Introduction:

The city of Scranton, Pennsylvania is not unlike most semi-metropolitan cites of its kind. The city of Scranton like most cities has many business and many residents all of which are busy with their own personal dealings day in and day out. However, there is one difference which distinguishes Scranton form most other cities and that is that Scranton posses a certain attitude which hardly any other cities possess. Some people argue that Scranton has a chip on its shoulder while others contend that that is just the way residents of the city act. Scranton in the past was made up of hardnosed workers just looking to get their cut of American freedoms and some money to go along with it. This attitude of “I want what’s coming to me” which was the mind-set of the all the residents of early Scranton and somehow continued to effect later residents. Thus it is not hard to see why Scranton exemplifies a model of a healthy political democracy and active participation in all forms of government decisions making. For it’s in the blood of the residents of Scranton to demand and want “what’s coming to them.”

Background of the city of Scranton:

Scranton's growth began in 1849 when the Scranton brothers formed the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad from a number of smaller lines, which created a hub for the transport of goods by steam engine. The Development of railroads and the production of steel in the area signified the beginning of Scranton’s bright and emerging future as one of the major metropolitan areas in the early stages of American
history. This rapid and exponential growth in the area made Scranton a superb catalyst for everything innovative including but not limited to economic, social, cultural, industrial and political developments.

Scranton was first integrated as a city in 1866 with the merging of two local boroughs. Soon after due to the tremendous economic and industrial prosperity it was achieving Scranton was on the fast track towards developing as a major U.S. city. The Steel business was the first great success but unfortunately the largest steel manufacture in the area moved his business to New York. This dealt a harsh blow to the Scranton area early in its inception. For the city of Scranton, bad luck and economic loose will be a resounding theme throughout its history and even into its present day.

Despite the loss of the industry on which the city was founded, Scranton forged ahead as the center of the Pennsylvania anthracite coal industry. It was during these years that Scranton witnessed some of its first political achievements such as the creation of The Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce which was put in place to promote innovative ways of economic development. The city of Scranton at this time was also home to the first electric-powered street car system in the United States. This commenced operations in Scranton in 1886 thus giving Scranton the moniker “The Electric City.” Following the street car the city formulated the Scranton Industrial Development Company (SIDCo) which was to be an extension of the Chamber of Commerce in order to further economic prosperity for the growing city.

Around 1945 the demand for coal throughout the world had dropped alarmingly and Scranton again found itself in economic hardships. This compounded with the
culmination of World War II and a downturn in commerce meant the Scranton would need to find away to regain some of it legitimacy as a major city in Pennsylvania. This slump gave rise to three new programs all aimed at finding new and viable options to bolster the failing economy. The three new programs which were incorporated consisted of the Scranton Plan, the Scranton Lackawanna Industrial Building Company (SLIBCO) and the Lackawanna Industrial Fund Enterprise (LIFE). All three will be discussed more in depth at a latter point in this paper.

As discussed above commerce in Scranton took off very early an in its early stages experienced great success through the production of coal and its first-class transportation resources such as the railroads. As the city progressively grew larger drains on its resources also grew with the population of the city and by the end of World War II most of Scranton’s coal resources very severely diminished. To add to the problem many of the large manufactures of steel which helped make Scranton an early booming metropolis moved their production plants else were facing a bleak future Scranton decided to turn itself around with a series of commerce programs all of which were designed to stimulate the economy.

The underlying aspect and ultimate goal of this paper is to integrate the theories of Democracy with aspects of our city and show whether or not our city fosters characteristics of a healthy Democracy or an unhealthy Democracy. The final component of this paper is to make some projections as to how successful or unsuccessful Scranton will be in its future endeavors if it continues to practice its current form of Democracy. In order to accomplish this task I will first lay out the two theories I will be using to
describe the caliber of Scranton’s Democracy. First I will be examining the Performance theory which basically states that people need to have the power to formulate policies which intern will give them the power to ultimately set the local government’s agenda so that it can be geared towards the people. Secondly I will be looking at aspects of the Participatory theory which at its core principal postulate that people need to be involved in the political sphere in numerous ways such as voting, formulating issues, civic involvement and having open access to political ideas and issues. Performance and Participatory theories of Democracy will act as the catalyst through which I will examine the city of Scranton.

There are many definitions that are used in the political spectrum to illustrate the word Democracy. In a literal sense Democracy means “rule by the people” it is derived from the Greek words Demos and Kratos which mean “people” and “authority” or “rule” if we were to use the literal definition of Democracy it is my belief as is the belief of many theorists that Democracy would be a rather hard concept to obtain because rarely is government solely ruled by the people. That is not to say that Democracy does not exist or is not attainable it simply means that a more modern definition in needed. A definition that will allow for the flaws each society inherently possess. For the purpose of my paper I will be using a different definition of Democracy. The definition will correspond with that of a healthy Democracy.

The definition that I will use to explain the premise of a healthy Democracy is “The Democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realize the common good by making the people itself decide issues
through the election of individuals who are assembled in order to carry out its will” (Schumpeter). For the purpose of explaining components of a healthy Democracy I will for the time being assume that there is such a thing as the “common good” and that people are rational and capable of achieving such a good.

The underlying concepts that need to be realized when reading this quote are two fold. First is that governments are in place to serve the people. Secondly is that it is the job of the citizen to become informed and active in politics so that they have the knowledge to elect a government that will represent the needs of the majority that elected them. These concepts are stressed in the Performance theory of democracy.

**Performance Theory:**

Performance theory of Democracy at its basic concepts argues that there is no true common good and even if there was people are not educated enough or concerned enough to attain that good. Furthermore, people do not care enough about other people’s wants, needs or beliefs thus making it impossible for them to settle on what would be good for the whole community. Performance theorist Schumpeter articulates this by saying “People think in instrumental terms, and it is no surprise that they bring utilitarian standards into politics. In this setting, voters do not pay attention to what they share with other citizens or to long term good of the polity or even to their own long term good” (Schumpeter). This quote tries to show that people think progressively about their own wants and needs but it’s those wants and needs that will eventually overshadow what could potentially be the “common good” for all the people.
One of the requirements for a healthy democracy and quite possible the most important is the need for an educated populace. **The importance of education in needed at every level in the formation of a healthy democracy.** Education is made up of many different aspects. Such as **education of the youth through core curriculum in schools such as civics, local government, politics and history classes.** Another important aspect of education is the **dissemination of information to the citizens.** And finally the third aspect of education is the **type and content of information** that is available to the people.

Schumpeter lays out three requirements in order to have a healthy and successful democracy. In the following section I will lay out these points and briefly discuss each of them and later in my paper I will relate them to certain aspects unique to the city of Scranton. The first requirement that Schumpeter articulated was the “human material of politics; the people who **man the party machines, are elected to serve in government, should be of sufficiently high quality.**” The second major quality that must be in place is that “the **effective range of political decisions should not be extended to far.**” Finally Schumpeter stated that there “**must be able to demand for all purpose the sphere of public activity.**”

Interpreting the first section of this quote one must look at the importance of selecting officials that are high educating level and are capable of making well-informed decisions that will affect the majority the elected them. It is simply not enough to say that it is the responsibility of the general populace to elect officials and representatives that will hold their beliefs and opinions at the highest level. This first part of Schumpeter’s
analysis does not necessarily mean that it is the job of the elites to run all functions of the government, quit the contrary it goes deeper than that and explains that not only do elected officials have to have a superior level of education especially in the political sphere but also that the people who are supposed to be making these well informed decision need to also have certain level of logical reasoning. This first requirement stresses the fact that it should be elites who run the government. Elites in this sense means people who posses higher levels of education especially in politics and people who more often then not come from a higher socioeconomic status.

Schumpeter’s second requirement is that the range of political decisions should not be extended to far. This requirement also seems to be more focuses on the fact that it is imperative that the men who make up the government should be of high quality or more commonly stated should be elites. When analyzing this quote I feel that the basic argument is that decisions in government should be made by a few select people instead of large mass of people.

The third requirement that is stated above is that {politicians} must be able to demand for all purpose the sphere of public activity. Again this prerequisite for a successful democracy goes back to the notion that politicians need to be of elite status. Schumpeter has stated and made it very clear that he believes that politicians need to be marketable. In the book Theories of Democracy Schumpeter says’ “voters choose between competing elites who offer their own products to voters.” This quote articulates that politics have become not something that is an idea or a certain belief that a person has, rather it is how marketable and attractive a politician can make his platform.
Schumpeter finds that “politics has become a vast marketplace where parties offer competitive products and victory goes to the one that is able to attract a winning coalition of political consumers.”

Expanding on Schumpeter’s beliefs that democracy should be controlled by elites and that politics are now marketed to target the consumer voter, Downs expresses very similar views. Downs recognizes that indeed that “politics is guided by the same kind of reasoning found in economic markets. Acting as political consumers, citizens try to get the best deal they can for themselves.” This exemplifies the concept that politicians compete for votes and that voters will elect the most marketable individual.

However Downs adds another layer to the performance theory and that is that knowledge of politics is not only a necessity but that it is also sometimes improperly skewed by politicians in order to win elections. “Politicians provide only those facts which are favorable to whatever groups their supporting.” Another factor which effects knowledge which the voters need is that “political parties will assume a type of ideology to get votes.”

Downs further elaborates on the pitfalls of imperfect knowledge as it relates to electing and choosing representatives who will make decisions which coincide with the wants, needs, and desires of the majority that elected them. He states that imperfect knowledge means “(1) parties don’t always know what citizens want; (2) citizens do not always know what the government or its opposition has done or is doing to serve their interests; and (3) that the information needed to overcome both types of
ignorance is costly and in other words, that scarce resources must be used to produce and assimilate it.”

As for performance theory of democracy is it clear that the need for education of both the elites who run the government and the voters who elect them needs to be disseminated in a fashion where both elites and the general population have access to clear and concise issues and facts that will enable them to successful run their local government. When the population is properly educated they will be able to formulate their own issues and ideas about how the government should be ran. Once this is accomplished it will allow the people to stop looking at politicians as a so called consumer good and will conversely allow them to choose candidates who ideas and platforms are directly aligned with those of which are most likely to benefit the masses. On the other hand when elites are educated and know what issues are most important to the masses they will be forced to make those issues their own. When the power to formulate the issues falls upon the masses the elites will have no choice but to adopt those issues as their own thus disabling them from pushing their own agenda or a false ideology in order to gain votes.

Participatory Theory:

The fundamental belief of participatory democracy is that the “real benefits of democracy can only be appreciated and sustained by a society that is characterized by relatively high levels of citizen intervention in the tasks of governing (theories of democracy, pg 165).” The most pressing aspects of participatory democracy are two fold and can be directed related to performance theory democracy and also can act as a stark
contradictory to performance theory. Under participatory theory the most significant condition for a healthy democracy is active and intelligent participation by the citizenry in their government. Participatory theorist Benjamin Barber states that “men and women who are not directly responsible through common deliberation, common decision, and common action for the polices that determine their common lives are not really free at all (theories of democracy, pg 171).”

When the masses run the government and set policy through avenues accessible to them then and only then will it constitute a strong and participatory democracy. Participatory theorists believe that it is not only the right of the masses to run their own government but it is also their job to be well informed and educated on how to do so. John Dewey “complains about the very thing that Schumpeter and Downs see as the essence of modern democracy – that it is, in Dewey’s words, “a competitive open market.” The problem for Dewey is that this does not leave room for discourse or meaningful avenues of popular input (theories of democracy, pg 165-166).” This is the main contradiction between the two theories Dewey feels that elites need not to run government but that it should be the masses that influence policy and decide issues through common deliberations and community involvement. When the people have no say in their government and no way to effect its decisions they become disinterested and apathetic towards politics in general thus elites manage to push their own agenda and rob the masses of their most basic freedom.

Nevertheless both theories hold strongly that education in all aspects of the community is paramount and needed to harbor the ideals of a strong democracy. Both
Dewey and Barber feel that “it is democratic deliberation and action that create
democratic citizens. In this sense, democracy provides its own education, as participants
are empowered to fulfill their roles as democratic actors at the same time as they come to
appreciate the heavy responsibility of self-governance. As Dewey and Barber see matters.
Participation brings people together in common projects where they develop not only
new skills but more importantly construct a strong civic sense (theories of democracy, pg
166).” As is evident in this lengthy quote education is not only having access to
knowledge it is also using that knowledge in decision making process that will allow the
newly attained knowledge to grow and spread thus incorporating the essence of a civic
society who strives to attain the common good.

Participatory theorists conclude that it is the people who should run the
government John Dewey states that “no government by experts in which the masses do
not have the chance to inform the experts as to their needs can be anything but an
oligarchy manages in the interests of the few (theories of democracy, pg 169-170).” This
quote maintains that the people who are elected to represent the masses need to do
exactly that and that the people need to be able to have access to their local government
so that they can inform them of the issues which are most important to them. Dewey
further elaborates on this concept by explaining that it is not necessarily the job of elites
to make policy decision. But that their job should be to inform the masses and make
known the facts in order to formulate such policy. “It is not necessary that the
masses should have the knowledge and skill to carry on the needed investigations;
what is required is that they have the ability to judge of the bearing of the
knowledge supplied by the others upon common concerns (theories of democracy,
People’s knowledge is limited by objects and tools at hand therefore it is imperative that the elites in an unbiased manner disseminate the required information need to educate the masses in a political arena.

In order to sum up participatory democracy I will quote Barbers formal definition of what constitutes a strong democracy “strong democracy in the participatory mode resolves conflict in the absence of an independent ground through a participatory process of ongoing, proximate self-legislation and the creation of a political community capable of transforming dependent private individuals into free citizens and partial and private interests into public goods (theories of democracy, pg 174).” Basically interpreted this means that ideas which were once private and people who were once disinterested strive to reach the goal of attaining the “common good” in hope that it will foster with it a strong democratic form of government for the people and by the people.

**Scranton as a Healthy Democracy:**

As was stated above there are many factors which constitute and help in promoting a healthy democracy. Factors which are essential to a healthy democracy can be placed into broad categories such as education, civic involvement, growth of the economy and how much people actually participate in local politics. All of these factors will be discusses in the following sections as I try to relate them to characteristics that are unique to the city of Scranton. I will be showing how programs and citizen involvement in government in Scranton is following some of the premises laid out in the above theories of democracy.
As was mentioned above education is one of the most important prerequisites in order for the existences of a strong healthy democracy. Education was laid out in both theories performance and participatory discussed above and it is evident that the importance of education is paramount in a healthy democracy. However we also know that there are different types of education such as education of the population which includes with not only education in a traditional sense i.e. schools and the types of curriculum offered. But it also means education of the population by the government which entails that the government be unbiased and forthcoming with information the people need in order to make well informed political decisions. Finally education also means that the citizenry makes available to the elected officials what issues are at the forefront of the community.

The city of Scranton has long since been viewed as a city that offers numerous educational facilities. Whether it is the opportunity for mom’s to have access to over 130 day care facilities for their young children or the ability to use either two of the universities libraries located in the city of Scranton. Scranton boasts a total of 20 elementary or middle schools 10 of which are private schools. Scranton also has 2 public high schools and 3 private high schools. “Dropout rates are minuscule, less than 2% in most local districts. Close to 75% of our public high school graduates further their education (the Scranton Plan).” As was discussed in the aforementioned section a major role in the education population begins with the youth. Also discussed above was the fact that curriculum is schools should focus on making sure that the youth is gaining knowledge that will be useful in the political realm. This is accomplished by tailoring core curriculum to involve the study of civics, local government and history. The city of
Scranton is committed to ensuring that all students receive some type of class involving practices of local politics and basic workings in the city of Scranton.

Apart from having an excellent primary education system Scranton hosts 12 colleges, universities and technical schools. These higher education facilities add an important aspect to the city of Scranton and that is that not only attending students have access to the schools resources but Scranton residents do as well. As will be demonstrated below the city of Scranton has relatively high percentages of population that is educated. 40.60% of the overall population in Scranton has completed high school or higher. 12.45% have obtained their bachelor’s degree or higher. And 7.17% have a graduate or professional degree. It is evident that Scranton is committed to promoting education of its population and by doing this the city is grooming people to be well informed and capable of making decisions about local politics.

The second educational aspect which must be looked at in determining what constitutes a healthy democracy is education of the population by the local government officials. This entails with it two components. First that the government shares with the masses information about it practices and how it formulates issues and implements policy changes. This information needs to be readily available to the people so that they can have knowledge prior to voting on important issues. Secondly the local government needs to offer civic involvement opportunities to the people and needs to have programs in place that help the masses become involved in the political process.

Regarding the first component it is important that the people receive information in an unbiased and straightforward manner. As we saw in the performance theory
democracy all too often will political elites change or formulate their policy differently in order to gain votes. The problem with this is elites and politicians will hide or sometimes shape information in a certain way so as to look favorable to whatever group of people they are addressing. The government needs to operate with a certain level of transparency so that the masses can really see what the issues at hand are. The city of Scranton has dealt with this problem of elites disseminating biased information or not sharing information at all. For the city of Scranton the solution was easy they made the local government as transparent as possible. One of the major ways Scranton brought about this change was with the creation of “Scranton Today.” Scranton Today is a community access show which covers all city council meetings and also regularly interviews local government officials on air. Along with cooperation of the local newspaper the Scranton Times Tribune and Scranton Today, the city has been able to maintain a level of information sharing with its general population which has seen great success.

While examining the second aspect of education and that there is a necessity to have civic programs in place in order to spur people to want to become informed and responsible for the community. Performance theorists Anthony Downs’s states that “the government can not coerce everyone to be well informed because “well informedness” is hard to measure because there is no agreed upon rule for deciding how much information constitutes a well informed individual (theories of democracy).” While what Down’s is saying is true that the government can not make people become informed. I believe that the government does needs to offer opportunities for the people to get involved in their community. After all civic involvement is the main premise for participatory democracy and it is civic involvement which makes people share ideas and think on a communal
Benjamin Barber says that “civic activity educates individuals how to think publicly as citizens even as citizenship informs civic activity with the required sense of publicness and justice (theories of democracy, pg 175).” For it is civic programs which get people thinking on a community based level rather than a selfish individual level. The city of Scranton has several civic programs which are all constructed for the purpose of bettering the community. Programs such as Neighborhood Watch and numerous Food Drives have been set up by city officials as well as by involved citizens. It is through programs such as these that will lead people towards taking a more community based approach.

This has been evident in Scranton through a program called Leadership Lackawanna. This is paraphrased below:

“Is a program that develops community leaders for the Greater Scranton/Lackawanna County area. This program seeks to identify leaders from various geographic, racial, ethnic, occupational and economic segments of the community. Through training the program provides it participants with the ability to develop community leadership by understanding the problems, opportunities, and issues facing Scranton (Scranton Chamber of Commerce, www.scrantonchamber.com).”

Leadership Lackawanna shows that Scranton has taken a progressive role in encouraging and promoting civic involvement in the city. This program shows that local government tries to discourage the rule of elites in all aspects of government, while at the same time it tries to promote community based involvement. Programs such as
Neighborhood Watch help educate the citizenry because people begin to realize some of the problems that there population is facing such as rise’s in crimes this realization of the problem will influence people to start thinking on a community level in order to solve the problem. In turn this community based approach will lead to common decisions and common actions in order to find a solution. Once enough for the citizens have become interested the elites in power will have no choice but to reformulate their issues in order to incorporate what the growing common masses feel is most pertinent to their community. Thus civic involvement through education is at the cornerstone of participatory theory in a democratic society.

The third aspect which is essential in the education process of the masses is flipped because it deals with how the masses can educate the elites or government representatives. When elected to office it is the job of the representatives to serve the needs of the people who elected them. However this job can sometimes become skewed when the needs of the people are not known by the representative or when the representative pushes for his own personal agenda.

The last core principle regarding education is that people (the masses) need to make a conscious effort to inform their representatives of the issues that are most critical to them. One requirement that must be in place for this to happen is that the masses need to have contact in some way, shape or form with their representatives. Contact with representatives can be easily accomplished though attending council meetings and voicing your concerns, writing to your elected official, and even accessing them through some type of governmental website. Under the performance theory Down’s stated the
“when most members of the electorate know what policy best serves them and their interest, the government is forced to follow those policies in order to avoid defeat (theories of democracy).”

This measure of formulating grassroots issues and making them common issues of the population is abundantly clear in the city of Scranton. This past year a number of concerned citizens petitioned the city council to adopt a smoking ban for the entire city of Scranton. In the beginning the adoption of a smoking ban was not an issue for city council members at all. Considering the amount of estimated smokers in the city is nearly 30% of the population (www.freepublic.com) and the sheer fact the Scranton does not have a public health office as a governmental position many believed that such a ban would never come to pass. Shockingly enough a few months later due to a tremendous amount of citizen petitions, council meetings, and public opinion polls though city council adopted a city wide ban on smoking tobacco products in bars and restaurants. This is evidence that through active participation and communication with government officials Scranton residents were able to formulate the issues and set the agenda of its own local government.

In closing upon the education aspect of a healthy democracy I would like to quote John Dewey when he said “In the degree by which they (elites) become a specialized class, they are shut off from knowledge of the needs which they are supposed to serve (theories of democracy, pg 169).” As fore the above mentioned reasons it is evident that a most dominant requirement for a healthy democracy is a strong educated population. Whether it is through the use of civic participation, education of the youth in terms of
proper schooling or informing representatives about paramount concerns of the populace, education is definitely the underlying concept for the procurement of a strong democracy that is ran by the masses.

As noted above it is my belief as is the beliefs of theorists who prescribe to the performance and participatory theories of democracy that education, civic involvement and actual participation of citizenry are the three main requirements in order for a government to be considered a healthy democracy. Bearing in mind these three major components I will now lay out more well known and fundamentally accepted norms which are essential and crucial to the attainment of the healthy democracy.

As I have come to understand 2 more criteria exist in order for a government to be regarded as a healthy democracy. These criteria include some of the basic needs which a city must possess and they are comprised of economic growth of the city and services offered to city residents. I believe that these 2 criteria coupled with the above mentioned prerequisites will in almost all cases harbor the seeds of a healthy democracy.

The economic strength and power of a city is a fundamental requirement in order to have any type of successful governmental institutions. The most basic need for a strong economy is simply the need for money to run all daily aspects of a city. As was discussed above the city of Scranton in its early stages experienced an enormous economic and industrial boom which lasted till the end of World War II. After WWII Scranton’s economic prospects began to leave the area resulting in large losses of money and business in the area. Determined to rebound and revitalize the city 4 new programs were developed by the Camber of Commerce. First was the creation of the Scranton Plan
in which “private and public sectors pooled their resources to purchase industrial sites and construct the nations first industrial shell buildings (www.scrantonchamber.com).” Secondly the Chamber implemented the Scranton Lackawanna Industrial Building Company (SLIBCO). The main job of SLIBCO was to make sure Scranton was equipped and ready to handle the future which at the time was dominated by advances in computer technologies. SLIBCO constructed several large office parks which were equipped to accommodate the growth of technology forms in the region. The third program to be implemented was the Lackawanna Industrial Fund Enterprise (LIFE). LIFE was a non-profit community development corporation which worked tirelessly to recruit big businesses to the city of Scranton. One of LIFE’s most prominent business dealings was its ability to provide the start-up money for the creation of the Montage Mountain Ski Resort. The fourth and final program to be implemented was the MetroAction program which was created with the hopes of finding ways to generate jobs and beautify downtown Scranton. Between these 4 programs Scranton has “developed over 2,700 acres of land that include industrial, office and technology parks (www.scrantonchamber.com).” Because of these development programs Scranton has been able to recruit numerous large corporations to the area such as Grumman Electronics, JCPenney Telemarketing and SRI International to conduct pharmaceutical research. These programs brought thousands of jobs to the Scranton area and laid the foundation for what Scranton’s current economy is like.

Another source of economic revenue for the city of Scranton is its wide variety of tourists and recreational activities. Scranton boasts itself on the numerous leisure and cultural activities that can be enjoyed all within minuets of downtown Scranton. Some of
the recreational or sports activities that are available to visitors include the Montage Mountain Ski resort which offers skiers a choice of 22 trails at all different levels of difficulty, the Ford Pavilion which is a great outdoor amphitheater for many big name performers or visitors could also go and watch the New York Yankees minor league team play at the stadium. This minor league team was very recently acquired and is estimated to bring in large revenue for the city.

Scranton offers a wide variety of cultural and educational gateways as well. Visitors can travel to the Steamtown National Historic Site which is home to a large number of some of the first trains that helped mold Scranton’s economic past. Visitors can also explore the Pennsylvania Coal Mine Tour and see what conditions were like in the mines. And finally Scranton is home to the Everheart Museum which offers a variety of art work both modern and contemporary. As I have mentioned Scranton has a rich economic heritage as well as a growing environment not only in tourism but in the business sector as well. With Scranton having the economic resources it does it is clearly evident that they possess the money which is needed to run the government and support the population of people which reside in the city limits.

Demographically speaking Scranton statistical numbers are somewhat aligned with its economy and governmental framing. As of July 2005 the estimated population of Scranton was 73,120 people. Of that number 35,543 are males and females account for 40,872. In Scranton the median age of a resident is 38.8 years of age. Scranton is comprised 99.34% whites and only 1.31% of African Americans. Some of the most common industries for a male to work in are Construction 9%, Education services 6%
and Health Care which accounts for 6% as well. Similar to the men the most common industries for a woman to work in are Health Care 20%, Education Services 13% and the Food service which is comprised of 7% of the female population. Income levels are fairly normal for a city the size of Scranton. The median family income is $44,949. Male workers are estimated at making about $33,215 while, female workers are estimated at making about $23,428 thousand dollars a year. The difference in the income between sexes can most likely be related to education level and years of job experience in a particular field.

The next factor that I will be writing about is types services offered to city residents. The city of Scranton provides its residents with different types of services and all of which are target to different types of socioeconomic levels. The city of Scranton has its roots deep into community involvement thus the local government and support services are committed to serving the needs of its residents as best possible. Scranton has numerous services that are in place to help the lower income individuals such as discounted housing, hospital services, homeless shelters, subsidized early childcare, and social services such as Plan Parenthood, Drug and Alcohol Abuse Counseling services and Unemployment offices. As of 2005 22.9% of Scranton’s population was living in poverty. For the above mentioned reasons Scranton feels it has a deep commitment to its citizens to provide them with at least basic services that are needed to survive.

Probably Scranton’s highest qualities of social services that are offered correspond directly with its health resources. Scranton is home to 3 major hospitals Community Medical Center (CMC), Mercy Hospital (Mercy) and Moses Taylor Hospital.
All 3 hospitals are distinctly dedicated to serving the community and all offer different types of specialized care as well as some type of free service. CMC specializes in women and child services and has the region's only Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Mercy is sponsored by the Sister of Mercy and is part of the Catholic Healthcare Partners. Apart from that Mercy offers a Healthy Kids Immunization Program which gives free vaccines to protect against childhood diseases. Finally MTH offers some of the highest quality family birthing suites also MTH runs a Health-Info Library which has health and wellness tips that are free to access for the public.

The city of Scranton offers a whole spectrum of social services to its residents. This do mostly impart to the people in the city of Scranton who have over the years become involved in the politics of the government. It has been though there participation in government affairs that has forced to government to adopt this type of forward-thinking society. People have found a ways to influence the government so that it allocates some of its spending in the social sector to benefit the people. Scranton has programs in place such as homeless shelters which are opened to the poor, low income housing or housing projects intended to benefit that 22.9% of the population that is living in poverty. Likewise there are rudimentary services that the government offers to all residents such as snow removal, trash pick-up, and cultural festivals such as the Italian Festival or the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. The former are basic services the government offers to the community as a whole. While the latter are usually longstanding traditions which were initiated by the citizens and are kept in place as a mechanism used to bring the community together. In essence all these activities that take place in the city of Scranton are prime examples of performance and participatory theories democracy
working at its best. Just as Downs stated “when most members of the electorate know what policy best serves them and their interests, the government is forced to follow those policies in order to avoid defeat (theories of democracy).”

**Scranton as an Un-healthy Democracy:**

Just as I have laid out multiply reasons why governmental infill structure and citizen involvement in Scranton constitutes a healthy democracy I, will also show some examples and characteristics unique to the city of Scranton that will directly point to practices of the government and involvement of the citizenry that indeed portray Scranton as a failing economy, with crime riddled streets, no educated citizen involvement and a overbearing government controlled and dominated by elites.

In so much as I regret to admit the city of Scranton is currently facing many economic hardships. Currently “Scranton’s budget deficit is estimated at more than $7 million. The Pennsylvania Economy League estimates that deficit could grow to nearly $11 million by the year 2009 (Scranton vs. Pittsburg: Act 47 & the Cost of Government, [www.antitrust.typepad.com](http://www.antitrust.typepad.com)).” City officials say that most of the debt is incurred due to yearly borrowing that has become a norm in order to pay day-to-day bills which the municipality incurs. As was mentioned above that Scranton housed 3 hospitals and 2 universities is some what of a course when it comes to enforcing property taxes. While all these institutions are needed and provide indispensable services to the community they are also exempt from paying property taxes. This results in hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost profit. In light of this new evidence articulated here one would not be
wrong in assuming that indeed Scranton lacks the economic backing and reliability needed to power a healthy democracy.

Though I have not mentioned the aspect of crime or criminal activity in the city of Scranton that is simply due to the fact that, it did not in any way pertain to requirements of a healthy democracy. On the contrary it does however greatly affect several aspects of an unhealthy democracy. For instance if a city has a high crime rate particularly a high rate of violent crimes that type of activity can lead to two conclusions and possible outcomes. Number one it can make voters become disinterested because they might feel that the government is not doing its job and simply turning it back on what’s really going on. Secondly the crime can take center stage above any and all other issues thus making the other issues obsolete. With regards to the city of Scranton it does high a relatively substantial number of rapes 51 to be exact in 2004, along with 136.1 robberies and 273.5 assaults. Those these numbers might seem large they are actually about average for a city with a population like Scranton. I feel that right now crime is not a major factor for the city of Scranton but it is something that could prove disastrous in the future if it is not taken care of soon. The possibility that rape case could transform into murder cases is entirely possible if this continues to go unchecked.

As I stated above the two most important aspects needed for a democracy to work is that citizens need to be educated and that they also need to be politically involved in the formulation of local government. For these 2 most pressing issues to represent an unhealthy democracy they must not be embodied or carried out in any way, shape or form. With respect to education of the citizenry in an unhealthy democracy it would have
to be completely obsolete. This is not the case in the city of Scranton but if it was then the
masses would be portrayed as follows. Students in primary school and high school would
not be educated in civics, local government or history. Furthermore the adult population
would be so disenfranchised that education through any possible avenues would be
prohibited. Information would not be readily available nor would citizens be concerned
enough to seek any such information. Also with an uneducated citizenry nobody would
question the information that was being shared no matter how biased and loaded it
seemed. In an unhealthy democracy Schumpeter’s argument that “the typical citizen
drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field
(theories of democracy, pg 147)” would be totally accurate. Without information sharing
on behalf of the elected official as well as the voter acquiring his own information he
would be completely uninformed and incapable of making any type of logical reasoning.

Directly related to education of the people is active participation in politics. In an
unhealthy democracy this participation would also be non-existent people would have no
reason to make themselves informed of political issues. Again if participation of the
masses was non-existent Schumpeter would again have postulated that “it is highly
inconvenient for every individual citizen to have to get into contact with all other citizens
on every issue to do his part in ruling or governing (theories of democracy).” Downs
further elaborates on this notion that it is simply to much work to become well informed
by arguing that “the saving a consumer could make by becoming informed about the
governments policy affects any one product he purchases simply does not recompense
him for the cost of informing himself particularly since his own influence would be very
minimal (theories of democracy).” This quote is emphizing and maintaining to be true the
fact the indeed political candidates are nothing more than a consumer good to voters and that we will selected representatives not based on educated and well informed decisions but rather will choose the candidate that was the most marketable and falsely adopted our ideology to be construed as his own but only for the a short time in order to gain the necessary votes to win office. The final reason why people will not become involved in the political sphere in an unhealthy democracy is that the cost and time required to become informed is not equal to the rewards of informing one’s self. Much more time will be spent learning then will be spent gaining any substantial rights through educated political interaction with elites.

The final aspect which will lead to an unhealthy democracy is total political control by the elites. This is the most basic of concept to relate to an unhealthy democracy. The reason it is so simple to make a negative correlation between elites controlling power and not serving the needs of the masses is that in definition the term itself is oxymoronically and fundamentally and inherently flawed. Democracy literally means “rule of the people”, however if elites control government and formulate policy and determine what issues to deal with and when to deal with them, there in no way can ever exist a healthy democracy. Elites may be more capable of ruling simply do to their specialized political involvement but that does not grant them the right to ignore the masses and push for their own personal wants and needs. The political sphere in Scranton is formed just like most other cities that are the same size and have the same type of citizenry. Sometimes politics in Scranton is dominated by political elitists who simply hold office for the prestige, wealth, and power. The men that practice this type of ruling and only express their own wants and desires are usually men whose fathers and
grandfathers have dominated the political arena for years just like Downs says they have no real concern for any of the issues that concern the people. It has been a somewhat long running trend the elites always hold the mayors position in the city of Scranton. For instance the current mayor is an extremely wealthy business man who has total support and backing from the largest newspaper in Scranton which he just so happens own. I’m not necessarily saying that he does not listen to the masses however, I’ am making the argument however that in order to hold public office in Scranton especially the mayors seat one must be like Schumpeter stated by saying that “it is true that the management of some of these affairs requires special aptitudes, technique and will; therefore they (decisions) have to be entrusted to specialists who have them (theories of democracy).”

Regarding what constitutes an unhealthy democracy would be the elites would most certainly be included however, I feel that elites are the best means by which to eventually recover and adopt principles of a healthy and strong democracy. I feel that a distinction needs to be made regarding elites and that is that elites have money, formulated ideas, power and certain powers of coercion which make then ideal for getting into office. They do not however posses the power to force there agenda and policy issues on every citizen because eventually another elite will emerge take power and a healthy democracy will rise out of the essential conflict between competing elites and ultimately competing ideas.

Prospects, Warnings and Remedies for the Future of Scranton:

Now that I have reached the end of my paper it is time for me to make some of my own predictions as to how successful or unsuccessful Scranton’s democratic future
will be. As can be seen above I will be breaking my thoughts down into prospects, warnings and remedies which might be available to the city of Scranton.

When I think about some of the prospects and the brighter things which Scranton has to look forward to in the future I think of three of the most important requirements in order to harbor a healthy and strong democratic government. The First prospect that I think the city of Scranton possess is a strong commitment to offering social services to its residents. Since I have already explained what types of social services are offered to residents in the above sections of this paper I will refrain from doing so again. I believe that Scranton’s ability to offer such a wide range of services to its residents will ultimately help its population attain a strong community based form of government which is ran by the people. I believe this is possible because interaction through the avenue of helping out in the community and being civically involved will act as a catalysts and bring the community closer together thus making it more possible to “common good” based decision making. Secondly I see hope in Scranton because I know that education of the entire population is one of the most vital aspects for the creation of a healthy democracy. Scranton has programs in place which are aimed at educating younger children in primary schools and high schools in subjects such as civics, local government and history. This practice will hopefully ensure that the future residents of Scranton will be educated, well informed and eager to participate in the local government. Also in accordance with the need for education as a perquisite to Scranton’s successful future government representatives and citizens have both recognized that they are working diligently and eagerly to have the best possible resources and avenues available to them in order to promote information sharing. Scranton has witnessed clear, unbiased and
concise sharing of information between the government officials and the masses that elected them. This represents Scranton’s permanent transition into a healthy democracy because now officials know what the people want and the people in turn know what the elected officials are doing in office. This has been made possible through information avenues such as new papers, news stations, representatives giving public speeches and actively engaging the masses and through political party newsletters which clearly lay out policy issues and agendas of officials. Finally my third prospect for Scranton is inevitably tied in with the importance of political involvement on behalf of the masses. As both Dewey and Barber stated involvement of the populace is the only way in which a government can be considered democratic. People should want to be involved and elected officials should welcome and encourage their input on issues. Furthermore political involvement is now easier than ever through council meetings, newspaper articles and most importantly through the internet. Concerned individuals can now get on the internet and relatively easily find websites dedicated to opening up the forum of political interaction between concerned citizens. This gives great prospects for Scranton’s future because it represents the breakdown in Schumpeter’s and Downs reasoning that people will not waste the time to educate themselves because its time consuming and the rewards of informing yourself about politics are basically nonexistent and your influence on any type of political decision is so minimal it also becomes almost nonexistent. If concept is in the midst of being proven totally wrong now that information sharing of ideas and concerns amongst citizens is as easy as sitting in your pajamas clicking a button. These aforementioned reasons allow me to have a sense of optimisms if not assurance that
Scranton’s future democracy will be strong, people oriented, educated, and involved in the political decision making process.

Now I will postulate some of the warnings and concerns that I feel might possible affect the way Scranton runs its future. My most pressing concern is related to crime in the city and how it continues to grow. Crime rates in Scranton right now a relatively average for a city its size but what concerns me is the types of crimes. While murder has been nothing short of a whisper its other types of violent crimes that are on the rise in Scranton. For instance rape and assault are rising at an alarming rate along with theft. It will not be long till these numbers transform and rape cases turn into murder cases and assault cases turn into rape cases. If crime rates continue to grow at this current level they will have a devastating and lasting effect on Scranton’s government and its democracy. Crime will affect the city in two similarly but different ways. First off government officials and policy makers will have no choice but to make the issue of crime prevention and detection their main concerns. This effects government because now other issues get pushed to the back burner and the want of the masses will have to be ignored. This shift from regular policy decision making to waging war on crime may also affect some of the normal citizen’s rights. Secondly if the government fails to properly address the problem it will not only grow worse but citizens will begin accusing the government of not fulfilling their job well enough. If enough voices are heard and are contesting the government officials Scranton’s government might be in the middle of removal from power. Another warning sign which might spell rough times for Scranton’s government is the current budget deficit which it faces. Currently Scranton is indebted 7 million dollars which, is estimated to grow to 11 million dollars by 2009. If this trend continues
Scranton will have to cut back on resources which include social services, public access shows and possible some governmental positions. Apart from cutbacks Scranton will most likely need to raise some sort of tax which, most likely would be a hike in property taxes for local residents. Understandably this would not sit well with the citizens and when citizens are unhappy changes in government officials always seem to ensue. One last potential problem that I believe could possibly plague Scranton in the future is rather simple and seems to be headed in the right direction now but could fall apart suddenly. My belief is that Scranton like many local governments could become lackadaisical in some of its most important endeavors such as, education of the people and the promotion of participation in politics. As is well known by now education and participation in politics are the two single most important factors for the creating and promotion of a healthy democratic government. Nothing has pushed me to feel like Scranton will abandoned practices that have given it so much hope for the future however, I feel that somebody might eventually say alight this is a waste of money; or how educated do we need to make the citizens? I only mention this so that the city of Scranton realizes how essential these two factors are in achieving a healthy democracy.

Finally I have reached remedies that I believe might help Scranton sustain a healthy and vibrant democracy for the people and ruled by the people. Reluctantly I have only one real concrete offer which might help heal some of Scranton’s wows, more specifically is economic wows. I would advocate that Scranton tries to find a way in which it can make once tax exempt institutions pay some sort of a property tax. With the current deficit Scranton could use a quick economic fix to generate some quick revenue. I’m not proposing that Scranton makes these taxes to the hospitals and universities
exceeding expensive nor do they have to be permanent. Rather implement them for a period of 5 years just to have extra revenue which can be specially allocated to paying off some of the 7 million dollar debt we current have.

In conclusion I feel that I have laid out numerous examples of how Scranton exemplifies a healthy democratic society. Scranton has a high level of community involvement in politics; it has programs which are committed to educating the youth of the city as well as providing opportunities for older adults to become informed in political decision making processes. Scranton offers to its resident a wealth of social services, economic opportunities and promotes communication between the public and political people and institutions. The city of Scranton has had its hard times both politically and economically but somehow always manages to revive itself and its people. I believe that Scranton embodies the principles that constitute a healthy democracy such as education of the people and participation of the people. It is my prerogative to state with all honesty that Scranton in my belief is the epitome of a strong democracy and will continue to hold this democratic notion of rights, needs, and rule by the masses in order to always work towards achieving and maintaining that sense of community and ultimately “common good”