or were suspected of being LGBTQ+ (pp. 471-534). In the courts, Romer v. Evans was one of the landmark Supreme Court decisions that affected the LGBTQ+ community. Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2014) stated that, Then came Romer v. Evans in 1996. Romer challenged the constitutionality of the 1992 Colorado initiative that had explicitly made it illegal to pass laws to protect homosexuals. The Colorado initiative had been a triumph for the Christian Right. Under the slogan “No Special Rights,” conservative religious groups worked diligently for the legislation. The U.S. Supreme Court declared 5-4 that the Colorado initiative was unconstitutional. Rejecting the state’s argument that the initiative merely blocked gays from receiving “special rights,” Justice Kennedy wrote that “the amendment imposes a special disability upon those persons alone. Homosexuals are forbidden the safeguards that others enjoy or may seek without constraint.” He continued, “Its sheer breadth is so discontinuous with the reasons offered for it that the amendment seems inexplicable by anything but animus toward the class that it affects; it lacks a rational relationship to legitimate state interests.” (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014, p. 347) From a legal standpoint, this created precedent in that LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination ordinances in housing, employment, and public accommodations were constitutionally justified. Legal cases
involving the LGBTQ+ community had to use rational basis review because at this point sexual orientation and gender identity are not considered “protected classes” from a legal standpoint.

In the 2000’s and 2010’s, there were advancements for the LGBTQ+ community and the stigma of the HIV/AIDS epidemic largely subsided due to advanced treatment options for the condition. The sodomy laws were struck down by the landmark Lawrence v. Texas Supreme Court decision (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014, p. 347). The George W. Bush Administration attempted to enshrine “marriage is between one man and one woman” into the U.S. Constitution with the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA), which failed to pass Congress. This was another major victory for the LGBTQ+ community. The election of Barack Obama and Democratic control of both the House and Senate ultimately led to many more advancements, including the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, the end of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell, hospital visitation rights for LGBTQ+ couples, and the legalization of same-sex marriage nationwide.

Even with all the advancements for the LGBTQ+ community, the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA) has repeatedly failed to pass Congress. ENDA would provide employment nondiscrimination protections in the public and private sector on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This would require companies to amend their Equal Opportunity of Employment statements to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Given the failure to pass these protections at the federal level, this has led to the patchwork of state laws and local ordinances. This means that the LGBTQ+ community may be protected in housing, employment, and public accommodations in one municipality and then potentially be subjected to discrimination in another municipality (Faderman, 2015, pp. 564-580). As of June 2020, federal
employment protections have been granted through a Supreme Court ruling, both in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity as it relates to “sex” discrimination. There are still no stated housing and public accommodations protections, but it could be presumed that “sex” discrimination statutes would apply to housing and public accommodations. This will likely require another future Supreme Court ruling once housing and/or public accommodations litigation is tried in federal court. Still, there is a patchwork of state-level and local-level protections for sexual orientation and gender identity.

Public Policy and Practice

Understanding how government works with the LGBTQ+ community in policy creation and practice is an essential foundation for assessing municipal managers and their role in policy creation, policy implementation, and managing the relationship of local government and the LGBTQ+ community. Literature from Binson et al. (2005), Clark et al. (2001), Luke et al. (2010), and Sherriff & Gugglberger (2014) shows ways that government can collaborate with the LGBTQ+ community to achieve policy outcomes, notably on HIV/STI prevention and tobacco cessation activities. While equality, or fairness in law and policy, may not be achieved internally (Holck, 2016), government can project equity, or fairness by representation and treatment, through policy (Binson et al, 2005; Sherriff and Gugglberger, 2014). In other words, political opposition may prevent a nondiscrimination ordinance protecting the LGBTQ+ community to be enacted, but various committees can work with stakeholders in the LGBTQ+ community (i.e., nonprofits representing the LGBTQ+ community) to advance equitable outcomes, such as on smoking cessation or addressing HIV/AIDS. This emphasizes the dire consequences of the
injection of politics into policy, and it implicates Schneider, Ingram, and Deleon’s (2014, in Sabatier and Weible, 2014) “Democratic Policy Design” framework aspect of “negative vs. positive social construction.” The very basis of this theoretical perspective is that policies create “benefits and burdens” and will “embed positive or negative social constructions on the targeted groups,” creating a policy system of “winners and losers” (p. 105). A negative social construction is when a group is viewed negatively based on knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions towards that group. It is in essence the politicizing of a group, rather than seeing that group through an objective lens. A nondiscrimination policy “punishes” the religious majority, while “rewarding” the LGBTQ+ community by creating the positive social construction that the “LGBTQ+ community is a valued part of society” (p. 105).

Hypothetically, a hospital employee could refuse treatment to someone with HIV/AIDS because of a false perception in the way the disease is contracted, because that employee assumes someone with HIV/AIDS is homosexual and they see homosexuals as “dirty” or “immoral,” or another preconceived notion about that individual or group. In other words, groups with a negative social construction (i.e., inmates, LGBTQ+ community, and any group that could be systematically marginalized) do not receive the intended policy benefit because of political interference in the policy process. In policy, this is the labeling of HIV/AIDS as the “Gay-Related Immune Deficiency” (GRID) because it assumes that, based on the prevailing knowledge at the time, that HIV/AIDS only affects homosexuals. Largely, the HIV/AIDS epidemic was ignored by the Reagan Administration due to the negative social construction of gay and bisexual men. As Faderman (2015) noted, Reagan “wouldn’t even utter the word AIDS until his good friend from Hollywood days, Rock Hudson, died of it in 1985” (p. 418).
On the basis of projecting equity in policy, the role of doing so comes down to the points on ethics from Catlaw and Jordan (2009) and Errigo (2016), in that public employees are responsible for applying “the law” (Frederickson, 2005) of American public administration through the lens of social equity, or fairness in representation, equal treatment, or equal status to create a “level playing field” (rather than another “lens” or “pillar” of public administration). If the law is applied based on “efficiency,” there is a much different outcome, much like the concept of a “triple bottom line” (Frederickson, 2005, p. 32).

The concept of the triple bottom line accounts for environmental concerns, social concerns, and economic concerns usually relating to the private sector. Using this approach, if the law is applied based on “efficiency” alone, it is accounting for economic concerns while ignoring environmental and social concerns. Betty Price, the wife of former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, is a Georgia state lawmaker who considered the idea of “quarantining those with HIV/AIDS to curb the spread of the disease” (Blau, 2017). This very idea would be an efficient way to prevent the spread of disease, but it completely disregards the human rights of those living with HIV/AIDS and the LGBTQ+ community, or a “social equity lens” concern. Additionally, the idea of a quarantine indicates a dire need to contain a disease and HIV/AIDS is relatively confined to select groups of the overall population. Those looking through the “efficiency lens” would see those with HIV/AIDS as a burden or as inefficient to the healthcare system, or they may see the LGBTQ+ community as running contrary to the interests of government in creating a stable, nuclear family with a mother and a father. The “social equity lens” accounts for the “reality of humanity,” or understanding that each person is unique and diverse in their own right and the same standard does not necessarily apply with equal
consideration to everyone. Speaking of fairness, social construction is substantially important for government to consider in policy. By not implicating social construction in policy, decision-making will likely be biased against groups of people, such as African Americans, the LGBTQ+ community, or those with negative social constructions. Social construction accounts for preconceived notions and stigma against an individual or class of people, and this outlines that social construction is important to ensure that policy is designed objectively. Disregard for the health crisis that largely affected gay and bisexual men was created by the negative social construction of gay and bisexual men, which led to prejudicial treatment in policy. To many in the LGBTQ+ community, this appeared to be a government-orchestrated attempt to commit genocide against a generation of gay and bisexual men.

To advance this narrative of the consequences of the injection of politics into policy, Between The Lines (2015), Sullivan (2015), and Terkel (2015) discuss instances when equal rights ordinances or nondiscrimination ordinances have passed (Wayland, MI) and failed (Houston, TX). Sullivan (2015) notes that the public rejected the Houston, TX ordinance on the 2015 ballot, even after openly lesbian mayor Annise Parker endorsed the ordinance to include sexual orientation and gender identity protections for housing, employment, and public accommodations. This is significant because it marks one of the many times that the general public has voted on the rights, benefits, and protections of a minority group of people. The opposite occurred in the 2017 election in Virginia, where Danica Roem was elected as the first transgender state lawmaker, beating Robert Marshall in the general election. Marshall refused to debate Roem, and he self-declared himself as Virginia’s “chief homophobe.” Ironically, Roem prevailed in the election after defeating Marshall, who introduced a transgender “bathroom bill”
“Bathroom bills” are public accommodation laws that prevent municipalities from adopting transgender-inclusive bathroom accommodations, forcing them to use the bathroom that corresponds with their biological gender. Terkel (2015) makes the point that the private sector and other stakeholders could have made the difference in Houston, TX with voters, yet they stayed silent on the ordinance likely due to public opinion in Houston on how voters felt about the ordinance. Why did they stay silent? Transgender protections are still extremely controversial in comparison to sexual orientation protections, largely due to the lack of public awareness of transgender people. The transgender population is much smaller than the population of gays and lesbians. Same-sex marriage or employment nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation is broadly supported (based on recent public opinion polling) as compared to transgender rights. This may be due to a more negative social construction of the transgender community, such as by opponents labeling them as “sexual predators.” The Holland, MI nondiscrimination ordinance case is a bit different, as the city council rejected it due to an overwhelming public presence (i.e., a standard city council meeting is an hour, but the intense interest caused the meeting to last several hours) (Kukla, 2011, p. 1-2). Businesses are under pressure and greater scrutiny in many traditionally conservative states, and it limits their advocacy power in that their advocacy of diversity may be hindered by their economic desires of profitability due to political factors. However, the business response goes “both ways” in that Chick-fil-A has been anti-LGBTQ+ to much success, as an example.

Forrer (2010) discusses public-private partnerships, contracting out, and how these arrangements can bring public accountability into question. Public-private partnerships and contracting out raise issues for LGBTQ+ inclusiveness in that often times there is an
establishment of hybrid organizations that do the work of government. These hybrid organizations, often called “authorities,” have the capacity to discriminate against the LGBTQ+ community. Some nonprofit and private sector organizations have “operating viewpoints” in disagreement with the LGBTQ+ community, such as contracting with faith-based organizations. As an example, the City of Grand Rapids has formed the nonprofit Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. Based on the organizing structure, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.’s board of directors is appointed by the mayor of Grand Rapids, and these directors come from private, public, and nonprofit entities in Grand Rapids. What happens to this hybrid organization’s board of directors if a pastor with anti-gay viewpoints runs for mayor and is elected? The LGBTQ+ community could hypothetically be harmed in this instance, even though the city policy itself revolves around a nondiscrimination ordinance that includes sexual orientation and gender identity. Government employees are expected to serve all citizens equally in administration (based on constitutional values), regardless of characteristics like sexual orientation and gender identity. This addresses the “cognizance” and “competency” aspect of this research by providing an avenue to spotlight the perceptions on the LGBTQ+ community and provide a “real example” that undermines government commitment to social equity.

Another aspect to include is information from a social equity and diversity perspective, specifically the inclusion of information on racial and sexual orientation disparities. For instance, Cahill (2009) shows that black same-sex couple households report lower annual median household income than those headed by black married opposite-sex couples ($10,000 less for black female same-sex couples and equal median income for black male same-sex couples, as compared to opposite-sex black couples) (p. 238). These findings are applicable to both racial
and sexual orientation disparities, and then presence of both types of disparities has a “multiplier effect.” The findings also exhibit disparities with Hispanic same-sex couples comparatively with opposite sex couples. While the “perceptions” are not exactly determinable through this information, it is understood that policies and how such policies are implemented create outcomes that can create disparities “within the system.” By understanding the perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community within public administration, one could potentially understand the root cause of the inequalities “within the system.”

Cahill (2009) covers a variety of policy implications, and thus this literature is one of the primary sources used for analysis of policy implications. Policy issues covered by Cahill (2009) include parenting, income and home ownership, military issues, immigration policy, and domestic partnership/marriage equality. Cahill (2009) states that the 2000 US Census data showed that “34 percent of lesbian couples and 22 percent of gay male couples that have at least one child under 18 years of age living in their home” (p. 227), and that “no credible, scientifically conducted study that has focused on LGBTQ+ parents and their children has found any harmful effects either in the quality of parenting or in the well-being of children” (p. 228). Additionally, Cahill (2009) noted that “black same-sex couples (54 percent for black male same-sex couples and 50 percent for black female same-sex couples) are less likely to report home ownership than black married opposite-sex couples (68 percent)” (p. 238). By understanding parenting, income, and home ownership data, it should be noted that discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community ultimately creates negative outcomes for children of LGBTQ+ parents, based on Cahill (2009, pp. 227-238). This burden is famously noted in the landmark Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) decision that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. Cahill (2009) noted the
effect on Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell and how this resulted in loss of income and benefits due to the discharge of LGBTQ+ service members, identifying that “black women in same-sex households report veteran status at nearly four times the rate of black women married to a male partner (11 percent vs. 3 percent)” (p. 240). Cahill’s (2009) notes on immigration policy as it relates to same-sex couples has largely been addressed by the expansion of same-sex marriage to all 50 states through the Obergefell decision (pp. 244-245).

The policy issue that is most applicable to local public administration is marriage equality. For instance, how would a same-sex couple be treated by a city clerk? What is the city clerk’s views and do they translate into policy decisions that affect the LGBTQ+ community (i.e., County Clerk Kim Davis as a national example)? Based on Human Rights Campaign (2015), a survey was conducted that found that,

Only 24 percent of Americans support allowing government employees to cite their religious beliefs as a reason to deny service to a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender person. A bipartisan 68 percent majority oppose allowing government employees being able to deny services. Republicans opposed allowing government employees to discriminate 50 percent to 41 percent. Non-college graduates opposed discrimination 67 percent to 24 percent, and seniors opposed discrimination 64 to 26 percent.”

(Human Rights Campaign, 2015, p. 1)

With such widespread opposition to LGBTQ+ discrimination, it would be important to understand how public administrators perceive the LGBTQ+ community and to determine the extent that these views are injected into policy implementation to undermine social equity, as defined and supported by Frederickson (2005).
Instances of discriminatory government actions, including PR Newswire (2007) and Crawford (2016), include stripping of domestic partner benefits, “religious freedom” laws, and repealing nondiscrimination ordinances that protect the LGBTQ+ community. This, along with Rader (2011), would naturally build the narrative that public administration “doesn’t have a good track record” on LGBTQ+ inclusiveness. Furthermore, the inclusion of literature on domestic partner benefits and other areas that government has acted that negatively affects the LGBTQ+ community will allow for the dissertation to focus on “cognizance” and “competency.”

Discriminatory government actions and why cognizance and competency are important are best understood by acknowledging the political and philosophical foundations of social equity. Svara and Brunet (2005) discuss Rosenbloom’s position that public administrators have a duty to promote equity as being politically and philosophically connected to constitutional law through due process, equal protection of the law, and the rule of law. Svara and Brunet (2005) state that “procedural fairness” is a way to define social equity, and they note that “constitutional competence is required of public administrators” (p. 4). The engrained nature of social equity in our Constitution ultimately led to modern public administration elevating it to a pillar of public administration. Furthermore, the rooting of social equity in a historical, political, and philosophical context as the “mission statement of the United States” is supported by Frederickson (2005), although he connects it to the Declaration of Independence and shows that not only is social equity fundamentally American but it is essential to the “survival of democracy” (p. 34).
CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The current policy environment on LGBTQ+ issues is worth noting as there are central policy issues that are connected with an emerging theoretical framework called the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF). Within the past few years, municipal government officials (i.e., City Clerks) have been required to comply with the nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage, whether it fits their own personal beliefs as a part of their position. This national trajectory has influenced the micro-level and meso-level policy environment as public opinion of the LGBTQ+ community has increased over time. It should be understood that not everyone agrees with the right for same-sex couples to marry, and that government officials have their own personal viewpoints. They are not immune to the effects of public opinion.

Additionally, it should be noted that the LGBTQ+ community has had some victories in nondiscrimination ordinances over time, and the increased focus on LGBTQ+ issues through the same-sex marriage national efforts has inspired additional cities, counties, and townships to adopt nondiscrimination ordinances to better protect the LGBTQ+ community in housing, employment, and public accommodations. The disparities that affect the LGBTQ+ community in terms of race, income level, home ownership, and other areas noted by Cahill (2009) are part of the micro-level policy environment in that there is a real harm to same-sex couples and their children without equality under the law. There are instances of animus towards the LGBTQ+ community, and this does affect the LGBTQ+ community in the policy environment. Justice
Anthony Kennedy noted this point on animus in the Obergefell decision that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide (Obergefell v. Hodges, 2015).

Knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions are the inputs that define this concept of “social construction.” Social construction is the subjective lens of the “micro level” of the policy environment. The actors within this level act upon the policy environment, which creates the overall narratives of the Narrative Policy Framework. On the micro-level, these narratives have inputs called experiences (such as the inputs to a phenomenology), while on the meso-level and macro-level define agencies and institutions as narratives, a summation of the whole entity. Various “cases” or “cities” may be described qualitatively within this meso and macro policy environment.

The “Narrative Policy Framework,” identified by McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014) serves as the conceptual framework for analysis of the policy environment. The Narrative Policy Framework uses narratives to describe policies. Policies must be communicated, otherwise there may be a disconnect with the public. Furthermore, narratives provide another additional level of understanding of policies, rather than just an explicitly written policy. Given that there is such a misunderstanding of the LGBTQ+ community and part of the LGBTQ+ community’s efforts for equality under the law have been made possible by public education and awareness, a narrative in addition to explicitly written policy helps to provide a greater understanding of that written policy. The Narrative Policy Framework can describe the current relationship between local government, groups that support the LGBTQ+ community, and groups that have been historically opposed to LGBTQ+ inclusiveness. To understand the different stakeholders and their relationship within the policy environment, policy narrative core elements were identified.
to understand the social dynamics of the policy environment, the actual policy issue, and how various stakeholders interact around the policy issue. In McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014, p. 228), there are four policy narrative core elements that are identified:

1. Setting
2. Characters
3. Plot
4. Moral

Based on McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014, p. 228), the “setting” for the policy narrative is the local government in which the “characters” are under the jurisdiction of. The characters, or the stakeholders, are operating under the “policy environment.” Additionally, there are geographic differences in public opinion and support for LGBTQ+ rights, comparing the Northeast and the Southern part of the United States. A more local example would be Holland vs. Kalamazoo. Certain communities have a greater level of religious representation overall and emphasis on value placement (i.e., it might be more acceptable in Holland as compared to progressive Kalamazoo to include a faith-based mission statement or have a statue of Jesus or the Ten Commandments on public property), comparatively. The “victims who are harmed” by the policy problem would be the LGBTQ+ community (based on the majority being their opposition and the LGBTQ+ community representing a small portion of the overall population) because they are the policy “losers.” Some would argue that religious groups are harmed and that is why there is a need for religious freedom laws. However, this logic assumes
that the LGBTQ+ community is a politically powerful force in size and scale. By comparison of size and scale, that is not the case (p. 228).

Based on McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Weible and Sabatier 2014, the “villains who do the harm” are presumably faith-based organizations, their clergy, and their members. There is a constant tug-of-war between the “villains who do the harm” and the “victims that are harmed.” The “heroes who provide or promise relief from the harm and a solution to the problem” would be the local, state, and federal governments. In terms of a nondiscrimination ordinance, this is a solution provided by the local government. When this solution is not provided by the local government, the “victims who are harmed” look to the legislative bodies of the state and federal government (p. 228). Often times, with the issue of marriage equality, there were patchworks of laws from state to state, no federal recognition of same-sex marriages, and limited legal recourse unlike the rights afforded to traditional, heteronormative marriages. When the legislative bodies fail to advance marriage equality, the solution was the United States v. Windsor decision handed down by the United States Supreme Court that immediately expanded same-sex marriage rights to all 50 states. It is important to note that the same political pressure on legislative bodies and local governments does not apply to judicial appointments at the federal level. The plot involves the “villains who do the harm” doing a policy tug-of-war with the “victims who are harmed.” In many cases, this plays out in the lengthy and contentious City Council meetings, such as the one in Holland. Ultimately, the “heroes,” or City Council members, must decide through an “up or down vote,” and there are “political pressures” from the villains (usually the larger group) on the “heroes” to comply with the values of the “villain” (McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan, in Sabatier and Weible, 2014, p. 228).
McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014, p. 228) identifies the “moral” component of the policy narrative, and states that it involves the “heroes” crafting a solution, or ordinance, that poses a minimum amount of “damage” to the rights of the “villains” while enhancing “equitable outcomes” for the “victims” so that they can be treated similar to the “villains” in dignity. Nondiscrimination ordinances require businesses to comply with the terms of the ordinance or they may face fines (if that is provided by the ordinance legal language). Ecclesiastical organizations maintain the right to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity because their sincerely-held religious beliefs would be violated by compliance to the policy. This same right or exemption to compliance is not afforded to for-profit businesses in which the owner has sincerely-held religious beliefs, even though the business owners may perceive that to be a right. A for-profit business is more of a public place that serves all types of customers, while an ecclesiastical organization is a nonprofit entity with their own views that chooses to serve only those with views that align with the ecclesiastical organization. To create a “moral” solution,” there must be a clear distinction that the rights of the “villain” and “victim” will be protected (p. 228).

McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) focus on some “core assumptions” in the Narrative Policy Framework, notably “social construction” and “bounded rationality.” On these two assumptions, McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) state that,

Social construction: Although it is true that there is a reality populated by objects and processes independent of human perceptions, it is also true that the meanings of those objects and processes vary in terms of how humans perceive them. Social construction in
this context refers to the variable meanings that individuals or groups assign to various objects or processes associated with public policy. Bounded rationality: Social constructions of policy related objects and processes vary to create different policy realities, however, this variation is bounded (e.g., by belief systems, ideologies, norms, etc.) and thus is not random. (McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan, 2014, in Sabatier and Weible, 2014, p. 229-230)

In other words, there is an objective truth in policy (expressly written or reasonably implied in a textual sense) and a subjective knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions application (i.e., denial of policy benefit to policy target). Those that enforce and implement policy may do so discriminatively, contrary to the way the policy was written expressly or reasonably implied. The Supreme Court implemented same-sex marriage in all 50 states through the Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) decision, but it didn’t stop Kim Davis and Roy Moore (at the time Chief Justice of Alabama’s Supreme Court) from applying or not applying the law as they see fit (i.e., their social construction of the LGBTQ+ community as not deserving of the title “marriage” because it conflicts with their personal “biblical” view, or “bounded rational view,” on marriage). The concepts of social construction and bounded rationality are important because the belief systems of the “villains that become heroes,” as some individuals that believe that the LGBTQ+ community is morally unacceptable may become employees of government, can effect policy that negatively affects the LGBTQ+ community. Thus, the LGBTQ+ community has a negative social construction to groups with certain belief systems and ideological underpinnings. The appropriateness of using the Narrative Policy Framework to assess the relationship of local government and the LGBTQ+ community in this study can be justified by the methodology that
is used, as a phenomenological case study approach is used. In a phenomenology, a narrative is used to set aside bias of the researcher and to document the researcher’s experience with the phenomenon of inclusion. Additionally, a phenomenological case study allows the researcher to identify how the participant might socially construct a group of people like the LGBTQ+ community negatively, leading to inconsistency in policy implementation and enforcement to the harm of that group. Alternately, someone with a positive social construction of the LGBTQ+ community may have a negative social construction of religious groups. The phenomenology allows for a comprehensive understanding of that individual’s experience with the phenomenon that can shape knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions. How can a narrative avoid bias? Triangulation of the data, or the use of multiple sources to verify whether the information presented is factual, will allow for an accurate presentation of the historical narrative. Another strategy is to allow for interviewers to review their responses in the data.

Incorporating the Narrative Policy Framework into the qualitative case study allows for the presentation of a policy narrative in addition to the historical and sociological implications. Additionally, a narrative is used to assess the historical and sociological nature of each city individually. Finally, McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014, p. 228) identify the types of data used in the Narrative Policy Framework, including transcripts, written texts, speeches, videos, archives, secondary sources, and original artifacts. These data types are compatible with the phenomenological case study approach used in this study (p. 229-231). The Narrative Policy Framework in McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) provides for compatibility with Yin’s (2014) case study methodological approach in that Yin (2014) provides an individual, case, and collective separation and presentation, much like
Table 1: Narrative Policy Framework applied to Yin (2014)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Narrative Policy Framework</th>
<th>Case Study Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Public managers from Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meso</td>
<td>Group/Coalition</td>
<td>Each public manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>Institution/Culture</td>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
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<tr>
<th>Core NPF variables</th>
<th>Narrative Policy Framework</th>
<th>Case Study Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Narrative</td>
<td>Policy Narrative</td>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Setting</td>
<td>*Setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Characters</td>
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<td>*Plot</td>
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<td>*Moral</td>
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<tr>
<th>Examples of Data Types</th>
<th>Narrative Policy Framework</th>
<th>Case Study Research</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey, transcripts</td>
<td>Written texts, speeches,</td>
<td>Archives, secondary sources, original artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>videos</td>
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<th>Application to Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo Cases</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transcripts are used for public managers in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. Written texts are used to understand inclusivity in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo, and these texts are not specifically limited to public managers. Archives and secondary sources are used as a written sample to understand inclusivity in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo, and textual information is not specifically limited to public managers. The narratives for each city are used as single case studies, presented individually first and then collectively. This combines the Narrative Policy Framework and Yin’s (2014) Case Study Research Design.</td>
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<th>Source</th>
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The next two diagrams present the overarching methodological goal of the combined Narrative Policy Framework and phenomenological case study approach. In Figure 1 Logic Diagram, significant variation of the qualitative data provides the optimal environment for the assessment of the emergent themes surrounding the phenomena of inclusion. Visually, this is expressed using the logic diagram below:

Figure 1 Logic Diagram.
Figure 2 outlines that the phenomenology is part of the overall case study as a phenomenological case study methodology. The phenomenology uses the micro-analysis approach for the Narrative Policy Framework, along with the four policy narrative core elements as components of analysis. Character, which is one of the four policy narrative core elements, is a component of the micro-level analysis that allows for studying public managers. “Public managers” are further categorized as three types of views that they have, whether it be knowledge, attitudes, or perceptions. “Knowledge” is the level of understanding that the public manager has on the LGBTQ+ community and the issues it faces. “Attitudes” are the public managers’ reactions towards the LGBTQ+ community and the issues it faces as a strict behavioral level of understanding. “Perceptions” are the connection or disconnect between the organization’s stated position on the LGBTQ+ community and the issues it faces and the individual public manager’s views.

The overall conceptual framework to be supported by the methodology is illustrated as Figure 2 Research Design Conceptual Framework below:
Figure 2 Research Design Conceptual Framework
Appropriateness of Narrative Policy Framework

Creswell (2013) and Yin (2014) provided the methodological basis for the conduction of a phenomenological case study. Both Creswell (2013) and Yin’s (2014) methodological processes were utilized to understand the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of municipal managers. A specific policy, LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination policy, was examined, along with other LGBTQ+ inclusive policies. These policies were grounded primarily under the umbrella term “Diversity Research.” McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan’s (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) “Narrative Policy Framework” was identified as a basis for the Conceptual Framework. McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) identify that the Narrative Policy Framework and the Advocacy Coalition Framework have been used to “determine how narratives constructed an advocacy coalition in the development of a nondiscrimination policy” (p. 252). McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) identify that it was Longaker (2013) who studied the NPF and ACF in terms of nondiscrimination policy.

Rather than focus specifically on the development of nondiscrimination policies, this research focused on another methodology in Creswell (2013) and Yin (2014) to study the municipal managers in relation to LGBTQ+ policy. Thus, the appropriateness of the application of the Narrative Policy Framework is justified as it is grounded in recent, past study in this field. This application fulfills the request made by McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) for other ways to apply the NPF for future use, as they want to “enlist your help” in answering “Do narratives play an important role in the policy process?” (p. 256). Thus,
this application serves as a new way to apply the Narrative Policy Framework to better understand narratives overall.
CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions and Overview

The purpose of this research is to better understand the relationship between public administrators at the local level and the LGBTQ+ community, specifically how municipal managers’ knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) of the LGBTQ+ community affects public policy creation, execution, and enforcement. The reason this research is necessary is that the LGBTQ+ community is lacking visibility, or physically defining characteristics, that other minority groups have. This lack of visibility has been exacerbated by lack of reporting in hate crime statistics and a lack of understanding of substantive policy issues that has led to disparities for the LGBTQ+ community. The following research questions help us better understand the KAP of municipal managers and their relationship with the LGBTQ+ community in terms of public policy, such as nondiscrimination ordinances. The research questions studied in this dissertation include the following:

RQ1: What are the beliefs and attitudes of public managers toward the LGBTQ+ community?

RQ2: What ordinances and policies does each municipality have that affect the LGBTQ+ community?

RQ3: To what extent do personal beliefs and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community differ from organizational policies and laws, such as nondiscrimination ordinances?

RQ4: Do these personal beliefs and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community differ by the presence of LGBTQ+ departmental staff?
RQ5: If there is a difference in LGBTQ+ departmental staff member presence, what is the nature of this difference across departmental units? Why is it different across departmental units?

RQ6: Do public managers understand the issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community, and what are some ways public managers work with the LGBTQ+ community?

RQ7: How do political, religious, and social environments affect municipal policies that impact the LGBTQ+ community?

Noting the definition and classification of “knowledge,” “attitudes,” and “perceptions” in the Conceptual Framework, each research question addresses a particular classification. RQ1 is an Attitude-based research question. RQ2 and RQ3 are Perception-based research questions. RQ4 is an Attitude-based research question. RQ5 is based on comparing Attitudes across departments, thus an Attitude-based research question. RQ6 is a Knowledge-based research question. RQ7 is based on factors in the policy environment and is thus a strict application of the Narrative Policy Framework. RQ7 seeks to have a deeper understanding of characteristics in the policy environment that are not yet defined.

Research Design Overview

Selection of a methodology design sets the foundation to understand the KAP of public managers as it relates to the LGBTQ+ community. Creswell (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2018) outline the criteria for selecting a research tradition and the methodology used to conduct the study. The research design used for the study is a phenomenological case study, which derives its philosophical and epistemological roots from “psychology, law, political science, and medicine” (Creswell, 2013, p. 268). Creswell (2013) defines phenomenology as the study of a
“phenomenon to be explored, phrased in terms of a single concept or ideas,” that a group of individuals have experienced (Creswell, 2013, pp. 78-79). A phenomenological case study combines two different qualitative methodologies for understanding inclusiveness as a phenomenon to understand how the phenomenon replicates comparatively across multiple organizational contexts (i.e., different cities in a multi-site case study). In essence, this research studied the lived experiences as a public manager with the phenomenon of inclusion and their KAP of the LGBTQ+ community.

The phenomenon is “inclusiveness.” Additionally, there was the desire to understand the individual experiences with the phenomenon as part of a broader case. Creswell (2013), supported by Moustakas (1994, p. 22) and Creswell and Poth (2018), states that a phenomenological study is a discussion with individuals who have experienced a phenomenon after the researcher brackets themselves out to follow “systematic procedures that move from the narrow units of analysis (e.g., significant statements) and on to broader units (e.g., meaning units) with a description of an experience in terms of “what” they experienced and “how” they experienced it” (pp. 78-79). Applied as a case study, there is an individual understanding of the phenomenon and then a “case-wide” understanding of the narratives in each unit (in this case, a city).

Yin (2014) is another source that was used for understanding qualitative research because it exemplifies important considerations and the process for conducting both phenomenology and case study research. Yin (2014) encapsulates the “scope of a case study” as a “two-fold definition” in that a “case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the
boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 52). Yin (2014) prescribes that the researcher present each case separately before a collective presentation of the multiple cases, noting that “case studies can cover multiple cases and then draw a single set of ‘cross-case’ conclusions” (p. 54-55).

**Interviews**

The interview method was used for this study as the primary method, supported by Yin (2014) which states that “there are two jobs throughout the interview process: (a) To follow your own line of inquiry, as reflected by the case study protocol; (b) To ask actual conversational questions in an unbiased manner that also serves the needs of the researcher’s own line of inquiry” (p. 174). Yin (2014) provides the foundation for the usage of the interview method in this study because of the focus on “attitudes, perceptions, and meanings” (pp. 168-169), and that multiple sources of evidence in addition to the interview method are necessary to account for construct validity, which is whether the research is actually measuring what it is trying to measure (pp. 90-91). Using multiple sources of evidence supports the usage of secondary data in addition to the interview method. Secondary data used in this study consists of newspaper articles, local government meeting minutes, and other textual data (as the interviews will be transcribed or converted into textual data). The secondary data was used to understand the policy environment to inform the application of the Narrative Policy Framework in Chapter VI. This information was corroborated with interview data to understand the political, social, and religious environmental factors, which is extensively applied to RQ7. This further establishes trustworthiness, specifically the credibility component of trustworthiness, through the
triangulation of multiple sources of data. All the interview and artifact data were organized using the NVIVO software program that was developed by QSR International.

Case Overview

Target Population and Selection Rationale

Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo were the cities in Michigan that were studied because each city has different historical, political, religious, and other factors that maximize variation of a qualitative sample. A detailed description of the history of each of the cities is provided in Appendix H: Historical Description. In terms of political factors for instance, the three cities represent every end of the political spectrum as the people in each city identify differently in terms of their political ideology. This helped create a richer qualitative study to promote maximum variation. Additionally, Michigan is unique in that it has some of the most anti-LGBTQ+ laws when looking at states in the Midwest and the Northeast. Before the Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, adoption rights for same-sex couples were nonexistent. The state’s Attorney General actively prevented state recognition of same-sex marriage. The anti-bullying laws are not LGBTQ+ inclusive. As of 2021, The Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) has not been updated to include sexual orientation and gender identity, but there was a proposed ballot measure to add these protections statewide in the 2020 election that ran into petition signature requirement issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Out Leadership, 2019; Shamus, 2019).

Holland was founded by approximately 60 Dutch Calvinist separatists in 1847 who fled Rotterdam, Netherlands to escape religious and economic oppression. Holland, MI was named
after The Netherlands in Europe, and it is a tourist destination in West Michigan known for its annual Tulip Time festival (Holland Michigan Area Visitors Bureau, 2017). Grand Rapids was founded by French trader Louis Campau in 1826, and Grand Rapids became the fine furniture capital of the world in the 19th century. Grand Rapids is known for being the “first city to add fluoride to its drinking water and for having the first publicly-funded art installation in the United States” (City of Grand Rapids, 2017, p. 1). It serves as headquarters for Meijer, Amway (near Grand Rapids in Ada, MI), and Spectrum Health, among other companies. Kalamazoo was founded as a result of the Treaty of Chicago, which permitted the land south of the Grand River to be sold to the federal government, and the Treaty of St. Joseph, which was part of the federal government’s eviction of Native Americans (in this case, the Potawatomi). Kalamazoo was founded by Titus Bronson. Kalamazoo was economically focused on paper mills, automobiles, farming, and medical supplies, among other industries. It is home of Dr. Homer Stryker and the Stryker Corporation, two healthcare systems, and Western Michigan University. It was influential during the United States Civil War as being part of the Underground Railroad (Kalamazoo Public Library, 2017).

The study focused on only Michigan cities in the western part of the state to use the same geographic area for analysis. The target population for the study was public managers (i.e., department managers, deputy managers) in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. The public managers from these cities served as informants that provide data on their experiences in their public capacity as it relates to working with and on policy that affects the LGBTQ+ community. Specifically, the study focused on the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) of public managers regarding the LGBTQ+ community, as public managers are responsible for key
decision-making in their departmental units. This was to understand how KAP of public managers affect departmental policies relating to nondiscrimination ordinances, hiring/retention policies, and services provided to the public (whether those services adhere to nondiscrimination policies of the city). This was to understand whether their KAP promotes or hinders LGBTQ+ inclusiveness, and whether there were inconsistencies in how policies are being applied as compared to what existing policies explicitly state in written form.

Some characteristics about cities in West Michigan were taken into consideration in the selection process. The region and the proximity of one city to another was taken into consideration to have a similar sample, yet some variation in terms of values that each city may have. Essentially, this was a purposeful sample (rather than a convenient sample) represented in a narrow definition of “public managers at the municipal level.” Specifically, the individuals were public management officials at the local government level. City population was taken into consideration to ensure the government entities are large enough to provide the leadership pool needed for this study. The leadership pool needed to be large enough to account for some managers potentially declining to take part in the study. The goal was one city with a larger population (greater than or equal to 100,000 people) and two smaller cities (less than 100,000 people) to ensure maximum variation. Additionally, the goal was to have different types of city governments with various levels of complexity. Grand Rapids was selected because it has a larger population and government than other cities in the region. Holland was selected because it has a smaller population and government than some of the other cities in the region. This allowed for maximum variation while accounting for the fact that six managers, which originally included four managers directly from departments in local government and two from hybrid
authorities under the oversight of government within the city, needed to participate in the study in each city. As of 2016, Kalamazoo had a population of about 75,000. While distance, population size, and other characteristics were not intended to be determinant factors to influence findings, these characteristics ensured maximum variation needed to generate comprehensive findings.

Criteria for cities used included city size and population, electoral and legislative history on nondiscrimination ordinances, current nondiscrimination ordinance presence, and nondiscrimination ordinance history in relation to other cities being studied. The rationale for selecting these three cities was that Holland considered and rejected a nondiscrimination ordinance inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment, and public accommodations by public body in 2011, Grand Rapids has a nondiscrimination ordinance enacted by public body since 1994, and Kalamazoo has a nondiscrimination ordinance enacted by voters in a landslide in 2009. Holland provided no protections in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity until 2020, Grand Rapids provides sexual orientation protections, and Kalamazoo provides both sexual orientation and gender identity protections. Currently, Holland provides both sexual orientation and gender identity protections, but it did not have these protections when the data was collected for this study. The inclusion of Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo is justified in that it created the variation needed to support a richer qualitative study, as there were likely to be ideological differences in these communities. Each of the three cities have different political leanings and environments. Holland is much more conservative than Kalamazoo for instance. These political and cultural variations led to a richer qualitative study because of maximum variation.
Subjects, Sampling, and Setting

A certain number of interviews were required to mitigate concerns of validity and bias. Creswell (2013) states that the recommendation is that researchers must interview “5 to 25 individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon” (p. 81). Based on these guidelines, the original target was 18 interviews if it included nonprofit organizations, with four government managers and two nonprofit/hybrid organization managers for each city. The goal became four government managers with no other types of managers, thus a narrower definition of a “public manager” was used. Ultimately, 12 interviews were conducted, consistent with the Creswell (2013) guidelines for sample size. Qualitative research can use a small sample size because it is focused on the phenomenon and lived experiences of individuals, rather than generalizability across a region. In other words, this study did not generalize that a majority of public managers in the Midwest feel a particular way about the LGBTQ+ community, but it instead examined the consistency across departments on policies that affect the LGBTQ+ community. Data saturation was assessed after four, eight, and 12 interviews, and there was a reflection on the data at each of these points (i.e., Phase One- Part One, Phase Two- Part Two, and Phase Two).

As aforementioned, the inclusion of only public managers was based on the fact that they are the key decision-makers for their department. For instance, four public managers that were directly employed by a city and two managers or decision-makers at a nonprofit organization that were contracted and maintained through governmental oversight (i.e., an authority such as a developmental authority for a city that has separate tax-exempt status, but is subject to government oversight) could have been interviewed. The reason for including these nonprofits that have governmental oversight is that sometimes policies may vary with contractors, thus
exposing the LGBTQ+ community to different policies and potentially subjecting them to discrimination. This ensures that the appropriate number of interviews can be conducted, while accounting for any likelihood that a public manager could decline participation in the interview. The narrow definition of a “public manager” was used, rather than a broader version that included nonprofit managers. This avoided potential “dilution” of qualitative data with the narrow definition of a public manager, and it promoted the purposeful sampling strategy rather than one of convenience.

The setting for this study was “cities in West Michigan,” specifically Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. The setting was limited to municipal office spaces, where the interviews were conducted. Public city meetings were evaluated and compared with in-vivo coding data to identify emergent themes and understand differences in each case, collectively and comparatively. An appropriate sampling strategy is necessary in order to ensure the research is well-informed, expansive, and maximizes variation for the identification of emergent themes.

Creswell (2013) called this concept “purposeful sampling strategy” and states that,

This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. Decisions need to be made about who or what should be sampled, what form the sampling will take, and how many people or sites need to be sampled.

(Creswell, 2013, pp. 157-158)

Additionally, each city in the multisite study is accessible and diverse, even if not quite an “unusual case.” Furthermore, maximum variation “ensured that more information and multiple perspectives” were collected in the data. This is important to ensure that there is a full
understanding of the issues, different perspectives, variation in process used in one city vs. another city, how one government official might respond to LGBTQ+ inclusiveness policy compared to another, and how it could affect decision-making in the development of LGBTQ+ inclusiveness policies (Creswell, 2013, p. 324-325).

The study must have variation in the participants, so demographic and cultural factors varied to ensure that the responses and perspectives had variation. Gaining access to participants in different cities should, first and foremost, consider the respect for research on human subjects because ethical research is necessary. Marshall & Rossman (2011) discuss the protection of and respect for human subjects, and they state that, “Respect for persons captures the notion that we do not use the people who participate in our studies as a means to an end (often our own) and that we do respect their privacy, their anonymity, and their right to participate – or not – with their free consent” (p. 243). The policies for conducting research with different cities and their employees are generally outlined by the City Commission or a type of review board. In this case, review protocol was approved by Western Michigan University’s Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) and was based upon the Informed Consent document that each participant signed and dated.

Triangulation of data occurs when using multiple data sources to create a relational meaning between different data source types in the identification of emergent themes and trends. As an example, observational data could be developed by attending a city commission meeting in which LGBTQ+-related topics are discussed, and then taking notes on the responses of members of the city commission. In this case, interview data was corroborated with artifact data, such as meeting minutes, news articles, action plans, and other documents. Interview data was
developed to have a set of questions that were tailored (i.e., “reasons,” “issues,” “factors”) towards answering the Research Questions (See Appendix A: Interview Protocol to review the interview questions).

Method Selection and Appropriateness

A phenomenological case study approach was selected as the most appropriate research design for this study because it involved “one or more cases” (i.e., cities), studied “an activity and more than one individual” (i.e., policymaking, government officials), and used one or more types of data: “Interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts” (p. 268-269). The methodology that was applied was both “within-site” and “multisite” because government officials were interviewed within one city, but the study involved government officials from multiple cities, or cases (p. 253). It is important to think of “within-site” and “multisite” as types of case studies, while thinking of a phenomenology as being applied to the type of study. The phenomenology is strictly a study of the phenomenon that is replicated across organizational contexts, while the case study is the analysis of the organization as a whole. The interview method can be used in both a phenomenology and a case study, and conducting both methodologies are essential to understand the phenomenon across a setting with multiple case study sites. Yin (2014) recommends the study of each case individually when using a multisite case study before generalizing the findings collectively. In other words, Yin (2014) prescribes that each case is presented individually before a collective presentation, and each case is both a phenomenology and a case study because there is the study of the phenomenon individually and finalized collectively as one multisite case study. The individual public manager is studied
individually and collectively in terms of KAP of LGBTQ+, presented on the micro, meso, and macro-level application of the Narrative Policy Framework.

Yin (2014) is compatible with McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan’s (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) Narrative Policy Framework particularly with the concept of “selective exposure,” which is according to McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) that, “Individuals select sources and information that are congruent with what they already believe” (p. 233). For instance, I expected to find a predominantly faith-based ideology inspiring vision and value statements in the City of Holland than Kalamazoo or Grand Rapids, and thus justifies addressing both McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan’s (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014, p. 233) point on “selective exposure” and Yin’s (2014) qualitative methodological process that separates content individually before a collective presentation. In practice, city mission statements were evaluated and compared to determine whether “selective exposure” may be a credible issue or not. Similar agencies were compared within each municipal government to ensure a “fair comparison.” This phenomenological multi-site case study was interested in “selective exposure” in the policy environment in that knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) may be influencing policymaking that affects the LGBTQ+ community. This concept of “selective exposure” is one way that the Narrative Policy Framework can connect with the researcher’s objective in understanding the lived experiences of public managers as it relates to working with and creating policy that affects the LGBTQ+ community. This is due to the study of KAP and how selective exposure creates preconceived notions of an individual or group like the LGBTQ+ community (McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan, 2014, in Sabatier and Weible, 2014, p. 233). Furthermore, Yin’s (2014) process for individual presentation (i.e., individual interviews and
transcriptions) followed by case analysis (i.e., each city individually) and collective analysis (i.e., all three cases in the multisite case study) supports the “micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level policy analysis” prescribed by McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014, pp. 230-231).

Data Collection Overview

This phenomenological, case study approach used the interview method and artifacts for methods of data collection in order to understand how public managers approach LGBTQ+ policy, while this qualitative methodology used similar instrumentation as the Narrative Policy Framework (i.e., interviews, artifacts, observations, etc.). By understanding the KAP of public managers on the LGBTQ+ community, this provides an understanding of their approach while the NPF describes the political, social, and policy environment they are working in on an individual level. This provided the data to be derived from recorded transcripts. Artifacts included newspaper articles, meeting minutes or transcriptions of the content of public meetings, and other document that provided insights into how a municipality sees LGBTQ+ inclusion strategically and as part of its values. These artifacts were not used to identify public manager views as that is covered by the interview method. Furthermore, public managers often do not provide public statements like elected officials. The relationship between the interviews and the artifacts is that the interviews provide for the “approach” of public managers and their KAP towards LGBTQ+ policy and the artifacts provide for the environment they are operating in.

The artifacts are used to develop an understanding that can be expressed narratively to describe the policy environment (Baumgartner, Jones, and Wilkerson, 2011). The understanding
provided by artifacts is not limited strictly to the policy environment though, as artifacts might provide additional understanding of the values of a municipality as a whole. Furthermore, artifacts can provide a rich qualitative understanding that can link emergent themes from interviews with how consistently policies are or aren’t being applied. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then in-vivo codes were derived from the transcriptions. Why were in-vivo codes used? Coding provides a way to understand the qualitative relationship of the data that is collected. This collected data is used in a qualitative data analysis software package, in this case NVIVO, to provide a meaningful understanding of the collected data. In-vivo codes were identified from the transcription passage by selecting thematic words directly from the transcription. The similarity of these in-vivo codes were evaluated using the Jaccard Index, which is described in detail later in Chapter V. A table as Appendix G: Emergent Themes Table is provided showing the frequency of “emergent themes,” or in-vivo codes that are grouped together based on meaning and that are replicated by multiple participants’ transcriptions, to provide for data for analysis. This allows for findings to be presented and conclusions to be made, dependent upon what the emergent themes are.

Emergent themes are important to understand as this is the significance of qualitative research, and these emergent themes provide a broader contextual understanding that cannot be described with just strict quantitative data. This is consistent with conducting a phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994). The data is used comparatively in a case study with other cities as a frame for measurement comparison. The emergent themes of personal views in cities with LGBTQ+-inclusive policies was compared (i.e., similarities and differences in emergent themes) to the personal views in cities without LGBTQ+-inclusive policies.
The interview questions address specific research questions, and the interview questions along with the identified “Research Question target” is presented in Appendix A: Interview Protocol. Each participant was asked all the interview questions after the completion of the Statement of Informed Consent, and then their responses were recorded as a password-protected audio recording for transcription. Each audio recording was randomly applied a four-digit numeric code to anonymize each participant, and then stored in password-protected storage. Then, highlighting in-vivo codes took place for the extraction of key data to use comparatively when evaluating cities qualitatively. It is important to use multiple sources of data to capture not only the “big picture” of each case, but the way LGBTQ+ inclusion is perceived in each respective city. This is why artifacts were used to support the narrative of each municipality. Since a multi-site research design was used, this indicates that the data was used comparatively once it was collected, to evaluate the variation in the data (Creswell, 2013, pp. 253, 324-325). City websites provided links to meeting minutes, or protocol documents that are transcriptions of official meeting content, which provided the documents and artifacts needed in order to have data from multiple sources.

To collect interview data, contact information was compiled of 56 public managers and deputy public managers. 13 of the managers agreed to be interviewed and one manager withdrew their data from the research. Ultimately, 12 managers participated in the research. The contact information was compiled in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, with a column for identification of position titles in addition to name, email address, and phone number. This helped me determine which individuals to interview. In terms of the actual data, the data was triangulated by interview data, newspaper data (statements from public officials on LGBTQ+ inclusion), and various
artifacts including meeting minutes in the NVIVO program in order to have a firm understanding of the data collected and the emergent themes that are derived from the data. The qualitative data analysis software that I used, in this case NVIVO, assisted with data triangulation and organization of data into a database. While the focus is on public managers, their experiences with the phenomenon, and their lived experiences in working with the LGBTQ+ community, the supplemental artifact data (i.e., newspaper articles that includes quotes from public officials, meeting minutes, and any other data that can provide a foundation for qualitative findings) provided a richer presentation of LGBTQ+ inclusiveness in each respective municipality.

Data Collection Process by Research Question

This section describes the data that was collected in relation to each research question to provide a more organized and concise presentation. A more complex and detailed presentation of the data is available in Appendix F for Artifacts and Appendix I for Interview Questions. This section corresponds with the Chapter V: Data Analysis and Findings presentation of findings based on the Research Question. The following research questions were used to collect data regarding the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of public managers as it relates to the LGBTQ+ community:

*RQ1: What are the beliefs and attitudes of public managers toward the LGBTQ+ community?*  
The required data to answer this research question is provided through the following interview questions, in the order that these questions were asked to each public manager (See Appendix A: Interview Protocol).
1. What do you identify as the top priorities strategically for your city and why?
2. What is your city’s roadmap for diversity and inclusiveness?
3. What is your definition of equality? What is your definition of equity? What does “LGBTQ+ Equity” mean?
4. In what areas does the LGBTQ+ community lacks equity or may face some disparities?
5. What policies do you know of that promote LGBTQ+ inclusion (in addition to any nondiscrimination ordinances) in your city?
6. How familiar are you with the LGBTQ+ movement overall?
7. Do you know any LGBTQ+ staff members, past and/or present, and what is your experience working with them? Has the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced your department’s operations?
8. What are a few areas your city can improve on in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusiveness?
9. Does your department work with or collaborate with LGBTQ+-serving organizations, such as nonprofit organizations? Tell me about this experience.
10. How do you receive news and information for learning purposes? How do you communicate in your department?
11. Does your department have meetings that discuss diversity and inclusion?
12. Does the city have a support group for LGBTQ+ employees? Tell me about this experience.
13. Does government have a place in promoting LGBTQ+ rights? Why or why not?
14. As a scenario, hypothetically speaking: What would your reaction be if an anti-gay hate group showed up to town to protest your city’s nondiscrimination ordinance that provides
protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment, and public accommodations?

15. What would your reaction be if a longtime employee of the city serving at your department announces that they are transgender and will start coming to work as the gender they identify with?

16. What would your reaction be if a resident of your city comes into your office to tell you that they just went to their car and found the offensive word “faggot” spray painted on their car after having been parked in the city’s parking garage?

17. In your current role, what would you do if your employees were to deny a marriage license or type of public service on the basis of LGBTQ+ status on the basis of a “violation of the employee’s personal deeply held religious beliefs”?

RQ2: What ordinances and policies do each municipality have that affect the LGBTQ+ community? To what extent do these personal beliefs and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community differ from organizational policies and laws, such as nondiscrimination ordinances?

The required data to answer this research question is provided through the interview questions that are in the prior research question section and in Appendix A and it is provided from secondary data (i.e., artifacts, data that is not collected by the me that originated from other sources). It should be determined whether or not each case, or municipality, has a nondiscrimination ordinance. This information is already known by me. I determined whether or not there have been advancements to ordinances such as additional policies supporting the LGBTQ+ community and whether there are threats to policies such as attempts to overturn
policies that protect the LGBTQ+ community. Each case is different, as Grand Rapids has a nondiscrimination ordinance enacted in 1994 by public body, Kalamazoo has a nondiscrimination ordinance enacted by voters at the ballot box in 2009, and Holland considered a nondiscrimination ordinance and then rejected it through a majority vote of the public body in 2011.

*RQ4: Do these personal beliefs and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community differ by the presence of LGBTQ+ departmental staff?*

The required data to answer the fourth research question comes exclusively from interview questions (See Appendix A). This requires the public manager to identify whether or not there are LGBTQ+ employees in their department that they personally know of. Given that the LGBTQ+ community is an “invisible group,” the only way this information can be gathered is through recollection by the manager of the “social dynamics of the office” (i.e. some employees are “Out” as LGBTQ+, some choose to not identify their sexual orientation and gender identity to coworkers, and/or the manager may know through conversation or observation that an employee is LGBTQ+). The public manager might have some knowledge on whether or not certain employees have identified themselves as LGBTQ+.
RQ5: If there is a difference in LGBTQ+ departmental staff member presence, what is the nature of this difference across departmental units? Why is it different across departmental units?

In order to answer the fifth research question, I compared the responses of public managers to identify any meaningful qualitative variation in responses provided for interview questions relating to “LGBTQ+ departmental staff member presence.” The presence (or lack of presence) of LGBTQ+ staff members was identified in the interview questions. This required the participant to know a member of the LGBTQ+ community. This can be determined by simply asking the public manager if they know of any LGBTQ+ employees in their department. If they don’t know of any LGBTQ+ employees in their department, they can be asked if they suspect that they have any and what obstacles those employees have in the workplace. The LGBTQ+ community, for the most part, is considered an “invisible minority group” because there are not physical characteristics (i.e., skin color, gender perception, etc.) to identify a member of the minority group. It could be argued that those that are transgender or queer undercut this argument because an individual “could possibly” identify someone as transgender as compared to gender binary conformist. This variable accounts for this limitation because it is based on whether the public manager knows a LGBTQ+ staff member based on that staff member being “Out,” or the staff member verbally expressing their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity. This eliminates the “well I think this person is gay” or “they look transgender” aspect, and instead relying on objective identification by the employee.
RQ6: Do public managers understand the issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community, and what are some ways public managers work with the LGBTQ+ community?

The essence of the fifth research question gauges the understanding of LGBTQ+ issues by the public administrators, and the research question will be answered through the interview method. Interview questions that were asked are specifically tailored to address the fifth research question. The transcript of the interview is analyzed to gain an understanding of whether public managers understand the issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. Does the administrator specifically know the dynamics of the working relationship of LGBTQ+ nonprofits and the city’s community relations commission? This requires knowledge or awareness of LGBTQ+ issues. For instance, is the public manager familiar with the protected classes of the city’s nondiscrimination ordinance? Does the manager have a degree of historical knowledge of the LGBTQ+ movement? Does the public manager understand holidays and cultural events of the LGBTQ+ community? What if a transgender person asks if the city has a gender-neutral bathroom? Does the manager know about the locations of such bathrooms?

Cognizance of legal and community issues is addressed through interview questions that address Research Question #6, and whether the public manager understands the legal and community challenges affecting the LGBTQ+ community, their LGBTQ+ staff members, and organizations that may communicate or partner with the public manager’s department. This is to understand how the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of public managers and their staff towards the LGBTQ+ community may be affecting administrative and policy decision-making. The collection of documentation, archival records, and artifacts is a key component for understanding
the cognizance of legal and community issues variable. Artifacts, including meeting minutes, newspaper articles, public statements, and video clips, provide for a richer understanding of public managers and their staff’s cognizance of legal and community issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. Documentation, archival records, and artifacts can provide an understanding of the environment in which a public manager and their staff operate (i.e., the political environment).

RQ7: How do political, religious, and social environments affect municipal policies that impact the LGBTQ+ community?

Research Question #7 is geared towards understanding the factors of the policy environment that affect the overall inclusiveness of the municipality. These factors include the influence of religion, gender, political influence, and other areas. This is specifically an application of the Narrative Policy Framework to understand the policy environment that public managers are operating in, and whether or not public managers are cognizant of LGBTQ+ issues may be affected by some of the external factors of the policy environment. The application of the Narrative Policy Framework as a micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level analysis using the guide by Schneider, Ingram, and Deleon’s (2014) is provided in “Chapter VI: Application of the Narrative Policy Framework.” This allows for an understanding of each level of the policy environment, and then provides for a case analysis of each city individually and collectively.
Data Collection Procedures

The first phase of data collection consisted of eight interviews that took place from March 13, 2019 to March 29, 2019. The second phase of data collection consisted of the final four interviews, and that took place from April 19, 2019 to May 7, 2019. Altogether, there were five interviews from Grand Rapids, two interviews from Holland, and five interviews from Kalamazoo. It should be noted that Holland had fewer interviews due to the fact that it has a smaller government, thus fewer municipal managers available to interview. All municipal managers’ identities are confidential for this study.

My goal was to reach a total of 18 interviews, including 12 municipal managers and 6 managers of connected organizations (i.e., hybrid nonprofits that have governmental oversight). It appeared that there was some initial opposition to the research by some prospective participants. Ultimately, I decided that 12 total interviews would allow for reaching a point of data saturation, especially because “hybrid” government/nonprofit managers were excluded. I chose to focus on municipal managers at the local level only and excluded nonprofit managers in favor of a narrower definition of a “public manager.” I gauged whether data saturation, an important component to measure the trustworthiness of qualitative research, would be met with 12 interviews. I found that some thematic elements were being replicated after only four interviews. Each successive interview after the initial four interviews supported that data saturation was met with the conclusion of 12 completed interviews. Additionally, the usage of 12 interviews is justified based on Creswell (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2018). I recorded notes or impressions after four interviews, eight interviews, and 12 interviews to understand the data that was being collected, as it was being collected.
I recorded information on each interview that is displayed in “Appendix E: Summary of Interview Data.” This information includes the participant ID number to prevent name disclosure, the city each participant was in, the audio total time, the transcript number of pages, and the minutes of audio per page. 13 total interviews were collected. One interview was discarded at the request of the participant after the completion of the interview. There was an attempt to try to keep the data, but the participant requested that the data again be discarded. I complied with the request and the data was excluded. At the conclusion of data collection, the discarded interview left me with 12 total interviews. The Informed Consent document was signed by each participant. The one discarded interview illustrates that LGBTQ+ based research is still controversial or sensitive. There is still the instance that someone can be married in a same-sex wedding ceremony on Friday and be terminated from their employment on Monday due to discrimination.

Altogether, the data in “Appendix E: Summary of Interview Data” consisted of 12 interviews for a total of 448 minutes, or seven hours and 28 minutes of total audio. The audio was transcribed as 104 pages of transcripts. The average interview time for Grand Rapids was 38 minutes, Holland was 46.5 minutes, and Kalamazoo was 33 minutes. The participation was voluntary and occurred at a point after the participant signed the Informed Consent document approved by the HSIRB (See Appendix C: Informed Consent). The participation was not compensated to ensure compliance with local government policies.
Data Analysis

Process and Procedures

After the data was collected, the data was analyzed using the NVIVO software package. The names of the participants were removed from the interview transcripts and assigned a four-digit code for each interview transcript. The transcripts were identified based on each case (i.e., Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo). No other identifiable information was assigned to the interview data. Each artifact was labeled based on the source (i.e., online newspaper name or website title) and the type of data (i.e., Action Plan, Meeting Minutes, etc.). This information is separated into 832 total in-vivo codes that were further reduced into 18 classifications, based on similarity. The Jaccard Index was used to identify similar codes that could be grouped together. The Jaccard Index was not used definitively, but simply used to help identify codes that are similar. Codes were grouped together based on Jaccard Index and whether or not codes had a similar definition and contextual basis (i.e., “openness” and “welcoming” are similar in definition and context). Both “welcoming” and “openness” had greater than 70 percent similarity on the Jaccard Index, have similar definitions, and were applied on the same contextual basis in the interviews (QSR International, 2020).

The simplicity of 18 code groups compared to 832 codes provides for a more generalizable understanding of the data. Additionally, by grouping all of the codes into 18 code groups, this allows for the identification of emergent themes that are in the single digits, seven in this case. The data would not be relatable if there were 50-60 emergent themes. The emergent themes provide a “big picture” of the qualitative data and the policy environment. The individual public manager is in essence an input in the wider policy environment, as is each stakeholder.
For the Interview and Artifact data, all data was separated into three cases: Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. Artifact data was not provided with in-vivo codes, but rather labeled and examined directly from within NVIVO. The reason for this is the KAP of municipal managers is being understood from the data, while the artifacts help describe the policy environment. A concise classification and description of the Artifact data helps to inform the policy environment.

NVIVO provides auto-coding, which was used initially to examine the various codes to provide me with an understanding of the types of codes that would be displayed. However, manual coding enhances specificity. Auto-coding provided for individual in-vivo codes and that was separated from the manual coding. Auto-coding was also done by Interview Question for convenience in examining the data. The benefit to using both automated and manual processes and procedures provides for a more comprehensive analysis. As an example, I know that five out of the 12 managers discussed the code “education” and nine out of 12 managers mentioned a “LGBTQ+ community center,” and this would help address RQ6 to understand how public managers work with the LGBTQ+ community or their level of awareness of LGBTQ+ issues.

The data is analyzed and organized in several ways. First, there are Reflections that describe the data and thematic elements at three separate time intervals (i.e., every four interviews). Next, a Historical Analysis is completed and summarized, with a more detailed description in Appendix H: Historical Description. Findings on Religion and Gender/Politics are detailed next. Then, the analyzed data is presented separately as Interview Findings and Artifact Findings, with a lengthy description of interview data in Appendix I and a concise summary of artifacts in Appendix F. Next, findings are discussed by research question, followed by
“significant statements” and “emergent themes.” A summary of “Expected Findings” was introduced in the next section in this chapter, which is then updated after data analysis (i.e., “after the findings are found”) in Chapter V to compare expected findings with actual outcomes. Data analysis is then completed with the presentation of a three-city case profile as “Case Profile Analysis,” along with a full table in Appendix J.

Expected Findings

The Narrative Policy Framework prescribes additional data sources to support analysis of the meso-level and macro-level policy implications. The interviews conducted satisfy the data source requirements by McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) for micro-level policy analysis (p. 230-231). In terms of newspaper articles and types of artifacts used, the data includes “significant statements” that were made in communication by officials. This type of data includes quotes from both elected and appointed officials for additional in-vivo codes to understand perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community, whereas the interviews are specifically focused on appointed officials and the information they present to the questions that are asked. The rationale is to provide a macro-level understanding of the municipality and how “it sees inclusion.” The following expected outcomes (O1, O2, O3, O4) are formulated below and addressed in Chapter V: Data Analysis and Findings. These expected outcomes are not subject to a specific test like in a quantitative study (i.e., hypothesis testing) but serve as predictions for future findings. Interview data and artifacts are used specifically to “test” the expected outcomes.
O1: Public managers are persuaded (or perceptions are influenced) by organizational policy narratives like nondiscrimination ordinances.

- Are public managers persuaded by the narrative created by policies affecting the LGBTQ+ community within their particular city?
- Have managers found their views to be more inclusive since the adoption of nondiscrimination ordinances or from working in the environment where inclusion is strategically prioritized?

O2: Public managers do not consider diversity and inclusion a strategic priority.

- Public managers likely have more pressing issues facing their cities and would not rank diversity and inclusion as a top priority.

O3: Public managers do not understand the issues facing the LGBTQ+ community.

- Public managers may not understand LGBTQ+ issues because perhaps they are not engaged on this topic or they may not know someone that identifies as LGBTQ+.

O4: Staff member identification as LGBTQ+ enhances public manager knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues, and attitudes and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community overall.

- If staff members openly identify as LGBTQ+, then this assumes they have discussed LGBTQ+ issues with their managers.
Additionally, questions were asked as part of the interview to understand how public managers receive information, such as the news outlet type where they receive information. This is to understand Narrative Policy Framework components on “selective exposure” and “confirmation/disconfirmation bias” (McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan, 2014, in Sabatier and Weible, 2014, p. 233). Newspaper articles and artifacts provide a narrative understanding as it relates to the phenomenon of inclusion. Thus, this type of data was used for the municipality narrative and the significant statements sections of the Findings section.

An overall narrative or summary is presented individually for each city, while the phenomenon is grouped based on the themes. If there was a theme in one city that is not expressed in another city, this was noted individually with each case. In order to understand this procedurally, the aforementioned points on the usage of in-vivo coding were before the identification of emergent themes. These in-vivo codes were pulled directly from the interview transcripts. The artifacts (i.e., newspaper articles, meeting minutes, etc.) are presented separately (as available) for each city in a separate section. This is to ensure an organized presentation of each type of data and the following analysis.

It was expected that public managers in Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo will have knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community that are in alignment with that particular city nondiscrimination ordinance and other policies. It was expected that public managers in Holland will have knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community that differ with Holland’s nondiscrimination ordinance and other policies. In other words, the foundation for micro-analysis of the Narrative Policy Framework as applied to this case is whether or not there was or was not congruence of public managers’ knowledge,
attitudes, and perceptions with nondiscrimination ordinances and other organizational policy. The reason for this expectation is based on my understanding of the trends of educational attainment and the relationship with support for LGBTQ+ rights overall, understanding of federal government employees and their support for LGBTQ+ rights and how this might differ from local government employees, and an understanding of the historical nature (i.e., founding of Holland, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo) of these three cities. It was expected that departments with a staff member that openly identifies as LGBTQ+ have an emergent theme that is supportive of diversity and inclusiveness of the LGBTQ+ community. It was expected that public managers of a city overall that has LGBTQ+ diversity support groups will identify with an emergent theme that is supportive of diversity and inclusiveness of the LGBTQ+ community. I expected there to be variation in the qualitative findings in “direct government roles” (i.e., public manager department, within primary government) compared to “auxiliary government roles” (i.e., hybrid organizations, nonprofits that do the work of local government) due to the fact that many hybrid organizations are staffed with business leaders in the community whereas government roles are generally career public administrators. It was expected to find that public managers overall are becoming more cognizant of issues and challenges facing the LGBTQ+ community, but some of the emergent themes identified a disconnect with the LGBTQ+ community (i.e., public managers may have a view that federal law provides protections to the LGBTQ+ community in employment when it in fact did not until June 2020).
Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are concerns that were addressed as the concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Since the 1980s, qualitative research has identified validity and reliability through the concept of trustworthiness. Before this period, the theoretical foundations of this research were based in the studies of two primary theorists, Edmund Husserl and his student Martin Heidegger. Creswell and Poth (2018) summarize the prior qualitative methodological frameworks and identify credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as the four key areas to establish trustworthiness. In process and practice, there must be: (1) Deep saturation- Is the data replicated from one interview to the next that allows for the identification of emergent themes? (2) Epoché or bracketing- Personal bias must be set aside by the researcher/interviewer, which was performed by taking notes and reflection on the data as it was collected and making sure to put personal bias aside. (3) Triangulation- Using primary and secondary data together to develop a more comprehensive understanding (i.e., using Action Plans and various artifacts to understand what’s going on “on the ground”). (4) Member Checking- Each transcript was extracted from a recording, and the written transcript was triple-checked for accuracy.

After I transcribed each recording, I sampled each interview randomly to ensure that there was 100 percent accuracy between the audio and transcript. Triangulation is focused on credibility, as is member checking (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Member checking was not used as there is transparency in the process from the beginning to the end of the research and research involving vulnerable or marginalized populations like LGBTQ+ may not advance validity and trustworthiness, especially in an age of politically correct responses (Gray and Jones, 2016;
Hallett, in Midgley, Danaher, and Baguley, 2013). Furthermore, Gray and Jones (2016) is an application of the Sabatier and Weible’s (2014) Narrative Policy Framework that uses methodology from Creswell (2013). Triangulation was used with a thick description, an accuracy check, audit trail, a transparent process, and reflexivity to ensure trustworthiness. The audit trail is maintained through recordkeeping, a diary or phase reflections to ensure reflexivity, recordings, transcripts in NVIVO, and maintaining a period of three to five years of keeping all data. (5) Consistency- The exact same questions were asked to each participant and probing was used where necessary for clarity (Korstjens and Moser, 2018).

To establish validity and reliability of the incorporation of the Narrative Policy Framework, the framework was precisely followed and applied based on micro, meso, and macro policy levels. This framework was followed in-depth and consistent with the guidelines in Sabatier and Weible (2014). These guidelines include assessing policy narrative core elements (i.e., setting, characters, plot, and moral), identifying core assumptions, and the analysis on three levels (i.e., micro, meso, and macro). These guidelines are applied in Chapter VI. Yin (2014) was used, which provides a different presentation than Creswell and Poth (2018). Additionally, multiple versions of Creswell’s book, including Creswell (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2018), were used to ensure that the methodological considerations were updated and applied to this study. According to McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible, 2014), the Narrative Policy Framework specifically uses interviews and transcripts at the micro-level (i.e., local public managers), “written texts, speeches, and videos,” at the meso-level, and “historical analysis, American political development, archives, secondary sources, and original artifacts” at the macro-level (p. 231). All of these data collection methods, such as interviews and artifacts,
are explicitly stated in Creswell (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2018) for the conduction of a phenomenological case study. This allows both a study of NPF and phenomenological case study to be used as one method, thus enhancing the validity and reliability of this study.

Yin (2014) identified four important considerations for data analysis. First, the concept of “construct validity” outlines that multiple sources of evidence are present to create a chain of evidence. Second, internal validity is supported through pattern matching, logic models, and explanations that counter alternative presentations of the data. For instance, a process that identifies emergent themes through in-vivo coding allows for the data to be valid, meaningful, and useful. Third, external validity is satisfied through the usage of theory in single-case studies and replication logic in multiple case studies. In this case, replication logic is used, which emphasizes whether we can logically expect our findings in three cities to replicate among others that are public managers in municipal government because they are similarly situated in certain characteristics including values and population size. This is not to say that it will replicate based on data analysis as in quantitative research, but rather the case could be made that it could be reasonably expected to replicate. Finally, reliability is established by following case study protocol and developing a case study database. The database is satisfied using a qualitative data analysis software package, in this case NVIVO.

Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 254-255), through the evaluation of prior qualitative frameworks, identifies that validity and reliability is established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These four focus areas for validity and reliability were expressed across multiple frameworks, thus providing a solid foundation for ensuring validity and reliability. Credibility was established through triangulation of interviews
and artifacts during data analysis. Data triangulation included interviews at different times of the day, in different phases (Phase One- Part One, Phase One-Part Two, and Phase Two), multiple municipalities, and with different attributes or characteristics of the sample (i.e., male and female managers, different cultural backgrounds, and different levels of managers in different departments). Multiple theoretical frameworks, historical analysis, and multiple sources of data established method triangulation (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Given that purposive sampling is to be used, this should ensure transferability because of rich and thick descriptions using maximum variation in the three cities that are different on the basis of geographic location, population size, politics, and other attributes. The software program NVIVO performs both manual and automatic functions which reduce errors, thus enhancing dependability.

Triangulation of data, member checking during the interviews, and an in-depth description of in-vivo code grouping and the process to identify and classify emergent themes are examples of ways to ensure confirmability of this research. This research used triangulation and reflexivity extensively along with multiple theoretical frameworks (Shenton, 2004; Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules, 2017). Multiple transcript checks were performed, and member checking was not necessary as the entirety of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interview transcripts and artifacts were triangulated to understand the entire policy environment.

Data was triangulated to ensure the credibility of this study, which is an important component of Trustworthiness. An example of such triangulation is Holmes and DeBoer (2019, in Lobo, A., Muyskens, C., & Carlson, K., 2019), which showed that the Mayor and a City Council candidate published a joint flyer which emphasized that the LGBTQ+ community’s invisibility was grounds for denying them nondiscrimination protections under City of Holland
policies. This was distributed around the same time as when the Detroit LGBTQ+ police liaison was providing LGBTQ+ sensitivity training to the police department, which is according to the Holland public managers (See Appendix I, IQ4- Holland). This example used contextual information from an artifact that was then triangulated with the interview data, and thus the Mayor of Holland was providing conflicting communication, noting the “Influence” emergent theme that specifies that there are powerful political forces that are influencing policy and management (See Appendix G). This contextual information about Holland was triangulated with Grand Rapids, noting Hicks (2019). Hicks (2019) discussed the human rights ordinance that was adopted in the City of Grand Rapids. Thus, the Holland Mayor was communicating a different message than the appointed public managers in Holland and Grand Rapids. This is just one instance of triangulation of interview and artifact data.

Previously, the issue of a participant providing a “politically correct” interview response was mentioned. There are methodological considerations to address to ensure that the interview questions are appropriate and not limiting. The goal of the interview questions is to not ask a direct question on the participant’s feelings, but to provide insight into their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community. For instance, questions about the diversity and inclusion strategy may provide information on what the participant knows or doesn’t know in this area, and it can be used to determine the consistency of policy enforcement across departments. There were some questions that were direct questions, and other questions that were more indirect. The direct questions were posed later in the interview to mitigate any potential initial opposition to the research. If a participant is opposed to the research, they might not understand that LGBTQ+ research is taking place from the description of the research. They
would then possibly provide a “politically correct” response. An “extreme level of opposition” to the research would then lead to both a “politically correct” response and a request to end the interview or later withdraw collected data.
CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Chapter Overview

This chapter begins with a detailed description of the interview data that was collected to summarize, understand, and group in-vivo codes. Each group code was described based on a numeric understanding for grouping individual codes by using the Jaccard Coefficient, which is a measure of code similarity (QSR International, 2020). After understanding the group codes, then I discussed how each interview question will be applied to each research question. A reflection of each part of Phase One and Phase Two takes place. After the interview data is fully organized and understood, then the analysis of the history of each of the three cities and social and political factors were discussed. This analysis consists of the “Historical Analysis,” “The Influence of Religion,” and “Gender and Politics” sections of this chapter. This provides the basis for understanding the policy environment before discussing the findings based on each interview question. Appendix I: Findings by Interview Questions section discusses the findings for each question and each public manager in each of the three cities, presented individually. After the discussion of the Findings by Research Questions, then a summary of secondary data artifacts and secondary data findings occurs by each city, presented individually. To evaluate the primary and secondary data that was collected, the researcher must first bracket out any biases and personal experiences. Then, the “Significant Statements” made by public managers in each of the three cities are presented collectively. Based on all of the data presented, “Emergent Themes” were developed and supported by “Appendix G: Emergent Themes Table.”
Summary of Primary Data Collected

There were approximately 832 coding references across the 12 interview files. The 832 coding references ranged from one word to a paragraph, or even a whole passage as long as it related to the content of each individual code. The 832 coding references were classified into 136 different code groups. The 136 code groups included codes that were each of the actual research questions. The codes in each research question could be included in another area, such as the codes “equality” and “equity.” There were codes specifically for each research question and there were codes that were specifically for each interview question. There was no specific limit to the number of codes that could provide as a descriptor. As a hypothetical example, five different codes could describe the word “welcoming” or “openness.” Ultimately, the term “welcoming” has a different meaning than the word “openness.” “Openness” would describe an individual’s willingness to embrace change or someone from a different background. The concept of “openness” is more behavioral, whereas the concept of “welcoming” is based on specific action. Given that both terms are relatively similar in definition, even if there is a perceived difference in the meaning of each word, the terms “openness” and “welcoming” as codes were grouped with “safe space” and “sensitivity” as a singular, code group of “Welcoming Environment.” Any reference that was determined to promote a “welcoming environment,” whether it be more personal belief-based, behavioral, or action based, was classified as the singular, code group of “Welcoming Environment.”

There are other instances of code groups. The code groups include the following, in no particular order of importance:

1. Basic Needs
2. Characteristics
3. Communication
4. Education
5. Equality and Equity
6. Feelings
7. LGBTQ+ Community Center
8. Other
9. Policy
10. Public Relationship
11. Research Question Based
12. Service
13. Staff Training
14. Strategy
15. Transgender
16. Visibility
17. Welcoming Environment
18. Youth

Table 2: In-Vivo Code Groups and Classifications

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<tr>
<th>18 In-Vivo Code Groups of 136 Code Classifications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
These 18 code groups describe 136 code classifications. As aforementioned, each of the 136 code classifications may have multiple references, which is evident with the total of 832 coding references. The following are descriptions of each code group:

1. “Basic Needs” includes codes that involve access and mobility, childcare, food, healthcare, housing, and income. Access/mobility and housing were the most common codes in this group.
2. “Characteristics” include identifiable characteristics like age, gender, height, weight, sexual orientation, and other classifications that would be a protected class.
3. “Communication” involved whether there was a reference to a communication silo or whether there was incorrect terminology. Communication codes involve internal organization communication, and these codes correspond with the particular interview question on how the organization communicates. Communication could have been discussed at any point during the interview, depending on each participant’s response. This code allows all information involving communication to be represented within this code group.
4. “Education” as a code group involved instances when the public manager stated, “we need to educate more on this” or “we should educate our staff on this,” or another instance in which education was used.
5. “Equality and Equity” pertain to the interview questions focused on defining equality and equity, as a way to group the responses of each interview participant.
6. “Feelings” was used when discussing “fear,” “hate,” and “morals and values,” which is relevant in which there was an emotional response.
7. “LGBTQ+ Community Center” is a code group used to group every instance of when Out on the Lake Shore, OutFront, Grand Rapids Pride Center, or any mention of a LGBTQ+ community center occurred.

8. “Other” is a code group to group any coding reference that did not fit in any of the other code groups.

9. “Policy” included any reference to the terms “discriminatory policy,” “history” (policy history), “inclusive policy,” and “ordinance enforcement.”

10. “Public relationship” included any code that was about government working with nonprofit organizations, the “community,” “public engagement,” “public trust,” and similar codes.

11. “Research Question Based” included any coding reference that directly answered any of the Research Questions. For instance, “RQ FAMILIAR NO” and “RQ FAMILIAR YES” were used when a public manager stated that they were familiar with LGBTQ+ issues in any way or familiar with a LGBTQ+ support group or another policy or instance involving LGBTQ+.

12. “Service” was a code involving the government’s role in providing a public service. There were twice the references for “service delivery” as “service disparity.” Any reference to services or providing services went under this code group.

13. “Staff Training” consisted of “diversity learning,” “diversity training,” and “staff training” codes.
14. “Strategy” includes municipal government components of strategic planning that were mentioned during the interviews in regard to the particular research question on strategy and whether or not diversity is part of the strategic plan.

15. “Transgender” includes any mention of the transgender community.

16. “Visibility” includes any reference to being “Out in the workplace,” “representation,” and “LGBTQ+ visibility.”

17. “Welcoming Environment” as a code group includes “openness,” “safe space,” “sensitivity,” and “welcoming” codes. This code group is discussed extensively in the discussion regarding the Jaccard Coefficient (QSR International, 2020).

18. “Youth” as a code group includes any mention of youth in terms of “youth development,” “LGBTQ+ youth,” and “bullying.”

The rationalization for the selection of the 18 code groups is through the usage of “quantitative measures of association.” Quantitative measures of association mean a similarity coefficient. NVIVO provides three quantitative measures of association to describe the relationship or association of qualitative data. All three quantitative measures of association will allow the research to arrive with similar conclusions based on the similarity of qualitative data codes. For the purpose of deciding on a quantitative measure of association, the Jaccard Index was selected for the purposes of identifying similar codes and grouping those codes into a condensed selection of 18 code groups. The Jaccard Index is also known as the Jaccard Similarity Coefficient or simply the Jaccard Coefficient. It is used for the purposes of determining the similarity and differences of a sample set, which are codes in this instance.
A Jaccard Coefficient value of “1” or 1.00 indicates “perfect similarity.” A Jaccard Coefficient value of “0” or 0.00 indicates “perfect dissimilarity.” There is no relationship or association of codes with a 0.00. There is a perfect relationship or association of codes with a 1.00. The target that is established by the researcher for grouping a code is a Jaccard Coefficient value of 0.70 to 1.00. This indicates a high-level of similarity. Given that the Jaccard Coefficient value is used in this instance to assist the researcher in grouping data codes into data groups, a Jaccard Coefficient value of 0.70 means that there is a high level of similarity and thus the two codes should be grouped. A 0.30 to 0.69 indicates a moderate level of similarity and thus the two codes could be grouped if there’s no other obvious group pairing. A Jaccard Coefficient of less than 0.30 indicates a low level of similarity and there is likely no compatibility between the two codes. A code regarding “food” or “housing” obviously has no relationship or association with a “welcoming environment,” based on the definition of what a welcoming environment means (i.e., behavioral, individual action). Surely, there are “behaviors” surrounding food or housing in terms public benefits, but it is not a behavior and more of an access and opportunity issue. In this context, “food” and “housing” could not be possibly related to “welcoming environment,” and this is further evidenced by a less than 0.30 for the Jaccard Coefficient. See Table 3: Jaccard Coefficient below.
Table 3: Jaccard Coefficient

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Jaccard Coefficient</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAX</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>0.70 - 0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>0.30 - 0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>0.01 - 0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIN</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the interest of understanding how the Jaccard Coefficient was used, it is not an absolute. In other words, the researcher could completely disregard the Jaccard Coefficient by understanding the qualitative data and referring to the codes. The Jaccard Coefficient was specifically used as a guide to determine the similarity of codes to assist me with grouping codes. This allows the matter to be strictly a qualitative exercise rather than a qualitative exercise with mixed methods. I knew the codes “welcoming” and “openness” would have a high value for the Jaccard Coefficient. The value is .778, which indicates a high level of similarity. Obviously, “Welcoming Environment” as a group code will have a 1.00 when compared with itself. “Welcoming” and “safe space” have a Jaccard Coefficient of .714. Again, this is a high level of similarity and rightfully so, as a “safe space” is required to have a “welcoming environment.” People are not going to want to be part of the environment if they feel they are in “danger.” “Welcoming,” “openness,” and “safe space” are thus grouped as “Welcoming Environment.” The Jaccard Coefficient changes when “welcoming” is not the first code, or Code A. There is a lesser level of similarity, but still moderate, when comparing “safe space” and “openness.” Still, these three codes should be grouped together because each of the three codes help define “Welcoming Environment.” There is still a moderate level of similarity at 0.375 when adding
“sensitivity” into the group. “Sensitivity” is much more closely associated at 0.50 with “safe space” than “welcoming” at 0.375. The researcher must ultimately decide whether each code should be grouped or not be grouped with another code. Using a visual example, the Jaccard Coefficient is comparable with the gravitational pull of the Earth versus the gravitational pull of another planet (assuming the Earth’s moon is the “code”). Does this code classify better with Earth or does this code classify better with Mars? Codes that have lesser values for the Jaccard Coefficient or codes that have no discernable grouping were classified as the “Other” group code. Ultimately, qualitative data analysis is about synthesis. What do these codes, the interview passages, and supplemental/secondary sources detail that provide the “big picture” to describe the policy environment?

Understanding the Research Questions as Applied to Interview Questions

Research Question #1, or RQ1, is applied to Interview Questions #1-4 and #13. Research Question #2 and #3, or RQ2, data comes from various research questions and Appendix J: Case Profile, which is basically a summary of the profiles of each city. Research Question #4, or RQ4, is applied to Interview Questions #1-4. Various interview questions are applied to Research Question #2. Interview Question #7 is applied to Research Questions #4 and #5. Part of Interview Question #3 and Interview Questions #4-9 are applied to Research Question #6. Interview Questions #14-17, along with any notes on groups and their relationship with local government and notes on historical factors, are applied to Research Question #7.
Personal Experience with Phenomenon

This section involves trustworthiness implications for validity and reliability, and the following description (i.e., epoché) was completed before any data collection took place to provide for reflexivity in this research. I identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community as an “openly gay man.” I reside in a community in West Michigan that does not have protections for the LGBTQ+ community on the municipal and county levels. Michigan has some of the most archaic policies as it relates to LGBTQ+ inclusion. There are current efforts that are taking place to advance LGBTQ+ rights in the State of Michigan. There are no efforts currently to change municipal and county level LGBTQ+ protections where I reside. The Supreme Court of the United States expanded employment protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity being classified as sex discrimination in June 2020. This would presumably include housing and public accommodations protections, but still the protections are on the federal level. It is more difficult to pursue a remedy for discrimination when you have to go through the federal government as opposed to local or state government. This is a reality that many LGBTQ+ people live through.

Overall, I feel “included” in Kent County and identify more with Grand Rapids due to the level of inclusion experienced in Grand Rapids as compared to the township where I reside while writing this dissertation. I provided the same interview questions to public managers in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. This had no bearing on my identity as a resident of Grand Rapids, nor my past nonprofit activities in the cities of Grand Rapids and Holland. The interview was entirely structured with minimal clarification of the questions required due to the in-depth nature and specificity of the questions. Based on Husserl’s methodological considerations for
phenomenology, I “bracketed out” (i.e., epoché) his own experience of inclusion or “being included” and did not consider his own level of inclusion during the interviews with public managers in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo (Creswell, 2013; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994, p. 22). Additionally, I understand that LGBTQ+ persons have led legal proceedings as they have research in the most objective sense (i.e., openly gay Judge Vaughn Walker in the Proposition 8 case). There is precedent for LGBTQ+ persons researching LGBTQ+ issues, such as my own prior research in Surfus (2013) and works with other LGBTQ+ practitioners and academicians.

**Researcher Notes on Data Collection**

In order to assess data saturation, interview data must be examined after it has been collected and transcribed to determine the point of data saturation and the eventual sample size. Data saturation will determine the appropriate sample size and replication of findings to ensure trustworthiness, or reliability and validity (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Phase One of data collection is divided into Part One and Part Two. Part One is comprised of Interviews #1-4. Part Two is comprised of Interviews #5-8. Phase Two of data collection is comprised of Interviews #9-12. I took notes or “a reflection” at the conclusion of Phase One: Part One, Phase One: Part Two and Phase Two. This process in phenomenology and case study methods is known as “journaling” (Peoples, 2020; Creswell, 2013; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).
Reflection of Phase One, Part One

Phase One: Part One of the interviews began on March 13, 2019 and ended on March 22, 2019. After the conclusion of the March 22, 2019 meeting, a research reflection of the first four interviews took place. This section addresses those observations, as a reflection of the researcher based on the data that was collected in the interviews. There was a focus on delivering services to the residents and “duty” of public service when confronted with a scenario that challenged providing a public service without discrimination. In Grand Rapids, there was a commitment to all forms of diversity and inclusiveness, including LGBTQ+ inclusiveness. There are forms of communication in the form of emails, training, and other activities, but there is miscommunication across the organization in terms of an LGBTQ+ employee resource group, LGBTQ+ policy, and other areas. There is a lack of an overall communication strategy on diversity and inclusiveness, based on the interviews.

Based on my reflection of the interview data, a theme in Holland was that the people of Holland do not “embrace people that are different than themselves,” which was stated in an interview with a public manager from Holland. However, people in Holland are presumed to be more inclusive of LGBTQ+ than other places in Ottawa County. It is evident that the managers are more supportive of LGBTQ+ inclusion than the people of Holland and surrounding communities in Ottawa County, which is based on City Council meetings and interviews with public managers in Holland. There are some terminology issues in both Grand Rapids and Holland, noting “LGBQ” was a reference in Holland when it should be “LGBTQ+” and “transgendered” as a reference in an interview in Grand Rapids. “Transgendered” is a term that is offensive or derogatory to those in the transgender community, as it stigmatizes the transgender
community as a condition or a disorder. However, there are generational differences as some older transgender people may use the term to describe themselves, while a younger generation may see “transgendered” as politically incorrect. Thus, “transgender” is a neutral term for public administrators to use as it is descriptive and generally not perceived as offensive (Steinmetz, 2014). The transgender community has been fighting the perception that those that are transgender are a “mental illness.” The American Psychological Association does not classify those identifying as transgender as having a mental illness simply for the fact that they are transgender. The American Psychological Association (2014) states that a “psychological state is considered a mental disorder only if it causes significant distress or disability” and that “many transgender people do not experience their gender as distressing or disabling,” although the DSM-5 has a controversial classification for “gender dysphoria” (p. 2).

It was found that based upon the interviews, there are no known LGBTQ+ employees in the Diversity and Inclusion office in Grand Rapids. Both Holland and Kalamazoo do not have a Diversity and Inclusion office. A Diversity and Inclusion office or a Chief Diversity Officer is much more likely in cities with larger populations and larger governments. A small government does not have the type of resources available to form such an office, due to a smaller budget.

I noted that there was a focus on public safety and community relations (specifically in Grand Rapids). I noted that there is an active civil rights investigation going on by the State of Michigan in the City of Grand Rapids as it relates to the City of Grand Rapids’ police department. I noted this “conversation” on race relations is on the minds of municipal managers, as they are quite focused on equity, representation, and equitable treatment.
In Holland, there appears to be more “opposition” or less of a willingness or openness to engage on the topic of diversity and inclusiveness. In Holland, one manager had significant reservations about the study and how the community would be perceived, but that manager ultimately participated in the study. In Holland, another manager did the study, but requested that their data be withdrawn from the inclusion in the study. Another manager signed the consent form, but never communicated back with me. I was able to finally schedule and complete this interview after nearly a two-month wait from the initial contact with the manager.

I noted that there are external political pressures that are quite “strong” in terms of money and influence in both cities. However, there is much more opposition from the residents of the City of Holland than the City of Grand Rapids. Both Holland and Grand Rapids have historically been perceived as “socially conservative” and as “strongholds for the Michigan Republican Party,” due in part to Grand Rapids being the hometown of Republican President Gerald R. Ford and having political influences of the DeVos family. In fairness, it should be noted that Gerald R. Ford was supportive of the LGBTQ+ community as President.

The residents of the City of Holland have much more influence on elected officials and their policy positions, while appointed managers seek to provide services to “all residents.” The presence of a nondiscrimination ordinance that includes sexual orientation and gender identity provides a perception of that community by the public as being inclusive or not being inclusive. Additionally, the presence of such a nondiscrimination ordinance provides legal protections to appointed public managers in that they are better able to argue that they are objectively implementing policy and providing services to “all residents.” How can a community like Holland provide services to “all residents” equitably and fairly when it has a nondiscrimination
ordinance that “opens the door to discrimination”? Largely, a nondiscrimination ordinance is about a reflection of that community’s values and how they want to be perceived by those that do not call that community their home.

While there was some initial opposition to the research by managers in Holland, all managers that were interviewed seemed to embrace the concept of diversity and inclusiveness, even for the LGBTQ+ community. They were all cognizant of their nondiscrimination ordinances and what that entails, including the perceptions by the community they serve and by those that don’t live in that community.

Reflection of Phase One, Part Two

Phase One, Part Two was the second set of four interviews that commenced on March 26, 2019 and concluded on March 29, 2019. As a reminder, each phase and each part are identical in terms of the interview questions asked and are merely used by the researcher to group data and describe the data collected. At the conclusion of the March 29, 2019 meeting, a research reflection of the second set of four interviews took place. Near the end of Phase One, Part One interviews, there were some private sector experiences that were brought into the public sector by managers, particularly in addressing transgender rights in the workplace and how to deal with harassment and intimidation of LGBTQ+ status. This theme continued in Phase One, Part Two for the second set of four interviews. Notably, only one manager in each set of four interviews had private sector experiences that were noted. Additionally, in Part Two there were three managers from Kalamazoo and one from Grand Rapids. The responses of the Kalamazoo managers provided some comparability in terms of the topics discussed based on being asked the
same questions. The focus in Kalamazoo was that diversity and inclusion was a key component of the new strategic plan, Imagine Kalamazoo 2025.

One interview was about modernizing procedures, such as technological concerns in providing core city services, and another interview was about modernizing processes to enhance equity and address systemic racism. Interestingly enough, the managers with the private sector experiences focused more on delivering transactional, modernized services. This pairs with a manager with a more conservative background potentially having similar views. In other words, a more conservative public manager, or a manager that has political views that align with conservatives, might be more service-focused as part of an efficiency and effectiveness focus in administration. A more progressive public manager might be focused on social equity concerns first, before the efficiency and effectiveness concerns. Political persuasion was not directly asked of the participants, and this is only an observation made based on information about political views that were provided in the interviews.

The Kalamazoo interviews were more focused on social equity concerns, while the interview in Grand Rapids in Phase One, Part Two was focused more on cost-effectiveness. In Grand Rapids, it was expressed that social equity issues and training were not on the level that they need to be in order to saturate the organizational culture. In other words, not all employees seemed to have the appropriate level of training in regard to social equity. Perhaps the most striking revelation of this set of four interviews is that only one out of four managers have competency or familiarity of the LGBTQ+ community. The managers seemed to be comfortable with the topic of LGBTQ+ issues, but they were not particularly familiar, or they had a LGBTQ+ employee that they went to for advice on LGBTQ+ issues. Even though the managers expressed
that they were not familiar with LGBTQ+ issues, there was a substantial focus that started to reveal the difficulty of living the experience as a LGBTQ+ person. Some of the areas expressed were discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and “social viciousness.” While the issues LGBTQ+ people face are likely not as widespread as they once were, some of the managers noted that the issues faced seemed to linger. One manager in the Phase One, Part Two group had similar thoughts and feelings as a manager in Phase Two as to how LGBTQ+ people are treated. The manager in Phase One, Part Two reflected on how LGBTQ+ people have been intimidated in the workplace in a private sector experience and some remarks residents made about efforts for the city to show LGBTQ+ inclusiveness, like a rainbow-colored crosswalk. This manager had both private and public sector experiences where intimidation or “social viciousness” occurred. It was noted that once people learn about LGBTQ+ people, meet LGBTQ+ people, and hear their stories about how they are treated that there is a rise in acceptance by the general public.

Reflection of Phase Two

Phase One and Phase Two are identical and used as a way to group data, describe the data as a reflection, and to separate the data into three equal sets of four interviews occurring during different scheduled times. Phase Two is used as a separate phase because there was a three-week break in between the first eight interviews and the last four interviews. Phase Two was the third and final set of four interviews that commenced on April 19, 2019 and concluded on May 7, 2019. The timing of the break between Phase One and Phase Two was simply coincidental, based on scheduling availability, and it was not planned strategically with methodological
considerations. It is important to note this break between Phase One and Phase Two provides a similar benefit in qualitative research like “bracketing” or epoché (Creswell, 2013; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). It allows the researcher to set aside previous interviews, biases, and other considerations to ensure more trustworthy qualitative research.

The most qualitatively rich example that was provided in Phase Two built upon a theme that was started in Phase One, Part Two regarding “social viciousness.” In Phase Two, a manager disclosed that a previous employee committed suicide based on how they were treated as a LGBTQ+ person. The manager became visibly upset and began crying, and it was expressed that this experience helped shape the manager’s views is support of LGBTQ+ people. This was based on just the general anti-LGBTQ+ environment which has changed in Grand Rapids. It was not attributed to treatment in employment with the City of Grand Rapids as an organization.

In this final set of four interviews as Phase Two, two managers were from Kalamazoo, one from Holland, and one from Grand Rapids. In Kalamazoo, the focus was on the implementation and enforcement of Kalamazoo’s nondiscrimination ordinance that includes LGBTQ+ protections. The strategic plan was discussed and how diversity and inclusion is a part of that. A theme in Grand Rapids and Holland was housing and affordability, as part of the larger topic of “economic vitality.” The role of the new City Manager and how that could impact racial equity was mentioned by a manager from Grand Rapids. Racial equity was a focus of the manager from Holland, as was the case in Grand Rapids. The theme of the role of education and how that impacts diversity was brought up again in the Holland interview. Throughout Phase One and Phase Two, there was a focus on “diversity education” being a theme. Throughout Phase Two, there was a theme that focused on learning based on what worked in other
communities. For instance, Holland learned on LGBTQ+ issues in policing from Detroit. Grand Rapids appointed an African American City Manager who has helped with the city’s issues regarding racial equity and justice. Kalamazoo learned about nondiscrimination ordinances from Ann Arbor, East Lansing, and other municipalities that already had LGBTQ+ protections. Finally, it was evident in Phase Two that LGBTQ+ rights were viewed more as an “economic issue” rather than a “human rights issue.” This is not to say that human rights issues were not valued and economic issues were the entire focus, but it seemed like the major concern was “How can LGBTQ+ rights benefit us?” rather than “Having LGBTQ+ rights is the right thing to do.”

Historical Analysis

A detailed history of the three cities in the study was outlined to better understand each city’s religious, cultural, political, and other factor implications as it relates to both its history, changes over time, and the modern policy environment. This provides for a richer qualitative understanding of the policy environment as part of the Narrative Policy Framework. Additionally, historical analysis is well-supported in the conducting of a phenomenological case study. Moustakas (1994) identifies that,

Dilthey (1976) believed that to understand human experience, in addition to description of the experience as such, it was necessary to study history and that studies of experience are dependent on historical groundings and on descriptions in order to form a whole.

(Moustakas, 1994, p. 8)
A detailed historical description is provided as Appendix H: Historical Description, which presents the history of Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo from the 19th century to the present. This provides useful information and insight into the historical foundations that have influenced the policy environment.

For the three cities, the historical analysis incorporated Baxter (1891), City of Grand Rapids (2017), City of Grand Rapids Economic Development (2020), City of Holland (1988), Holland, Michigan Area Visitors Bureau (2017), and Kalamazoo Public Library (2017). The historical background on LGBTQ+ issues involved Brooks (2015), Faderman (2016), and Richards (2014), which was presented in Chapter II: Literature Review. Efforts for nondiscrimination ordinances to protect the LGBTQ+ community started in the early 1970s, beginning with East Lansing, MI. East Lansing was the first city in the nation to have such an ordinance. In the three cities, the efforts began after the national march on Washington, D.C. for gay and lesbian rights at the end of the 1980s. In the three cities, ordinances were adopted in 1994 in Grand Rapids, 2009 in Kalamazoo, and 2020 in Holland. Based on the general historical description, much of the early settlers in the 19th century fled Rotterdam, Netherlands to escape religious persecution. This would explain why West Michigan has been conservatively religious. Politically, Grand Rapids is the home of Gerald R. Ford, a notable Republican President of the United States. This intersection of general history, religious history, political history, and LGBTQ+ history provides for a snapshot of environmental factors for LGBTQ+ policy in this confined, geographic region. This historical description provides contextual information that can help one better understand the policy environment on the macro-level. For instance, the narrative that religion has had an evolving view on homosexuality shows that this has led to policy
changes in support of the LGBTQ+ community. A detailed historical description can help one understand the policy inputs, the progression of policy change over time, and the factors that affect policy change (Baumgartner, Jones, and Wilkerson, 2011).

The Influence of Religion

While businesses have largely been able to influence LGBTQ+ rights and educational institutions have been known for progressive or liberal political leanings, another area of political influence would be religion. Religion has had a significant impact on life in West Michigan. The influence of religion in West Michigan is discussed in Baxter (1891) by stating that,

From its earliest settlement the churches have exerted a decided influence in forming the character of this community…It is gratifying to note that our leaders of the public and commercial affairs have generally been the stanch friends of the churches.

(Baxter, 1891, p. 279)

This quote from 1891 provides an understanding of the deep history of religion in this geographic region and how it has influenced policy over time. Additionally, the presence of religion in West Michigan can further be noted that there’s over 170 churches in Holland, which has a relatively small population by comparison. There are at least 13 churches in the main downtown area of Grand Rapids alone. Mack (2015), citing data from the Pew Research Center survey and the 2010 Religion Census, presents data on religious affiliation in West Michigan. 53 percent of Ottawa County (Holland) residents have religious affiliation. 55 percent of Kent County (Grand Rapids) residents have religious affiliation. By comparison, only 38 percent of Kalamazoo County residents have religious affiliation. While Kent County is “more religious”
than Ottawa County, Kent County denomination identification comes from more progressive denominations (i.e., UCC, Episcopalian, and Catholic) whereas Ottawa County identifies more with the conservative denominations (i.e., Christian Reformed Church, Reformed Church, and Protestant) (Mack, 2015).

The domination identification as it relates to each city, and whether ideological beliefs are progressive or conservative, has had a direct relationship with the presence of LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination ordinances. For instance, Holland does not have an LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance, and Holland is “less Catholic” and “more Reformed and Protestant.” The role of religion in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusion is reflected in the four faith-based colleges and universities in Grand Rapids. Aquinas College is more LGBTQ+ inclusive than Baptist-based Cornerstone University and Kuyper College in terms of policies affecting students and faculty. The history of religion and the LGBTQ+ community, and the lack of inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community in religious circles, is well-documented and these findings are consistent with prior findings. However, these findings provide an understanding of the policy environment as it relates to religious identification, and the role that religion likely plays in influencing departmental policy in local government as it relates to the LGBTQ+ community.

**Gender and Politics**

While gender of individual participants is not revealed in this study (as it relates to responses based on interview questions) as a safeguard to protect the identity of participants, there are some findings in regard to gender and politics. There was much more opposition in regard to participation in the research in the city of Holland. There are a lot of political and
religious elements. Holland is regarded or perceived as a conservative community in terms of the overall political ideology. Only two participants were involved in this study from Holland, compared to five for Grand Rapids and five for Kalamazoo. Grand Rapids is regarded as conservative, but progressive, while Kalamazoo is considered the most progressive politically of the three cities (i.e., LGBTQ+ identified Mayor and Vice Mayor). More male municipal managers participated in Kalamazoo than female municipal managers, and more female municipal managers participated in Grand Rapids than male municipal managers. It appears based on my observations of gender and politics that male municipal managers are more likely to participate in LGBTQ+ research in more progressive municipalities, but a larger sample would be required to provide a broader generalization.

Summary of Artifact Data

A variety of documents, or artifacts, were collected that are representative of Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. These artifacts are meant to be supplemental or secondary data to the interviews that were collected. These artifacts describe LGBTQ+ rights and the relationship of the LGBTQ+ community with municipal government. Additionally, these artifacts describe past policy efforts, including ballot measures, that have attempted to enhance the quality of life for the LGBTQ+ community particularly in terms of nondiscrimination policy.

41 artifacts in total were collected from March 2019 to November 2019. The age of artifacts varies, and the range of artifacts is approximately 32 years, from 1988 to present. The data collection of secondary data concluded on November 5, 2019 with the election loss of Holland Mayor Nancy DeBoer, a longtime opponent of the LGBTQ+ community, to its new
Mayor Nathan Bocks, an ally of the LGBTQ+ community who promised to adopt a nondiscrimination ordinance to protect the LGBTQ+ community. No data was collected after November 5, 2019 in regard to Holland and Kalamazoo, even though there is an effort underway as of December 18, 2019 to amend the nondiscrimination policy in Holland, Michigan. One artifact was collected in Grand Rapids after the November 5, 2019 date, which relates to the opening of a homeless shelter for LGBTQ+ youth.

41 artifacts were collected and included in the NVIVO project file separately from the primary interview data. Of the 41 artifacts, 30 artifacts were about Holland, Michigan, 6 artifacts were about Kalamazoo, and 5 artifacts were about Grand Rapids. More artifacts were about Holland due to the fact that LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination was considered and rejected in the past decade, along with the recent Holland Mayor election and the various news media about the Mayor’s statements on the LGBTQ+ community. Kalamazoo’s nondiscrimination ordinance efforts concluded at the ballot box in 2009, in which the voters embraced the changes to be inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community in nondiscrimination policy. Grand Rapids had an expansion on human rights issues with the 2019 adoption of a Human Rights Ordinance (Hicks, 2019). Grand Rapids received high marks for inclusion by the Human Rights Campaign, having been the “most improved” municipality in the HRC’s Municipal Equality Index (Ambu, 2019). Other than the 2009 Kalamazoo ordinance and the recent policy changes in Grand Rapids relating to the Human Rights Ordinance and Gender-Neutral Bathrooms, there have been no major policy changes in the past decade. Thus, the majority of artifacts are regarding Holland, Michigan. These artifacts primarily detail the policy dynamics of a politically powerful majority of religious conservatives anchored in a rich Dutch history in which the settlers fled religious
persecution, a historically oppressed minority facing similar persecution by its government, and a
diverse, first female Mayor of Holland who is politically controversial and sided with the
religious conservative majority. More information on artifacts that were collected is available in
“Appendix F: Summary of Collected Artifacts.”

Artifact Findings by City

This section is separated by each of the three cities and presents a description of the
Artifact Data and Findings of those artifacts. Each of these artifacts are described in Appendix F:
Summary of Collected Artifacts. While all the artifacts collected in Appendix F are not included
exhaustively below, this section merely attempts to identify and describe the key findings for the
artifact data.

Grand Rapids

In Smith, J. (2011, October 31), the artifact is about former Grand Rapids Mayor Gerald
Helmholt not issuing a proclamation for the annual gay pride festival. Helmholt used the
rationale that a pride festival was “controversial” and stated that groups like the Nazis were not
issued proclamations. The overall narrative of the City of Grand Rapids on LGBTQ+ issues
evolved from “it is controversial” to “it is a human rights issue” over the course of 32 years. In
this same time period, the Mayor of the City of Holland at the time, Phil Tanis, issued a
proclamation from the City of Holland on its letterhead in support of the Grand Rapids Pride
Festival (City of Holland, 1988). However, Grand Rapids adopted an LGBTQ+ inclusive
nondiscrimination ordinance in 1994 and Holland failed to do so in 2011 but appears to be
poised to adopt this ordinance in 2020. This evolution in Grand Rapids to being a human rights issue is further emphasized by the adoption of a Human Rights Ordinance in 2019 in Grand Rapids (Hicks, 2019). While LGBTQ+ rights were controversial in 1988, these rights were not controversial in Grand Rapids like in Holland on the policy level. It is important to emphasize that this just applies to nondiscrimination ordinances, as it was discovered in primary research interviews that the process to adopt gender neutral bathrooms at City Hall has been more controversial. Grand Rapids succeeded at the adoption of an “all gender restroom” at City Hall after a process of updating building codes and some opposition. Holland has not had a “policy victory” for the LGBTQ+ community in terms of nondiscrimination policy or bathroom policies as of 2019.

The artifact findings for Grand Rapids are limited to 1988 and 2019-2020 on LGBTQ+ issues. Ambu (2019) reported that Grand Rapids saw a 16-point increase on the Municipal Equality Index, which is the index rating from the Human Rights Campaign to measure how cities perform on LGBTQ+ inclusion. WoodTV (2020) reported that Grand Rapids now has a homeless shelter for LGBTQ+ youth. Other than data from primary research interviews, this is the extent of information available through artifacts for the City of Grand Rapids.

**Kalamazoo**

All of the six artifacts for Kalamazoo are in regard to the adoption of a LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance in 2009. According to Kalamazoo Discrimination Protection for Gays Referendum (2019), the 2009 vote on Ordinance 1856 was 61.85 percent in favor of LGBTQ+ inclusive protections and 38.15 percent against. The most notable information
in the artifacts is that Kalamazoo’s mayor supported Ordinance 1856. The same level of elected
support was not evident in Holland when Holland’s City Council considered but rejected their
ordinance. Thus, elected leadership in municipal government is essential for advancing LGBTQ+
rights, and changes in public opinion have allowed local level changes in support of the
LGBTQ+ community.

Holland

Most of the artifacts are regarding LGBTQ+ rights in the City of Holland due to the fact
that this has been a major issue in Holland over the past decade. Grand Rapids settled
nondiscrimination in 1994 and Kalamazoo did so in 2009. After Holland’s nondiscrimination
failed by one City Council vote in 2011, there was a march in Holland in August 2011 to get the
discusses the candidacy of Holland’s first openly gay City Council candidate Donald Martin,
who was ultimately not elected. Martin’s opponent was Holland’s Mayor Nancy DeBoer, then a
City Council candidate. According to Smith, S. (2018), Holland’s LGBTQ+ community center,
Out on the Lakeshore, opened in 2017. That same year, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission
met to consider whether sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination can be classified as
sex discrimination under Michigan’s civil rights law, based on Eggert (2017). The United States
Supreme Court extended sexual orientation and gender identity protections as sex discrimination

Other artifacts include City of Holland (2018f), which is a Holland Tulip Time Festival,
Inc. Agreement. This agreement has nondiscrimination language that does not include sexual
orientation and gender identity. This is one area where the City of Holland government is perpetuating discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community through its management of the annual Tulip Time Festival. This is an example of a hybrid entity that a government can work with that performs essential contracting out, and thus creates a “loophole for discrimination.”

City of Holland (2015) is the City of Holland Crisis Response Plan, which details hate crimes reporting of sexual orientation and gender identity classifications through the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009. Federal law mandates that the City of Holland collect data on hate crimes through its police department, even if the City of Holland itself doesn’t have a nondiscrimination ordinance. In a community where a nondiscrimination ordinance protecting the LGBTQ+ community is not present, then the legal recourse is at the state level. Interestingly enough, the State of Michigan does not have sexual orientation and gender identity protections with the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. There is a current ballot measure pending for 2020 to amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. This means the Michigan Department of Civil Rights does not currently have a remedy to sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. Additionally, the Ethnic Intimidation Act in Michigan does not provide protections for LGBTQ+ status.

The most substantial finding in terms of secondary data in regard to the City of Holland was the political climate surrounding the former Mayor’s 2019 electoral loss. The former Mayor went on the radio criticizing an LGBTQ+ event at the Holland Civic Center. This LGBTQ+ event was a “drag show,” which is a popular type of entertainment in the LGBTQ+ community that involves musical and dance performances by men who are female impersonators. The LGBTQ+ community and their allies were furious. This was worsened by Dr. Vicki Holmes and
Nancy DeBoer’s (2019, in Muyskens and Carlson, 2019) flyer that compared LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination with innocence and guilt in a homicide case and also suggested that the LGBTQ+ identity needed to be “verified” in order to receive legal protections under the law. Their flyer involves legal interpretations when neither DeBoer nor Holmes have law degrees. Holmes is a mathematics professor at Hope College, and DeBoer has a degree in English (Hope College, 2020; Goodell, 2015, November 9). Neither DeBoer or Holmes have a single J.D. or LLM degree, yet they are giving their opinion on law to use their political position or candidacy to try to continue to deny the entire LGBTQ+ community legal protections under nondiscrimination policy. In the November 2019 election, the now former Mayor lost by approximately 6.9 percent of the vote to Nathan Bocks. Dr. Vicki Holmes was running for a seat on the City Council and she lost the primary to Lyn Raymond. Raymond, like Bocks, appears to support a nondiscrimination ordinance for the LGBTQ+ community, even though there was at that point no formal vote by the City Council.

Findings by Research Question

*RQ1: What are the beliefs and attitudes of public managers toward the LGBTQ+ community?*

Based on the interview data, public managers appear to be overall supportive of LGBTQ+ rights as a matter of constitutional principle. While managers try to remain neutral in all of the cases, they see their role in social justice as an extension of American constitutional principles. They believe they have a unique duty to provide for equal protection under the law for all people. This is consistent particularly with Svara and Brunet (2005) and Frederickson
(2005), and other instances of social equity theoretical principles within the realm of public administration.

Based on interview data, several managers noted that they have LGBTQ+ neighbors, friends, and colleagues. They noted that much of the viewpoints that they possess come from having a person they can refer to. While all of the public managers know of LGBTQ+ people, whether personally or professionally, many of the public managers do not possess historical information about the LGBTQ+ movement and they lack familiarity with the wide array of LGBTQ+ issues, whether it be marriage rights, nondiscrimination policy, family adoption laws, the patchwork of laws on nondiscrimination and other areas that are not uniform, immigration issues, mental health, substance abuse, LGBTQ+ youth, bullying policies in K-12, healthcare disparities, patient-physician relationship dynamics, HIV/AIDS medication (PrEP or preexposure prophylaxis), transgender policies, and other areas that affect the lives and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people.

Based on interview data, managers expressed that sexual orientation hasn’t really come up in terms of the scope of their work with LGBTQ+ people. Overall, managers believe that government has a unique responsibility to promote justice and equal rights for LGBTQ+ people. Managers expressed that they would be “angry” and “have strong emotions” towards people that hate the LGBTQ+ community. Managers expressed that they would look for opportunities and try to support LGBTQ+ employees that work under them. Managers seemed to be supportive and see LGBTQ+ rights as more of a human rights issue and their role as a fulfillment of constitutional duties. Managers pointed to the importance of “relationship building” and “trust” to combat “past wrongs.”
In an interview, a manager named a political party, Presidents of that political party, and their views on politics. There were no reservations to mentioning any political views, which is surprising as public managers are expected to be neutral. Another manager was upset about not receiving a “thank you” from the LGBTQ+ community for “publicly speaking out in support for LGBTQ+ rights.” This same manager stated that “their feelings” have to “take a backseat” and there needs to be a focus on the position responsibilities, which is contradictory to their earlier point. Again, managers are expected to be neutral, yet some managers seemed to have no problem expressing personal views in the workplace.

Multiple managers expressed in the interviews that local government should be a “leader on human rights” and that government should do “symbolic gestures” such as rainbow-painted crosswalks and other measures to promote diversity. A manager overheard a “senior leader” expressing viewpoints in the workplace, stating that “Oh my God, that’s a homosexual for you.” This disparaging comment runs contrary to the neutrality of public administration. This manager expressed that a derogatory joke about gay people should be treated the same way as a joke about black people or Hispanic people. They stated that the Westboro Baptist Church has a legal right to protest, but it would cause them “blind rage.” An attorney told a public manager that they have to “sit down and shut up because there’s nothing you can do because they have the right to free speech” after the manager stated they were “very upset personally” about the presence of a hate group.

On the note of being a “leadership on human rights” and doing “symbolic gestures,” another manager went further and stated that if government doesn’t lead on LGBTQ+ rights, they “risk not being an open and accepting place.” Additionally, talent retention and acquisition
were mentioned as important economic development components but stated that supporting diversity often happens because of how the public would perceive their local government. It was expressed that there was some resentment to the “old conservative guard” that has been in management for a very long time. This manager stated that if you can’t uphold the policies and rules of the municipality by having personal opinions against the policies and rules, then you have no business working there. Another manager explicitly mentioned the name of a politician of a political party they opposed and then proceeded to say disparaging remarks about the politician’s family member.

Based on the interview data and all of the points in the prior paragraphs in this section, it is apparent that public managers expressed supportive views of the LGBTQ+ community, but they didn’t appear to be very tolerant of those that are anti-LGBTQ+. They were at times openly expressive of political and religious views. Even though public managers at the local level are supportive of the LGBTQ+ community based on their personal views, it is apparent that they try to advocate for those viewpoints in government while balancing First Amendment rights of the opposition with a human rights argument for LGBTQ+ inclusion. The narrative is that public managers at the local level are “Champions of the Constitution,” and this revolves around human rights, equal protection of the law, and justice for all.

*RQ2: What ordinances and policies do each municipality have that affect the LGBTQ+ community?*

The City of Holland most recently adopted nondiscrimination protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity by public body in 2020. This vote came at the end of
Summer 2020, at relatively the same time of heightened fears of the COVID-19 pandemic and a national outcry on race relations in policing. Furthermore, there was a significant policy development in that employment discrimination provisions on “sex” discrimination now included “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” protections at the federal level through the landmark Supreme Court ruling Bostock v. Clayton County. Still, many states and municipalities do not have similar policies in housing, employment, and public accommodations. Previously, Kalamazoo adopted protections by voters with about 62 percent of the vote in 2009 (Kalamazoo Discrimination Protection for Gays Referendum, 2019) and Grand Rapids adopted protections by public body in 1994. Based primarily on interview data, Grand Rapids is the only city in this study to have a Chief Diversity Officer and a LGBTQ+ affinity group, which is called Prism GR. Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo have gender-neutral bathrooms in City Hall. The Chief Diversity Officer, Prism GR, and gender-neutral bathrooms are an “additional step,” rather than a mandate by the city’s nondiscrimination ordinance. Thus, it is a further expression of the city’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. The building codes need to be updated before gender-neutral bathrooms can be added to other buildings. This is a relatively new concept in public accommodations, so the building codes will eventually reflect this and accommodate with the addition of “all-gender restrooms.” Appendix J: Case Profile has a full case profile for each of the three cities in this study.

Ordinances other than nondiscrimination ordinances that include the LGBTQ+ community include the recent Human Rights Ordinance (Hicks, 2019). Other policies, based on HRC’s Municipal Equality Index, include harmful youth conversion therapy protections, transgender healthcare benefits, domestic partner benefits, antibullying prevention policies, and
services to various groups like youth, elders, those living with HIV/AIDS, and homeless LGBTQ+ individuals. Cities are scores on the leadership they provide on LGBTQ+ policy, such as whether leadership takes a public position on LGBTQ+ equality and legislative/policy efforts. Cities are awarded “flex points” for testing restrictive state laws or having openly LGBTQ+ elected or appointed leaders (Human Rights Campaign, 2020).

RQ3: To what extent do personal beliefs and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community differ from organizational policies and laws, such as nondiscrimination ordinances?

Noting the points under the RQ1 section above and the overall notion that public managers are supportive of LGBTQ+ rights as a matter of constitutional principles, there were only two instances where public managers expressed views that were contrary to organizational policy. This involved a supportive view of the LGBTQ+ community but stated that LGBTQ+ employees do not inherently enhance public services based on their identification. This view runs contrary to the overall operations and policy narratives that are expressed by other public managers. It is possible that this manager just couldn’t think of an example of where public services were enhanced and was providing just a general view based on “sexual orientation identification” without examining it further in respect to cultural competency and an organizational learning aspect. The other instance was a public manager that stated that they spoke in favor of LGBTQ+ rights, did not receive a “thank you” for speaking in favor, and did so even though the local government policy has no policies that specifically protect the LGBTQ+ community based on suspect class identification. Based on Appendix J, the only city with an explicitly stated “core value” that involves the LGBTQ+ community was Holland, as diversity is
explicitly stated as a “core value” out of respect. Both Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo have had nondiscrimination ordinances for a decade or more, yet none of the “Core Values statements” explicitly mention diversity being a core value (Strategic Plan of the City of Grand Rapids, 2019; Vision, Mission and Values, 2020).

**RQ4: Do these personal beliefs and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community differ by the presence of LGBTQ+ departmental staff?**

All 12 managers who completed interviews in the three cities were aware of LGBTQ+ staff members in their department or another department in their municipality. Four of the five managers in Grand Rapids, both managers in Holland, and three of five managers in Kalamazoo expressed that LGBTQ+ staff enhanced public services to each respective municipality. It is apparent based on where managers grew up (some disclosed this as part of their answer to interview questions and stated that this informed their view on LGBTQ+ rights), their political beliefs, educational attainment to a degree, and prior work experiences are variables that would drive their attitudes on LGBTQ+ acceptance. As was the case in Holland, religious density created a more informed nondiscrimination ordinance that incorporated all of the stakeholders, and this is evident in that its protections are the most expansive in West Michigan. These environmental factors are drivers of “attitudes and perceptions” of the LGBTQ+ community. What is clear from the interview data is that the presence of LGBTQ+ departmental staff enhances “knowledge” (the K in KAP only). Managers expressed that LGBTQ+ identified staff that they manage directly contributed to their competency and understanding of LGBTQ+ issues so much that it impacted their decision-making. For instance, a smoking cessation program that
is designed in consultation with LGBTQ+ staff to achieve an outcome for the local health
department creates a more informed program because no one understands the LGBTQ+
community more so than someone who is a member of that community. These points are
supported by Binson et al. (2005), Clark et al. (2001), Luke et al. (2010), and Sherriff &
Gugglberger (2014) in showing ways the LGBTQ+ community and government can collaborate
to create policy outcomes.

LGBTQ+ staff influence attitudes and perceptions, but what is unclear is the degree to
which those are influenced by LGBTQ+ staff alone. It is clearer that some other variables may
be a factor in influencing attitudes and perceptions. In an example, someone that grew up in
California will likely be very familiar with LGBTQ+ people and more so than someone that
grew up on less densely populated Wyoming or Montana.

**RQ5: If there is a difference in LGBTQ+ departmental staff member presence, what is the nature
of this difference across departmental units? Why is it different across departmental units?**

Every department does not have a LGBTQ+ staff member because the LGBTQ+ community is a relatively small part of the population of about three or four percent. The
managers do not keep track of LGBTQ+ status as a metric, and there’s certainly many LGBTQ+
people that wouldn’t want to disclose their status when employment discrimination isn’t
protected in the State of Michigan on the statewide level. As of August 2020, all three
municipalities in this study have LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination protections. The point of
RQ5 is that it is for the manager to identify LGBTQ+ employees to understand whether
LGBTQ+ employees are comfortable being Out in the workplace. Does the manager know
LGBTQ+ employees in their department or another department? If the employee is Out in the workplace, then this helps to understand the working relationship between the employee and the manager and what the KAP of the manager is regarding the LGBTQ+ community overall. If the employees are not Out, it can be inferred that they either do not want to be Out in the workplace for fear of discrimination, personal and professional reasons, or something else might make the employee uncomfortable. If the work environment is not hostile towards LGBTQ+, then the employee might be Out and the manager can then be able to identify. This also provides an advantage in terms of organizational representation as it relates to Human Rights Campaign’s (2020) Municipal Equality Index.

It is unclear regarding the extent of the difference in LGBTQ+ staff member presence across departmental units as the LGBTQ+ community is an invisible population, and it clear that some departments have LGBTQ+ employees and some do not based on the size of the LGBTQ+ population. An appropriate amount of LGBTQ+ representation is one out of every 25 employees, given that LGBTQ+ is about four percent of the population (Horizons Foundation, 2011; Surfus, 2013). In terms of trainings and whether those trainings are done consistently, the trainings that the Chief Diversity Officer would do in Grand Rapids there is likely to be less of a difference among departmental units in Grand Rapids as opposed to small or mid-size cities like Holland and Kalamazoo. Holland and Kalamazoo do not have LGBTQ+ Chief Diversity Officers and they do not have LGBTQ+ Liaisons in their police departments. It is unclear about Holland and a LGBTQ+ Liaison in the police department, but their police department received a training from Detroit’s LGBTQ+ Liaison that was specified in one of the interviews with a manager from Holland. It is unclear about Holland because they do not report to the Human Rights Campaign.
as a part of their annual Municipal Equality Index. One could speculate as to why this would be. It’s not their population size, as Pleasant Ridge, MI reports which has a significantly smaller population. It is possible that appointed public managers have political pressures, such as a Mayor with anti-LGBTQ+ policy positions who chairs the City Council and wields significant political power that can decide the employment fate of a manager. This is probably the more likely explanation for why Holland does not yet report to the Municipal Equality Index, but they did receive a mention in the publication for passing a nondiscrimination ordinance in 2020.

Grand Rapids has both a Chief Diversity Officer and a Grand Rapids Police Department LGBTQ+ Liaison, and thus the only city in the study with this distinction (Human Rights Campaign, 2020).

The managers knew of LGBTQ+ employees in all three cities in the study. LGBTQ+ employees were not present in every department, which would mean that if LGBTQ+ issues are mentioned in a task, then the manager or employees might have to ask an LGBTQ+ employee in another department for assistance. This would be to ensure well-informed decision-making, as it was apparent from the interview data that managers do not have a “LGBTQ+ movement” level of understanding on issues impacting the LGBTQ+ community. In the instance of a hate crime incident, members of the LGBTQ+ community might be reluctant to file a police report as the police raided the Stonewall Inn at the start of the LGBTQ+ movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Another example would be a LGBTQ+ employee could potentially have reservations about working from their governmental unit with a faith-based organization because that individual employee might have felt “rejected” by their church growing up for their sexual orientation or gender identity.
RQ6: Do public managers understand the issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community, and what are some ways public managers work with the LGBTQ+ community?

Three out of the 12 public managers have no understanding of the issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community, based on their responses to the interview questions. I ranked their understanding as “Very,” “Somewhat,” or “Not at all” for their level of understanding. To clarify, “Very” would be an advanced level of knowledge on LGBTQ+ issues, “Somewhat” would be intermediate or more than no knowledge, and “Not at all” would have no understanding at all. Five public managers were “Very” understanding or competent of LGBTQ+ issues, four were “Somewhat” competent of LGBTQ+ issues, and then three had no understanding. 50 percent of public managers knew about their city’s nondiscrimination ordinance and whether it had sexual orientation and gender identity protections in housing, employment, and public accommodations. 67 percent of public managers knew about other policies other than nondiscrimination ordinances (i.e., anti-harassment, human rights ordinances, implicit bias, restroom, and dress code policies, etc.). Only one public manager out of the 12 public managers interviewed had no understanding of LGBTQ+ issues or any type of policy that protects the LGBTQ+ community. This is based on managers’ statements when they were asked about their familiarity with LGBTQ+ issues.
RQ7: How do political, religious, and social environments affect municipal policies that impact the LGBTQ+ community?

Managers see public administration as a vehicle for delivering upon American constitutional principles. Still, managers must remain neutral to a variety of different groups in the policy ecosystem. For instance, members of the Ku Klux Klan and the Westboro Baptist Church have First Amendment rights, and there are boundaries for the expression of those rights. Public managers must determine how to protect their rights, while at the same time promoting equal treatment of the LGBTQ+ community and racial minorities. The interviews asked specific scenario-based interview questions, which were IQ14-17 as noted in Appendix I: Findings by Interview Questions. These are questions based on work experiences that face public managers in the routine of their position descriptions. These questions are relevant when having instances in news media where public officials refuse to perform marriage license for LGBTQ+, when encountering a transgender employee, or how to accommodate a hate group while ensuring human rights. The public managers were consistent in the scenario-based questions, such as how they would address a group like the KKK or Westboro Baptist Church. They expressed that such a group would run contrary to the values of local government. Another scenario-based question asked about transgender employees and transitioning in the workplace. The general consensus was that they would try to create a supportive workplace for transgender employees and they expressed a willingness to learn about this group from a cultural perspective, even if they didn’t necessarily understand all of the dynamics of transgender employees and the issues they face. All of the managers were outraged about anti-LGBTQ+ vandalism of someone’s car based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, which was a focus of another scenario-based
The scenario-based questions were straightforward with predictable responses. There was nothing particularly surprising or out of the ordinary.

Significant Statements

Epoché, or bracketing out, comes from the transcendental phenomenological tradition by Husserl, the “Father of Phenomenology.” As I must use epoché to separate myself from the phenomenon to provide a neutral understanding of the individual interpretation of the phenomenon of “inclusion,” significant statements provide a glimpse at how municipal managers encounter inclusion and inclusive environments. The direct opposite of this is exclusion and environments that are not welcoming. The actions that create the negatively enforced environment and exclusion are animus and discrimination. A “significant statement” in the descriptive or transcendental phenomenological tradition is one that provides a clear understanding of the phenomenon and how the individual encounters that phenomenon. Taking this into consideration, there were significant statements that public managers made during the interviews in each of the cities. One manager talked about a plan to foil an act of homophobic behavior in a prior work experience in the private sector. Another manager discussed a gay employee committing suicide due to how LGBTQ+ people are treated by society in general. Another manager discussed workplace experiences that shaped or informed views on transgender employees that could be used to implement gender-neutral bathrooms. The first manager saw an act of animus in the private sector by another employee that created a negative environment for an employee that happened to be gay. This manager was outraged by what they experienced and proceeded to directly confront the animus.
The next manager discussed about a gay employee that committed suicide in the past and how they reacted to it. The manager was among the few managers in the study that showed emotion in their responses to the interview questions. I could feel the manager’s pain as they detailed the story, wiping tears from their eyes. It was suddenly something very real that I could relate to, having experienced discrimination as a gay man before. However, I did not mention my personal experience as epoché requires the bracketing out of a personal experience or bias. Still, this pain that this manager felt is the true cost of exclusion and discrimination. It takes a very personal toll on LGBTQ+ individuals, their friends, and their coworkers.

The third significant statement involves a municipal manager that encountered a transgender coworker going through their transition process for their gender identity and expression. The manager noted that it was difficult for the employee to do as it was “several years ago” with a different environment, as a transgender employee’s transition in the workplace was not accepted to the degree that it is in the modern era. It is still legal in many states for transgender employees to be fired for their gender identity. What is important is that encountering a transgender employee and seeing how they may struggle in the workplace with their transition provided a competency that could then be applied to municipal government.

Emergent Themes

As a review, 832 codes were classified into 136 code groups. The 136 code groups were separated into 18 code group classifications. The 18 code group classifications then became seven emergent themes to simplify the overall findings of this study. The seven emergent themes are Communication, Awareness, Acceptance, Influence, Intimidation, Equity, and Services. Each
of these themes have a description to describe different data elements from the interviews. These themes are described in detail in the proceeding paragraphs and in Appendix G: Emergent Themes Table. The process for determining the seven emergent themes involved examining the data across 12 interviews to determine which themes were the most widely discussed by multiple municipal managers. For instance, the theme “Influence” was mentioned by many in reference to the political influences of the DeVos family and religious influences particularly in Grand Rapids and Holland. The emergent theme “Intimidation” involves “social viciousness” (as one manager put it) towards the LGBTQ+ community. This “Intimidation” was expressed by multiple managers in Kalamazoo and in an example provided in Grand Rapids in terms of the initial opposition to the gender-neutral bathroom at Grand Rapids City Hall.

One manager went into the process for updating the building codes in Grand Rapids as taking place every 20 years or so, so understanding this point along with the initial controversy of a gender-neutral bathroom shows how difficult it is to implement a gender-neutral bathroom. In terms of “Influence” and “Intimidation” themes, these primarily apply to RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ7. A political “influence” is a belief that could impact how a public manager would address an issue out of fear of political fallout. Opposition to a gender-neutral bathroom because of preconceived notions or implicit bias on gender identity could impede the adoption of such a policy, as was the case in Grand Rapids for a long time. The public managers are the individuals making policy decisions, such as implementing a gender-neutral bathroom, based on a viewpoint or to fulfill an ordinance requirement. Grand Rapids had nondiscrimination protections in 1994, but the gender-neutral bathroom took a decade or more to implement because of opposition to the idea by administrators and political obstacles. The policy had the “force of law,” but the
“force of politics” impeded implementation. This “force of politics” eventually waned over time due to loss of influence, greater visibility, and knowledge or education on this policy issue.

“Communication” is defined as the organization level communication, but not across cities. Communication in Grand Rapids was assessed based on all communication across the Grand Rapids organization. This would not include Holland or Kalamazoo. This “communication” is strictly limited to “diversity and inclusion communication,” or how LGBTQ+ inclusion is communicated across the organization, policies that affect the LGBTQ+ community, and what systems are used to relay information to different departments. In Grand Rapids, multiple public managers emphasized that there was a disconnect in organizational communication on diversity and inclusion, as not all employees understood that there are gender-neutral bathrooms or LGBTQ+ affinity resource groups for instance. This theme was primarily evident in only Grand Rapids, but not Holland and Kalamazoo. A breakdown of communication affects implementation and fulfillment of policy objectives, as noted previously.

The “Awareness” emergent theme is defined as the lack of understanding and awareness of LGBTQ+ issues, which would be inclusive of terminology issues to describe the LGBTQ+ community. The “Awareness” emergent theme is categorized into two sub-themes. The first subtheme is that there is animus portrayed among the citizenry, but it is not widespread and just an education and awareness issue. This animus towards LGBTQ+ people also permeates the staff level of the organization. This animus was not present among managers directly, but this doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. The second subtheme is that visibility and awareness of LGBTQ+ increases acceptance of LGBTQ+ in policy and practice and on the community level. Both
subthemes were present in Holland and Kalamazoo, and the theme and second subtheme was present in Grand Rapids.

The “Acceptance” emergent theme is defined as managers are overall accepting of LGBTQ+, both personally and professionally, even if there isn’t a full understanding or awareness of LGBTQ+ issues. The subtheme identified for the “Acceptance” emergent theme is that the prior private sector work experiences have influenced their views in the public sector workplace. This has led to a LGBTQ+ supportive environment between management and employees. This theme and subtheme was present in all three cities of Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo.

The “Influence” emergent theme is defined as strong external political influences (i.e., DeVos family) affecting policy and management. The first subtheme is that there are strong external religious political influences affecting policy and management. This subtheme is more specific to the influence of religion used as a political force. The second subtheme is that over the past decade, the LGBTQ+ community has gained political influence to push the policy agenda that has become increasingly popular. The main theme only was evident in Grand Rapids. Holland has both political and religious influences, so the main theme and the first subtheme. Additionally, it was expressed that the second subtheme was present in Holland. This can be best seen through the momentum in the 2011 City Council vote and the 2020 City Council vote. There was a much greater influence in Holland in 2020 because the LGBTQ+ community was “winning” the policy narrative. One interview in Kalamazoo expressed the second subtheme, but it was not consistent across a majority of the interviews in Kalamazoo to apply as a subtheme in Kalamazoo.
The “Intimidation” emergent theme is similar to the Influence theme in that it is a form of influence, but the “Intimidation” emergent theme is defined more on an individual level as intimidation, discrimination, harassment, bullying, and “social viciousness” toward LGBTQ+ is evident, mostly from external of the organization. Public managers who witnessed prejudicial actions towards LGBTQ+ have more supportive views of LGBTQ+ (i.e., more expressive). There is one subtheme in the “Intimidation” emergent theme category. The subtheme is that public managers that witness or learn of traumatic situations (i.e., suicide of a LGBTQ+ employee) connect with LGBTQ+ rights as human rights on a personal and emotional level. When human rights are concerned, public administrators must be “Champions of the Constitution” to use administration to fulfill constitutional ideals and values. The theme as it relates to influence and both subthemes apply to Grand Rapids, specifically with the DeVos family and their influence on decision-making in Grand Rapids. The main theme was evident in Holland and Kalamazoo in terms of internal and external to the organization. While Grand Rapids had more of a political influence, Holland had more of a religious influence that led to intimidation as an emergent theme. It is important to note that it is perhaps much more difficult to overcome religious intimidation than political intimidation. Many people have a connection to religion, but the same can’t be said as to people that follow the DeVos family or another political influencer.

The “Equity” emergent theme is defined as equity being a focus of strategic planning. This relates to the questions about equality and equity, and whether those are part of the city’s strategic vision for the next five or ten years. The first subtheme was “racial equity was a specific focus.” The second subtheme was that “LGBTQ+ equity was a specific focus.” Equity in general
and racial equity are a focus of all three cities. LGBTQ+ equity was not a specific focus for any of the cities as part of a strategic planning component, but this concept was expressed as a value of public managers.

The “Services” emergent theme is described as managers that might be more conservative are focused on service delivery, rather than diversity and inclusion. Diversity and inclusion is focused on “we need to do this” vs. “human rights issue.” This was a theme in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo.

Findings on Expected Outcomes

Chapter IV: Methodology identified four expected outcomes in the Expected Findings section, and thus this section is a follow-up to the earlier section in the prior chapter. All four expected outcomes are discussed and compared with the “Findings by Interview Questions” section (Appendix I) and the “Emergent Themes Table,” see Appendix G: Emergent Themes Table. For a more detailed description of the expected outcomes with bulleted points, please refer to Chapter IV: Methodology’s Expected Findings section. The following Expected Outcomes in this section are applied to the Research Questions, RQ1 through RQ7, and each Research Question is identified next to each Expected Outcome in parentheses.

*Expected Outcome #1 (Applies to RQ1 and RQ3)*

O1: Public managers are persuaded (or perceptions are influenced) by organizational policy narratives like nondiscrimination ordinances.
This expected outcome is likely to be correct to some degree, but there is at best a limited connection between nondiscrimination ordinances and public manager perceptions. Public administrators have been substantially influenced by the private sector more so than by the presence of nondiscrimination ordinances, based on the interview data. There were multiple public managers that discussed their work experiences in the private sector and how this shaped their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community. Nondiscrimination ordinances that are LGBTQ+ inclusive discourage and punish “negative behaviors,” or actions taken to discriminate against the LGBTQ+ community or another protected class.

Nondiscrimination ordinances that include provisions on public service discrimination promote an environment internally that is inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community.

Public managers are not blind to discrimination that is occurring by their own staff or members of the public. Surely, negative comments could be perceived as hurtful about the LGBTQ+ community because the individual manager can relate to those hurtful comments. It could be that the manager had those feelings before, or it could be that the manager can understand what it must be like to feel that type of discrimination. Public managers are human too! The notion that a public manager could be persuaded by a nondiscrimination ordinance has to do with their own feelings about inclusion. It is hard to fathom that someone would want to be part of a community where one part of that community is told “you are not welcome” or “you don’t belong here.” If the manager can relate to this individually, then they can be in a position where they can educate the community about the importance of such an ordinance. It seems impossible to believe that someone could sit idly by while a “moral wrong” is taking place, especially on such a divisive policy issue as LGBTQ+ rights. Virtually every person has an
opinion on a social issue, but that view is not refined until that individual knows a person from that suspect class. It is expected that narratives will be identified that show how a group feels about a social issue before and after the introduction of the suspect class. In other words, the LGBTQ+ community is “largely invisible,” and thus an education campaign on a policy matter will influence not only perceptions of the general public, but of public managers themselves.

*Expected Outcome #2 (Applies to RQ1)*

O₂: Public managers do not consider diversity and inclusion a strategic priority.

This is simply not true as “racial equity” as a concept was a major focus in Grand Rapids in particular. Holland and Kalamazoo focused on racial equity as well, but it wasn’t as operationalized as Grand Rapids. Holland specifically discusses “diversity” in their core values statement (See Appendix J: Case Profile) (Vision, Mission and Values, 2020). This is understandable given that Grand Rapids is a large city with a more complex government.

*Expected Outcome #3 (Applies to RQ6)*

O₃: Public managers do not understand the issues facing the LGBTQ+ community.

Public managers were very open with the fact that they do not understand the issues facing the LGBTQ+ community on the level of a History Professor or an expert of LGBTQ+ studies. Still, public managers had a moderate level of understanding of LGBTQ+ issues. Public managers were engaged and willing to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community. Public managers emphasized that they were dedicated to LGBTQ+ inclusion and would take measures to counteract discrimination in the workplace. Public managers saw it as a role to fulfill the
Constitution of the United States and to “correct wrongs” like discrimination, and thus they saw the Constitution as a living and breathing document that empowers public administration to do justice work for minority groups. In other words, public managers saw LGBTQ+ inclusion as “mission focused.”

Expected Outcome #4 (Applies to RQ4, RQ5, and RQ6)
O4: Staff member identification as LGBTQ+ enhances public manager knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues, and attitudes and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community overall.

This expected outcome is correct. There were a number of instances of public managers working with LGBTQ+ employees and how this work shaped their knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues, attitudes, and perceptions. Public managers consult LGBTQ+ employees on matters that pertain to the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ employees feel comfortable enough to be open with their employer about their sexual orientation and gender identity. This level of openness enhances the decision-making in departments in municipal government and the overall cohesiveness in departments.

Case Profile Analysis

A full case profile was completed as Appendix J: Case Profile to better understand the three cases, or Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. The mission, vision, and core values statements were compared, and only Holland mentioned “diversity” while Grand Rapids mentioned “equity” in the “Core Values statement (Strategic Plan of the City of Grand Rapids, 2019; Vision, Mission and Values, 2020). The race, gender, and LGBTQ+ representation of the
public body (i.e., City Council) was completed and compared, which is current as of 2020. The only city with LGBTQ+ leadership was Kalamazoo. The type of nondiscrimination ordinance protections and dates of adoption were compared in the next section of Appendix J. Next, LGBTQ+ affinity groups within city government and the availability of gender-neutral restrooms were compared in each of the three cases. The presence of a Chief Diversity Officer was compared for the three cases, with only Grand Rapids having a manager in this position. Nondiscrimination ordinance protections, LGBTQ+ affinity groups, the presence of a Chief Diversity Officer, and various policies described in Appendix J address RQ2 and RQ3, which focus on the ordinances and policies in municipalities.

LGBTQ+ Staff Awareness, LGBTQ+ Staff Influence Enhanced Public Service, LGBTQ+ Policy Awareness, and Understands LGBTQ+ Issues are the next areas of comparison for the three cases, with this category of Appendix J involving public managers based on their interview responses. It was found that 100 percent of managers or all 12 managers who completed interviews in the three cities were aware of LGBTQ+ staff members. Four of the five managers in Grand Rapids, both managers in Holland, and three of five managers in Kalamazoo expressed that LGBTQ+ staff enhanced public services to each respective municipality. This part of Appendix J addresses RQ4, RQ5, and RQ6. As a reminder, RQ4 address LGBTQ+ staff departmental presence and its role in enhancing services, while RQ5 address LGBTQ+ staff departmental presence comparatively. RQ6 focuses on the knowledge of public managers on LGBTQ+ issues and how public managers work with the LGBTQ+ community.

In the area of LGBTQ+ Policy Awareness, the findings for nondiscrimination policy awareness were that three of five managers in Grand Rapids, one of two managers in Holland,
and two of five managers in Kalamazoo specifically mentioned “nondiscrimination ordinances” as policies that protect LGBTQ+ in their respective cities. Two of five in Grand Rapids, two out of two in Holland, and four out of five in Kalamazoo were able to name some other type of policy in each municipality that protects the LGBTQ+ community.

For “Understands LGBTQ+ Issues,” I found it appropriate to rate each manager based on their responses as “Very,” “Somewhat,” or “Not at all” familiar with LGBTQ+ issues. Only one of five managers in Grand Rapids and two of five managers in Kalamazoo “understood LGBTQ+ issues” in depth, while both managers were “very familiar” with LGBTQ+ issues based on their interview responses. This can be attributed to the exposure to the proposed nondiscrimination ordinance changes in 2011 and 2019-2020, and this is reflected in the secondary artifact data (i.e., Action Plan and Feedback Loop). This simply means that public managers are more familiar with LGBTQ+ issues based upon having exposure to LGBTQ+ policy reforms and programming by LGBTQ+ community centers. The further timewise you are from the proposed reform or exposure to the LGBTQ+ community, it is likely that public manager awareness decreases over time. Visibility is key to LGBTQ+ inclusion (Reynolds, 2013).

Finally, the “environmental factors” within the policy environment were discussed in Appendix J. These environmental factors address the final research question, RQ7. These environmental factors include religion, politics, social, and economic influences within the policy environment. Notable factors in the policy environment include religious density (number of churches per capita) in each of the three cases, the influence of the DeVos family and Amway corporation as being against LGBTQ+ inclusiveness, leadership representation of public bodies
based on race, gender, and LGBTQ+ status, and the level of corporate support acting on 
LGBTQ+ policy. The corporate support is acting in the policy environment because they have it 
as part of their corporate interests in talent acquisition and retention and as a part of their core 
values.
CHAPTER VI

APPLICATION OF NARRATIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK

While much of the findings have focused on RQ1 through RQ6, Chapter VI focuses on the application of McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan’s (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) “Narrative Policy Framework.” As was discussed in Chapter IV: Methodology in the overview of the Research Questions, RQ7 focuses on how the policy environment affects ordinances and policies in municipal government in terms of the political, social, and religious factors. The micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level analyses in the following sections will focus strictly on RQ7 because RQ7 discusses and is entirely focused on these environmental factors. Up until this point, the analysis derived data from the interviews that were conducted. In Chapter VI, the focus will be on artifact data, or secondary sources, to describe the policy environment on every level.

Micro-Level Analysis of the Narrative Policy Framework

McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) prescribe “10 assumptive foundations” (pp. 231-233) for micro-level analysis in the Narrative Policy Framework, and these assumptive foundations are as follows with application to Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo. These foundational points will be applied later in this section regarding the micro-level and a partial application to the meso-level. McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) state the following:
1. **Bounded rationality:**

   - “Limited time and limited information” define decision making, which would be the individual public manager applying municipal government policies organization wide. The elected officials of City Council decided to not adopt LGBTQ+ protections in Holland in 2011. The limited time and information includes their personal backgrounds, the time to make a decision on their personal stance on the policy, and the ultimate outcome of the collective decision (p. 231).

2. **Heuristics:**

   - Given bounded rationality, heuristics or shortcuts apply based on “what information is available at the time, past experience, expertise, training, and biological biases” (p. 231). This would be diversity trainings that provide competency for the individual employee, educational background, and content that was read by the employee or elected official to inform decision-making.

3. **Primacy of affect:**

   - What emotions are applied to the policy being decided upon? What subjective feelings might someone have? This could be the historical and religious characteristics that define many people in Holland. This could be current political views that inform individual decision-making on policy (p. 231-232).

4. **Two kinds of cognition:**

   - An example provided includes the ability to “determine if someone is telling the truth” (p. 232). Do the LGBTQ+ residents in Holland experience discrimination or are they just telling the City Council that they are experiencing discrimination?
Will the municipal manager or elected official believe the member of the public or will they rely on the “common knowledge” in the community based on past views or tradition (p. 232)?

5. Hot cognition:
   - This involves having an unfamiliar concept, like for instance LGBTQ+ inclusion, in a community where LGBTQ+ are less visible. How is this phenomenon applied to the “common knowledge” or tradition in this community (p. 232)?

6. Confirmation and disconfirmation bias:
   - Individuals, whether appointed municipal managers or elected officials as managers, supplement their research with information that confirms their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (p. 232). Holmes and DeBoer (2019, in Lobo, A., Muyskens, C., & Carlson, K., 2019) is evidence of confirmation and disconfirmation bias that applies to their traditional views to exclude the LGBTQ+ community in dignity and rights.

7. Selective exposure:
   - McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) identify this like “conservatives watching Fox News and liberals watching MSNBC” (p. 233). Does the Mayor of Holland and the Mayor of Kalamazoo receive their information from the same sources? How might this change over time as more information becomes available?
8. Identity-protective cognition:

- An elected official may want to distinguish their views in a way that is specific because they are “politically sophisticated,” whereas an appointed manager may want to appear neutral without taking a controversial position (p. 233).

9. Primacy of groups and networks:

- A manager who is a member of the American Family Association may have preconceived notions of the LGBTQ+ community based on their political affiliation, and they may use that as basis to vote against a policy to protect the LGBTQ+ community in dignity and rights (p. 233).

10. Narrative cognition:

- Narratives are used as an individual method of communication, such as for a public manager, while an academic (i.e., researcher) uses a narrative to describe each part of the case to identify and discuss emergent themes (p. 233).

(McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014, pp. 231-233)

McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) identify Gray and Jones (2013) as a study that used interviews to understand “elite policy positions that can be effectively described using the NPF’s core elements” (McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014, p. 236). These policy positions are individual positions rather than organization-wide positions, and the usage of “emergent themes” identified in Chapter V: Data Analysis and Findings, justified by Creswell (2013), allows for a comprehensive understanding of the micro-level.

In Chapter II, Sears and Mallory (2011b) was mentioned, which discussed that the rate of
discrimination in municipalities among police officers was lower than in the private sector. Sears et al. (2013) identifies that The Williams Institute found that over “200 cities and counties in 35 states have enacted employment nondiscrimination ordinances on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity” (p. 19). At the micro-level, the narrative is that there are more supportive environment for LGBTQ+ employees than the private sector, which is actually not the case as Human Rights Campaign (2014; 2016) showed that Fortune 500 corporations were leading the way on LGBTQ+ inclusion. However, corporations overall may be leading on LGBTQ+ inclusion but on an individual level, public sector employees have found more inclusive environments. In the interviews, Holland managers stated that they did have LGBTQ+ employees. In fact, every manager in all three cases found that there were LGBTQ+ employees and they could easily identify them, despite LGBTQ+ people being largely “invisible” in terms of physically defining characteristics. Given the findings in Sears and Mallory (2013) as only applying to police officers, it is possible that this could apply to all public employees as LGBTQ+ employees were comfortable as identifying as openly LGBTQ+ despite places like Holland not having a nondiscrimination ordinance to protect them in employment up until August 2020.

On the note of Sears et al. (2013), the large number of states and cities in those states that have LGBTQ+ protections could have influenced places like Holland to adopt similar protections. The nondiscrimination ordinances had to be tested against traditions, norms, and perceptions of the general public. As the fears by the public have dissipated about the perceived types of discrimination that could occur against churches and those that view homosexuality as “morally wrong,” nondiscrimination ordinances that protect the LGBTQ+ community have been
adopted and simply shield the entire LGBTQ+ community from discrimination without an attack on religious freedom. Given that a place like Holland has a large number of churches and a LGBTQ+ community that was seeking nondiscrimination protections for a long time, it could be argued that the nine year period it took to fail at an ordinance in 2011 and the success at adoption of the ordinance in 2020 led to a more comprehensive, inclusive, and effective policy. All of the stakeholders within the policy environment were consulted, everyone stated what they liked and didn’t like, and eventually they determined the course that would be right for their community in which there is a balance between social justice and religious freedom. This is the narrative that unfolds when a nondiscrimination policy is adopted. When you have several states and cities that Sears et al. (2013) noted, this influence both the micro-level and the meso-level of the policy environment. How does this happen? Muskegon, Saugatuck, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, and virtually every other community in the region (meso-level) had these types of protections. Holland was simply doing what was projected nationally with federal advancements and what was happening from within its “operational bubble.”

Holland is primarily used here, as it is the only city out of the three cities to adopt a nondiscrimination ordinance at the time of the rising support for LGBTQ+ rights nationally, which was in the past decade. It would be much more punitive in the eyes of the public for an elected official to change their position on LGBTQ+ policies than an appointed official. An elected official has to be accountable to the voter, while an appointed manager could implement LGBTQ+ policies and it might not be until several years later that the public finds out about the changes to make their opinion known. Every official action of an elected official is on record, in public, and recorded on video. Taking this information into account, one of the City Council
members was present in both 2011 and 2020. This City Council member changed their opinion because they saw the “writing on the wall” that the general public opinion on LGBTQ+ issues was changing. The member thought it was “the right thing to do” from a moral perspective to vote in support of the nondiscrimination ordinance expansion. The City Council member stated on video a full reasoning of why they voted the way that they did. The narrative is that the macro-level changes in federal policy and the meso-level changes in other municipalities, along with changes in public opinion, led to an elected official changing their views. Given that an elected official is held publicly accountable, this would apply to public managers as well.

Meso-Level Analysis of the Narrative Policy Framework

Based on Figure 7.1 in McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014), the meso-level incorporates two advocacy coalitions, one in support and one against the policy. In this case, the example of a LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination policy is used. Those in opposition to the policy include every elected official on City Council in 2011 that voted against Holland’s nondiscrimination ordinance, citizens that voted at the ballot box (i.e., Kalamazoo) in opposition to an LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination ordinance, and various interest groups (i.e., nonprofits, social welfare organizations, and political action committees). This is not an exhaustive list of everyone included in Advocacy Coalition A, or those against the policy (See Figure 7.1 in McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014). Advocacy Coalition B, or those in favor of a LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination policy include members of Holland City Council that voted in support of the nondiscrimination ordinance in 2011, those who voted in support at the ballot box in Kalamazoo, and various interest groups in support.
Interest groups include the American Family Association (Advocacy Coalition A), the Human Rights Campaign (Advocacy Coalition B), the American Civil Liberties Union (Advocacy Coalition B), and others. Again, this is not an exhaustive list of everyone in each coalition. What do actors like the American Family Association do? According to “Kalamazoo voters approve anti-discrimination ordinance by a wide margin” (2009), the Kalamazoo City Commission adopted a nondiscrimination ordinance by public body and it was the American Family Association that was successful in forcing a public vote on the ordinance. The American Family Association must have thought that the voters would reject LGBTQ+ protections when put up for a vote, but they underestimated the political environment even if their advocacy efforts were powerfully effective. These advocacy groups, in support of and against, have enormous power to shift the debate on public policy, especially now with Citizens United and the injection of “dark money” into politics. Similarly, in the political environment, the previous Mayor of Holland was reportedly propped up by DeVos family “dark money.” When an “advocacy coalition” can stop an ordinance or install an anti-LGBTQ+ politician in a position of power, much can be done to steer a “moral argument” towards an “advocacy argument” that may not be in the public interest. As Chapter II noted, Frederickson (2005) stated that public managers are responsible for “applying the law” (p. 32) and that it is “essential for the survival of democracy” (p. 34). Svara and Brunet (2005) emphasize “procedural fairness,” and dominant advocacy coalitions over individual rights runs contrary to this theoretical principle (p. 4).

Additionally, there are actors outside each case, including people in Kalamazoo attending a Holland meeting and voicing support or opposition, or Grand Rapids, or even from other parts of the country. The policy narrative is for or against the policy. The policy beliefs are whether or
not someone should be discriminated on based on housing, employment, and public accommodations and who should be included in the suspect class identifications in the legal sense. Narrative strategies include how the policy would be implemented. Many of these policies have a $500 or $1000 fine as a punitive measure for enforcement. Then, the meso-level descends into the individual level for implementation, enforcement, evaluation, and accountability (p. 239).

Macro-Level Analysis of the Narrative Policy Framework

McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible 2014) did not have a dedicated section to the macro-level analysis and instead focused on the micro-level and the meso-level. The reason for this is that the macro-level is perceived to be outside the scope of the policy environment, acting externally on the policy environment from the state and federal government, special interest groups, and other actors outside the application of the Narrative Policy Framework. Still, the macro-level analysis is important to understand the full policy environment, or rather the forces acting on that policy environment. The municipalities are for all purposes the “center of the policy environment.” These municipalities are acted upon on an individual or micro-level and the meso-level. The state and federal government developments as it relates to LGBTQ+ inclusiveness in policy are of importance for a macro-level application of the Narrative Policy Framework.

On June 15, 2020, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled on two sets of cases regarding employment nondiscrimination. One set of cases was on sexual orientation protections at the federal level in employment, and the other set of two cases was on gender identity
protections at the federal level in employment. In the State of Michigan, the equivalent law would be the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA), which in its 1970s iteration does not include sexual orientation and gender identity protections. There was a campaign by Fair and Equal Michigan to amend this law at the ballot box in the 2020 election, but enough signatures were not gathered due to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. As of this date, there is pending litigation regarding the signature requirements for the ballot given the extenuating circumstances. This ballot measure would add both sexual orientation and gender identity protections in housing, employment, and public accommodations provisions of nondiscrimination policy. There appears to be bipartisan interest to take up the ELCRA law revision in the Michigan state legislature. The Supreme Court of the United States ruled that sexual orientation and gender identity is classified as “sex” discrimination under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Therefore, the federal law now protects the LGBTQ+ community in employment, but it does not protect the LGBTQ+ community in housing, public accommodations, or other areas (i.e., those areas proposed under past congressional bills regarding ENDA law).

The LGBTQ+ community in Michigan does not have sexual orientation and gender identity protections at the state level. Other areas of macro-level importance to LGBTQ+ rights in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo include the 2015 marriage equality ruling by the United States Supreme Court and the numerous attacks on the LGBTQ+ community’s rights by the Trump Administration. Nationally, the LGBTQ+ community has experienced a rise in acceptance in terms of how homosexuality is viewed from a “morality standpoint,” the level of support of same-sex marriage nationally, and how LGBTQ+ persons are treated overall. This is also reflected in some of the Human Rights Campaign’s Municipal Equality Index ratings for
cities in the Midwest, which have made substantial policy changes to benefit the LGBTQ+ community. There is the behavioral recognition in terms of how LGBTQ+ persons are treated on a personal level, and then there is the policy recognition which amounts to how LGBTQ+ persons are treated on a policy level (Human Rights Campaign, 2020).

In 2011, the general public at the Holland City Council meeting discussing a nondiscrimination ordinance expansion were about 40-50 percent in support of those changes based on their public comment testimonies, whereas virtually all of the public (except for a few people) in the December 2019 meeting were in support of a nondiscrimination ordinance expansion. This shift has been reflected in elected officials and appointed officials as well. There is no study on public sentiment in 2011 compared to 2019 comparatively in the City of Holland. Much of this tide change can be attributed to the impact of the 2015 marriage equality ruling. Gallup, Pew, and other opinion research firms have tracked the public support nationally for same-sex marriage since the 2015 Supreme Court ruling, Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) The trend is that support for same-sex marriage is rising each year, especially now that the Supreme Court legalized it nationwide in 2015. Based on Gallup’s tracking over time on support of same-sex marriage, there is now 67 percent support for same-sex marriage (McCarthy, 2020). There has been a rise in support in each of the three municipalities as LGBTQ+ issues have become more visible through policy advancements. These factors that are external to each city or case are acting on each city from the macro-level of the policy environment. The policy advancements at the federal level through the courts raise the visibility of the LGBTQ+ community and support for LGBTQ+-inclusive policies at the local level. While these federal policy changes are taking place, there is a rise in support for LGBTQ+ policies in a place like Holland, MI. This is
supported by the findings in Kalamazoo regarding their ordinance in that once people began to see LGBTQ+ people, know them, and understand them, there was a “sea change” in support. These dynamics led to a win at the ballot box in Kalamazoo, and a win at the City Council in 2020 in Holland. This was the same “political and policy force” that defeated Nancy DeBoer in her reelection campaign for Holland Mayor.

The Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) decision at the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in all 50 states. The rise of support of same-sex marriage, as noted by McCarthy (2020), has been happening much more substantially over the past decade. In June 2020, the Supreme Court ruled on LGBTQ+ rights again, and this time it affirmed that sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination in employment could be applied to “sex” discrimination classifications that already existed in federal law. This expanded LGBTQ+ rights, but it was only at the federal level. This impacts the perception that LGBTQ+ people are protected in employment because they only are if it is litigated at the federal level. In Michigan, there are no current statewide protections. The macro-level narrative is that between 2011 and 2020, the City of Holland was influenced by these federal developments.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Overview

All the municipal managers were contacted at least one time and no more than four times for the entire study, depending on whether they responded and accepted or declined to participate in the study, using the template in “Appendix D: Initial Contact Email.” 13 out of the 56 public managers participated in the research, which was a 23 percent response rate. One of those managers withdrew their data from the study. 25 percent of Grand Rapids, 16 percent of Holland, and 21 percent of Kalamazoo public managers participated in this study. Holland was significantly lower in terms of the participation rate due to the political environment, as it was the only city in the study at the time of the interviews to not have a nondiscrimination ordinance. All of the public managers appeared to be supportive of the LGBTQ+ community and their pursuit for equality overall. Still, there is some controversial aspect in participating in this type of a study, noting the political and religious pressures in the policy environment.

Only one of the 12 public managers had no policy and no LGBTQ+ awareness, and that was in Grand Rapids. This is surprising as Grand Rapids has Prism GR, which is the LGBTQ+ affinity group that is promoted to all employees of the City of Grand Rapids, and there is a Chief Diversity Officer in Grand Rapids that conducts trainings and enhances the awareness of LGBTQ+ issues for the employees of the City of Grand Rapids. Holland was the only city in the study without a gender-neutral restroom, a LGBTQ+ affinity group, and without a
nondiscrimination ordinance at the time the study was conducted, yet all of the managers in Holland were “very familiar” with LGBTQ+ issues.

All managers were aware of the presence of LGBTQ+ staff and nine of the 12 managers thought LGBTQ+ staff enhanced the overall public service. This is not to say that three of the 12 managers thought that LGBTQ+ staff provide no benefit to public service, but rather that they could not identify how LGBTQ+ staff provided a benefit to public service based on their protected class alone. Only six of the 12 public managers were aware of a nondiscrimination ordinance that protects on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Two of the 12 managers were in Holland, which did not have a nondiscrimination ordinance with sexual orientation and gender identity classifications in the policy. This means that four of the 12 public managers were not aware of protections and were in a city with a nondiscrimination ordinance that protects on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Slightly more than half of public managers knew of policies that protected LGBTQ+ people (both employees and the community at-large) other than nondiscrimination ordinances.

The four expected outcomes that were postulated found that nondiscrimination ordinances influence public managers’ attitudes and perceptions to a degree, based on Expected Outcome #1. Diversity and inclusion are a strategic priority of public managers based on Expected Outcome #2. Expected Outcome #3 showed that public managers were upfront about the fact that they do not understand all of the issues facing the LGBTQ+ community on the level of someone who studies diversity and inclusion or a historian. Expected Outcome #4 was entirely correct in that LGBTQ+ staff enhance public manager knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community overall.
Policy Environment Changes

The policy environment particularly in West Michigan is rapidly changing. Throughout the process of this study, Grand Rapids adopted its Human Rights Ordinance which focuses on bias and racial equity primarily and Holland adopted perhaps the most LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance in West Michigan (Hicks, 2019). The influence of religion hindered the Holland nondiscrimination ordinance in 2011 and to a lesser degree in 2020, but it ultimately seemed to create a more informed ordinance with broad support from the community. It was once the general public began knowing LGBTQ+ people and seeing the struggles that they face that there was a “sea change” in support on a policy level.

Elsewhere in West Michigan, Kalamazoo still has one LGBTQ+ representative in leadership on the City Commission. The Mayor at the time the study was conducted did not run for reelection. In Holland, their previous Mayor was defeated after making offensive remarks about the LGBTQ+ community on a local radio station and Holland finally adopted a nondiscrimination ordinance after much deliberation. The ordinance was adopted in August 2020 and was nearly unanimous. This ordinance is now the most inclusive ordinance for the LGBTQ+ community in West Michigan, and it goes further and provides “public service” protections.

Discussion of Literature Considerations

This section is intended to address some of the literature in Chapter II in relation to the Findings. There are four additional points of discussion in relation to the literature and findings. First, Carrizales and Gaynor (2013, p. 314-320) stressed that a majority of the research in public affairs journals focused on race and ethnicity, with less of a focus on LGBTQ+. This is
consistent with Chapter V: Data Analysis and Findings in that much of the focus of municipal management is on racial equity, particularly now in regard to police departments. “LGBTQ+ Equity” is a concept on the horizon, as many of the managers are focused more on racial equity. Second, Sears and Mallory’s (2011b) found that the rate of LGBTQ+ public sector complaints was lower than private sector employees overall. This is likely due to the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index and efforts by Fortune 500 companies to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion. Additionally, many municipalities do not have LGBTQ+ protections due to political environment concerns, even though municipal managers are largely supportive of LGBTQ+ inclusion (at least in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo). Third, Brooks (2015) focused on how the Vietnam War provided the “political energy” for the LGBTQ+ equality movement. In a different era, it seems to be that the Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) decision that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide and the Trump Administration’s attacks on the LGBTQ+ community have provided momentum for LGBTQ+ rights and this is manifesting at the state and local levels (Surfus, 2018, in Swan, 2018). Finally, Forrer (2010) discussed public-private partnerships and contracting out. Based on the conducted interviews, municipal managers were clear in that all external entities that collaborate with local governments should have matching nondiscrimination policies so that LGBTQ+ are protected in all government operations and contractual obligations. These public-private partnerships were discussed in interviews in Kalamazoo and are expressed as an emergent theme in Appendix G under the “Influence” theme, with religious influence being specific (i.e., a controversial Chick-fil-A restaurant and its location/zoning concerns that the LGBTQ+ community opposed).
Discussion of Historical and Policy Implications

Historically, Grand Rapids was a hub for the fur-trading industry in the 19th century, which then morphed into Grand Rapids being the “furniture capital of the world.” The Grand River was used as an economically strategic resource. In the 21st century, Grand Rapids is now Beer City USA, noting its major brewery industry. Out of the three cases, it is apparent that Grand Rapids is the economic center of West Michigan, based on its size and scope. While Grand Rapids is very conservative religiously and politically like Holland, it has shed this image with the rise of the healthcare sector, breweries, and now emergent marijuana industry as these areas have attracted people with more progressive perspectives to the area. Kent County was considered a bellwether county in the 2020 election, which notes the changing political climate.

Holland was founded by Albertus van Raalte, who founded the Pioneer School that is now Hope College. This is a private, religious school that is in the center of the City of Holland. By basic observation and an understanding of the historical and religious implications, this emphasizes how difficult enacting a nondiscrimination policy would be that protects on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity compared to other cities in the case. As of August 2020, Holland was able to pass the ordinance after incorporating the voices of everyone who lives in the community and the region. While there might be initial suffering (i.e., evictions, employment discrimination, etc.) for the LGBTQ+ community in not having access to the rights and benefits of such an ordinance prior to 2020, the long-term effect was a nondiscrimination ordinance that has the most inclusive language in West Michigan, and it passed with an 8-1 vote on the City Council. The traditionally religious nature of Holland that may have delayed progress for the LGBTQ+ community seems to have led to a more informed policy and level of understanding.
When you “hear their voices” and “understand their struggle,” LGBTQ+ rights become more palatable to the average person who may not be an expert on the policy issues and have as much information as a historian.

Discussion of Emergent Themes

The study of emergent themes found that diversity and inclusion communication in Grand Rapids is inconsistent across the organization. In all cases, there is some degree of animus portrayed among the citizenry as a decreasing minority of people have these views over time. This level of animus does not significantly impact staff or managerial positions, as observed from the interviews. Visibility of LGBTQ+ issues enhance the overall acceptance of LGBTQ+ people in policy, practice, and on the community level. This is supported by Reynolds (2013) who found that countries that had LGBTQ+ legislators saw a rise in LGBTQ+ inclusive policies, specifically same-sex marriage rights.

It is apparent that the driver of acceptance among public managers of the LGBTQ+ community is the private sector work experiences that have influenced managers’ views in the public sector. This has allowed “influencers from within” to promote inclusive policies. While there are strong external political influences such as the DeVos family that have an influencing role on policy, this family has been thus far unsuccessful at permeating the fabric of the organization and effecting policy change that harms the LGBTQ+ community on the local level with the exception of gender-neutral restrooms. The DeVos family has however impeded and potentially delayed inclusive changes for the LGBTQ+ community, based on political spending and advocacy activities (Haski-Leventhal and Korschun, 2019).
While all three cities now have inclusive nondiscrimination ordinances that protect on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, there is still some level of “social viciousness.” However, this is external to the governmental organization. In areas where the DeVos family has been successful in harming the mental health of the LGBTQ+ community, this has created a learning situation for public managers to better understand LGBTQ+ issues, such as the manager who was profoundly impacted by knowing an employee who committed suicide that identified as LGBTQ+. This has allowed public managers to become “Champions of the Constitution” and use administration to fulfill constitutional ideals and values expressed in policy at the municipal level. While some would most certainly frown at the idea of “activist judges” advancing law in the courts and public managers who promote social equity, there is a moral imperative and a societal benefit in advancing LGBTQ+ equality in administration that is constitutionally fruitful by advocating for the public health and wellness enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution. This is supported by Svara and Brunet’s (2005) and research on public administration’s role in promoting social equity and equal outcomes.

In terms of the emergent themes of Communication, Awareness, Acceptance, Influence, Intimidation, Equity, and Services, Awareness will be a challenge that will cost the organization time and resources, as the managers may have to find a LGBTQ+ expert within the organization or externally to address these concerns as they emerge in general workflow. As it relates to the Influence theme, it appears external political forces have a lesser return of their “dark money” political investments as the public becomes more accepting of LGBTQ+ people. Equity is a focus of strategic planning, but it is almost always in terms of racial equity. LGBTQ+ equity has not been addressed significantly within the policy environment, and perhaps outside of the policy
environment as well, noting the journal representation findings for sexual orientation by Carrizales and Gaynor (2013) that were discussed in Chapter II.

Contribution to the Field of Public Administration

LGBTQ+ research in the field of public administration is an emerging body of study. This study was inspired by Federman and Rishel Elias’ (2016) work at the federal level. There is a lack of understanding of LGBTQ+ issues at the local level, as noted by the difficulty in passing nondiscrimination ordinances due to the politically controversial nature of something that would seem so basic as human rights in housing, employment, and public accommodations. In August 2020, the City of Holland finally passed its nondiscrimination ordinance with an 8-1 vote. This was after several hours of deliberation, failed amendments to the proposed ordinance, immense public interest in the public comment part of the City Council meeting. There were efforts in Holland previously to have a nondiscrimination statement rather than an ordinance. This would run contrary to the protections that are afforded to other protected classes, and proponents of an LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance would see this as yet another effort to relegate LGBTQ+ people to a “second class” status. A nondiscrimination statement that is not legally enforceable or punitive is viewed by some as a “license to continue to discriminate.”

This study promotes a greater understanding of the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of public managers on the LGBTQ+ community, and how those views may shape or influence public policy decision-making at the municipal level. Public managers were overall supportive of LGBTQ+ inclusion in the study, but they are not historians and their ability to make decisions is based on their “selective exposure” as well as the information that is available to them at the time.
(McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan, 2014, in Sabatier and Weible, 2014, p. 233). Based on this information, it is essential that there are recommendations for municipal managers to enhance their ability to serve the entire public, including the LGBTQ+ community.

Future Research

McBeth, Jones, and Shanahan (2014, in Sabatier and Weible, 2014) expressed the idea that the Narrative Policy Framework should continually evolve to provide for new applications of the framework. This study’s usage of the NPF, with the usage of phenomenology and case study methodologies, was a new application of the NPF, as there are no instances of LGBTQ+ research using this qualitative tradition in a municipal government application. Additionally, the study of nondiscrimination policy, such as in the way that Longaker (2015) did with the application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework and the Narrative Policy Framework, and the role of religiosity in this policy environment, particularly in the area of studying advocacy coalitions like the American Family Association and the Family Research Council, should allow for the future development of research in this area. I encourage the reader and practitioners to use the findings of this study to be applied in other areas of diversity research, but especially LGBTQ+ studies as there is a limited base of research that is currently available at the municipal government level.

Recommendations for Practitioners of Public Administration

1. Establish a working relationship with your local LGBTQ+ community center to have an agency to refer to in the event that you work with the LGBTQ+ community.
community center staff can help public administrators with trainings to enhance organizational competency on LGBTQ+ issues overall.

2. Implement identification of pronouns on name tags and email taglines to be accommodating to the transgender community.

3. Study LGBTQ+ history to enhance your knowledge and overall awareness of LGBTQ+ issues. The interviews found that public managers overall were not as familiar with LGBTQ+ history as they felt they needed to be.

4. Identify the policies that your municipality has that affect the LGBTQ+ community. Only half of public managers knew of nondiscrimination ordinance protections and eight of the 12 public managers knew of other policies that affect the LGBTQ+ community.

5. Periodically review your policies to ensure that they are inclusive.

6. Review building codes periodically and implement gender-neutral restrooms to be accommodating of the transgender community. In some of the interview, outdated building codes were mentioned, and these codes are apparently updated every 20-30 years. By ensuring transgender accommodations is a priority and that building codes are updated for gender-neutral bathrooms, your municipality can be more inclusive of transgender individuals. Gender-neutral bathrooms are visual and concrete action for inclusion, not words on a page or as a promise to be inclusive.

7. Have an action plan to address the potential that hate groups may show up at a government function to target the LGBTQ+ community or another marginalized minority group. An idea expressed in the interviews was to have a municipality participate in a counter-event to a hate group, such as a community picnic as was done in Kalamazoo.
Hate speech can turn into hate crimes. Report hate crimes to law enforcement promptly, so that it can be included in FBI data.

8. Identify LGBTQ+ staff members, if possible, to have a go-to resource on LGBTQ+ issues. Nine of the 12 public managers felt that LGBTQ+ employees enhance public services. LGBTQ+ employees provide a resource to enhance organizational competency on the LGBTQ+ community.

9. As there is a legal patchwork of LGBTQ+ policies that are different at the local, state, and federal level, consult with the City Attorney to clarify the law as it relates to organizational policies.


11. Public administrators have a duty to promote social equity and equal treatment under the law (Svara and Brunet, 2005). If your municipality does not have LGBTQ+ protections in the nondiscrimination ordinance in housing, employment, and public accommodations, present this to your City Council or City Manager. When these ordinances come up for a vote, speak out to support the ordinances if you are able. It is important because in many states and municipalities, LGBTQ+ people have no legal recourse when they are evicted from an apartment, fired from a job, or denied a service by their government.

Afterthought

In the period since the conduction of the in-person interviews, the policy environment has evolved in these three cities and nationally. There is a focus on civil rights in the Summer of
2020 while the COVID-19 pandemic is taking place. These are fundamentally challenging times in the policy environment. Presently, policymaking is taking place with social distancing and under intense challenges for racial justice in municipalities around the country. In this particular policy area relating to LGBTQ+ rights, some significant developments have taken place in Grand Rapids and Holland. Grand Rapids adopted a “Human Rights Ordinance” that makes calling the police on racial minorities for their racial status a crime, among other components of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Ordinance (Hicks, 2019). In Holland, voters rejected the now former Mayor in favor of the more progressive Nathan Bocks, who spearheaded the effort in Holland to amend its nondiscrimination ordinance to protect the LGBTQ+ community in housing, employment, public accommodations, and public service.

What is significant is that Nancy DeBoer had policy positions that were extremely anti-LGBTQ+ and she was funded by the DeVos political machine. These policy positions would have been acceptable for a mayoral candidate in Holland just five to 10 years before. The Mayor herself was defeated decisively at the ballot box. The nondiscrimination ordinance in Holland was adopted with an eight to one vote in August 2020, less than a year after the election. Not only was this ordinance researched extensively, but it had broad public support and City Council members listened to the public comments for over seven hours on the day of the final vote.

Public administrators studied the ordinance that was being considered to determine the implications for each individual department. There was a level of overwhelming support among public administrators throughout this study, and this was reflected in how this ordinance was considered and implemented. The views of public managers were consistent with the rising acceptance of LGBTQ+ people nationwide. The macro-level narrative at the federal level,
particularly with same-sex marriage and employment nondiscrimination on the federal level, appeared to influence the policy environment in Holland. At the City Council meetings in Holland in 2011, there were about half of the members of the public in support of the ordinance compared with minor opposition, which was nearly unanimously in support both among the public and the City Council. There was definitely a change in a policy environment in Holland as a response to the federal level progress and rising public support. In Grand Rapids, the ordinance was on the books for over decades by the time the marriage equality decision came around. In Kalamazoo in 2009, the public affirmed support for an ordinance at the ballot box, which is among the few times that LGBTQ+ rights have been defended by voters. Same-sex marriage was not passed at the ballot box until 2012, with Maine, Washington, and Maryland being the first states. This was due in part to the first federal executive endorsing same-sex marriage (i.e., Joe Biden, followed by Barack Obama) (Fetters, 2012).

Religion is much more firmly rooted in the City of Holland than any other city in this study, which is why elected officials on the City Council took great care in addressing this issue. They had to find a way to balance the perspectives of all the stakeholders within the policy environment in Holland, as the region has shed its conservative ideological tilt. Kent County, Michigan was rated as one of the “top bellwether counties in the 2020 election,” and it was in Biden’s column (Wasserman, 2020). This is not to say that religion has lost its political power, and that is not the case. Religion is still politically powerful, but what has changed is religious views on homosexuality and LGBTQ+ rights overall. There was a “sea change” on LGBTQ+ rights in the past decade. No city in this study is immune to the political action of the environment upon it.
What is the source of this “sea change” for LGBTQ+ rights? As Wasserman (2020) stated, it is largely due to a rise in the “white-collar workforce” in places like Grand Rapids, which has a booming healthcare sector and Steelcase, and in places like Holland, which has the presence of Herman Miller (p. 1). Additionally, companies like Meijer have seen the value of LGBTQ+ inclusiveness in their policies. This change is on the micro/meso policy environment level. It is likely that the shift is from a “moral” argument to an “economic argument.” Even the “moral” argument has changed, as Americans see LGBTQ+ people more favorably over time. This national public opinion change is more of a macro-level change occurring at the same time as the aforementioned micro/meso level change.

Still, there is much work to be done in terms of enhancing awareness of the entire public on LGBTQ+ people and the struggles they face. The general public is not a group of historians with deep knowledge of the history of the LGBTQ+ movement. Public managers focus on providing public services to the community. Like police officers, public managers must “wear many hats” and work with many diverse communities in their public service. This next frontier of Public Administration is social equity, a pillar of Public Administration. Public administrators should be both “accessible” and “accountable” to the public, as the “Communication” emergent theme noted inconsistent communication across the city as an organization. Municipal governments are being tested on social equity with the Summer 2020 race riots, health disparities in COVID-19, and how LGBTQ+ people are treated at the municipal level. Municipal managers must “right wrongs” by using a constitutional lens and promote fairness in representation and treatment through policy (Frederickson, 2005).
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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Identification:

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position Title of Interviewee:

This project will collect data on the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) of public managers and how this may or may not be affecting policymaking.

Questions:

1. What do you identify as the top priorities strategically for your city and why?
2. What is your city’s roadmap for diversity and inclusiveness?
3. What is your definition of equality? What is your definition of equity? What does “LGBTQ+ Equity” mean?
4. In what areas does the LGBTQ+ community lack equity or face some disparities?
5. What policies do you know of that promote LGBTQ+ inclusion (in addition to any nondiscrimination ordinances) in your city?

6. How familiar are you with the LGBTQ+ movement overall?

7. Do you know any LGBTQ+ staff members, past and/or present, and what is your experience working with them? Has the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced your department’s operations?

8. What are a few areas your city can improve on in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusiveness?

9. Does your department work with or collaborate with LGBTQ+-serving organizations, such as nonprofit organizations? Tell me about this experience.

10. How do you receive news and information for learning purposes? How do you communicate in your department?

11. Does your department have meetings that discuss diversity and inclusion?

12. Does the city have a support group for LGBTQ+ employees? Tell me about this experience.

13. Does government have a place in promoting LGBTQ+ rights? Why or why not?

14. As a scenario, hypothetically speaking: What would your reaction be if an anti-gay hate group showed up to town to protest your city’s nondiscrimination ordinance that provides protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment, and public accommodations?

15. What would your reaction be if a longtime employee of the city serving at your department announces that they are transgender and will start coming to work as the gender they identify with?
16. What would your reaction be if a resident of your city comes into your office to tell you that they just went to their car and found the offensive word “faggot” spray painted on their car after having been parked in the city’s parking garage?

17. In your current role, what would you do if your employees were to deny a marriage license or type of public service on the basis of LGBTQ+ status on the basis of a “violation of the employee’s personal deeply held religious beliefs”?

Thank the city official for their time today and let them know that their perspective is greatly appreciated. END INTERVIEW.
Date: February 19, 2019

To: Udaya Wagle, Principal Investigator
    Christopher Surfus, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: IRB Project Number 19-02-03

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “Michigan Municipal Manager Perceptions on LGBTQ Inclusion: A Narrative Policy Framework Case Study” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may only be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes to this project (e.g., add an investigator, increase number of subjects beyond the number stated in your application, etc.). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation.

In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the IRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

A status report is required on or prior to (no more than 30 days) February 18, 2020 and each year thereafter until closing of the study. IRB will send a reminder.

When this study closes, submit the required Final Report found at https://wmich.edu/research/forms.

Note: All research data must be kept in a secure location on the WMU campus for at least three (3) years after the study closes.
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Western Michigan University
School of Public Affairs and Administration

Principal Investigator: Dr. Udaya Wagle, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: Christopher R. Surfus
Title of Study: “Michigan Municipal Manager Perceptions on LGBTQ Inclusion: A Narrative Policy Framework Case Study”

Study Summary:
This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you decide whether you want to take part in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The purpose of the research is to “understand the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of public managers as it relates to diversity and inclusiveness of a municipality.” This project will serve as Christopher R. Surfus’ dissertation for the requirements of the Ph.D. in Public Administration degree. If you take part in the research, you will be asked to answer interview questions that will be recorded for transcription and data analysis as part of a qualitative study. Your time in the study will take approximately one hour of your time. Possible risks and costs to you for taking part in the study may be discomfort from answering sensitive questions and the time to participate in the interview. Potential benefits of taking part may be enhancing the understanding of diversity and inclusion in your community. Your alternative to taking part in the research study is not to take part in it.

You are invited to participate in a research project titled “Michigan Municipal Manager Perceptions on LGBTQ Inclusion: A Narrative Policy Framework Case Study” and the following information in this consent form will provide more detail about the research study. Please ask any questions if you need more clarification and to assist you in deciding if you wish to participate in the research study. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by agreeing to take part in this research or by signing this consent form. After all of your questions have been answered and the consent document reviewed, if you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
This is a qualitative study to understand the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of public managers regarding diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the study may help the student understand the working relationship of government entities with organizations in the community. The student may apply a theoretical framework to help understand the policy environment across multiple cases and contexts.
Who can participate in this study?
Public managers, which include department-level managers and deputy or assistant managers. The participant must work for a government entity within a municipality and serve in a managerial capacity.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
The study will involve one interview that will take approximately one hour of your time.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
The student investigator, Christopher R. Surfus, will ask you a series of questions on diversity and inclusion in your city that will be recorded to create a transcription for use with qualitative research. The audio file and transcription will be password-protected and encrypted, and then the files will be destroyed after three years based on the data retention requirements for federal research guidelines.

What information is being measured during the study?
This qualitative research uses word codes, or in-vivo codes, based on the interview transcripts to understand diversity and inclusion themes.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?
This study asks you to provide information on your knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of various diversity and inclusion topics. The risks are minimal to you because you are not publicly identified. All information provided during the interview is entirely confidential through encryption, password-protection, and data destruction at the end of the study following federal guidelines of three years for data retention.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
This provides you the opportunity to discuss what your city is doing regarding diversity and inclusion, and why this is important. The potential benefits are a better understanding of local government decision-making and how this affects diversity and inclusion in your community. Other research benefits are unknown until the data is collected and analyzed.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
There are no costs to participate in this study.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There is no compensation for participating in this study as the participant is a public official, and most agencies have policies that would be against such compensation.
Who will have access to the information collected during the study?
Personal information will be protected and is confidential. Information provided during the interview will be used as data, but will never result in the identification of the interview participant.

What will happen to my information collected for this research after the study is over?
The information collected about you for this research will not be used by or distributed to investigators for other research.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You may stop participating in the study at any time. Please inform the student that you would like to stop the interview at any time.

You can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences personally, academically, and/or professionally if you choose to withdraw from this study.

The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Dr. Udaya Wagle, by phone or email at udaya.wagle@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (WMU IRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year. Online consent language may vary, see webpage for guidance.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Participant’s Signature Date
Hello,

My name is Chris Surfus with the Western Michigan University School of Public Affairs and Administration. I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Public Administration, and I am conducting dissertation research on diversity and inclusion in local government. I need to conduct approximately 6 interviews with public managers from each city in my study.

I was wondering if I could count on you to help me gain an understanding of local government while earning my Ph.D. Your help is greatly appreciated! Are you interested in learning more about this study? If so, I have attached a copy of the Informed Consent document for your review and understanding of my dissertation research. I’m hoping to schedule in-person interviews for any date between March 21 and April 5.

I hope to hear from you soon!

Thank You,

Chris Surfus, GCNL, MBA, MPA
Ph.D. Candidate in Public Administration
Western Michigan University
School of Public Affairs and Administration
APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW DATA

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Transcript Number of Pages</th>
<th>Minutes of Audio/Page</th>
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<td>Kalamazoo</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>####</td>
<td>Kalamazoo</td>
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<td>3.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>####</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>####</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>####</td>
<td>Grand Rapids</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>####</td>
<td>Grand Rapids</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>####</td>
<td>Kalamazoo</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.63</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“Audio Total Time” is in the number of minutes.
APPENDIX F: SUMMARY OF COLLECTED ARTIFACTS

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<th>Number of Artifacts</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Holland Sentinel</td>
<td>8 newspaper articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mlive.com</td>
<td>6 newspaper articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>GRIID</td>
<td>5 articles from Grand Rapids Institute for Information Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ballotpedia</td>
<td>1 article from Ballotpedia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Detroit Free Press</td>
<td>1 newspaper article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>WZZM 13 Website</td>
<td>1 TV online news article</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wood TV8 Website</td>
<td>1 TV online news article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GLAAD</td>
<td>Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NPR</td>
<td>1 radio news article online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Michigan Public Radio</td>
<td>1 radio news article online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meeting Minutes</td>
<td>2011 Holland City Council meeting minutes- ordinance rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Transcript</td>
<td>Mayoral candidate Nathan Bocks transcript on LGBTQ+ policy positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Flyer</td>
<td>Misinformation flyer about LGBTQ+ policy issued by Nancy DeBoer and Vicki Holmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Crisis Response Plan</td>
<td>City of Holland plan to address racial/bias incidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Community Feedback Loop</td>
<td>City of Holland &quot;Inclusive Cities&quot; Community Feedback Loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meeting Minutes</td>
<td>Holland Human Relations Commission meeting minutes on Community Feedback Loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
<td>City of Holland &quot;Inclusive City Action Plan&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General Public Comments</td>
<td>Community Feedback Loop comments from the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MML magazine</td>
<td>Michigan Municipal League magazine on &quot;fostering inclusive communities.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sponsor Invite</td>
<td>Out on the Lakeshore- Holland LGBTQ+ Center sponsor invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Festival Agreement</td>
<td>Tulip Time Festival Agreement with nondiscrimination policy language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mayoral Proclamation</td>
<td>Former Holland Mayor Phil Tanis' Proclamation in support of the Grand Rapids Pride Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #</td>
<td>Theme Category</td>
<td>Theme Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Diversity and inclusion communication across the organization is inconsistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>There is a lack of understanding and awareness of LGBTQ+ issues, and this includes some terminology issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Managers are overall accepting of LGBTQ+, both personally and professionally, even if there isn't a full grasp of LGBTQ+ issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #</td>
<td>Theme Category</td>
<td>Theme Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>There are strong external political influences (i.e., DeVos family) affecting policy and management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>Intimidation, discrimination, harassment, bullying, and &quot;social viciousness&quot; toward LGBTQ+ is evident, mostly from external of the organization. Public managers who witnessed prejudicial actions towards LGBTQ+ have more supportive views of LGBTQ+ (i.e., more expressive).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX G: EMERGENT THEMES TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme #</th>
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<th>Theme Description</th>
<th>Sub-Theme 1</th>
<th>Sub-Theme 2</th>
<th>Grand Rapids</th>
<th>Holland</th>
<th>Kalamazoo</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Equity is a focus of strategic planning</td>
<td>Racial equity was a specific focus</td>
<td>LGBTQ+ equity was a specific focus</td>
<td>Theme, Sub-Theme 1</td>
<td>Theme, Sub-Theme 1</td>
<td>Theme, Sub-Theme 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Conservative managers are focused on service delivery more than diversity and inclusion. Diversity and inclusion is &quot;we need to do this&quot; vs. &quot;human rights issue.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H: HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

Grand Rapids

The City of Grand Rapids is the largest city in West Michigan, which is the geographic region to describe every city in this study. Grand Rapids is the second largest city in Michigan, after Detroit. As of 2018, the population of Grand Rapids surpassed 200,000 for the first time in its history. Grand Rapids becomes only the second city in Michigan history to have a population exceeding 200,000 residents at any given point in time. The City of Grand Rapids is approximately 45 square miles in size, and it is roughly 30 miles east of Lake Michigan. The Grand River runs through the center of the City of Grand Rapids. The metropolitan statistical area (MSA), which includes Holland but not Kalamazoo, has a population exceeding 1,000,000 residents. Kent County, the county that Grand Rapids is part of, has a population exceeding 660,000 residents overall (City of Grand Rapids, 2017; City of Grand Rapids Economic Development, 2020).

The Hopewell Indians occupied the Grand River Valley before the Ottawa Indians moved into the area approximately 300 years ago. The Ottawa Indians traded fur pelts in exchange for metal and textiles with the British and the French before they took the land from the Native Americans. French trader Louis Campau established a trading post along the Grand River in the area that is now the DeVos Place convention center. Louis Campau is the founder of the City of Grand Rapids, with it first being the Village of Grand Rapids. Campau founded the trading post in 1826. Isaac McCoy, a Baptist minister, was the first settler in the area. However, Campau was the “most important settler,” as he bought the entire downtown business district of Grand Rapids
from the United States federal government in 1831 for $90 (City of Grand Rapids, 2017; City of Grand Rapids Economic Development, 2020).

By 1838, the early settlement had incorporated as the Village of Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids quickly became known worldwide for its production of furniture as a major part of its economy, long before being known for its breweries. As of the present day, Grand Rapids is still a world leader of office furniture production. Grand Rapids has a history of pioneering. In 1881, the United States’ first hydro-electric plant was opened in Grand Rapids. In 1945, Grand Rapids became the first city in the United States to add fluoride to its drinking water. Water fluoridation is regarded as one of the major health breakthroughs of the 20th century, and it started in Grand Rapids. Additionally, Grand Rapids had the first scheduled air service and the first publicly funded art installation *La Grande Vitesse*, known commonly as “The Calder” (City of Grand Rapids, 2017; City of Grand Rapids Economic Development, 2020).

In 1916, the City of Grand Rapids residents notably voted to alter the city charter to abolish the alderman system, which paved the way for a commission-manager form of government. This commission-manager form of local government in Grand Rapids was among the first in the United States. The 1916 charter remains in effect in the modern era after several amendments. The City of Grand Rapids adopted its logo in 1982. This logo features *La Grande Vitesse* as the official symbol of the City of Grand Rapids. Decision-making of the city is through the city commission, which currently includes six commissioners for three wards (two for each ward). There is currently an effort underway to enhance representation by increasing the number of wards and commissioners. The Mayor, the City Clerk, and the Comptroller are elected
positions. Appointed positions include the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Treasurer (City of Grand Rapids, 2017; City of Grand Rapids Economic Development, 2020).

The modern Grand Rapids economy consists of businesses that manufacture automotive parts, plastics, footwear, cleaning equipment, office furniture, medical devices, material handling equipment, micro-brewed beers and artisanal spirits, food products, aerospace engines and components, industrial tools and dies, and hardware and shelving systems. There are 19 four-year public colleges, private colleges, and universities. (City of Grand Rapids, 2017; City of Grand Rapids Economic Development, 2020).

Holland

The City of Holland was founded by Albertus C. VanRaalte, an immigrant to the United States from The Netherlands. VanRaalte traveled from The Netherlands, specifically Rotterdam, to New York over the course of about 47 days, then decided to stop in Detroit. He was initially going to purchase land in Wisconsin, but he instead decided to settle near Lake Macatawa. VanRaalte founded Holland in 1847 after traveling to West Michigan with a group of approximately 60 settlers. When they arrived, the settlers found out that West Michigan was an insect-infested swamp, but it was rich in terms of natural resources. The trees fueled the logging industry to build homes and furniture. The abundance of natural resources was a large part of why the furniture industry thrived. The economic opportunity of West Michigan was fruitful compared to the economy that the Dutch settlers left in Europe (“History of Holland- Michigan History,” 2019, p. 1-2; “Our History,” 2019, p. 1-8).
The Holland settlers began to undertake projects, such as the development of a market square that is now the present-day Centennial Park. Virtually all of the land in Holland belonged to Van Raalte that was then donated for other purposes. One of those purposes was the formation of an academy. In 1850, VanRaalte donated land to academy that was initially named the Pioneer School. In the next year, the academy opened as the Pioneer School. Four years later, the Pioneer School was renamed the Holland Academy before becoming Hope College in 1859. Dutch immigrants continued to travel to the United States and into the Holland area. The motivation of the Dutch immigrants to travel to the United States to settle in Holland was to escape religious oppression and economic depression in The Netherlands. A fire occurred in Holland in the 1870s that burned the entire city, destroying everything that the settlers had built. Holland became dependent upon assistance from the surrounding communities to rebuild. The transportation infrastructure that Holland had in place allowed it to thrive economically, which led to the development of manufacturing. Specifically, the lumber and furniture industries, along with agriculture, were able to further develop due to the transportation infrastructure in place (“History of Holland- Michigan History,” 2019, p. 1-2; “Our History,” 2019, p. 1-8).

The Holland Museum was created in 1914 to preserve Holland’s history. Holland’s famous Tulip Time festival started in the 1920s, and much of the tourism industry in Holland was booming. The Netherlands was invaded in 1940, which halted Dutch immigration to Holland. This led to a modern racial and cultural diversification where the Dutch identity declined over time in the City of Holland. Holland became known for another group of immigrants as the Latino population rose to support the thriving manufacturing community in Holland. In the World War II era, Holland area businesses became manufacturers of various

Hope College, as a faith-based institution in the City of Holland, began to thrive in the period after World War II due to a surge of veterans enrolling in college degree programs from the GI Bill. In the 1960s, Holland businessman Carter Brown led the Windmill Island endeavor to bring a windmill to the City of Holland from The Netherlands in order to celebrate the City of Holland’s Dutch heritage. There were other efforts to preserve Holland’s history, including some efforts by the Prince family to save the historic Tower Clock building (“History of Holland-Michigan History,” 2019, p. 1-2; “Our History,” 2019, p. 1-8).

Kalamazoo

Before Kalamazoo was founded by Titus Bronson, the Potawatomi Native Americans occupied the Kalamazoo area. In 1827, the Potawatomi ceded the land to the United States. Permanent settlers arrived in 1829, led by Titus Bronson. The town of Kalamazoo was initially named Bronson. Bronson was regarded by historians as cranky, restless, erratic, and displaying symptoms of Tourette’s Syndrome. This behavior, combined with excessive alcohol consumption, led to problems with the initial settlers and Bronson. Ultimately, the settlers won against Bronson who was still regarded as the founder, and thus the name reverted to the Potawatomi name “Kalamazoo.” Kalamazoo, or Kikalamazoo (the Potawatomi name for the Kalamazoo River) more specifically, means “boiling water.” Like Holland, MI, Kalamazoo developed an educational institution at the start of its founding. Kalamazoo College was formed in 1833, and the name Kalamazoo became the official name of the city in 1835. In terms of land
sales, the Kalamazoo land office sold the most land in the history of the country at that point (“Kalamazoo: History,” 2019, p. 1-2).

Like Holland, Kalamazoo had a group of settlers or refugees from The Netherlands. At the same time, James Taylor began experimenting with celery seeds from England. He could not convince the townspeople to consume the celery as they thought it was poisonous. Eventually, Kalamazoo became known as “Celery City” before transitioning to “Paper and Rice City.” The Kalamazoo Paper was established in 1874, which created the demand for a paper mill. Other industries began to flourish as Kalamazoo was strategically between Chicago and Detroit. An early entrepreneur in Kalamazoo was William Erastus Upjohn, who opened a pharmaceutical laboratory to manufacture pills and granules. This led to the creation of the Upjohn Pill and Granule Company in 1885 (“Kalamazoo: History,” 2019, p. 1-2).

Kalamazoo evolved from a town to a city, and it officially incorporated as the City of Kalamazoo in 1883. The educational systems experienced growth, leading to the founding of the women’s Nazareth College in 1871 and Western Michigan University in 1903. In 1918, Kalamazoo became one of the first cities in the State of Michigan to adopt the commission-manager form of local government. The Kalamazoo City Hall was constructed in 1931. The Kalamazoo County government building was constructed in 1937. Economically, Kalamazoo had over 150 industrial/manufacturing facilities manufacturing goods in excess of $70 million. There were 13 paper mills along with industrial buildings to manufacture taxicabs, furnaces, automotive, caskets, clothing, fishing rods, cards, and musical instruments. The Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra started in 1921, the Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts was founded in 1924, and the country’s first permanent outdoor pedestrian shopping mall opened in 1959. In addition
to Upjohn, Pfizer and Stryker Corporation are major employers in the Kalamazoo area
APPENDIX I: FINDINGS BY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Each city in the study is separated alphabetically (i.e., Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo) based on each individual interview question. Some interview questions are divided into a Part A and Part B component, as there are multiple questions in some interview questions. Each numbered interview question is a separate category for data collection purposes. The questions may refer to the “first manager,” “second manager,” “third manager,” etc., but this should not mean that the “first manager” in one question is the same “first manager” in another question. “The manager,” “they,” and “their” are used descriptively or as pronouns where it is possible to not disclose identifiable characteristics of the interviewee (i.e., gender). I used discretion to redact some information, wherever possible, to ensure the confidentiality of the interviewee’s identity.

IQ1: What do you identify as the top priorities for your city and why?

Grand Rapids

The first manager from Grand Rapids stated that the city just finished appointing a new City Manager. This change has led to the development of a new strategic plan. The new strategic plan was just completed for the City of Grand Rapids. The second manager from Grand Rapids emphasized that equity and inclusion are the top priorities for the City of Grand Rapids. Additionally, policing and community relations need to be addressed as the manager stated that economic opportunities for African Americans were rated “poor.” The third manager from Grand Rapids stated that the City of Grand Rapids just completed its strategic plan and that there were...
“various pillars” in that plan. These pillars include economic vitality, affordability, equity, and inclusion. The fourth manager from Grand Rapids stated that the city has a responsibility to prioritize city services and reduce disparities, along with providing for economic prosperity, mobility, and safety. The fifth manager from Grand Rapids stated that city services need to be delivered in the most cost-efficient way by reducing taxes and user fees/rates, ensuring consistency and maintenance of services, and doing what can be done for economic development.

Strategically, it appears that the City of Grand Rapids is in alignment with the City of Kalamazoo on the topic of social equity and how it relates to economic development. The City of Grand Rapids appears to be in alignment with the City of Holland on some of the economic challenges in the area, particularly in terms of housing affordability and desirability. One of the challenges for Grand Rapids is that it appears to be having “growing problems.” Grand Rapids is frequently ranked in the past decade as one of the fastest growing economies for mid-size cities nationally. Grand Rapids has its first female Mayor and an African American City Manager, but at the same time it is under investigation from the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. There are numerous news articles about Grand Rapids and its inequitable treatment of African Americans, specifically in the area of law enforcement. It does appear to be that there is an effort to address this topic, but the problem is systemic in nature.

Holland

On this particular question, one of the interviews focused on service delivery as a whole, infrastructure, quality of life, and desirability (a suitable place to “live, work, and play” or
vibrancy or attractiveness of a particular community). This same interview focused on financial stability or financial viability of the community as a whole. One of the other interviews focused on the topic of financial stability or financial viability, but this was more in regard to the individual rather than the community as a whole. This interview focused on rent, affordable housing, and food. These issues that were raised focus on economic development, and this is consistent with the perception that West Michigan in general has “desirability” issues and “talent acquisition and retention” issues, as based on interview data and Erickcek, Pittelko, Timmeney, and Watts (2010). Additionally, there appeared to be a general avoidance of talking about “social” diversity and inclusion, and instead a focus on “economic” diversity and inclusion. In other words, the focus was on different socioeconomic groups and their inclusion in the broader community rather than a focus on a racial or sexual characteristic (i.e., African American, LGBTQ+, etc.). This is not to say that LGBTQ+ or racial minorities are not a strategic priority for the city as a whole, but rather this perspective of the manager is atypical in regard to the other cities and managers in the region. It should be noted that there is a degree of outside influence for those that live in this community that may possibly influence public managers in this city, in that it was expressed that the people in the City of Holland have difficulties in accepting people that are different from themselves.

*Kalamazoo*

Kalamazoo just completed a strategic plan called Imagine Kalamazoo 2025. There are 10 key goals within this strategic vision. One of the managers began to list the 10 key goals during the interview, but only six of those 10 goals came to mind. Of the six to 10 goals, none of the

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goals mentioned included diversity or a diversity-related topic. The goals focused on economic development, neighborhood development, and governance. The top three goals that were mentioned focused on economic vitality, specifically in terms of poverty reduction and shared prosperity. Shared prosperity as a concept would be aligned with equity. Equity was a major focus in Grand Rapids, and it is apparent that equity is a major focus in Kalamazoo as well.

It appears there is alignment in Holland and Kalamazoo on creating high quality services and a high-performance organization. Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo appear to be focused on social equity more so than Holland, and in Holland these efforts are undermined by the political environment, specifically the Mayor and her viewpoints on the LGBTQ+ community. On the issue of social equity, the Mayor Nancy DeBoer appears to support the opening of Out on the Lakeshore, the LGBTQ+ community center in Holland, MI. This information was revealed in one of the interviews with a Holland public manager. However, the Mayor seems to undercut this welcoming of LGBTQ+ inclusion by voting against a nondiscrimination ordinance in 2011 that protects the LGBTQ+ community, refusing to reopen debate on the ordinance in the past few years even though there appears to be intense public interest, and making an appearance on a local radio show in 2019 in which she appeared not open to cultural events in the LGBTQ+ community. This confusing and inconsistent position that Mayor DeBoer has may actually undercut efforts by administrative municipal government to attract and retain talent, appear “desirable,” and promote overall economic development.
IQ2: What is your city’s roadmap for diversity and inclusiveness?

Grand Rapids

At the present time, the City of Grand Rapids is facing a civil rights investigation by the State of Michigan. The hiring of a new City Manager and the adoption of a new strategic plan are new developments that outline where the City of Grand Rapids stands at the beginning of this roadmap for diversity and inclusiveness. The public managers that were interviewed stressed that the concept of equity is a major component of the City of Grand Rapids’ strategic plan, and it is at the core of how the public managers are looking at their role as it relates to economic development. Some of the managers identified that there was a State of Michigan civil rights investigation currently taking place involving the Grand Rapids Police Department, so the idea of this civil rights investigation was a theme that the managers are thinking about as affecting the roadmap for diversity and inclusiveness. Talent and the creation of an inclusive environment were some additional themes as it relates to the roadmap on diversity and inclusiveness for the City of Grand Rapids.

Grand Rapids is the only city in this study that has a Chief Diversity Officer type of position. The Diversity and Inclusion director or Chief Diversity Officer role tends to be an established employment position in midsize to large cities that have more resources. This type of position was not yet established in Holland and Kalamazoo, as these cities have much smaller populations compared to Grand Rapids. In Grand Rapids, there is formalized diversity training known as “Cohort Training for Diversity and Inclusion.” This program trains approximately 20 employees at a time over the course of six months. The problem that was identified in the
interviews with public managers in regard to this particular program is that it is not far-reaching enough. Cohort Training for Diversity and Inclusion is not fully effective in that it “doesn’t affect the organizational culture enough.”

_Holland_

It was noted in all of the interviews with public managers in Holland that the City of Holland would be partnering with Ottawa County, which is the county that Holland is in. Furthermore, this partnership would involve a diversity and inclusion office that would be established. It was also expressed that the community needed to better understand the different diverse groups within the community, and later in the particular interview that the people of Holland do not “necessarily accept people that are different from themselves.” There was no particular focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion in this interview question for City of Holland public managers. This is particularly notable because at least one public manager from the City of Grand Rapids and at least one public manager from the City of Kalamazoo mentioned the LGBTQ+ community in regard to the “roadmap for diversity and inclusiveness.” This is not to say that the LGBTQ+ community is not “on the radar” for the City of Holland, but it does emphasize that “diversity and inclusion” has a different definition on an individual basis. One of the Holland public managers noted that Holland was “one of the first communities to have a Human Relations Commission in Michigan.”
Kalamazoo

While equity was a primary target in the City of Grand Rapids, the concept of “strength through diversity” emerged in the interviews with the Kalamazoo public managers. “Strength through diversity” is one of the pillars of Imagine Kalamazoo 2025, the five-year strategic plan for the City of Kalamazoo. This concept of strength diversity through diversity is projected in the representation of Kalamazoo’s city government. Noting the diversity in leadership in the region, the City of Holland elected its first female mayor in 2015. The City of Grand Rapids also elected its first female mayor in 2015. The City of Grand Rapids has an African American City Manager. The City of Kalamazoo has an African American and openly LGBTQ+ mayor, and a female and openly LGBTQ+ vice mayor. This is not to say that Kalamazoo is “leading” on “strength through diversity” necessarily. It is perhaps more difficult for an LGBTQ+ politician to get elected than an African American politician, as has been shown in our recent political history. A city that has LGBTQ+ leadership is perhaps more progressive that other cities on a comparative basis.

It was revealed in the interviews that the City of Kalamazoo is partnering with the Kalamazoo Community Foundation on “Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation” (Kalamazoo Community Foundation, 2020). One of the Kalamazoo public managers discussed private sector experience on diversity and inclusion in regard to the development of a diversity and inclusion council. That particular manager discussed using this private sector experience to develop a similar diversity and inclusion council for the City of Kalamazoo. The development of a diversity and inclusion council would place the City of Kalamazoo on par with the City of Grand Rapids in terms of having a dedicated employee or group focused on this topic of
diversity and inclusion. It appears that there is a concerted effort to make diversity and inclusion at the core of the overall organization environment of the City of Kalamazoo.

IQ3-A: What is your definition of equality?

Grand Rapids

   The concept of “equality” is having equal rights, benefits, and opportunities in terms of a statutory framework, while the concept of “equity” is focused on “leveling the playing field” by providing equal access and outcomes. One of the public managers appeared to mismatch the definitions of equality and equity, and thus instead using the definition of equity to describe equality. This same public manager then equated the definitions of both equality and equity to be the same, and then provided an example of what was actually “equity.” The examples provided by this particular public manager included having different fee structures for different groups of people and the concept of “targeted universalism.” The public manager described this concept of “targeted universalism” as the “identification of a neighborhood that has been experiencing outcomes showing a disadvantage relative to another neighborhood.” The manager stated that you could provide “some kind of benefit to that entire neighborhood universally that would help to lift all people including those that have been most disadvantaged.” This likely relates to both economic status and racial status, as it is much more difficult to identify members of the LGBTQ+ community due to “visibility.”

   One Grand Rapids public manager expressed “not liking the term equality anymore.” This manager expressed that the terms equality and equity are “adversarial,” in that you can only
have one because equity involves treating others differently to reach equality. This at the same time undermines equality. In order to get to equality, you have to undermine equality. There is equality in treatment and there is equality in terms of statutory relations. Individuals have a right to be treated equally, with dignity and respect, based on the statutory application. This statutory application (i.e., the law, the Constitution, etc.) prescribes the individual application (how we treat others). Public Administration as a study focuses on the statutory application as it relates to equality with the individual application being the citizen’s interaction with government.

**Holland**

One of the Holland public managers stated the definition of equality as having the same status as anyone else who’s born at that same time, but then said, “that is not what happens.” The manager correctly identified equality, but then conflated it with equity in a discussion about outcomes. Another manager from Holland expressed “not liking the term equality,” but then actually defining the concept of “equality” as “equity” in terms of mentioning “outcomes” and “opportunities.”

**Kalamazoo**

As was the same in the other two cities, City of Kalamazoo public managers identified equity as being tied to “opportunity” and “outcomes.” Thus, there is some confusion in terms of the actual definition of “equality” as it relates to “equity.” One of the public managers identified that there are “several different definitions of equality.”
IQ3-B: What is your definition of equity?

*Grand Rapids*

Two of the five public managers from Grand Rapids used the term “outcomes” to define equity. Two of the five public managers from Grand Rapids defined equity as allowing “equal access.” One of the five public managers from Grand Rapids defined equity in terms of “opportunity.”

*Holland*

One of the two public managers in Holland described equity as “justice oriented” and “business oriented,” but this particular manager did not define equity in the interview despite defining equity as receiving the “sameness of services” provided by government. The other public manager from Holland connected equity with “outcomes” and “impact.”

*Kalamazoo*

Two of the five public managers from Kalamazoo discussed equity in terms of “opportunity” and the “barriers to opportunity.” One of the five public managers from Kalamazoo talked about “fairness” in a legal sense, and one of the five public managers from Kalamazoo talked about “fairness” in terms of “shared responsibility” and “shared accountability.” Thus, two of the five public managers from Kalamazoo talked about “fairness” in terms of defining equity. One of the five public managers from Kalamazoo talked about equity
in terms of the achievement of a “quality of life” standard that is comparable to other people in a different situation.

IQ3-C: What does “LGBTQ+ equity” mean?

Grand Rapids

One of the five public managers from Grand Rapids did not actually define “LGBTQ+ equity.” One of the five public managers from Grand Rapids defined LGBTQ+ equity in terms of having the same “opportunities.” One of the five public managers from Grand Rapids provided an evolved definition of equity when the topic of LGBTQ+ equity was introduced. Rather than the definition being just about “outcomes,” “opportunity” was introduced as a step to achieve “outcomes.” The concept of opportunity did not emerge before this part of the interview question. One of the five public managers from Grand Rapids that initially responded to the definition of equity as having “opportunities” provided an evolved description when introducing the concept of “LGBTQ+ equity.” This brought the focus on equity toolkits, education, and the city’s current activities in combating institutional racism. The fifth public manager in Grand Rapids that initially defined equity as it relates to “equal access” described LGBTQ+ equity as having equitable treatment and supports within the community, and then that particular manager connected it with the “ability to thrive” or an economic application.
Holland

One of the public managers from Holland shifted the conversation on equity when the topic of LGBTQ+ equity was introduced. This manager talked about the State of Michigan not having protections for the LGBTQ+ community, and then that same manager placed the blame on local LGBTQ+ nonprofit organizations for not doing enough to educate people on LGBTQ+ issues. It should be noted that this manager did not mention Holland’s nondiscrimination ordinance that lacks protections for the LGBTQ+ community. In the other interview from a public manager in Holland, this manager did not mention the LGBTQ+ community at all when discussing what LGBTQ+ equity meant. The message in this response was connected to the services that the city provides, how they experience services, and how that extended to employees. It is important to note that in this response, the conversation was about “outcomes” when talking about equity in general, and the conversation shifted towards LGBTQ+ equity being about “how people are treated.” What does this mean about the outcomes for the LGBTQ+ community, or is the focus just about how the LGBTQ+ community is treated? Why does the definition of equity change when talking about the LGBTQ+ community?

Kalamazoo

In Kalamazoo, one of the public managers was consistent with the prior response on equity being about equal access to opportunity when the topic of LGBTQ+ equity was introduced. The second public manager was also adamant about “making no distinction between LGBTQ+ equity and any other kind of equity.” The third manager also directed the response to the prior response, making no distinction between LGBTQ+ equity or equity in general. The
fourth manager talked about religion and the role of education in LGBTQ+ equity, as compared to “shared responsibility” and “shared accountability” when talking about equity in general. The fifth manager talked about equity in terms of respect and dignity. This differed from the conversation on “quality of life” when talking about equity in general.

**IQ4: In what areas does the LGBTQ+ community lack equity or face some disparities?**

*Grand Rapids*

One of the five public managers from Grand Rapids brought up the topic of homelessness that LGBTQ+ youth face. One of the five public managers from Grand Rapids talked about the lack of representation on boards and commissions, and how that affects equity for the LGBTQ+ community. One of the public managers from Grand Rapids talked about having different ways to measure how the city is doing in terms of business startups and ethnicity of the owners of those startups, but the manager expressed that there was no way to measure how it is doing on LGBTQ+ equity. This manager expressed that there needs to be more education around what the issues are. The fourth manager brought up the topics of employment and housing and stated that the City of Grand Rapids has been hearing concerns about these areas. The third manager discussed about hearing those concerns as well but emphasized that there’s no formal way to measure how they are doing on LGBTQ+ equity. The fifth manager in Grand Rapids proceeded to talk about political and religious topics. This manager was surprised at how “conservative Grand Rapids is.” This manager identified that someone told them that Grand Rapids was the “town of churches.” Two of the five public managers in Grand Rapids were able to address areas
that the LGBTQ+ community lacked equity or faced some disparities. Two of the five public
managers in Grand Rapids were focused on how equity is measured and fielding concerns from
the public (how those concerns could be converted into measurable data). One of the five public
managers discussed political and religious factors that affect the LGBTQ+ community but did
not mention specific areas where the LGBTQ+ community lacks equity or faces some disparities.

Holland

One public manager in Holland brought up the issue of housing being important to the
LGBTQ+ community. Using outside expertise for law enforcement was a topic that was
discussed. Larger cities, like Detroit, have more progressive policies in place that protect the
LGBTQ+ community. The City of Holland received some training from Detroit’s public safety
liaison for the LGBTQ+ community. There is an effort or willingness to learn from outside
experts to improve policies and processes in the City of Holland in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusion.
The other public manager in Holland referenced the nondiscrimination ordinance in Holland that
does not include sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment, and public
accommodations. This manager did not specifically mention housing, employment, or public
accommodations. This manager began discussing a partnership with Ottawa County and
Holland’s city government, and the manager did mention being involved in communication with
Out on the Lakeshore, which is Holland’s LGBTQ+ community center.
Kalamazoo

One of the five public managers from Kalamazoo discussed the housing ordinance, which is the nondiscrimination ordinance that was voted on at the ballot box. The second public manager from Kalamazoo brought up the issue of housing, healthcare, and the issue of adoption by LGBTQ+ couples. Both of these managers discussed issues of respect and how that affects the workplace, such as addressing someone with their preferred pronouns or dress codes in the workplace. The third and fourth public manager could not name a single area where the LGBTQ+ community lacks equity or faces disparities. The fifth public manager discussed how the LGBTQ+ community has been treated by religious groups and the overall lack of acceptance by different church denominations. This manager connected the lack of acceptance by religion with the nondiscrimination ordinance. It was emphasized that once people began to know people who identify as LGBTQ+, their views on the nondiscrimination ordinance switched from opposition to support. Once there were education efforts regarding this unfamiliar LGBTQ+ group, the views and perceptions began to change.

IQ5: What policies do you know of that promote LGBTQ+ inclusion (in addition to any nondiscrimination ordinances) in your city?

Grand Rapids

The first public manager from Grand Rapids mentioned an awareness of the city’s nondiscrimination ordinance that has protections for the LGBTQ+ community. This manager mentioned the name of the person who represents the LGBTQ+ community on the city’s
Community Relations Commission. The second public manager from Grand Rapids mentioned harassment, nondiscrimination, and retaliation policies that include the LGBTQ+ community. This manager mentioned the housing ordinance and policies that are administered by the City of Grand Rapids’ Diversity and Inclusion office as being other areas in policy that protect the LGBTQ+ community. The third manager from Grand Rapids was not familiar with any policies that the City of Grand Rapids has that promote LGBTQ+ inclusion. The fourth manager from Grand Rapids first discussed the Community Relations Commission as having a LGBTQ+ community representative, and then that manager discussed the presence of a nondiscrimination ordinance that protects the LGBTQ+ community. This manager mentioned the Human Rights Ordinance that was being considered at the time of the interview, which was later adopted by the City Council unanimously, that has updated language for bias-motivated crimes, crime reporting, and other areas that would be of interest to racial and sexual minorities (Hicks, 2019). This manager discussed Michigan’s Proposition 2, which bans affirmative action in the State of Michigan, and how this proposition has certain limitations for LGBTQ+, racial, or gender as it relates to affirmative action. The fifth manager named human resources policies, but this was not specifically referred to as the nondiscrimination ordinance.

Holland

The first manager from Holland mentioned just receiving training from a conference that they could not name but I believed it to be the Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes conference based on the description provided by the manager. The manager expressed that as a result of the training, there will be recommendations that are provided to the City of Holland to
have gender-neutral policies. The manager did not elaborate further as to what those policies would be. The second manager from Holland stated that “we have all the nondiscrimination clauses” and that we certainly “have that in our employment practices.” It is important to note that the City of Holland has a nondiscrimination ordinance, but this ordinance does not include the language of “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” in housing, employment, and public accommodations. The City of Holland rejected the addition of those protected classes in a five-to-four City Council vote in 2011 that would have protected the LGBTQ+ community from discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations. This manager stated that the City of Holland’s downtown development authority was going through a process to review policies and procedures, and that one of the efforts was to make the City of Holland appear to be more welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community. This effort would involve placing rainbow flags and other flags associated with welcoming the LGBTQ+ community in windows.

*Kalamazoo*

The first manager from Kalamazoo mentioned the nondiscrimination ordinance, and then elaborated that there needs to be enforcement on this ordinance. The manager expressed certainty that there’s some policies in place that are “problematic,” but then that manager didn’t go into detail as to what those policies are. The second manager mentioned hiring policies as being policies they know that promote LGBTQ+ inclusion. This manager mentioned the importance of being cognizant of holidays or special events that are important to the LGBTQ+ community. The third manager mentioned the nondiscrimination ordinance and hiring policies immediately. This manager mentioned contracting out and the importance of not contracting with businesses that
discriminate against the LGBTQ+ community. The manager stated that it is important to have value alignment when contracting out. The fourth manager mentioned the hiring policies and training. This manager stated that the City of Kalamazoo is actively involved and encourages the Pride event. The fifth manager mentioned inclusive hiring policies that protect the LGBTQ+ community. The manager expressed that it is important to include the LGBTQ+ community in creating policies that affect the LGBTQ+ community. The manager noted that there is LGBTQ+ representation among leadership and that has helped the City of Kalamazoo, noting that the Mayor is openly gay and the Vice Mayor is openly lesbian.

**IQ6: How familiar are you with the LGBTQ+ movement overall?**

*Grand Rapids*

The first manager from Grand Rapids expressed average to a little better than average familiarity. The manager stated that they have LGBTQ+ neighbors. The manager stated that knowing someone that is LGBTQ+ helped shape their views. The second manager from Grand Rapids stated that they are “learning every day,” and that they are not as familiar with the LGBTQ+ history component as they want to be. A documentary on the LGBTQ+ community helped shape this manager’s views. The third manager from Grand Rapids stated that they have limited in terms of “the movement.” The views of this manager are shaped by the LGBTQ+ people they know. The fourth manager from Grand Rapids simply stated that they are “very familiar,” and did not elaborate further. The fifth manager from Grand Rapids is not so familiar with the LGBTQ+ community other than what they read in the newspaper. This manager stated
that they used to go to a gay bar with friends and that being in San Francisco with a great level of LGBTQ+ visibility helped shape their views and experiences.

**Holland**

The first manager from Holland expressed that they “know a lot more than most individuals,” and that they learned a lot over the years. This manager stated that they could give information about LGBTQ+ history, so this emphasizes that this manager has an advanced level of knowledge as regards to the LGBTQ+ community. The second manager from Holland stated that they are more familiar than other public managers, and more familiar on LGBTQ+ issues than the general public. This manager’s views were shaped by making “conscious choices of going to trainings and to be involved in conversations on the topic.”

**Kalamazoo**

The first manager from Kalamazoo expressed being “loosely” familiar with the LGBTQ+ community and stated that they have a lot to learn. This manager has a gay coworker that they are the direct supervisor for. The second manager from Kalamazoo stated that they are “not terribly” familiar with the LGBTQ+ community, and that most of what they have learned is from radio and TV. This manager stated they have come a “long, long way” from the time they were in high school. The manager expressed that “public viciousness” towards the LGBTQ+ community has come out as it has become more visible, but the visibility is noted as a positive for advancing rights for the LGBTQ+ community. The third manager from Kalamazoo stated that they are “not very familiar with it at all” when asked how familiar they are with the
LGBTQ+ movement overall. There was no other response from this manager. The fourth
manager from Kalamazoo reflected on an experience in “Corporate America” in which there was
an LGBTQ+ Pride group in the workplace that pioneered the best practices for diversity and
inclusion. The manager stated that having a gay uncle and growing up on the Northeast part of
the country shaped their views on diversity and inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community. The fifth
manager stated that they are “very familiar.” This manager stated that they officiated gay
weddings when it was illegal to do so.

**IQ7-A: Do you know any LGBTQ+ staff members, past and/or present, and what is your
experience working with them?**

*Grand Rapids*

The first manager from Grand Rapids stated that they know LGBTQ+ employees both
past and present. The manager stated that the employee’s sexuality never came up in the scope of
working together. The employee doesn’t hide their sexual orientation, and the employees feel
comfortable being out in the workplace. The second manager stated that there have been
LGBTQ+ staff members in the department. The manager stated that Prism GR launched and that
is an employee resource group. This type of group is not present in the other cities in the study,
and something like Prism GR only seems to be present in larger cities with more resources. This
manager emphasized that there were about 5-10 percent LGBTQ+ employees of the total
employee population in the City of Grand Rapids. This is representative of the approximately 5-
10 percent of the LGBTQ+ population of the United States, which may be a greater or lesser
figure in Grand Rapids specifically. The third manager from Grand Rapids stated that there have been LGBTQ+ staff members both past and present. The manager’s experience has been positive, and they stated that they have positive relations with the LGBTQ+ community. The fourth manager from Grand Rapids stated that they know LGBTQ+ employees both in the past and presently. This manager stated that they bring a “tremendous amount of value” to the city government in their roles, and that they enjoy their perspective at tables in conversation about city government policy programs. The manager stated that including the LGBTQ+ voice is “critical and imperative to the city’s future.” The manager stated that there’s probably less than 10 percent and probably “on the low side” in terms of representation. The fifth manager stated that there’s a few LGBTQ+ employees that work in the building presently. The manager didn’t state knowing LGBTQ+ employees in the past and emphasized that they might have been uncomfortable being out in the workplace in the past (i.e., before the rise in approval nationally for the LGBTQ+ community). The manager stated that they know a “closeted” manager that doesn’t feel comfortable sharing that they are LGBTQ+ because they are worried that it will affect their advancement. The manager stated that this was “unfortunate.”

Holland

The first manager from Holland stated that they know of three individuals who are LGBTQ+. The manager stated that the experience has been positive. The manager stated that the topic of conversation is more of business, and that there is less of a focus on an individual’s sexuality. The manager stated that they “hang out with” the LGBTQ+ employees, indicating that this manager has LGBTQ+ friends. The manager stated that a lot of people are probably “old
fashioned.” The manager then discussed the value of having diverse perspectives and the value that can bring to the organization as a whole. The second manager from Holland stated that their experience working with the LGBTQ+ community has been no different than in prior places of employment. The manager stated that there are between three and five LGBTQ+ employees in the building. There are about 200 employees citywide. The manager stated that they are proud of the work that the police department does with fair and impartial training to ensure that the officers are aware of implicit bias, and to make sure they are familiar with diversity in all its forms and to keep that in mind when delivering services.

*Kalamazoo*

The first manager from Kalamazoo works closely with LGBTQ+ individuals that provide guidance on LGBTQ+ issues. This manager has LGBTQ+ neighbors. The presence of working with this coworker and other LGBTQ+ employees has been positive. The second manager from Kalamazoo has staff and other colleagues that identify as LGBTQ+. The third manager from Kalamazoo has worked with several people who have identified as LGBTQ+ and stated that LGBTQ+ status is a “nonissue in terms of doing the job they are hired to do.” The fourth manager from Kalamazoo said that they have worked with LGBTQ+ employees, but there isn’t someone specifically in his department that is LGBTQ+. This manager stated that somebody in a nearby department is LGBTQ+ and will be chairing the city’s diversity council. The fifth manager from Kalamazoo knows LGBTQ+ employees but didn’t state whether those employees were past or present. This manager stated that the experience has been “very positive” and found that LGBTQ+ employees are “professional, caring, sensitive, kind, and competent.”
IQ7-B: Has the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced your department’s capabilities in serving the public?

Grand Rapids

The first manager from Grand Rapids stated that they thought the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced the department’s capabilities in serving the public. This manager stated that an employee that does not know a LGBTQ+ person outside of the workplace who works with someone that is LGBTQ+ would be “more at ease with the public” in dealing with all issues, not just those pertaining to the LGBTQ+ community. The manager stated that having LGBTQ+ employees provides “organizational competency” on LGBTQ+ issues. The second manager from Grand Rapids stated that the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced their department’s capabilities in serving the public. Additionally, this manager stated that LGBTQ+ employees provides an “organizational competency” on LGBTQ+ issues. The third manager from Grand Rapids discussed an employee that was LGBTQ+ that committed suicide a few years back, and this manager emphasized that the department at the city lost so much because the employee brought so much to the department. This situation led to the department becoming more “culturally competent” by educating employees on LGBTQ+ issues.

The third manager from Grand Rapids then elaborated on having a representative on the Community Relations Commission that identifies as LGBTQ+ and how that has led to the new Human Rights Ordinance that provides additional protections to vulnerable groups because of that individual’s advocacy. The fourth manager from Grand Rapids stated that the presence of
LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced their department’s capabilities in serving the public. The manager discussed the Grand Rapids Pride Festival and the city’s support of the event, and how this enhances the visibility of the LGBTQ+ community. The fifth manager from Grand Rapids was unsure about whether the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced their department’s capabilities in serving the public. The manager thought that it showed inclusivity of the city overall but didn’t know if sexual orientation and gender identity “makes a difference as far as their ability to do their job.”

Holland

The first manager from Holland stated that “whenever you have someone from a diverse background, it can only benefit you.” This manager made a connection about LGBTQ+ issues and positions that people have on LGBTQ+ issues as being a generational issue. The manager discussed how having someone from a diverse group in the office “eases the tension of coming into a government office” which helps “serve the community better.” The second manager stated that the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced their department’s capabilities in serving the public. This manager stated that this particularly applies to the police department in terms of being aware of implicit bias and making sure that the police department is familiar with diversity in all its forms. The manager connected diversity management with the concept of service delivery.
Kalamazoo

The first manager from Kalamazoo stated that the openly LGBTQ+ employee they manage took initiative to work with various departments to help create supportive spaces in the workplace for LGBTQ+ employees. The manager supported the employee in those efforts. The second manager from Kalamazoo thought it would be absurd to find someone that doesn’t believe the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhance capabilities in serving the public. The manager stated that Kalamazoo is “pretty friendly in general,” but then contradicted this by saying that “they are more open to people with different sexual orientations than they are people of color because it’s harder to find. It’s harder to detect.” The third manager stated that they don’t think the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced their department’s capabilities in serving the public because “I don’t think it really matters” (referring to the ability to do the job they are employed to do). The fourth manager from Kalamazoo emphasized that the legalization of same-sex marriage at the Supreme Court generated greater public awareness to the history of Stonewall and the LGBTQ+ rights movement. This manager emphasized that the employees are expected to be accommodating of those that are LGBTQ+, even though the manager did not directly state an opinion on whether the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhance their department’s capabilities in serving the public. It would be assumed based on everything else the manager stated in the course of the interview conversation. The fifth manager said that the presence of LGBTQ+ staff members enhanced their department’s capabilities in serving the public, and that it has made them “more sensitive to issues that LGBTQ+ people face” and that the manager wouldn’t have known about the issues LGBTQ+ people faced without their presence in the workplace.
IQ8: What are a few areas your city can improve on in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusiveness?

Grand Rapids

The first manager from Grand Rapids stated that one of the areas was the lack of gender-neutral bathrooms in all facilities. Another area that the manager identified is having some kind of a protocol in place for when a transgender employee is transitioning or joining the department in order to make the transgender employee feel comfortable. The manager discussed building floor plans and how often those floor plans change, and how this creates issues for creating an inclusive environment. It is not a simple process to create a gender-neutral bathroom, as the floor plans only change every 20 years or so.

The second manager from Grand Rapids emphasized the usage of preferred pronouns, such as “they/them” for gender nonbinary individuals, and how a particular department in the city did not understand the email tagline that called for “they/them” pronoun usage. The gender identity of a person may not be masculine (i.e., he/him) or feminine (she/her), but rather nonbinary. There are more than two genders that have been identified, so this emphasizes the importance for city employees to be cognizant of changing gender norms and identities.

The third manager from Grand Rapids discussed the “white Christian Reformed” background of West Michigan, and the difficulty for anyone who is different to fit in with that cultural identity. The manager stated that Grand Rapids is a “nice city, but not that inviting.” The manager stated that LGBTQ+ inclusion aligns with Democratic values, and that the Republican political ideology is less dominant in Grand Rapids than in times past. This changing political ideology from “very Republican” to “somewhat Democratic” has shifted over the course of 20-
30 years. The manager then discussed incremental changes like term limits and the new Human Rights Ordinance, which is several years after the LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance that was passed in 1994.

The fourth manager from Grand Rapids stated that the hiring process could improve. Additionally, ensuring that there are opportunities that are open and made available to people in the LGBTQ+ community. Representation of LGBTQ+ employees in city government, boards, and commissions was another point that was made. The fifth manager from Grand Rapids made a connection with generational issues in terms of political positions. This is consistent with the third manager’s viewpoint on the political climate. The fifth manager discussed not only the generational issues but discussed the “old conservative guard” in management and how their voice is being minimized for newer ideas such as LGBTQ+ inclusivity. The manager then discussed the role of the DeVos family and how philanthropy can shape the community. The DeVos family has funded many efforts that undermine LGBTQ+ equality, including candidates for public office that prevent the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights.

Holland

The first manager in Holland, rather than discussing the areas that Holland improve on in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusiveness, decided to talk about how the LGBTQ+ community stays at Out on the Lakeshore, which is Holland’s LGBTQ+ community center, rather than discussing issues the LGBTQ+ community faces at the library in panel discussions. The manager identified a “general fearfulness” that the LGBTQ+ community has in engaging with the community and their local government. The second manager in Holland assessed the city as an organization and
how it engages with the community, without specifically mentioning the LGBTQ+ community. This manager discussed partnership with Ottawa County and how it is important to use racial equity and other equity toolkits to look at policies and procedures. The manager then stated that the community is “still a community that still struggles with welcoming those that are different than themselves.”

**Kalamazoo**

The first manager in Kalamazoo discussed the importance of benchmarking and how this could be used to measure how the city as an organization is doing. The manager expressed that Kalamazoo is not exactly benchmarking how it fits on the “continuum of intolerant to celebrated,” and then the manager proceeded to offer this as an area of improvement. The manager suggested looking at this from a lens of “what are the most inclusive policies we can create” and “how do these policies fit in the current environment?” The second manager from Kalamazoo suggested focusing on bullying and how the city could “be smart” about tackling bullying behavior. The manager suggested assuming the best possible scenario, as opposed to prejudging an individual. The third manager from Kalamazoo stated that Kalamazoo should continue to express its values in actions, such as the addition of the rainbow-painted crosswalks at Rose and South streets in Kalamazoo. The rainbow crosswalks imply that the City of Kalamazoo holds these values, which it does as part of its overall strategy and vision for the future, and it also applies the visibility of the LGBTQ+ community. The manager emphasized that inclusion is expressed by government to be symbolic, as are the values of the city.
The fourth manager from Kalamazoo stated that a senior leader said, “Oh my God! That’s a homosexual for you.” This indicates anti-LGBTQ+ bias among some public managers, but it appears that these perceptions are fading over time. Some of these perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community are becoming more evident as there are openly elected LGBTQ+ people in government. The very presence of LGBTQ+ representation brings out some comments that would be perceived as offensive and hurtful by the LGBTQ+ community by managers or leaders that do not support the LGBTQ+ community. The fourth manager from Kalamazoo discussed a double standard when it comes to talking about the LGBTQ+ community, stating that these managers or leaders “would never in a million years make a black joke or a joke about a Hispanic person.” The manager stated that the culture of an organization is “dictated by the worst behavior a leader is willing to tolerate,” and this manager emphasized the importance of not tolerating behaviors that are anti-LGBTQ+ to promote a more inclusive city as an organization. The fifth manager from Kalamazoo emphasized that something should be done about youth that identify as LGBTQ+ who are shunned by their families and on the street. This manager emphasized that the Vice Mayor, who identifies as LGBTQ+, has a full understanding of youth homelessness and the issues surrounding it. Youth homelessness isn’t necessarily due to identification of LGBTQ+ identity and then being evicted from their parents’ home, but there are surely many LGBTQ+ youth that are disproportionately affected.
IQ9: Does your department work with or collaborate with LGBTQ+-serving organizations, such as nonprofit organizations? Tell me about this experience.

Grand Rapids

The first manager from Grand Rapids identified that the presence of the Grand Rapids Pride Center, which is Grand Rapids’ LGBTQ+ community center, helped a colleague do a presentation on transgender individuals and the issues they face for being who they are. This was the only instance of collaboration with a LGBTQ+ serving organization that the manager could identify. The second manager from Grand Rapids stated that their department worked with the Grand Rapids Pride Center and that the chairperson of the Community Relations Commission is LGBTQ+. The manager stated that other than conversations, there haven’t been any types of collaborative events. The manager stated that the City of Grand Rapids works with the Human Rights Campaign on the Municipal Equality Index, which is an annual publication to quantitatively measure municipalities as it relates to how LGBTQ+ inclusive each city is comparatively on a 100-point scale. The manager stated that there is an effort underway to adopt a youth anti-bullying policy that engages with children in the community to create a policy that’s inclusive.

The third manager from Grand Rapids stated that they allocate resources into the community through a process, but they don’t fund any organizations directly. The fourth manager from Grand Rapids was aware of the Grand Rapids Pride Center by name but was unsure of whether or not there’s a specific relationship with that organization. This manager mentioned OutPro, which is a networking effort for the LGBTQ+ community developed by the
Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce. The manager stated that the City of Grand Rapids isn’t formally engaged with that program. The fifth manager mentioned the Pride Festival, but did not mention the Grand Rapids Pride Center, which is the organization that organizes the Grand Rapids Pride Festival. The manager then discussed the racial equity component, talking about racial equity toolkits and equity in all of the wards of the city.

Holland

The first manager stated that the City of Holland is partnering with the Holland Pride festival and that the City of Holland is going to have a table there. The manager stated that the Mayor of Holland writes a proclamation for the Pride Festival every year. The second manager stated that they work with Out on the Lakeshore, which is Holland’s LGBTQ+ community center nonprofit, and with Ottawa County and LEDA. LEDA is the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance.

Kalamazoo

The first manager from Kalamazoo stated that the City of Kalamazoo works with OutFront, which is Kalamazoo’s LGBTQ+ community center. This manager mentioned the importance of what the city is doing for LGBTQ+ youth, particularly on the issue of youth homelessness. The manager stated that the city wants to have more than one option for LGBTQ+ homeless youth because not all are comfortable with going to Catholic Charities, not to mention some faith-based organizations may not necessarily be welcoming of LGBTQ+. The manager
stated that the Kalamazoo Community Foundation is significantly involved in this effort to provide resources on LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

The second manager from Kalamazoo stated that Kalamazoo Cares is the most active LGBTQ+ organization that they know of in town. This manager notably did not mention the OutFront organization. The third manager from Kalamazoo mentioned OutFront. This manager noted that there’s an initiative with OutFront to put together an ordinance that tackles clean needles and drug usage. Historically, drug usage has been an issue facing some in the LGBTQ+ community. The initiative in Kalamazoo is based off a similar effort that has been taking place for years in Grand Rapids with an organization known as the Grand Rapids Red Project. The manager noted that their department is not reaching out to stakeholders in the LGBTQ+ community. It is the LGBTQ+ community that is reaching out to municipal government. The manager discussed a rezoning effort to accommodate a Chick-fil-A restaurant that the LGBTQ+ community opposed. The City of Kalamazoo ultimately sided with Chick-fil-A under First Amendment applications, but the manager stated that the City of Kalamazoo doesn’t have to do business with Chick-fil-A on a contractual basis when it conflicts with the values of the City of Kalamazoo that support inclusiveness of the LGBTQ+ community.

The fourth manager from Kalamazoo stated that they weren’t aware of any specific outreach efforts to the LGBTQ+ community, and the manager did not name any LGBTQ+ serving organizations other than state that the City of Kalamazoo is affiliated with Pride month activities. The fifth manager from Kalamazoo stated that OutFront is one of the LGBTQ+ serving organizations that their department works with or collaboratives with. The manager stated that there are some other advocacy organizations that Kalamazoo works with, but they
didn’t go into details as to what those advocacy organizations are. The manager discussed how the Kalamazoo Community Foundation has been influential in development of policies that are friendly to people in the LGBTQ+ community.

IQ10: How do you receive news and information for learning purposes? How do you communicate in your department?

Grand Rapids

The first manager from Grand Rapids stated that the city has a training coordinator that emails the entire organization with new training opportunities. There is a media coordinator, which is a separate position from the training coordinator, that provides a daily communication that is of interest to the whole organization. They use SharePoint listservs for communication. The manager emphasized that communication is not siloed and that there is cross-departmental communication that is taking place. The manager stated that this communication of news and media is more of a recent development that was nonexistent a few years ago.

The second manager from Grand Rapids stated that they receive information from emails, webinars, newsletters, and Facebook pages. Facebook is used as an important way for the city to disseminate information, and one department may have multiple pages or groups to ensure that the public receives information communicated from the City of Grand Rapids. The third manager from Grand Rapids stated that they are having more online meetings and fewer traditional meetings due to technological advances over the past few decades. This manager emphasized the importance of trainings and other educational opportunities to exceed the bare minimums of
federal rules and regulations to give staff more opportunities to engage on important issues that are relevant to municipalities.

The fourth manager from Grand Rapids had similar points when compared to the third manager on the importance of electronic communication and how that has had a role in workplace communication more so than traditional meetings. The primary methods of communication are through email, telephone, and in-person meetings with the presence of interdepartmental working teams. The fifth manager from Grand Rapids stated that there’s daily emails, much similarly like the first manager from Grand Rapids stated. Additionally, the manager stated that there are briefings for top-level managers that go out to every department.

Holland

The first manager from Holland stated that press releases and a media department are used for communication. Departments utilize the websites of other departments to gain information. They use Facebook and Twitter for communication. The second manager from Holland stated that the city has been proactive in seeking out trainings on the subject of diversity and inclusion and coordinating with other entities in the community. The manager attended a training in Lansing, MI on diversity and inclusion put on by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. The manager discussed the value of having trainings on diversity and inclusion and the importance of seeking out those opportunities. The manager connected this with the importance of having representation of staff at various events to communicate organizational values, as part of an overall communication strategy of the city as an organization.
**Kalamazoo**

The first manager from Kalamazoo stated that there are email blasts, newsletters, conference trainings, and the usage of an intranet site. The central leadership team has meetings where they ask departments to disseminate information to staff. The second manager from Kalamazoo has one-on-one meetings with other managers. The third manager from Kalamazoo has one-on-one meetings with other managers and email blasts. The fourth manager from Kalamazoo discussed using blogs and outside resources to enhance communication, along with conferences. This manager did not elaborate on other types of communication, whether it be one-on-one meetings or email blasts. The fifth manager from Kalamazoo gains information from news programs on television and newspapers. This manager prefers to have in-person meetings.

**IQ11: Does your department have meetings that discuss diversity and inclusion?**

**Grand Rapids**

The first manager from Grand Rapids stated that they do not have departmental meetings on diversity and inclusion. They have multi-day intensive training programs on diversity and inclusion. The second manager from Grand Rapids stated that there are social equity trainings, “lunch and learn” trainings, and other types of meetings that involve the LGBTQ+ employee resource group called Prism GR. The third manager from Grand Rapids stated that their department has department-level meetings that involve diversity and inclusion as a topic as it relates to the strategic plan of the city as an organization. The fourth manager mentioned “lunch and learn trainings,” National Equity Project Training, and Government Alliance on Race and
Equity training. The fifth manager stated that the only time diversity and inclusion seems to be discussed is when it involves the hiring process.

**Holland**

The first manager from Holland stated that diversity and inclusion meetings occur monthly or with greater than monthly frequency. There is coordination with the county on the topic of equity with the usage of an “equity toolkit.” Additionally, there is involvement of youth in the decision-making that takes place around diversity and inclusion. The second manager from Holland stated that there are citywide trainings on the topic of diversity and inclusion. There are leadership group trainings on diversity and inclusion. This manager stated that diversity and inclusion is in the City of Holland’s “Core Values statement” (Vision, Mission and Values, 2020).

**Kalamazoo**

The first manager from Kalamazoo stated that there are diversity and inclusion meetings, and these meetings involve the application of Imagine Kalamazoo 2025, the strategic plan of the City of Kalamazoo, with the strategic goal of “strength through diversity.” The second manager from Kalamazoo stated that they have been invited to meetings and are engaged on the topic of diversity and inclusion. The third manager from Kalamazoo does not have meetings that involve diversity and inclusion, but it is more of a “bigger discussion” on meeting the various city goals that have been set. This is consistent with the first manager’s application of the Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 strategic plan. The fourth manager from Kalamazoo stated that they do not
specifically have meetings on diversity and inclusion, but this manager frequently applies concepts on diversity and inclusion that were learned from the private sector to the public sector position. The fifth manager stated that their department does have meetings that discuss diversity and inclusion and that they try to incorporate speakers from different diverse backgrounds to come and speak. This is similar to what takes place in Grand Rapids by using outside expertise for organizational learning on diversity and inclusiveness. Holland does a similar type of training, but Holland’s involves an application to address a particular need with law enforcement, while Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo are specifically for training rather than an application to address an immediate departmental need.

**IQ12: Does the city have a support group for LGBTQ+ employees? Tell me about this experience.**

*Grand Rapids*

Grand Rapids was the only city in this case study to have a LGBTQ+ employee resource or support group, likely due to the population and size of Grand Rapids’ government. This group is called Prism GR. The first manager from Grand Rapids was not aware of the presence of Prism GR. The second manager from Grand Rapids was completely aware of every detail about Prism GR. This manager stated that Prism GR was successful in getting the gender-neutral restroom implemented in the main building on one floor. The other floors at City Hall do not have a gender-neutral restroom. This manager noted that there were tremendous political obstacles, namely the presence of wealthy families like the DeVos family that have impeded
progress on a gender-neutral restroom. The third manager from Grand Rapids was not aware of Prism GR, but they were aware of other groups like a young professionals group. The fourth manager from Grand Rapids was not aware of Prism GR. The fifth manager from Grand Rapids was not aware of Prism GR.

Holland

The first manager from Holland stated that there is no LGBTQ+ resource or support group. This manager stated that the LGBTQ+ employees don’t want a resource group because they want to be treated like everyone else. This manager then stated that LGBTQ+ employees are “afraid to engage” and “don’t want to bring attention to themselves.” The second manager from Holland stated “we do not” have a group but did not elaborate further on this topic.

Kalamazoo

The first manager from Kalamazoo stated that there is no LGBTQ+ employee resource or support group. The second manager from Kalamazoo was not aware of an LGBTQ+ employee resource or support group. The third manager from Kalamazoo was not aware of an LGBTQ+ employee resource or support group. The fourth manager from Kalamazoo stated that they don’t have an LGBTQ+ employee resource or support group, but they have an Ombudsman or similar position that people can communicate with anonymously and be directed to the appropriate resources. This manager did state that diversity groups are under development for racial and sexual identity categories. The fifth manager from Kalamazoo was not aware of an LGBTQ+ employee resource or support group.
IQ13: Does government have a place in promoting LGBTQ+ rights? Why or why not?

*Grand Rapids*

The first manager from Grand Rapids stated that government has a place in promoting LGBTQ+ rights because government has the unique responsibility to “promote justice.” The second manager from Grand Rapids stated that government has a place in promoting LGBTQ+ rights, and that the manager sees it as “civil rights” or “human rights.” The manager stated that government always has a place in ensuring and promoting human rights and civil rights, and that this duty is at the core of public service. The third manager from Grand Rapids saw government promoting LGBTQ+ rights as “promoting all human rights.” This manager emphasized it isn’t just important to “elevate” LGBTQ+ rights, but there needs to be “enforcement” as well to ensure compliance with laws and rules. The fourth manager from Grand Rapids stated that government “absolutely” has a place in promoting LGBTQ+ rights” because if city government doesn’t lead in that respect, they risk not being an “open and welcoming place.” The manager stated that government promoting LGBTQ+ rights is central to talent acquisition and retention for employers and other job generators, and that government has a role to create the type of environment for business and the community to thrive. The fifth manager from Grand Rapids stated that it is “important for the employer” for government to promote LGBTQ+ rights, seeing government as the employer and promoting a “comfortable” workspace for all.
Holland

The first manager from Holland stated that government has a responsibility promoting LGBTQ+ rights because it is a human rights issue like the right to vote. The second manager from Holland stated that they have a “heavier responsibility in promoting” “LGBQ” rights, notably not saying the acronym LGBTQ+. The manager only mentioned the “LGBQ” community once, but then discussed how it is the state and the federal government that have a “primary role in laws that protect.” The manager thought that the local law should not exceed the state law requirements. Currently, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act does not protect sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment, and public accommodations. Holland does not have a nondiscrimination ordinance that protects the LGBTQ+ community, and there are absent state and federal protections for the LGBTQ+ community in housing, employment, and public accommodations. The Equality Act in Congress has yet to pass and the Supreme Court is reviewing employment nondiscrimination in the 2019-2020 term for both sexual orientation and gender identity as it relates to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Kalamazoo

The first manager from Kalamazoo stated that government “absolutely” has a responsibility in promoting LGBTQ+ rights in order to ensure “equal access” and to “combat past barriers.” This manager saw it as a form of “relationship building” to address “past wrongs.” The second manager from Kalamazoo stated that promoting LGBTQ+ rights by government is “promoting respect for everybody” without government “picking favorites.” The third manager from Kalamazoo stated that government “wants everyone to be welcome,” and that local
government has a place stating that they do not discriminate even if state law allows for discrimination of a group with “immutable characteristics.” This manager states that government has a role advocating for the LGBTQ+ community, and that Kalamazoo has a representative that is openly gay in the Michigan House of Representatives. The manager noted how Kalamazoo adopting a nondiscrimination ordinance led to surrounding townships like Kalamazoo Township and Oshtemo adopting similar nondiscrimination ordinances. The manager noted that the Mayor and the Vice Mayor are openly LGBTQ+ and this has a role in advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community, but sexual orientation or similar characteristics are a “nonissue” and have “nothing to do with their ability to carry out their official functions” of employment. The fourth manager from Kalamazoo stated that it is “the law of the land,” and that managers are stewards of the organization’s culture. The manager stated that government should be modeling behaviors that promote a “healthy community,” so there is “absolutely” a place for government promoting LGBTQ+ rights. The fifth manager from Kalamazoo stated that government “definitely has a place” in promoting LGBTQ+ rights. The manager stated that government “formulates policy that is going to protect and help people.” The manager stated that they can speak on issues at public forums and can “initiate learning opportunities” for people in the community.
IQ14: As a scenario, hypothetically speaking: What would your reaction be if an anti-gay hate group showed up to town to protest your city’s nondiscrimination ordinance that provides protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment, and public accommodations?

Grand Rapids

The first public manager from Grand Rapids stated that they would be angry because the “people promoting hate are distasteful.” This manager would feel “embarrassed” by the presence of a hate group and expressed support for the LGBTQ+ community. This manager expressed a willingness to potentially engage in a counter-protest of a hate group. The second public manager from Grand Rapids stated that protestors “do not have a right to perpetuate hate speech or any type of violence.” This manager stated that instances in the past that did not involve the LGBTQ+ community were used to combat the Ku Klux Klan with the development of ethnic intimidation policy statewide. Stakeholders were engaged in a collaborative effort to see that policy changes were implemented. The third public manager from Grand Rapids was “personally upset” and “infuriated” by what was being promoted in the public space. This manager emphasized that the city enforced rules and regulations regarding free speech and looked for ways to avoid granting permits if there was something that “crossed the line.” The fourth public manager from Grand Rapids emphasized always providing for public comment and ensuring free speech rights. This manager said it is important to be mindful of protesting as a “public safety concern” to ensure that it doesn’t “get out of hand.” This manager expressed that it is important to be diplomatic and provide for the ability to comment in support or in opposition. The fifth
public manager from Grand Rapids stated that they would be “disappointed” if a hate group showed up to town, but the “beauty and the burden of democracy is that everyone is entitled to their own opinion and we must preserve that.” Sometimes this has led to having to shut down City Commission meetings when the dialogue is no longer “respectful.”

Holland

The first manager from Holland focused on safety to ensure that the protestors are safe, and the citizens of Holland are safe. This manager suggested holding an alternate event at a different venue as a way for citizens to peacefully counter the message of protestors. This manager emphasized external groups that have been influential in mitigating concerns regarding protestors, such as trainings by the Southern Poverty Law Center and trainings on specific issues like hate crimes. The second manager from Holland focused on ensuring public safety, “calling on partnerships” when a larger conversation needs to be had on a particular scenario, and enforcing policies and procedures to ensure the right to protest and the right to not agree with the protest. Both managers discussed the Human Relations Commission and its role in steering inclusiveness efforts in the larger community.

Kalamazoo

The first manager from Kalamazoo simply stated that they would hold the hate group accountable to every single rule in regard to what is acceptable and what is not when it comes to protesting and free speech rights. The second manager from Kalamazoo stated that it is important to recognize free speech rights, but there should be a way to “spread out a protest” to keep the
opposing groups separate to avoid conflict. The third manager from Kalamazoo expressed the right to protest as a free speech right and that anti-LGBTQ+ protestors are “not very enlightened.” This manager discussed protesting as a protected First Amendment right. This manager was not aware of any instances of hate groups showing up in Kalamazoo to protest the LGBTQ+ community in any way. The fourth manager expressed that they would have “blind rage” when it comes to a hate group showing up to town, but that they would not express that view publicly and instead side with free speech rights under the First Amendment. The fifth public manager from Kalamazoo provided an example of a nonprofit event that the city supported in order to counter a Klan rally. This event was a picnic and they anticipated having only about 30 people there. Over 1,000 people showed up to the picnic, so it was a very effective way to counter a hate group.

IQ15: What would your reaction be if a longtime employee of the city serving at your department announces that they are transgender and will start coming to work as the gender they identify with?

Grand Rapids

The first public manager from Grand Rapids stated that they would have to “work on the surprise of that,” but not in any way that would be opposing it or considering it a problem. This manager stated that the City of Grand Rapids needs to accelerate the creation of gender-neutral bathrooms, but the problem that remains is the building codes are only updated every 20 years or so. The second manager from Grand Rapids stated that it is “not an issue” and that the City of
Grand Rapids works with employees through transitions and with insurance. This manager stated that they have held employees accountable when there is a disciplinary issue regarding the treatment of an employee. The third manager from Grand Rapids would “applaud them” and then proceeded to appear emotional and was visibly crying. This manager then disclosed some age and gender bias. This was both bias that the public manager has and bias that employees under the manager have towards the manager.

The fourth manager from Grand Rapids stated that it is important to support the employee that is transitioning in any way possible as a community leader and to make sure that accommodations are made as necessary. This manager was knowledgeable of gender-neutral bathrooms and forthcoming gender-neutral locker rooms. This manager stated that there are “several transgender individuals working for City Hall.” This manager stated that building improvements are currently taking place and this topic is of consideration by the city to make it more inclusive and welcoming. The fifth public manager from Grand Rapids stated that they have “limited exposure with transgender people,” but thinks “it is great that they would feel comfortable saying and wanting to be who they are at work.” This manager stated that it would “definitely be a learning experience for me,” but has met “one or two people that are transgender.” This manager did not appear to be uncomfortable by this question and was supportive of providing a “comfortable” work environment.

Holland

The first manager from Holland stated that the “first thing they would do is make sure they can accommodate them.” This manager knows they will accommodate, but they want to
make sure they are following the rules to be as supportive as possible. There was a willingness to support the employee with the transition, focusing on elements like “thriving” and creating “value” for the employee. The second manager from Holland stated that having a transgender employee transition was a situation they were familiar with because of it happening at a prior employer. This manager emphasized that they would use this experience as guidance for how to accommodate a transgender employee who is transitioning.

**Kalamazoo**

The first manager from Kalamazoo said that they would “validate” and “appreciate” the employee for being open. This manager mentioned the importance of “trust” when sharing this kind of news with an employer. The manager was very supportive and emphasized the willingness to help the employee in this “new space.” The second manager from Kalamazoo would “have no problem with it” and would “try to instill patience and tolerance” among colleagues. The third manager from Kalamazoo would “not pry into the personal lives of my employees.” This manager stated that it was important to meet “expectations” and “carry out your job.” The fourth manager from Kalamazoo stated that it would be “wonderful” and to “let me know how things go.” This manager emphasized the desire to ensure that the transition is supported in the workplace. The fifth manager from Kalamazoo stated “Congratulations! I’m glad you are able to become who you truly are.”
IQ16: What would your reaction be if a resident of your city comes into your office to tell you that they just went to their car and found the offensive word “faggot” spray painted on their car after having been parked in the city’s parking garage?

Grand Rapids

The first public manager from Grand Rapids was sympathetic to the victim and would work with them to help file a police report. This manager stated that they wanted to be a resource for the victim in connecting them to appropriate agencies that can help them. The second public manager from Grand Rapids would first ask whether or not the vandalized vehicle is still in the parking garage. Then, the manager would directly communicate with the detective bureau at the Grand Rapids Police Department. This manager would follow up with the individual to determine what additional assistance that the city or the manager could provide. The third public manager from Grand Rapids would call the police department to have the incident investigated immediately. The manager noted that simply having an investigation and talking to a suspect is sometimes “scary enough” and would deter future crimes, even if the police department was not able to find the perpetrator.

The fourth public manager from Grand Rapids instantly stated that the incident is a hate crime. This manager stated that the first step is reporting it to the police to document the incident. The manager noted that the city has numerous security cameras. The manager noted that there are a series of procedures and activities, or protocol, that takes place in the instance of an incident, with a bomb threat being an example that was provided. The fifth public manager from Grand Rapids would call the police and encourage the victim to file a police report. This
manager noted that they do not have the resources to help the victim in their day-to-day work but would try to connect the victim with the appropriate resources.

**Holland**

The first public manager from Holland stated that they would help the victim report it by walking with them or driving them over to the police department to make a police report. This manager would address the trauma aspect with the victim to ensure their safety and wellbeing, and then this manager would have police monitor their home and neighborhood for their safety. The manager would follow up in a few days to determine what else the city could do.

Additionally, this manager would report it to the FBI as a hate crime. This manager noted that the media does not report on when the city does “good things,” such as hate crimes trainings.

The second public manager from Holland would try to “connect with the victim on a personal level” and “express remorse and empathy” with that person. This manager would inquire with the victim as to what they wanted to do with the situation, whether file a report or pursue an investigation. The manager identified it as a crime and that the city would definitely work to investigate it.

**Kalamazoo**

The first public manager from Kalamazoo would “listen and validate the trauma of that experience.” This manager would connect the victim with public safety, consider it a hate crime, and help the victim of the crime try to deal with the trauma that they experienced. The second public manager from Kalamazoo would alert the City Manager to use their resources to
investigate the matter and then await a report from the City Manager. The third public manager from Kalamazoo identified the incident as a form of vandalism, stated that they would work to prosecute the individual that committed the crime, and then noted that sometimes “LGBTQ+ people or otherwise are sometimes the victims of vandalism.” The fourth public manager from Kalamazoo would make sure that the employee is “OK” first. The manager said that they are not a qualified clinician but would connect them to the appropriate resources. The manager would try to get the surveillance video. This manager provided an example from prior experience in the workplace of an incident that they attempted to foil by catching someone in the act of trying to sabotage property. The fifth public manager from Kalamazoo would first go to the police to have the victim presumably file a police report. The manager would talk with the victim about how this is unacceptable and then try to find out if they could identify who did this.

IQ17: In your current role, what would you do if your employees were to deny a marriage license or type of public service on the basis of LGBTQ+ status on the basis of a “violation of the employee’s personal deeply held religious beliefs?”

Grand Rapids

The first public manager from Grand Rapids stated that they were familiar with the situation involving Kentucky Clerk Kim Davis. This manager noted that the issue of marriage is particularly controversial for some people, but it is not controversial for them. This manager would ensure that a marriage license is issued and not argue with the employee in front of the member of the public, then they would deal with the employee’s action in failing to issue the
license later. The second public manager from Grand Rapids “rolled their eyes” and then instantly mentioned “a certain Kentucky place.” This manager mentioned that she had to pay the legal fees and court costs. This manager noted that the city has made accommodations for employees with “deeply-held religious beliefs,” but that would not excuse them from their duties in providing a marriage license if that was a requirement of their position.

The third public manager from Grand Rapids stated that they would “go to Labor Relations” and figure out how they could stop that. The manager brought up the issue with the wedding cakes, such as Masterpiece Cakeshop. The manager said that their job is to implement policy and that they may “not like the policies they implement,” but you need to follow how the policy is established regardless of individual views. The fourth public manager from Grand Rapids stated that not issuing a marriage license in the City Clerk’s office would be grounds for a “violation of performance.” This manager stated that they are there to “do a job” and that the “violation of performance” would be handled through the standard employee discipline process. This manager stated that an employee that can not issue a marriage license due to “deeply held religious beliefs” would then have to provide someone that could issue the marriage license because the activity still must be carried out as a function of government.

The fifth public manager from Grand Rapids instantly provided an example about a Meijer pharmacist having a personal opinion against abortion and failing to issue a prescription to someone for medicine regarding their abortion. This manager’s reaction upon reading this story, as they stated, was “how could they be a pharmacist?” and how does the personal opinion have anything to do with providing medical care. The manager used this example to apply to the workplace at the City of Grand Rapids stating that, “if you can’t uphold the policies and rules of
the municipality and you have personal opinions against them and that’s going to affect your day-to-day job, then you have no business working here.” In the event a marriage license was denied by an employee, the manager would intervene and process the marriage license themselves.

**Holland**

The first public manager from Holland stated that they would look to what the federal law says regarding issuance of marriage license and employee responsibility in doing so. This manager then would refer to the City Attorney. The manager then noted that it is “illegal” to not provide a service based on sexual orientation or gender identity because they “have to serve the people.” The second public manager from Holland stated that they do not do marriage licenses there and that it is handled by the county clerk. This manager stated that the employee is not allowed to deny someone a service based on their sexual orientation or status, and that such a violation would be a disciplinary matter up to and including termination. This manager noted that they are hired to do a job and that they are public servants. This manager remembered the Kim Davis incident, but did not guess the correct state of where this occurred.

**Kalamazoo**

The first public manager from Kalamazoo stated that they would check with the City Attorney to understand what the law tells the city what they have to do. This manager stated they would assess the situation by asking what the laws say, what does policy say, and whether or not the employee followed the policy. Then the manager would determine whether their policy is
wrong, or their policy is right, and then follow up with the particular employee. The second public manager from Kalamazoo stated that they would have the human resources department address the situation, rather than the manager themselves. The third public manager from Kalamazoo stated that the Clerk knows what the city as an organization stands for and that it is “not appropriate” to deny someone a service on the basis of their sexual orientation.

The fourth public manager from Kalamazoo stated that this was the “Kim Davis special.” The manager instantly knew of the incident that the scenario is referring to. The manager provided some humor regarding Kim Davis when she left jail. This manager stated that you should “do your job” and that your “religious beliefs should remain at home because it is irrelevant to the job that they were hired to do.” This manager then proceeded to discuss that less than five percent of employees identified as LGBTQ+ and that this has led to people from the public treating LGBTQ+ people differently. This manager noted that there was “snickering” and that someone said that the rainbow sidewalks “should be painted over because they are blinding.” This manager noted that LGBTQ+ acceptance is an uphill battle or a “lonely vigil” and expressed a willingness to improve it. The fifth public manager from Kalamazoo stated that the employee has to provide a marriage license to all regardless of sexual orientation or step aside from their public role if they are unable to comply. The manager noted the Masterpiece Cakeshop decision by the Supreme Court, but it was actually the Kim Davis incident. The manager then began to talk about Mike Huckabee and noted that “his daughter is worse.”
### APPENDIX J: CASE PROFILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE NAME</th>
<th>GRAND RAPIDS</th>
<th>HOLLAND</th>
<th>KALAMAZOO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DESCRIPTION</strong></td>
<td>&quot;To elevate quality of life through excellent city services.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Maximize Livability.&quot;</td>
<td>No explicitly stated mission statement; Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 strategic plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mission Statement</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Grand Rapids will be nationally recognized as an equitable, welcoming, innovative and collaborative city with a robust economy, safe and healthy community, and the opportunity for a high quality of life for all.&quot;</td>
<td>A vibrant, world-class community in a beautiful lakefront environment where people work together, celebrate community, and realize dreams.</td>
<td>No explicitly stated vision statement; Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 strategic plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vision Statement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:

Vision, Mission, and Values (2020)

Strategic Plan of the City of Grand Rapids (2019)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Values</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>We will maintain respect for each other and the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>We will foster a positive environment to accomplish our mission, encouraging and supporting each other to perform our work and reach our full potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>We will perform each responsibility with pride and integrity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>We will continually improve channels of communications both internally and externally, being especially mindful to be inclusive of all people and groups in our community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>We will encourage participation in the development and improvement of services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>We will strive for excellence and satisfaction in the provision of public services. We will recognize our strengths and weakness and how we can learn from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We will build upon the diversity of our community and experiences and hold it as a basic value to treat all people with courtesy and respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We will remember the importance of stewardship of public money operating in a responsible, cost-effective manner, always remembering and respecting the source of our funding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:

Vision, Mission, and Values (2020)

Strategic Plan of the City of Grand Rapids (2019)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE NAME</th>
<th>GRAND RAPIDS</th>
<th>HOLLAND</th>
<th>KALAMAZOO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equity (Elected Leadership)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race and Gender</strong></td>
<td>WF Mayor; 6 Commissioners-2 WM, 2 BM, 1 BF, 1 HF</td>
<td>WM Mayor (replaced WF Mayor); 8 Commissioners-4 WM, 1 BM, 1 HM, 2 WF</td>
<td>WM Mayor (replaced BM Mayor); 6 Commissioners-2 WM, 1 BM, 2 WF, 1 BF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBTQ+</strong></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES, former Mayor and Vice Mayor. Vice Mayor now Commissioner, so 1 LGBTQ+.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nondiscrimination Ordinance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Orientation</strong></td>
<td>YES, as of 1994</td>
<td>YES, as of 2020</td>
<td>YES, as of 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Identity</strong></td>
<td>YES, as of 1994</td>
<td>YES, as of 2020</td>
<td>YES, as of 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBTQ Affinity Groups and Policies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affinity Group</strong></td>
<td>PrismGR- LGBTQ+ Affinity Group</td>
<td>No LGBTQ+ Affinity Group</td>
<td>No LGBTQ+ Affinity Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Neutral Restrooms</strong></td>
<td>Gender Neutral Restrooms</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Gender Neutral Restrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chief Diversity Officer</strong></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Grand Rapids</td>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>Kalamazoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBTQ+ Staff Awareness</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (100%)</td>
<td>1, 2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4 (80%)</td>
<td>1, 2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBTQ+ Staff Influence Enhanced Public Service</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4 (80%)</td>
<td>1, 2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
<td>3, 4 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBTQ+ Policy Awareness</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1, 2, 4 (60%)</td>
<td>2 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3, 5 (40%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Policies</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2, 5 (40%)</td>
<td>1, 2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1, 3, 4 (60%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understands LGBTQ Issues</strong></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td>4, 1, 2</td>
<td>4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not At All</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*DESCRIPTION*

**Public Managers (Appointed Only)**

**LGBTQ+ Staff Awareness**

- Yes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (100%)
- No: 1, 2, 3, 4 (80%)

**LGBTQ+ Staff Influence Enhanced Public Service**

- Yes: 1, 2, 3, 4 (80%)
- No: 5 (20%)

**LGBTQ+ Policy Awareness**

**Nondiscrimination**

- Yes: 1, 2, 4 (60%), 2 (50%), 1, 3 (40%)
- No: 3, 5 (40%), 1 (50%), 2, 4, 5 (60%)

**Other Policies**

- Yes: 2, 5 (40%), 1, 2 (100%), 2, 3, 4, 5 (80%)
- No: 1, 3, 4 (60%), 1 (20%)

**Understands LGBTQ Issues**

- Very: 4, 1, 2
- Somewhat: 1, 2, 5
- Not At All: 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE NAME</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DESCRIPTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Centralized LGBTQ+-inclusive Churches</td>
<td>Most Churches per Capita</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>DeVos Family Influence</td>
<td>Mayor with anti-LGBTQ positions not reelected</td>
<td>DeVos Family Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Leadership Representation</td>
<td>Varying degree of Public Body Composition by Race and Gender representation, but not LGBTQ+</td>
<td>Varying degree of Public Body Composition by Race, Gender, and LGBTQ+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Business Community</td>
<td>Significant Corporate Support for LGBTQ+ (i.e., Steelcase, Meijer, etc.)</td>
<td>Significant Corporate Support for LGBTQ+ (i.e., Herman Miller, Johnson Controls, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amway (DeVos Family) influence in opposition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX K: TERMINOLOGY

LGBTQ+ Community Descriptors

GLBT- Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender. Other than LGBT, the community is sometimes referred to GLBT but this terminology is outdated and less inclusive.

LGBT- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. This is a less inclusive term than LGBTQ+ and LGBTQIA.

LGBTQ+- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and any person in this community that does not necessarily identify as LGBTQ. This would include Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) and Women Who Have Sex with Women (WSW) that do not necessarily identify as LGBTQ. This would also include gender nonbinary and gender nonconforming individuals.

LGBTQIA- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and ally.

Note: This dissertation refers to the entire community as the LGBTQ+ community and is meant to be inclusive of all groups and classifications within this population. Sources cited and other references include GLBT, LGBT, or LGBTQIA. These references were not changed and left as is to ensure accurate citations.