

Hybrid Leadership in Post-Industrial Cities



Whitepaper

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Abstract

This study explores the Hybrid Leadership Model as applied within the mayoral administrations of Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; and Gary, Indiana, three post-industrial cities navigating economic recovery, institutional reform, and community revitalization. Each city's leadership demonstrates how blending transformational, distributive, servant, and Lean management theories can produce adaptive and sustainable governance. In Detroit, Mayor Mike Duggan's administration utilized transformational vision, distributive collaboration, and Lean operational reforms to restore municipal efficiency, stimulate investment, and rebuild resident trust. Cleveland's Mayor Justin Bibb employed a similarly hybridized model rooted in data-driven management, public accountability, and community engagement, integrating servant leadership principles to advance equity and transparency through initiatives such as the Cleveland ERA. In Gary, Mayor Eddie Melton's leadership emphasized collaboration, ethical stewardship, and strategic economic partnerships to chart a "new course forward" focused on social renewal and fiscal stability. Collectively, these cases illustrate how hybrid leadership fosters innovation, inclusion, and performance across different urban contexts. The findings suggest that cities facing structural decline can achieve resilient transformation through integrative leadership that balances vision with accountability and empathy with efficiency.

Keywords: hybrid leadership, transformational leadership, distributive leadership, servant leadership, Lean management, urban revitalization, adaptive governance, post-industrial cities, Detroit, Cleveland, Gary, public administration

Preface

Urban leadership in post-industrial America presents a complex challenge, how to govern cities marked by economic transformation, demographic diversity, and historical inequities while fostering unity and shared purpose. The cities of Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; and Gary, Indiana illustrates this challenge vividly. Once engines of industrial prosperity, these communities have grappled with population decline, racial and economic segregation, and crises of public trust. Yet they also stand as laboratories of leadership innovation, where mayors and civic leaders experiment with hybrid leadership models that combine elements of transformational, adaptive, and collaborative governance. These models aim to bridge divides between racial, ethnic, and economic groups while promoting inclusive growth and civic renewal.

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. (1998), in *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, warns that an overemphasis on cultural and ethnic particularism can erode the shared civic identity that binds a democratic society. His observation resonates deeply in these urban contexts, where the “cult of ethnicity,” as he termed it, risks fragmenting public cooperation and weakening collective progress. For mayoral leaders in Detroit, Cleveland, and Gary, the challenge lies not only in managing diverse populations but also in building unity through shared values, economic equity, and civic participation. Effective leadership in such settings requires what Schlesinger describes as “particular leadership stewardship,” the moral and strategic capacity to celebrate diversity while reinforcing the broader ideals of common citizenship and democratic purpose.

Examining the leadership models used in these three cities offers insight into how urban governance can respond to the dual imperative of diversity and unity. Through a balance of

cultural sensitivity, ethical commitment, and strategic collaboration, these cities' leaders demonstrate how local government can serve as both a microcosm and a remedy for the broader tensions of America's multicultural society.

Detroit's Collaborative Leadership

Introduction

Detroit, Michigan once the emblem of American industrial strength and later the stark symbol of post-industrial decline offers an essential case study in modern leadership amid urban transformation. For much of the 20th century, Detroit flourished as the global center of automobile manufacturing, supported by vertically integrated factories, unionized labor, and mass-production innovations that defined the Fordist economic model. However, beginning in the 1950s and accelerating through the late 20th century, the city experienced significant deindustrialization as manufacturing jobs moved to suburbs, non-union regions, and overseas. Automation, globalization, and corporate restructuring contributed to widespread job loss, population decline, and fiscal instability, positioning Detroit as one of the most notable post-industrial cities in the United States (Sugrue, 2014).

Detroit's revitalization under Mayor Mike Duggan beginning in 2013 demonstrates how leadership in such an environment must be adaptive, strategic, and multidimensional. The city's recovery has relied on a hybrid leadership model that integrates transformational, distributive, servant, and process-oriented approaches to address deep-rooted social, economic, and operational challenges. This blend underscores that modern public leadership requires balancing vision with collaboration, ethics with efficiency, and inspiration with accountability, especially in a city still navigating the legacies of industrial loss.

A crucial element of Detroit's governance landscape is the Detroit City Charter, the foundational legal document structuring the purpose, powers, and limitations of municipal government. As the city's operational constitution, the Charter outlines the separation of powers between the Mayor and City Council, establishes responsibilities for public safety, land use, budgeting, and service delivery, and embeds mechanisms for transparency, fiscal discipline, ethical conduct, and citizen participation. These legal parameters ensure that leadership operates within a system designed to promote accountability while enabling effective governance an essential balance in a recovering urban environment.

Detroit's leadership context in the early 2010s must also be understood alongside its demographic profile. Following decades of out-migration, the 2010 Census recorded Detroit's population at 713,777, continuing a long downward trend. The city remained one of the nation's largest majority-Black urban centers, with African Americans comprising more than 80% of the total population, alongside growing Hispanic, Middle Eastern/North African, and younger racially diverse groups drawn to revitalizing districts such as Downtown, Midtown, and Corktown. Between 2010 and 2014, these shifts reflected both ongoing decline and the early signs of urban reinvestment, shaping the cultural and administrative landscape in which leadership decisions occurred.

Taken together, Detroit's post-industrial transition, governance framework, demographic dynamics, and hybrid leadership practices provide a rich foundation for examining how modern leaders navigate complexity and drive reform. The city's ongoing resurgence illustrates the importance of integrating legal structures, cultural awareness, and multidimensional leadership into a cohesive strategy capable of moving a diverse and evolving urban community toward sustainable progress.

Transformational Leadership: Vision and Change

Transformational leadership theory emphasizes vision, inspiration, and the ability to motivate followers toward collective goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Mayor Duggan’s leadership reflects these characteristics through his consistent articulation of a clear and motivating vision for Detroit’s recovery. After decades of population decline, municipal bankruptcy, and economic instability, Duggan focused on restoring trust in city government and improving essential services. His “eight principles” for Detroit’s redevelopment, such as ensuring equitable access to jobs and welcoming all residents to share in the city’s renewal, illustrate a commitment to collective transformation (Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, 2023).

By mobilizing both public and private sectors around this vision, Duggan exemplifies transformational leadership’s core mechanism, motivating diverse stakeholders through shared purpose and long-term strategic goals. His administration’s initiatives in housing stabilization, neighborhood investment, and business attraction have been guided by a transformative narrative that emphasizes opportunity, inclusivity, and optimism about Detroit’s future (Newsweek, 2025).

Distributive Leadership: Collaboration Across Sectors

In addition to transformational leadership, Duggan’s administration exhibits the principles of distributive (or shared) leadership, which emphasizes shared responsibility and collaborative problem-solving (Spillane, 2006). Detroit’s recovery has been characterized by coordinated partnerships among city agencies, nonprofits, private investors, and community organizations. The Kresge Foundation (2024) describes this approach as a “genuinely distributive leadership model” that mobilizes actors across sectors to address the complexity of urban challenges.

This collaborative governance structure disperses leadership functions throughout the network rather than centralizing authority in the mayor's office. For example, neighborhood revitalization programs and small-business support initiatives are often co-managed by local organizations and philanthropic partners, reflecting a participatory approach to policy implementation. Such distributed decision-making empowers community stakeholders and enhances long-term policy legitimacy, consistent with Yukl and Gardner's (2020) observation that shared leadership enhances adaptability and collective ownership in large organizations.

Servant Leadership: Centering the Community

A third dimension of Detroit's hybrid model is servant leadership, which prioritizes service to others, empathy, and ethical responsibility (Greenleaf, 1977). This philosophy aligns closely with the city's emphasis on resident engagement and equitable service delivery. Duggan and his team frequently use the language of service, humility, and responsiveness. For instance, Deputy Mayor Todd Bettison described his appointment as an opportunity to "serve the people of the City of Detroit in new ways," emphasizing a leadership style grounded in public service and relational trust (City of Detroit, 2022).

Programs focused on equitable housing access, community policing, and resident feedback channels demonstrate the administration's effort to align leadership behavior with community needs. This orientation toward inclusivity and empathy is consistent with servant leadership's core values, suggesting that the Duggan administration not only seeks to transform systems but to humanize them.

Lean and Process-Oriented Leadership: Efficiency and Accountability

The Lean management component of Duggan's hybrid model reflects a performance-oriented framework that seeks efficiency, accountability, and data transparency. The city's

“LEAN” program defines its purpose as reducing waste and improving “quality, speed, cost, safety, and morale” (City of Detroit, 2023). Similarly, the “Detroit Dashboard” provides weekly updates on performance metrics, allowing citizens and administrators to track progress and outcomes.

This process-driven model aligns with transactional and systems leadership principles, in which leaders establish clear metrics, incentives, and feedback mechanisms to drive improvement (Northouse, 2022). By embedding these mechanisms within city operations, Duggan ensures that the administration remains transparent, responsive, and accountable, which are key ingredients for rebuilding public trust in a city long marked by bureaucratic inefficiency.

The Integrated Value of a Hybrid Leadership Model

The combination of transformational, distributive, servant, and Lean leadership principles has enabled Detroit’s administration to respond effectively to diverse challenges. The hybrid model leverages transformational vision to unite stakeholders, distributive collaboration to build coalitions, servant orientation to maintain ethical engagement, and Lean process discipline to ensure operational excellence. This synthesis underscores the idea that leadership in complex municipal environments must be contextual and adaptive, aligning both human and technical dimensions of governance.

Moreover, the Detroit experience illustrates how leadership theories, when combined, can reinforce one another: distributive leadership enhances transformational goals by expanding participation; servant leadership ensures that change remains grounded in community well-being; and Lean management provides measurable accountability to sustain trust. Collectively, these elements position Detroit as a case study in effective hybrid governance.

Managing the Community

The leadership model employed by Mayor Mike Duggan's administration exemplifies how hybrid leadership can drive large-scale urban transformation. By blending transformational vision, collaborative governance, servant ethics, and process efficiency, Detroit has emerged as a model for other post-industrial cities seeking renewal. This integrative approach not only improves administrative performance but also rebuilds civic confidence and equity, proving that modern municipal leadership requires a synthesis of multiple theoretical perspectives to achieve sustainable and inclusive outcomes.

Cleveland's Participatory Leadership

Introduction

Cleveland, Ohio once a major center of American manufacturing has spent decades navigating the realities of post-industrial decline. As factories closed and jobs shifted overseas or to the suburbs, the city experienced long-term population loss and economic disinvestment, reflecting broader trends of deindustrialization across the Rust Belt (Mallach, 2018). Within this context, Cleveland's recent governance efforts, particularly under Mayor Justin M. Bibb since 2022, illustrate how modern urban leadership must be adaptive, collaborative, and community centered.

Mayor Bibb's administration employs a hybrid leadership model that blends transformational, collaborative, data-driven, and servant-oriented principles. This integrated approach allows the city to address interconnected challenges such as economic revitalization, public safety, housing equity, and government modernization. Rather than relying on a single leadership style, Bibb emphasizes vision-setting, stakeholder engagement, operational efficiency, and service-oriented governance to promote equitable growth across Cleveland's neighborhoods.

The Cleveland City Charter adopted in 1913 under Ohio's Home Rule Amendment provides the structural foundation for such leadership. As the city's municipal constitution, the Charter creates a mayor-council system, grants powers related to public services, taxation, and infrastructure, and outlines the purpose of local self-governance. At the same time, it imposes critical checks and limitations, ensuring accountability, separation of powers, and adherence to the rule of law. The ability to amend the Charter through voter referenda further enables Cleveland to adapt its governance structures to evolving urban needs while maintaining democratic integrity.

Cleveland's demographic landscape from 2010 to 2014 highlights additional leadership challenges. With a population of 396,815 according to the 2010 Census, the city continued to experience decline tied to industrial restructuring and suburban migration. Yet ethnic diversity increased during this period: the population was 53.3% African American, 33.3% White, 10% Hispanic/Latino, and about 2% Asian, with growth concentrated in neighborhoods such as Clark-Fulton and Detroit-Shoreway. Meanwhile, areas like Downtown, University Circle, and Ohio City saw new residents including young professionals, students, and immigrant entrepreneurs drawn by revitalization and anchor-institution investments.

Taken together, Cleveland's post-industrial evolution, charter-based governance framework, demographic shifts, and Bibb's multidimensional leadership model form a comprehensive backdrop for examining contemporary municipal leadership. These factors demonstrate that effective governance in Cleveland requires balancing innovation with accountability, community engagement with structural limits, and long-term vision with measurable implementation.

Transformational Leadership: Vision for Revival

Transformational leadership theory emphasizes the role of the leader in articulating a compelling vision, inspiring change, and motivating stakeholders to achieve higher levels of performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Mayor Bibb’s “Cleveland ERA” (Economic Resurgence in Action) initiative exemplifies this orientation. The program aims to build on Cleveland’s industrial heritage and reposition the city as a hub for innovation, manufacturing, waterfront development, and inclusive growth.

By framing the city’s future in terms of a new “era” of opportunity, Bibb uses transformational leadership to rally city agencies, private sector partners, and residents around a shared narrative of revival and possibility.

Collaborative Leadership: Engaging Stakeholders

The complexities of modern urban governance call for leadership that can harness collaboration across sectors and distribute leadership functions beyond the mayor’s office. The collaborative leadership model emphasizes building networks, forging partnerships, and engaging multiple actors in decision-making (Spillane, 2006). Mayor Bibb’s administration demonstrates this in several ways: for example, the “RISE” (Raising Investment in Safety for Everyone) initiative combines law enforcement, public health, housing, nonprofit, and community partners to reduce violent crime.

Additionally, Cleveland’s transformation of its permitting system, interaction with business attraction teams, and the “15-minute city” initiative show the administration’s reliance on cross-departmental and cross-sector cooperation. By convening diverse stakeholders and distributing leadership responsibilities, Bibb ensures that his vision is operationalized through many agents and pathways rather than solely the mayor’s office.

Service-Oriented and Equity Leadership: Centering the Community

A third dimension of the leadership model is service-orientation and equity focus hallmarks of servant leadership. This approach places community welfare, ethical governance, and inclusion at the forefront of leadership priorities (Greenleaf, 1977). Mayor Bibb emphasizes housing equity, neighborhood revitalization, and resident access to city services. For example, his “Home for Every Neighbor” program works to move unsheltered residents into permanent housing, and his housing investment fund aims to expand affordable housing for working families.

Equally, the emphasis on modernizing the city’s 311 system, improving transparency, and elevating resident voice aligns with a servant-leader mindset focused on empowering citizens and improving public service delivery.

Process-Improvement and Management Leadership: Data and Infrastructure

Modern urban leadership also demands a strong management orientation: focusing on performance metrics, operational efficiency, technological innovation, and process improvement. In Cleveland, the administration’s push for permitting reform, integrated tech platforms (such as Salesforce), and “site readiness” funds to prepare industrial land highlight this orientation. Moreover, the administration’s use of data-driven models for public safety (e.g., targeted interventions, “all-of-government” summer safety plan) indicates a process-improvement mindset. These elements reflect transactional and systems-oriented leadership frameworks, where clear metrics, feedback loops, and accountability mechanisms help translate vision into tangible outcomes.

Integrative Value of the Hybrid Model

By integrating transformational, collaborative, service-oriented, and process-improvement leadership approaches, Mayor Bibb's administration displays a hybrid leadership model well suited for complex, multi-dimensional urban challenges. Transformational vision sets the direction; collaborative leadership ensures broad engagement and shared responsibility; service-oriented leadership maintains community focus and equity; management and process-improvement leadership ensure accountability, transparency, and operational execution. This hybrid model appears especially suited to a city like Cleveland, one with longstanding structural issues, demographic shifts, and competing demands for growth, equity, and modernization. By balancing big-picture aspiration with detailed implementation, and by combining participatory governance with disciplined performance metrics, the administration aims to transform both the "what" and the "how" of urban governance.

Managing the Community

The leadership approach of Mayor Justin M. Bibb in Cleveland is best understood as a hybrid model that weaves together multiple leadership theories to address the complexity of city governance in the 21st century. His strategy emphasizes vision, partnership, service to residents, and rigorous management. While the ultimate outcomes of his tenure will unfold over time and challenges remain, the integrative nature of his leadership model offers a promising framework for other mid-sized American cities navigating economic transition, equity imperatives, and institutional modernization.

Gary's Community-Based Governance

Introduction

Gary, Indiana founded in 1906 by U.S. Steel as the model industrial city stands as one of the clearest examples of the rise and decline of America's steel-based economy. For decades, Gary thrived as a center of mass steel production, drawing workers from across the nation and supporting a strong middle class anchored by unionized labor and stable industrial employment. However, beginning in the 1960s and accelerating through the late 20th century, global competition, automation, suburbanization, and corporate restructuring reshaped the steel industry. As production shifted overseas or became increasingly mechanized, Gary experienced massive job losses, declining population, and severe reductions in municipal revenue conditions emblematic of the broader post-industrial transformation that impacted many Midwestern manufacturing cities (Massey & Denton, 1993). This economic restructuring created deep social, fiscal, and governance challenges that continue to frame leadership in the city today.

Within this context, contemporary leadership in Gary requires an approach capable of addressing the complex legacy of industrial decline while pursuing economic revitalization, community stability, and institutional accountability. The city's leadership municipal officials, community organizations, and regional stakeholders have increasingly adopted multidimensional leadership practices that incorporate elements of transformational, collaborative, and service-oriented leadership. These approaches emphasize rebuilding public trust, fostering economic diversification, enhancing public safety, and strengthening local infrastructure. Because Gary's challenges span economic, demographic, and administrative domains, leaders must balance long-term vision with practical governance, leveraging partnerships and data-informed strategies to confront persistent structural barriers.

Foundational to leadership in Gary is the city's governance structure, which outlines the authority, purpose, and constraints of municipal government. The City Charter establishes a mayor-council system and distributes responsibilities related to public safety, land use, budgeting, and essential service delivery. It also embeds limitations to ensure transparency, separation of powers, and fiscal accountability important safeguards in a city facing constrained resources and ongoing redevelopment pressures. These structures guide how leaders navigate complex policy environments and ensure that governmental action remains aligned with the community's legal and civic expectations.

Gary's demographic landscape highlights additional leadership considerations. As industrial jobs disappeared, the population fell sharply from over 178,000 residents in 1960 to under 80,000 by 2010 resulting in widespread housing vacancy, reduced tax capacity, and shifting neighborhood dynamics. Throughout the early 2010s, Gary remained a majority-Black city, with African American residents comprising more than 80% of the population, alongside smaller but significant Hispanic, White, and immigrant communities. This demographic composition, shaped by decades of economic restructuring and segregation, influences how leaders address equity, public service delivery, community engagement, and long-term reinvestment.

Taken together, Gary's post-industrial evolution, governance framework, demographic shifts, and reliance on hybrid leadership strategies provide a critical foundation for examining how leaders operate in complex, resource-constrained urban environments. Understanding these elements is essential for analyzing contemporary leadership in Gary and for assessing how municipal leaders can guide a post-industrial city toward stability, equity, and sustainable revitalization.

Transformational Leadership: Vision and Renewal

Transformational leadership theory emphasizes a leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision, inspire stakeholders toward change, and motivate collective engagement (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Mayor Melton's inaugural remarks and subsequent State of the City address reflect such an orientation: he framed Gary's future as one of resurgence and "greater Gary," promising to "chart a new course forward." His leadership is oriented toward large-scale change: for example, he has been central to a landmark investment with U.S. Steel Corporation and Nippon Steel that underscores industrial rebirth in the city. In deploying this kind of vision-oriented leadership, Melton aligns with the transformational model's emphasis on elevation of purpose and inspiring a shift in the orientation of the city's stakeholders.

Servant Leadership: Community-First and Equity-Driven.

A key dimension of Gary's leadership model under Melton is what one might label servant leadership, prioritizing service, responsiveness, inclusion, and ethical governance (Greenleaf, 1977). The city's official "Office of the Mayor" page states that the mayor's team "strive to operate transparently as servant leaders within the Gary community" and welcome feedback from residents and businesses. Moreover, Melton has emphasized improving basic services such as repairing non-functioning streetlights, addressing infrastructure decay, and focusing on public safety fundamentals to ensure the community's needs are met first. By centering the needs of residents, especially in historically underserved neighborhoods, the administration reflects the ethos of servant leadership.

Distributive/Collaborative Leadership: Shared Responsibility and Partnerships

Modern urban governance increasingly requires leadership that distributes responsibility, engages multiple sectors, and forges partnerships across government, business, and community

organizations (Spillane, 2006). Under Melton’s administration, the governance model in Gary reflects such collaborative leadership. For example, Melton joined the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative’s Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation to bring regional, clean-industry investments to Gary. Additionally, his mayor’s cabinet structure and the shift to appointing new police and fire chiefs reflect intentional coordination across departments. The leadership style thus does not depend entirely on the mayor alone but draws on partnerships and distributed decision-making across actors and sectors.

Process-Improvement Leadership: Efficiency, Accountability, and Performance

Effective leadership in a municipal context also involves management discipline: defining metrics, implementing operational improvements, ensuring accountability, and monitoring progress (Northouse, 2022). The Gary mayor’s office highlights that it is responsible for “driving continuous improvement in the delivery of city services, including public safety, economic development, education, and public health.” (“Office of the Mayor - Gary”) Melton has emphasized fundamentals such as infrastructure repair, fiscal stabilization, and departmental restructuring as priorities. These actions reflect the process-improvement leadership orientation, ensuring that the vision is supported by disciplined execution.

Integrative Value of the Hybrid Model

By combining transformational, servant, distributive/collaborative, and management orientations, Mayor Melton’s leadership model in Gary represents a hybrid style well suited to a city with complex, interlocking challenges. The transformational vision sets the direction, the servant orientation ensures resident-centered priorities, the collaborative framework brings in networks of actors, and the process-improvement management ensures tracking, accountability and operational follow-through. Together, these dimensions reinforce each other: a bold vision

signals change, servant orientation grounds the change in everyday realities, collaboration leverages broad resources and legitimacy, and disciplined management delivers results.

Managing the Community

The leadership approach of Mayor Eddie D. Melton in Gary, Indiana illustrates how municipal governance in the 21st century is best served by a hybrid leadership model that draws from multiple theoretical traditions rather than relying exclusively on one. By integrating transformational vision, servant-oriented service, collaborative decision-making, and process-driven management, the Gary mayoral administration is positioning the city for both renewed growth and improved public service. While the outcomes of this leadership approach will become fully evident over time, the early indicators from infrastructure action to major industrial partnerships suggest that this hybrid model holds significant promise for legacy urban communities seeking revival.

Conclusion

Comparative Analysis of Hybrid Leadership in Detroit, Cleveland, and Gary

1. Detroit, Michigan - Application of Hybrid Leadership

Detroit's governance under Mayor Mike Duggan illustrates a highly integrated hybrid model, combining transformational, distributive, servant, and Lean leadership principles. The city emphasizes large-scale vision setting (transformational), collaborative partnerships across sectors (distributive), ethical and community-centered service (servant), and operational efficiency (Lean). This approach addresses Detroit's complex post-industrial challenges, including fiscal recovery, population decline, and rebuilding trust in municipal institutions.

Cultural Dimensions Influence

- Power Distance (GLOBE/Hofstede): Detroit demonstrates relatively low hierarchical barriers within city governance, promoting inclusive stakeholder engagement.
- **Performance Orientation (GLOBE):** High performance orientation drives efficiency and accountability through the LEAN initiative and transparent dashboards.

Potential Negative Influence

Transformational leadership in a city with low power distance could be misused to create dependence on the charismatic vision of a leader, potentially marginalizing dissenting voices, or grassroots input. Distributive leadership could be co-opted by dominant stakeholders, reinforcing inequities in decision-making rather than fostering equitable participation.

Mitigation Recommendation

To prevent unethical influence, Detroit's leadership should emphasize transparent communication channels, clear performance metrics, and inclusive decision-making frameworks. Regular public reporting and participatory forums ensure that transformational goals do not overshadow accountability, empowering residents, and stakeholders to maintain oversight.

2. Cleveland, Ohio - Application of Hybrid Leadership

Cleveland under Mayor Justin Bibb exhibits a hybrid approach that combines transformational vision, participatory collaboration, servant leadership, and process-oriented management. Programs like the Cleveland ERA and RISE initiative demonstrate data-driven governance integrated with community engagement and equity-oriented initiatives. Leadership is decentralized, engaging civic organizations, residents, and private partners in decision-making.

Cultural Dimensions Influence

- **Individualism (Hofstede):** Cleveland reflects high individualism, encouraging citizen empowerment and participatory governance.

- **Future Orientation (GLOBE):** A focus on planning and long-term neighborhood revitalization aligns with the city’s strategic investments.

Potential Negative Influence

Servant leadership in a highly individualistic culture could be exploited if leaders overly prioritize personal agendas or selectively address community needs to gain support.

Collaborative initiatives may also be captured by influential interest groups, undermining equitable resource allocation.

Mitigation Recommendation

Strategic leadership should integrate formal accountability structures and consistent, accessible communication of goals and outcomes. By publishing performance data, encouraging citizen advisory boards, and using participatory evaluation mechanisms, Cleveland can reinforce ethical leadership while maintaining community trust and engagement.

3. Gary, Indiana - Application of Hybrid Leadership

Gary’s hybrid leadership, exemplified by Mayor Eddie Melton, prioritizes transformational vision for economic and social renewal, servant leadership to address community needs, distributive/collaborative governance to coordinate across city departments and regional partners, and process improvement to enhance accountability. The city’s strategy focuses on stabilizing infrastructure, improving public safety, and fostering inclusive industrial investment.

Cultural Dimensions Influence

- **Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede):** Gary’s leadership operates in a context of high uncertainty due to economic decline and demographic instability, requiring clear processes and risk mitigation.

- **Institutional Collectivism (GLOBE):** Emphasis on shared responsibility and community-centered outcomes guides collaborative initiatives.

Potential Negative Influence

Lean or process-oriented leadership could be misapplied to enforce rigid bureaucratic control, reducing flexibility in responding to community needs. Transformational leadership might unintentionally centralize decision-making around charismatic leaders, suppressing local input in a city already vulnerable to disenfranchisement.

Mitigation Recommendation

Gary’s leadership can mitigate unethical behavior by fostering transparency in budgeting, decision-making, and progress reporting, ensuring collaborative initiatives remain community centered. Leadership communication should be proactive, culturally sensitive, and involve consistent stakeholder feedback loops to maintain trust and prevent misuse of authority.

Comparative Insights

City	Dominant Leadership Focus	Cultural Lens	Potential Negative Influence	Mitigation Strategy
Detroit,	Transformational + Distributive + Servant + Lean	Low Power Dominance, High Performance Orientation	Charismatic dominance, stakeholder inequities	Transparent metrics, participatory forums, inclusive oversight
Cleveland	Transformational + Servant + Collaborative + Process-oriented	Individualism, Future Orientation	Selective attention to personal agendas, interest group capture	Accountability boards, public performance reporting, participatory evaluation
Gary	Transformational + Servant + Distributive + Process Improvement	High Uncertainty, Avoidance, Institutional Collectivism	Overly rigid bureaucracy, centralization to authority	Transparent budgeting, proactive stakeholder communication, community feedback loops

The leadership challenges and strategies of Detroit, Cleveland, and Gary reflect both the broader cultural characteristics of the United States’ Anglo cluster and the unique local dynamics of each city. While the Anglo cluster emphasizes high performance orientation, assertiveness,

low power distance, individualism, and participative leadership (House et al., 2004), the histories, demographics, and economic realities of these Midwestern cities shape more nuanced approaches. Detroit's hybrid leadership model balances pragmatic, purposeful governance with inclusive cross-sector collaboration; Cleveland emphasizes participatory governance that engages citizens and organizations in decision-making; and Gary relies on adaptive, community-based leadership to address immediate needs and build trust among historically marginalized populations. These variations illustrate how local leadership must adapt national cultural tendencies to the specific needs of diverse, post-industrial communities. At the same time, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.'s (1998) reflections in *The Disuniting of America* highlight the importance of balancing diversity with unity, cautioning against the fragmentation that can result from excessive focus on subgroup identity. Effective urban leadership in these cities demonstrates Schlesinger's principle that ethical, inclusive, and participatory stewardship strengthens civic cohesion and democratic vitality. As Proverbs 11:14 (New World Translation) notes, "*Where there is no guidance, a people fall, but there is success through many advisers,*" underscoring that collaboration, discernment, and inclusive decision-making are essential for transforming diversity into shared prosperity and sustaining resilient, unified communities.

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