

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE FOR SERVICES  
INTEGRATION IN PUBLIC HUMAN SERVICE  
ORGANIZATIONS: EXPERIENCES IN SEVEN  
COUNTIES**

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**ABSTRACT**

This is a study of organizational change strategies employed in seven county human service agencies to improve the coordination of services through the structural integration of previously free standing organizations or the development of voluntary interagency collaborative service delivery systems. The central question involves the identification of organizational change tactics which contributed to the success of the organizational change initiatives. The literature on organizational change is reviewed, with particular attention to a framework developed by Fernandez and Rainey based on their extensive review and synthesis of the research on successful change strategies in the public and business sectors. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from over 250 individuals and from agency documents. Findings are compared with the success factors identified by Fernandez and Rainey, and refinements to their propositions are suggested. More precise methods for measuring successful and unsuccessful change initiatives are suggested. Implications for practice and research are presented.

Key Words: Organizational change, services integration, collaboration, human service organizations.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, human service organizations (HSOs) and other government organizations have come under increasing pressure from policy makers, funders, community members, and other stakeholders to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of services and the management systems which support them. One approach to these concerns has been extensive and persistent work to achieve more coherent and effective human service systems through services integration and coordination (Austin 1997; Jones, Crook, and Webb 2008). Goals have included finding ways to reduce fragmentation and service gaps to improve access and continuity of care, reducing duplication and redundancy in order to lower costs (time, energy, and inconvenience associated with accessing and receiving services) for clients, utilizing scarce resources more effectively, and achieving greater accountability. One common solution has been to structurally integrate programs serving common clients under one administrative umbrella. A more recent idea has been to develop collaborative systems or processes which autonomous programs can use to facilitate better service delivery.

To implement changes such as those related to services integration, the technologies of organizational change, many originating in the business sector, have been used and studied with increasing frequency in the health and human services sectors. In healthcare, for example, Rubino and French (2004) reported the challenges for large governmental organizations trying to create large-scale change with a case example of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Regarding an attempt at restructuring through reengineering (Hammer and Champy,

1993), Rubino and French noted that a major barrier to re-engineering is “getting the various departments inside as well as outside to work together” (2004, p. 62). They also listed several factors which needed to be managed to enhance prospects for success. These will be discussed below, related to findings in the study reported here. Additional themes in the research on services integration and collaboration have been summarized by Patti, Packard, Daly, Tucker-Tatlow, & Prosek (2003).

This growing literature on organizational change was recently reviewed and summarized by Fernandez and Rainey (2006), but many gaps in knowledge still exist.

In the study reported here, a team of researchers studied seven county human service organizations which had all engaged in significant organizational change in order to improve the coordination and efficiency of agency services through either structural integration of previously free-standing agencies or by developing voluntary interagency collaborative service delivery systems.

The paper has two main purposes. The first is to compare our findings with the propositions contained in the Fernandez and Rainey framework, with a view to refining their schema. This paper is also intended to advance the development of research methods for studying organizational change. Much of the literature in this field, in both the business and government sectors, is based on individual case studies or the authors’ practice wisdom based on consulting or managerial experience. Fernandez and Rainey (2006) have suggested the use of more systematic methods. This study advances knowledge in this field by using a comparative case study method and both qualitative and quantitative data.

After a review of the literature, the setting and research methods will be described. Findings will then be presented, followed by lessons learned and study

limitations. The paper will end with a discussion of implications for practice and research.

### **PRINCIPLES AND MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

Within the huge literature on organizational change, the focus here is on planned change implemented with managers as change agents or change leaders, using *rational adaptation* approaches which include contingency, resource dependency, and strategic choice theories. All of these suggest that managers can use various strategies and tactics to adapt to changing environmental conditions (Demers 2007).

Since many health and human service organizations are in the government sector, some of the unique challenges facing change leaders in public sector organizations warrant mentioning here. Rainey (2003, 12-15, 59-62) outlined unique challenges facing public sector managers, ranging from intense scrutiny and criticism from elected officials to the complexities of cross-sector relationships. Behn (1997) identified challenges related to innovation in government, including complex accountabilities, inappropriate paradigms, tradeoffs between analysis and action, and complex structures.

The reinventing government movement, and notably the National Performance Review (NPR) (Gore 1993), launched recent efforts to change public sector organizations. Kamensky (1996) provided an early summary of this work; and Ingraham, Thompson, Sanders, and others (1998) detailed the experiences of “reinvention laboratories” to implement NPR directives.

Kelman (2005) described the major reform of the Federal Government procurement system when he was its administrator. His focus was on change at the front line level, and on perspectives of workers at that level. He

suggested (p. 6) two “paths for successful organizational change”: “activating the discontented”, in which top leadership creates conditions in which lower-level staff can begin implementing change that they seek, and “change feeding on itself”, with positive results leading to subsequent positive results.

In a similar vein, Rossotti (2005) provided an extensive description of his efforts to reform the IRS when he was the commissioner. Change activities included formation of a steering committee and a project team, recruitment of executives as change leaders, extensive consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders including union leaders, and meetings with staff in field offices.

Abramson, Lawrence and others (2001) reported the results of “case studies of the most successful transformation initiatives of the 1990’s in the federal government” (p. 2), summarized with eight lessons learned: select the right person; clarify the mission; get the structure right; seize the moment; communicate, communicate, and communicate; involve key players, engage employees; and persevere.

Light (2005), after a thorough review of RAND research on organizational change, with a strong emphasis on government organizations, identified six “lessons on managing change: 1. Create a sense of urgency, 2. Remove the barriers to success, 3. Recruit the champions, 4. Build internal momentum, 5. Prove that change works, 6. Keep experimenting” (p. 230).

Brudney, et al. (2009) and Liou and Korosec (2009) studied the impacts of various reform strategies in the states.

The largest and most prominent HSOs are in the public sector, but there are also many not-for-profit, and even some for-profit, human service organizations. Public HSOs, of course, have much in common with other public sector organizations, including, for purposes here, the

dynamics of internal organizational functioning including organizational change.

Austin (2004) and others described over twenty cases of changing public human service agencies, with many based on the new expectations of the Federal welfare reform legislation of 1996. Schmid (2010) used four case studies to illustrate the relevance of leadership styles in organizational change theory. Jaskyte (2010) summarized the literature on innovation as organizational change and suggested implications for human service organizations.

In HSOs, seminal writing on organizational change began over thirty years ago (Resnick and Patti, 1980; Brager and Holloway, 1978; Patti and Resnick, 1985), and has been addressed sporadically in the human services literature. In recent years, it has received increasing attention (e.g., Schmid, 2010; Packard, 2008; Perlmutter, 2000; Perlmutter and Gummer, 1994). Galaskiewicz and Bielefeld (1998) studied change in charities in Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Hagedorn (1995) profiled change activities in public social services in Milwaukee. Eadie (2006) has outlined a model for change and innovation in not-for-profit organizations. In a special issue of *Administration in Social Work*, Bargal and Schmid (1992) summarized other work in this area.

In recent years, two models for organizational change designed for use specifically in human service organizations (Proehl 2001; Lewis, Packard and Lewis 2007) have been articulated. These two HSO models suggest steps to be taken in the process, while acknowledging that tactics and principles are applied at different points based on the uniquenesses of a situation. These “phase” models (Armenakis and Bedian 1999) include steps which should be of use in the application of propositions such as those suggested by Fernandez and Rainey.

There are still notable limitations in this literature, however, with much of it based on only authors' experiences as consultants or on profiles of allegedly successful change leaders, with little or no empirical support, and limited or nonexistent conceptual models. On the other hand, the academic literature often focuses on only a limited number of possible variables or on individual case studies. A commonly agreed upon phase model of organizational change has yet to emerge; and further research will be needed to build upon the work of Fernandez and Rainey.

Fernandez and Rainey (2006) advanced this field of study with their comprehensive review of the literature, which identified eight factors associated with organizational change in both business and government settings. Their framework will be used to organize and analyze the study data presented here because it draws upon the widest survey of the existing empirical research literature yet available. Their review identified major theoretical perspectives on organizational change and a framework of eight factors which can determine successful organizational change. Their findings, stated as propositions summarizing the literature, are consistent with the models proposed by Proehl (2001) and Lewis, et. al. (2007). Findings from the study reported here will be organized and analyzed using the eight factors they identify.

### **STUDY SAMPLE**

This study was part of a larger research project to assess the organizational change processes and results achieved through structural and services integration initiatives undertaken in seven public human service agencies in California in recent years (Patti, et al., 2003). The research was sponsored by a consortium of eight

county human services agency directors and two universities serving as a forum for county directors to explore and exchange ideas and information on issues facing public human services and to develop strategies for addressing these issues. The purpose of the larger study was to produce information relevant to these county directors as they addressed issues of service integration. The study also shared county experiences and identified strategies that appear to be effective in moving public and private agencies into productive collaborations.

The study's research questions which focused on organizational change, the subject here, were: 1. For the structurally integrated counties, what strategies were used in each of the counties to develop new organizational cultures and build commitment to the new umbrella organization? To what extent were these strategies successful? 2. For the collaborative counties, what conditions and processes facilitated and sustained and/or impeded inter-agency collaborations?

The analysis described here addresses these questions by examining the change management processes used by leaders and other stakeholders to move these agencies into either integrated or collaborative systems of service delivery.

Because of the complexity of the subject, a comparative case study method was employed to look at the seven counties. The methods of this study are described below. Major findings clustered around several major themes (Patti, et al., 2003): factors in the political and policy environment which served as drivers of change, top officials as prime movers of the process, the role of leadership in articulating the vision for change, strategies for mobilizing the executive team to lead the change, marketing change goals, involving stakeholders, maintaining a long term vision while engaging in incremental change, services co-location and

regionalization as useful integration strategies, and developing teamwork across professional and program cultures.

Because the study reported here focused on assessing specific prescriptions for organizational change (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006, described below), the relevant data from the larger study will be presented here based on the Fernandez and Rainey framework. Details on the larger study are available in Patti, et al. (2003).

Another aspect of the larger study was an initial survey of all counties in the state to identify those counties which had adopted a structurally integrated human services agency model, defined as an agency that includes under its jurisdiction two or more previously free-standing county agencies. Directors of those which, based on their title or other descriptors, appeared to be structurally integrated were sent a questionnaire to confirm that they were structurally integrated. Additional data were gathered from human service agencies in those counties through a questionnaire and secondary data sources including web sites and agency directories.

This phase of the study found that 26 counties had undertaken structural change initiatives. From this group, four county agencies were chosen, representing a range of demographic and regional characteristics. The selection process used purposive sampling including the preliminary survey just described and reputational sampling based on input from expert informants from human service organizations in the state. These county directors and members of their executive and program staffs meet regularly to address policy and program issues. The directors are members of a statewide association of county welfare directors; and through these various contacts over the years they have become familiar with the major changes and functioning in each others' counties. Counties chosen were known for having implemented extensive

structural or collaborative approaches to services integration. All these agencies were considered by other county directors familiar with their functioning to have successfully implemented, to varying degrees, major changes which led to demonstrable improvements in agency and program functioning.

In addition to this group of 4 integrated agencies, 3 other agencies were studied: three free-standing departments that had developed extensive collaborative networks with other county organizations in their counties. For structurally integrated agencies, a purposeful sample of four agencies was selected to represent two large urban counties with over one million residents and two smaller counties, both of which had populations of less than 500,000 at the time of the study. The three non-structurally integrated counties selected were ones in which the agency director and other knowledgeable informants believed that a high degree of service integration and collaboration had occurred between his/her department and two more other county departments. The populations of these counties ranged from nearly three million to under 150,000.

The differences between the two organization design solutions used in these counties – structurally integrating programs into one agency versus leaving program in separate administrative structures while enhancing coordinating mechanisms - could be seen as a confounding variable in this analysis. However, in fact, the change dynamics and processes used showed much consistency across these groups. The key exception was the notable collaboration of executives across free-standing departments in the agencies which did not structurally integrate. This possible limitation and others will be discussed below.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Several types of data were obtained for the seven counties in the study: agency archival documents such as organizational charts, budget information, strategic plans, historical information, newsletters, etc.; and interviews, focus groups, and a survey involving selected agency staff, county officials, and consumer representatives. Data collection was not structured based on a specific theory or change model, but rather was designed to give wide latitude to respondents and researchers to refer to any goals, driving forces, and change processes they had observed. In the section below, these findings will be analyzed with respect to the Fernandez and Rainey factors mentioned above.

Interviews were held with a vertical slice of key stakeholders in each county (executive staff, program directors/middle managers, supervisors, front line workers and consumer group representatives). Executive staff and consumer representatives were interviewed individually, while middle managers, supervisors and front line workers were interviewed in focus groups. In a few counties, individual interviews were conducted with members of the Board of Supervisors (elected officials) and/or the County Administrative Officer (CAO). Specific questions asked of different groups of respondents are in the Appendix.

All interviews were in-person, with notes taken by the researchers. Interviews ranged in duration from 30 to 90 minutes, typically averaging approximately 60 minutes. Details on interview and focus group subjects are in Table 1. The Ns represent individuals or, for focus groups, the number of focus groups. Also included in Table 1, in the far right column, are County scores on the extent of implementation of collaborative practices, which will be discussed later. The N there shows the number of respondents who completed the Collaborative Practices Questionnaire.

Table 1  
*Interview and Focus Group Respondents with Counties Grouped as Structurally Integrated or Collaborative, Ranked on the Extent of Implementation of Collaboration.*

	Executives and Elected Officials	Managers and Community Stakeholders	Focus Groups (Managers, Supervisors, Line Staff)	Collaborative Practices: Extent of Implementation (5-point scale) N=256
INTEGRATED (N=52)				
County A N=14	2 elected officials, CAO, Director, 3 executives	3 Program managers, Consumer group representative	3 groups	3.31
County B N=13	4 current and 1 former executives	2 Regional Managers, 3 support division directors	3 groups	3.16
County C N=14	2 elected officials, Director, Assistant Director	5 Deputy Directors, Fraud Investigator, Community Stakeholder	3 groups	2.72
County D N=11	CAO, Director, Assistant Director	5 Department Directors, Project coordinator	2 groups	2.45
COLLABORATIVE (N=29)				
County E N=13	2 elected officials, Director, Deputy Director	3 Division Directors, 3 Section Deputy Directors	3 groups	3.69
County F N=8	1 elected official, Director	3 Deputy Directors	3 groups	3.52
County G N=8	Director, 5 executives		2 groups	3.44
TOTALS	28	34	19	

While qualitative data were primarily used for this analysis, some quantitative data were compiled. First, the content analysis of the interviews resulted in quantification of response frequencies within major themes. These themes included:

- Goals for Newly Integrated Agencies
- Prospects for Success when Integration Started
- Concerns not Attributed to any Particular Group
- Strategies for Addressing Concerns / Building Support
- Major Barriers to Implementation of Integrated Agency
- Processes Used to Promote Collaboration and Teamwork
- Advice for Others Attempting Integration
- Environmental Factors Facilitating Collaboration
- Environmental Factors Hindering Collaboration
- Factors Contributing to Successful Collaboration
- Major Barriers to Collaboration

Aspects of these findings which are relevant to this study, which focuses specifically on dynamics of the change process, will be presented below as relevant. Complete results are available in Patti, et al. (2003).

The other quantitative data came from a Collaborative Practices Questionnaire, which was used to allow respondents to assess the extent to which 16 collaboration practices were seen as implemented. Program-level factors included co-location of services, case plans developed jointly by all service providers working with a client, a common understanding of workers' roles, and consumer ease of access to all services. Administrative factors included integrated information systems, routine sharing of resources, cross-program training to improve teamwork and coordination, and reduced redundancies and gaps in services and functions. The instrument was adapted

slightly from an instrument developed by O'Looney (1997) who, based on his research with human service collaboratives, proposed a number of markers to gauge the extent to which collaboration and service integration have occurred. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted with executive staff from one of the county agencies, and changes were made to improve wording and eliminate redundancy.

Separate questionnaires were developed for structurally integrated and free standing agencies (questions are listed in the Appendix), each focusing on a different unit of analysis. For integrated counties, the unit of analysis was relationships among all elements of the agency. Items asked respondents to characterize the extent to which various kinds of collaborative practices were being implemented *throughout* the agency. The questionnaires were tested for internal consistency and were found to have high reliabilities with alphas ranging between .89 and .93.

The questionnaires were given to all individual interviewees and each member of the focus groups. The response rate for the integrated counties was 94%, with 144 of the 153 interview and focus group respondents completing the questionnaire. In non-integrated county agencies, by contrast, respondents were asked to select a significant collaboration with one (or more) other county public human service agencies and characterize the extent to which certain collaborative practices were implemented in *that* collaborative. Both instruments had common items, but each also included questions that were specific to the types of collaboration in that county (i. e., intra-agency vs. interagency). It is important to note these differences in the instruments because it would be misleading to compare results obtained in the two types of counties. In the non-integrated counties, the response rate was 92 percent, with 95 (out of a total of 103) interview or focus group respondents completing the questionnaire.

In both cases respondents were asked to rate the extent to which each collaborative practice was being implemented on a five-point scale ranging from little or no implementation of a collaborative practice to full implementation of the practice. Mean scores for the global level of collaboration in each county are indicated in Table 1 above. Practices included co-location of services, training to improve teamwork, integrated information systems, and blended funding. Additional detail was not seen as essential for the current focus on organizational change processes, but these findings are available in Patti, et al. (2003).

As with the interview guides, the questionnaires for both types of counties were particularized for respondents at different levels of the organization and types of organizations to maximize the relevance of the items to respondents' experience and knowledge. (County supervisors and CAOs were not given questionnaires.) Thus, there were three variations of the questionnaire (executive, middle level/front line and consumer representative) in the integrated and non-integrated counties.

Each director or his/her designate was asked to select for interviews persons from an array of program areas in the department who had been in or related to the agency for at least five years. In each county, there were seven to ten interviews with executive level staff, county officials, and consumer group representatives and two to three focus groups representing middle level managers or front line supervisors and workers, with eight to twelve participants each. Interview questions addressed background information on respondents, agency integration/collaboration history, external factors, change goals, change strategies and tactics used, success factors, supports and barriers to integration, effects on programs and clients, and advice for others.

Four researchers conducted intensive interviews in one or two counties each and compiled findings into one case analysis for each county. The senior researcher, who had conducted similar research projects on collaboration (Ezell & Patti, 1990, Patti & Einbinder, 1997) analyzed all cases and identified common themes and differences. This summary analysis was reviewed by all researchers; and adjustments were made to ensure accuracy and completeness. Full instrumentation and case narratives are available from the senior author.

Across the four integrated counties, 41 interviews and 11 focus groups (with 113 total participants) were conducted. For the non-integrated counties, 21 interviews and 8 focus groups (with 82 total participants) were conducted. A total of 195 participants attended 19 focus groups, which had an average of 10 participants each. The findings presented in this report thus reflect the perspectives of 257 individuals in seven counties. It is important to note that for each of the focus groups, participants' responses were grouped and counted as one interview, reflecting the "group's" perspective, rather than the perspective of each individual in the group. As a result, data collected via individual interviews are more heavily weighted throughout the findings section of this report. Data analysis included tabulation of frequencies of responses to closed-ended questions and a content analysis by the researchers to identify themes, patterns, and connections among responses.

## **FINDINGS**

Findings will be presented as major themes, grouped according to the eight success factors identified by Fernandez and Rainey. Themes and examples were drawn post-hoc from this study's data and were connected to the appropriate success factor. Highlights which augment

Fernandez and Rainey’s sub-propositions are summarized in Table 2. Some of these findings suggest refinements to the model which will be discussed in the final section.

Table 2  
*Organizational Change Propositions and Selected Findings*

Propositions	Selected findings
Ensure and communicate the need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize the need for improved services</li> <li>• Clearly state and prominently share the vision and guiding principles</li> <li>• Communicate regularly with employees regarding benefits, costs, and progress</li> </ul>
Provide a plan for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve mid- and lower-level staffs in planning</li> <li>• Fully communicate plans to all employees</li> </ul>
Build internal support and overcome resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve key stakeholders in both planning and implementation throughout the process through work groups and task forces</li> <li>• Communicate concern for staff and an understanding of their increased day-to-day demands</li> <li>• Provide support staff resources for change processes</li> <li>• Provide cross-program training and team building</li> </ul>
Ensure top management support and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate top management commitment through vision and championing the change</li> <li>• Build trust within teams and between hierarchical levels of staff</li> <li>• Build trust and mutual understanding among executive team members</li> </ul>
Build external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and aggressively implement goals and visions of elected officials</li> </ul>
Provide adequate resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage change incrementally to prevent overloading staff while maintaining momentum</li> <li>• Provide adequate training on change management and implementation of new processes</li> </ul>
Institutionalize changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make formal changes in organization charts, policies, and procedures</li> <li>• Address dynamics of culture change through training and team building</li> <li>• Monitor implementation through action plans and review meetings</li> </ul>
Pursue comprehensive change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and address the interconnectedness across organizational subsystems, both formal (information systems) and informal (varying professional cultures)</li> <li>• Design and plan for comprehensive change</li> </ul>

***Ensure and Communicate the Need***

While external support from executive and political leaders was almost always a key driving force for the changes undertaken in these agencies, it was equally true that if agency leaders were to obtain widespread commitment to change they needed to “craft a compelling vision of change” (Fernandez and Rainey 2006, 7) . A key strategy used by leaders to persuasively communicate the need for change was to emphasize the importance of improving services through coordination and to project a vision for how that might happen. In each of the counties we studied, there was a small set of “prime movers,” or persons who initially projected a vision and expectation of improved interagency or inter-program coordination. In the Integrated counties, 73% of respondents identified the County elected officials or county Chief Administrative Officer as prime movers, with 69% identifying department directors and 33% identifying other executive level staff as prime movers.

Their visions centered around a few central ideas, including easing access for clients, improving services through coordination, greater attention to consumer needs, performance enhancement and assessment, achieving savings through the reduction of duplication and economies of scale in administrative operations, and improving the extent and quality of partnerships with the community (e.g., community-based organizations).

The visions, usually stated as principles or guiding values, were often formally promulgated early on in the process of change and positioned prominently in Board resolutions, agency business or strategic plans, and newsletters and other media (see the section below on building support). Common examples of guiding values included efficient government, improved services for poor and vulnerable clients, and increased accountability to the community. These values served as mantras in most change

projects, though the extent to which they were communicated did vary. In those cases where agencies made the greatest progress toward integration or collaboration, it appears that staff and the community resonated with these values, even though they might have had reservations about whether they could be achieved or concerns about their impact on particular programs or client groups. The importance of communication cannot be overstated. In one county, it was noted that department heads needed to send out regular messages regarding their expectations. According to one respondent, “people need to hear the leaders talk about this.”

In several of the counties that were most successful in building collaboratives, the credibility of the goals articulated to staff and other agency directors seemed closely tied to the perception that the agency director was a trustworthy, knowledgeable, and effective leader.

In spite of all the communication from leaders regarding the change process, the most commonly mentioned advice in the structurally integrated counties, mentioned by 35% of respondents, was to have more information exchange up and down the line. This was also the third most common piece of advice, mentioned by 24% of respondents, from those in the non-integrated counties. Thirty four per cent (the second highest percentage) of all respondents in the collaborative counties recommended cross training between partners and development of a shared vision. Some respondents noted that if a person was not involved in an implementation group they were less likely to be knowledgeable of change activities. In one county, a less successful one, there were only three issues of a newsletter over a two-year change process.

### ***Provide a Plan***

While all counties had some form of a formal planning process to integrate services, many respondents,

and particularly those at lower organizational levels who were not involved in the planning, noted that more planning would have helped. In the integrated counties, the second most common piece of advice, suggested by 21% of respondents, was that more planning was needed. Almost half (45 percent - the highest percentage) of respondents in the collaborative counties said more planning would have helped.

One county, which used a consulting firm, had a very elaborate implementation plan. Change project staff initially formed 15 work groups (with more added later) to undertake some 2 dozen change projects over the next three years. The work groups or teams were composed of members of the core project staff, a group leader (usually from top management), volunteer staff from various parts of the new agency, and usually some community representatives. The work groups were given goals, tasks and time lines to guide their work. In each case, staff assisted in the management of the projects by organizing meetings, tracking progress, report writing and so on. Within the first year, 125 staff members and others had worked on these teams.

In another county, respondents suggested that staff that are actually “doing the work” need to be involved and provided the opportunity to share ideas and to learn what is going to occur. They added that lower level staff should be made clear as to what their role will be in the new organization and how their job will change, to help them to “buy-in” to the benefits of integration. A manager in another county asserted that “without buy-in at the front line, collaboration can’t work.”

One of the sub-propositions under Fernandez and Rainey’s (2006, 7) proposition for planning is “The strategy should rest on sound causal theory for achieving the desired end state”. Plans were generally clear and specific, partly because the overall goal was so clear; but

we found only one example in which “sound causal theory” was explicitly used. This was in one county in which consultants used a theory of change known as the Technology of Participation (Spencer, 1989). The key weaknesses in planning may have been the limited ways in which plans for the change process were communicated to staff, and the limited involvement of middle- and lower-level staff in planning.

In the county which experienced the most challenges with integration, in spite of a clear articulation of overall goals for integration, and the fact that people had a general understanding of these, it was clear that a clear and compelling “case” for this massive change was never made. Staff were not convinced that the benefit would outweigh the threat. One deputy director suggested that it may have been better to start from the bottom, focusing on what works best for the client. Another manager recommended involving staff at all levels and communicating progress to staff, suggesting labor-management team meetings early as one way to initiate this.

### ***Build Internal Support and Overcome Resistance***

Important to success in these initiatives were efforts to aggressively involve community constituents and internal staff in planning for implementation. Staff and key community groups usually understood that reorganization or collaboration was a fait accompli, but their acceptance of the change and enthusiasm for implementation depended on their involvement in real time planning.

The counties that moved quickly toward integration and/or collaboration mobilized a wide variety of constituents in a number of workgroups, committees, task forces, “charter teams,” and the like, to work on organization redesign technologies and processes to facilitate the change goals. As indicated in Table 3, which

includes data from the structurally integrated counties (this question was not asked in the collaboration counties), 62% of respondents mentioned such task forces as helpful in building support and addressing concerns. For the most part, these work groups were charged with important responsibilities and were relied upon to find solutions that could be implemented.

In one county, several managers were of the view that collaboration at the program and service levels depended largely on the ability of staff to solve problems as they arose without having to continually refer to superiors. The freedom of subordinates to problem solve at this level must be done within parameters that the agency can live with, but unless a good deal of authority is delegated, staff will not take the initiative to solve the problems associated with interagency work. In some cases, these work groups were supported by a central staff that oversaw and facilitated the entire change project.

The work groups typically involved middle and front line staff and representatives of top management, and were seen as key success factors. In some instances, external consultants were available to assist work groups, but staff was not uniformly satisfied with the kind or quality of help they received. In two counties, where consultants were perceived as uninformed about the realities of public human services, their assistance was considered in some respects as detrimental to the change process. A common suggestion was to choose consultants who were better informed about the about the day-to-day realities of human services work. In two counties, early staff involvement included having staff develop the scope of work and request for proposals for consultants, and this was seen as helpful in building support for the project.

Table 3:  
*Strategies for Addressing Concerns / Building Support:*  
*% of Respondents Mentioning the Factor N=52*

County:	A N=14	B N=13	C N=14	D N=11	Total Mean
Multi-level task forces, committees, workgroups to get input, plan, etc.	71%	46%	36%	100%	62%
Information dissemination (e.g., newsletters, hotlines, videos)	36%	54%	43%	100%	56%
Team building, shared mission/vision	21%	15%	7%	27%	17%
Leaders emphasize positives, don't dwell on problems	7%	15%	0%	9%	8%
*Other	36%	46%	21%	9%	31%

Note: Percentages do not total 100% as respondents were asked to check all that apply.

\*Other responses include: Staff survey; Staff meetings; community leaders involved in planning; evaluation of integration; position above Regional Managers created; consultant; public hearing at Board of Supervisors meetings; Town Hall meeting; director's commitment to expansion of mental health services; one meeting w/ CAO & Directors; tied reorganization to new classifications/ raises.

Researchers found that there had been resistance to change projects among middle management and front line workers in certain program areas such as mental health, child welfare, aging, and drugs and alcohol. The resistance to change was manifested in a variety of ways, such as fears that expertise would be diluted, that service standards would be compromised, that information shared with others would be used inappropriately, that workers in other programs with less professional preparation could not be entrusted to perform competently, and that general managers would not have expertise needed to effectively manage programs. These matters continued to serve as

barriers in some counties, either slowing or preventing the full development of interagency cross-agency or cross-program coordination.

Success factors noted by respondents in the “collaboration” counties which helped to build support for the changes are listed in Table 4. In several counties, teamwork began to occur in facilities where staff from different programs were co-located and involved in joint planning and service activities. Co-location was enhanced through team building activities, executive staff modeling, staff development, regular meetings, and cross training where stereotypes and distrust could be addressed and relationships built. These supports were an integral part of the planning, with time and resources allocated. The researchers observed in several counties that, with improved communication skills, workers in different program areas often developed mutual respect and enthusiastically embraced the opportunities to utilize one another’s expertise to further the interests of their common clients.

In one county, having people from different programs working together on projects was seen as moving integration beyond what team building activities accomplished: regular contact through joint work (e.g. team service planning) expedited staff getting comfortable working with each other. In one county, there was considerable agreement in the middle management group with the statement: “Team building activities did not take the integration effort as far as having people work together on projects.” In several counties, pilot projects in selected geographic areas were useful in showing quick successes and examples of the ultimate vision.

Table 4  
*Factors Contributing to Successful Collaboration:  
 % of Respondents Mentioning the Factor  
 N=29*

	County E N=13	County F N=8	County G N=8	Total Mean
Co-location	54%	75%	38%	55%
Cross-agency training and team building activities	54%	63%	50%	55%
Strong agency leadership	54%	75%	38%	55%
Regular meetings	31%	88%	50%	52%
Shared vision, philosophy, values and culture across agencies	15%	50%	63%	38%
Understanding agency partners' cultures and limitations	23%	38%	25%	28%
Involve staff of all levels in planning and problem solving	15%	0%	25%	14%
Shared information systems	15%	0%	0%	7%
*Other	23%	13%	13%	17%

Note: Percentages do not total 100% as respondents were asked to check all that apply.

\*Other responses include: Keep focus on community and best interests of public; build trust, prevent blindsiding; economies of scale when support functions centralized; measurable and concrete objectives to show value of collaboration; clear procedures.

In all the counties, it was generally agreed by middle and front line staff that while it was *necessary* for them to understand the values and vision of change, this was not *sufficient*. In most cases, staff at these levels continued to have professional and personal reservations about the change projects well after they were underway. Marketing efforts, information dissemination, and involvement in planning were important ways to address these concerns, but in the end “consideration” - the belief

that the agency executive team understood that the additional responsibilities associated with the change effort were heaped upon ongoing responsibilities that did not abate while new policies, rules and procedures were being put in place - emerged as a central issue. Even in counties where change was more effectively implemented, many staff expressed initial resentment and even resistance to change proposals because of the perception that management did not appreciate the impact of these changes on them personally and professionally. Some thought their concerns were simply not heard; others felt that changes were sometimes implemented without a careful consideration of human costs such as confusion, conflict, and loss. In combination, these perceptions often created discontent, which in turn slowed or undermined the change project itself.

One way in which this concern was addressed was for change leaders to communicate concern for staff and an understanding of their day-to-day demands in staff meeting, newsletters and other venues. Such information dissemination, seen as helpful; by 56% of respondents, was useful in not only building support but also in communicating the need for change and reporting progress. The nearly universal advice from line staff was that changes should be introduced incrementally, at a pace that permitted staff to absorb new policies and practices into their work and with careful planning about how to deal with the staff reactions. A slower implementation plan, it was often recommended, should be balanced with need to maintain the momentum of the change project. Ongoing, frequent, and regular two-way communication between leaders and staff was seen as essential. Related to this, a common theme was that change leaders should aggressively involve agency constituencies and stakeholders throughout the process.

This proposition includes several dimensions, ranging from building support to addressing resistance, and may warrant refinement. Empowering employees has often been noted in the literature as useful for other reasons, separate from the notion of addressing resistance. This will be discussed more fully in the section on implications for further research.

***Ensure Top Management Support and Commitment***

In the structurally integrated counties, the department heads were mentioned by 69 percent of respondents as prime movers for the change. A priority for leaders in the more successful change projects was building an executive level core action system committed to the changes sought and willing to spend personal energy and professional capital to achieve them. Sometimes this involved bringing into the team new persons with energy and commitment, but it also involved seeking the participation of the team in planning and implementation and in most cases the building of trust and mutual understanding among executive team members if these were not already present. Commenting upon the importance of creating a collaborative culture among leaders, one respondent said “moving chairs around is not as important as having the right people in the chairs.” The philosophy and attitude of individual workers and managers were seen as key variables, more important than structural arrangements.

In several counties, the commitment to and support for the changes sought were reflected in the creation of offices placed high in the hierarchy whose primary function was to facilitate integration and/or collaboration. There appeared to be a decided advantage to having a highly placed instrumentality for facilitating integration and/or collaborative arrangements.

In non-integrated counties, the counterpart to building the executive team was forging alliances with other agency executives. A similar process of building trust and mutual understanding is necessary in these kinds of collaborations. Successful collaboration seemed very dependent upon the mutual perception that the interests of all the agencies were being served, that none would exploit the collaborative to achieve unfair advantage, and that all partners understood the limitations and vulnerabilities of the others. In one county, the fact that the directors of social services and other departments already had effective and trusting working relationships was seen as valuable in getting staff committed to the new or enhanced collaborative agreements.

Successfully pursuing a strategy of structural reorganization or one of interagency collaboration, depended on the ability of leadership to “market” (as several respondents put it) the change efforts to the Board of Supervisors, key community constituencies such as various other agencies and consumer groups, agency management, and front line staff, especially those with strong professional identifications such as mental health staff.

The experiences of these counties, reflected in interviews with management staff, suggest strongly that successfully marketing core values requires a committed executive team. In most counties studied, a committed executive staff made it possible for the director to convey a constant and consistent message out to community and inward to staff and to receive feedback that could be helpful in implementing plans. In one county that experienced initial resistance to integration, respondents observed that the agency prime mover spent little time trying to articulate the vision, receive input, and get others on board. It was only through later efforts at the middle management level that collaboration began to take hold.

Where marketing with staff and community was not effectively done, it was at least partly due to the director's inability or failure to mobilize the executive team around the ideas and strategies. This, in turn, undermined efforts to build agency wide consensus, slowed implementation of the reorganization and may have, in one or two cases, jeopardized the entire change effort. One county had to replace a visionary director with an interim director who had a different and less dynamic leadership style. This change may have affected the strategies that had been in place to build commitment. The temporary loss of "visionary" leadership was cited by half of the respondents in this county as critical.

Successful marketing efforts were broadly based and used multiple media. Newsletters, conferences and retreats, videos, speeches and presentations, and communication liaisons were among the tactics used with varying degrees of success. What seemed important was that these communication efforts were persistent and prolonged. Kotter's (1996) proposition that one cannot "overcommunicate" when seeking to change organizations very much describes the practices in those counties that were most successful in getting staff and community buy-in.

#### ***Build External Support from Political Overseers and External Stakeholders***

As noted by Kelman (2005) and Rossotti (2005), external political forces can be huge factors in large-scale change. The change goals sought in these counties – services integration and increased coordination – had external support in advance and, in fact, were largely initiated by elected officials and top county executives. For counties which had structurally integrated, 73 percent of respondents mentioned the County Board of Supervisors

(elected officials) or the county chief executive as the prime movers.

Interviews with county officials suggested that the most compelling motivation for this change was that collaboration has come to enjoy broad acceptance in political and professional circles as a way to address a variety of problems in the human service system. Projects appear to have been initiated at this level largely because they were seen as important ways to improve county government. Thirty seven percent of respondents noted concerns about duplication or lack of coordination of services, and 35% mentioned a desire to improve access or quality of services. Second, the policy environment, reflecting conventional wisdom on collaboration, is replete with exhortations, mandates, and other incentives for public agencies to work across agency boundaries. Third, all the agencies studied were more or less interested in improving their credibility with important governmental and community constituencies. Integration and/or collaboration provided visible means for improving public perceptions by promising, and sometimes delivering, better client access, enhanced service and planning coordination, economies of scale, and more creative financing.

In all the counties studied, these and related reasons were very much in the minds of prime movers and created substantial incentives for structural reorganization and/or the building of collaboratives.

### ***Provide Adequate Resources to Support the Change Process***

Many staff, especially those at middle and lower administrative levels, thought that greater preplanning and more sensitivity to staff concerns would have increased staff buy in, avoided burnout, and lessened some of the turnover that was attributed to these changes. More planning was suggested by 21% of respondents in

integrated agencies and 45% in collaborative departments (remember that each focus group, which had an average of 10 participants, was treated as one respondent for data collation purposes). In these counties, *time* ended up being a key resource, particularly in terms of the pressures to make changes happen fast. While the cases reported here actually spanned periods of years, many staff felt, especially in the earlier stages, overwhelmed by the time pressures. One common suggestion by staff, already mentioned, was to introduce change incrementally.

Another aspect of support is providing staff the training they will need to participate in the change process and function in the new system. One focus group suggested that “staff need to be taught [about] the ambiguity that trying something new means there will be challenges and some things are unknown. Staff need to be taught to manage the flux that will inevitably occur during the change.”

### ***Institutionalize Changes***

In the four counties that were structurally integrated, institutionalization of the new structures was initially reflected through changes in the formal organizational chart and reporting relationships. Displacing “old patterns of behavior” (Fernandez and Rainey 2006, 7), however, required additional leadership and change tactics. The change to a new culture cannot be underestimated. According to one executive, “people need to know they are not just changing jobs, they are changing who they are.”

Both the structurally integrated and collaborative agencies explicitly addressed the merging of professional cultures through cross-training, staff development, and team building (noted by 27% of respondents in integrated counties and 55% in collaboration counties). In one

county, continuing bi-weekly meetings of executives to strategize ways to get more buy-in were seen as useful.

### ***Pursue Comprehensive Change***

The nature of the change goal here – comprehensive integration of services and systems across departments or agencies – was inherently comprehensive. Planners understood that changing systems to this extent would affect all aspects of the agency. In fact, the *lack* of connectedness across service delivery systems, such as when clients were involved, for example, with child welfare, mental health, and income maintenance, was seen as a problem that needed to be addressed.

## **STUDY LIMITATIONS**

Several limitations should be kept in mind when assessing this research and its implications. First, as noted above, four organizations integrated structurally and three integrated only through coordination mechanisms. This may suggest different change management approaches; but as also noted above, the organizations had key similarities such as being government organizations providing similar services with the common change goal of improving services through integration at the service deliver level. At this stage of research in this field, and because of the realities of organizational life, studying change processes will rarely involve comparisons between nearly identical settings. Researchers will need to clearly identify relevant variables in their studies to advance knowledge on the success of specific applications of change tactics.

Respondents in all of these counties reported notable successes with their integration efforts, but a causal connection between the change strategies and tactics employed and success in implementing the change cannot be claimed. While substantial progress was noted in staff

surveys about the extent of collaboration which existed after these initiatives (Patti, et al., 2003), the lack of pretests or comparison groups means that the results cannot be attributed directly to the change processes used. Ideally, this study would have also looked at equivalent counties which had similar problems and change goals but had not had success with organizational change; but, of course, creating or finding such quasi-experimental conditions would be a huge logistics challenge. Methodological challenges such as these will be discussed further below.

Related to this, the study did not look at other variables, or even gather precise, quantitative data on factors such as leadership style or organizational culture, which could have been assessed with the use of standardized instruments, and which could have contributed to successful outcomes. Finally, this sample of seven cases, while rich in detail, cannot be directly generalized to other agencies. These departments all had long-standing directors who had given a great deal of time and energy to the development of interagency collaboratives and had developed extensive interagency networks. In this sense these county agencies may not be representative of others. Nevertheless, strategies, outcomes, and lessons learned here can be of value to other researchers and agencies interested in the conscious use of principles of planned organizational change.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH**

French and Rainey's (2006) review of the literature suggested that eight propositions and several sub-propositions are associated with successful organizational change. These guided the structure of the analysis here, and were generally supported by this study's findings.

### *Implications for Practice*

Some practice implications which emerged from this study may seem like statements of the obvious. Some reinforce existing theory or research, adding weight to existing prescriptions for practice. Others offer new insights that show promise for advancing organizational change practices in public human service agencies. For example, success factors cited by Rubino and French (2004) in their study of Los Angeles County, including “clarity and consistency of vision, training and preparation for change, communication, [and] support and involvement” (p. 74) were all seen in this study. The use of these principles and others cited above (e.g., strong leadership, extensive information sharing, including regarding the plans for the change process, cross-training and teambuilding, developing a shared vision) could be expected to enhance prospects for success in organizational change.

Expectations from political leaders and executives and agency values and goals can be the initial drivers for change, but trusting relationships among the leaders and staff of participating organizations are essential to making things happen. These conditions form the scaffolding for such efforts, but implementing change that is widely accepted in the organization requires a painstaking process involving middle and front line staff in the decision processes that directly affect their work. In these agencies, collaborations often altered the fundamental ways of doing business. They introduced real uncertainty; entailed additional work, and challenged professional and personal interests. For all these reasons, agency leaders and managers need to be sensitive to how much change can be absorbed and sustained lest the pace of change itself become an issue and a source of resistance. Because of the stresses and workload demands of comprehensive change, many respondents recommended developing a long-term

vision and implementing incrementally to increase staff buy-in and avoid burnout.

One county had success by approaching integration incrementally with a focus on integrating services (through the implementation of an interdepartmental network for children's services) rather than structurally reorganizing staff. In another county, incremental change was helpful in securing buy-in and maintaining flexibility throughout the process. Overall, however, this was generally a dilemma in the cases here. Participants often felt too much simultaneous change was overwhelming for staff and contributed to low staff morale. One participant characterized this as "change fatigue."

From a managerial perspective, slowing implementation may risk losing momentum. Focusing on staff concerns could be perceived as providing an opportunity for opposition to consolidate. In some cases, where timelines have been determined by external policy bodies, there may be little discretion in the speed of implementation. Many of these agencies were under timelines set by County policy makers and had little choice regarding the pace of change. Still, these findings and the literature (Carnochan and Austin, 2002) point to the benefits of incremental change and careful planning to address the personal and professional concerns that inevitably emerge in far-reaching organizational change.

To address the concern expressed earlier, related to fears of diluting professional expertise and compromising service standards, it should be recognized at the outset that professional and program loyalties are highly salient to human service workers and reflect commitments to craft and to the needs of client populations. It is important that those attempting to build collaboration avoid dismissing the legitimate concerns of program and professional specialists and commit instead to supporting the standards and protecting the special expertise that is found in these

groups. This should not mean exempting such groups from involvement in collaborative undertakings, but rather mobilizing them in a cause that transcends their specific interests while honoring their ethical commitments.

One county had success by establishing ten “Charter Teams” to address the concerns of staff, clients, and community-based organizations (CBOs) and to develop strategies for pilots and address concerns such as how to handle confidentiality and how to design an integrated database. Another county held “town hall” informational meetings for all staff several times a year. Yet another county found that, in spite of early negative reactions to agency reorganization, ongoing clarification of the plan, involving employees, seeing success in initial integration of administrative functions, and reinvesting savings from eliminating management positions into enhanced services led to gradual acceptance of the new agency model. In one focus group, the process was described in the following way: “It’s a little bit like marriage. You don’t know each other’s habits. But, you don’t really know until you get in there and then you start to learn things.” Another participant commented, “and divorce is not an option.”

Structural changes such as staff co-location and regionalization appeared to facilitate interaction and joint problem solving at the program level, but these structural strategies needed to be supplemented with training and team development to help build understanding and trust across program and professional cultures.

To ensure success of change beyond minimal compliance, leadership is essential. Agency leaders need to be champions of change and articulate a compelling vision. Leaders need to aggressively involve constituencies and stakeholders in planning and implementation throughout the project. Involvement in implementation planning, training and actual experience with the new processes are essential for staff acceptance. “Leader” here refers not only

to a chief executive, but also to a strategically aligned and committed executive team. A highly functioning team, which can speak and lead with a common voice, is an important success factor.

Change leaders cannot overcommunicate about the benefits, costs, progress, and consequences of implementing change. Outcome data such as results of successful pilot projects can be used to reinforce the change goals as well as to maintain political support.

Since these change initiatives were concerned with structural integration and collaboration, they may be of particular interest to public managers who are contemplating ways of better-integrating services and work processes to improve client service and coordination. The use of successful change strategies and tactics may also be relevant for application to other large-scale change goals in governmental agencies and even large not-for-profit organizations. Further research can look at variations which may be appropriate across sectors and types of agencies.

### ***Implications for Research***

The findings here suggest several implications for future research, in the spirit of Fernandez and Rainey's call for "additional research to further validate or refine these propositions" (2006, 17). The findings in this study were generally consistent with their principles, but suggestions are made below for possible refinements and further testing.

The most prominent implication for research has to do with the role of employee participation in the change process noted in Fernandez and Rainey's third proposition: "Build internal support and overcome resistance". Based on our findings and other research, we believe that this proposition could be better focused on the broader benefits of participation, with less of an emphasis on resistance. The

literature on employee participation suggests that involving employees in decision making can have at least two goals or outcomes: building a sense of ownership which can both reduce resistance and enhance commitment to implementation of the plan, and improving the quality of the decisions and resulting plans. The second goal seems to warrant greater attention.

Notably, for example, a major priority of the National Performance Review (Gore 1993) was “to empower employees *to get results*” (italics added). Rainey (1998) reinforced this rationale, noting that the purpose of the NPR Reinvention Labs was to “encourage bottom-up innovation” (p. 164). Osborne and Plastrick (1997) listed empowering employees and one of five key “levers” of change.

We found extensive concern among respondents regarding tactics related to the proposition of building internal support. Active participation by staff in both planning and implementation seemed to be a key factor; and many respondents said that more participation in the *development* of the plan, as well as fuller communication of it, would have helped. Both instrumental and emotional support (Fernandez and Rainey 2006, 11) were important here and warranted even more attention. This is actually consistent with Kelman’s (2005) strategy of “activating the discontented”. As Kelman found, in some cases, employees may be eager for change, not resistant to it. In such a case, participation in decision making empowers employees to engage with the proposed change. Connor and Thompson (2006) addressed this issue in commentary based on the Fernandez and Rainey article, accenting an alternative perspective that “argues that organizational change occurs most successfully when organization members are truly engaged”, and their views are “in fact being taken into account and considered” (p. 29). In the same issue, Mihm (2006), summarized success factors in

change at the GAO, noting that “employee involvement strengthens the transformation process by including frontline perspectives and experiences” (p. 34). Rainey and Fernandez, in a response to commentary reaction pieces (2006, 48), seem to agree with the importance of this.

Beyond the notion that participation may warrant its own proposition, the term “overcome resistance” in this proposition is different from all the others in the sense that it is not objectively observable to members of the organization or researchers, but is rather stated as an intermediate goal which can be pursued through observable tactics such as widespread participation. If this proposition were reworded to say “use widespread participation in the change process”, its wording would be aligned with the other propositions, and it would also be easier to observe and measure. Eliminating here the rationales for participation (building support and reducing resistance) would also reinforce the notion that employee participation has value beyond these purposes: it can proactively enhance employee commitment and ownership over the process and outcomes and, perhaps more importantly, improve change outcomes by tapping the creativity and knowledge of a larger number of employees. For example, in their study of executives in two state agencies implementing the 1996 welfare reform law, Bruhn, Zajac, and Al-Kazemi (2001) found that the most commonly reported results of employee participation were enhanced “buy in”, greater commitment and accountability regarding the success of the change, and the value of the employees’ practical knowledge which aided in problem solving. Based on their findings, they recommend that “welfare agencies experiment with and evaluate the process and outcome of greater employee participation in organizational planning” (2001, 221), including the training of employees regarding effective participation.

As a final suggestion on this principle, replacing the phrase “and other means” with additional specific tactics would provide more specific guidance to both practitioners and researchers. These suggestions are reflected in Table 5, offered as a replacement for Fernandez and Rainey’s third proposition. As noted above, the other propositions seemed to offer a solid framework for further study.

Table 5  
*Suggested Amended Proposition and Subpropositions*

Proposition	Subpropositions
Use widespread participation in the change process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve employees in change planning and implementation.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing opportunities for extensive communication and dialogue.</li> <li>• Commit sufficient time, effort, and resources to manage participation effectively, particularly by supporting employees.</li> </ul>

In terms of research methods, this study, which gathered data from over 250 respondents in seven agencies, can be seen as a transition step between earlier studies, which were often based upon single case studies or consultant experiences, and more systematic research such as that suggested by Fernandez and Rainey. As conceptual models are further refined, and success factors are more definitively identified, future research can be more precisely based upon this prior work, helping to unify this growing body of knowledge. Data from the seven cases presented above add to the knowledge base on organizational change and can help provide a foundation for more structured quantitative research to assess the presence and absence of key success factors by contrasting successful and unsuccessful organizational change initiatives.

Fernandez and Rainey suggest (2006, 18) that research should begin to address the effects of organizational change on actual organizational outcomes. The current study looked at agencies which were generally seen as having completed successful major change processes, but even within this sample some agencies were more successful in achieving change results than others (Patti, et al., 2003). Future research would be enhanced through longitudinal designs of change efforts in which pre-and post-data on performance can be gathered. Alternatively, and perhaps more logistically feasible, surveys of staff that have experienced successful and unsuccessful change processes can be used to contrast practices used and results obtained.

The success factors presented by Fernandez and Rainey provided the structure for presenting the findings here. These factors, including their sub-propositions, with any promising additions (such as the suggestion here that greater attention should be paid to the role of employee involvement), could be incorporated into a survey instrument which could be administered to staffs of large agencies that had experienced significant organizational change initiatives. Other variables, including specific change leader characteristics or behaviors, agency size, type of agency, culture, and the content of the change, could be included in such quantitative analysis. Until resources are available for large-scale research using the large-sample data sets and multivariate statistical techniques suggested by Fernandez and Rainey, smaller-scale survey research can make valuable contributions to knowledge development.

There is still a great deal to be learned about which factors are essential or valuable in creating successful organizational change, and what activities, in what sequences, contribute to success. The work of Ramirez and

Rainey and others provides an excellent framework and foundation for continued work in this area.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDES

For all interviews: Demographics: current and prior roles, time in current and former positions, position at the time of the integration, extent of involvement with the process

INTEGRATED COUNTIES:  
QUESTIONS & RESPONDENTS

Q	CAO & BOARD	DIRECTORS, DEPUTIES, & OTHER EXECUTIVE STAFF	SUPERVISORS	CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVES
How would you describe the nature and extent of your involvement in planning for the reorganization of the integrated agency?	X			
Were you (or your community organization) generally in favor of, opposed to, or neutral about the idea of integrating several human service agencies when it was first seriously proposed? (Follow-up on why.)	X			X
Did your opinion about the idea of an integrated agency change during the period of planning leading up to the actual reorganization? If so, what influenced this change in your view?	X			
What in your opinion were the key factors (conditions, problems, interests, etc.) that lead the Board of Supervisors to authorize the creation of the super agency?	X			
What would you say were the three or four most important changes or goals for county human services that the Board was attempting to achieve when they authorized creation of the integrated agency? (For CAO, were these also the changes or goals you had for reorganization?)	X			
At the time of reorganization, how would you describe your (Supervisor) assessment of the likelihood of achieving the changes or goals the Board was seeking? (For the CAO, did you agree with this assessment? If not, why?)	X			
For each of the changes that the integrated agency was supposed to bring about, what in your judgment has been accomplished to this point? Are you satisfied with what has been achieved so far?	X			

Where progress toward a goal has been slow or unsatisfactory, why do you think this has happened? What has contributed to the level of progress you observe?	X			
Where progress toward a goal has been satisfactory or positive, why do you think this has happened? What has contributed to the level of progress you observe?	X			
What in your opinion needs to be done now and in the future to realize the full potential of the integrated agency?	X			
How would you describe the nature and extent of your involvement in the planning and implementation of the reorganization before it became "a fait accompli" (prompts: on task force, chaired committees, worked with external consultants, oversaw, etc)?		X		X
At the time the reorganization was completed and new agency established how would you describe your assessment of likelihood of achieving the goals that were set for it?		X		X
Who would you say were the prime movers (i.e. leaders) in the effort to develop the integrated agency? (Prompt: Get names and positions)		X	X	X
Viewed from the perspective of the prime movers (i.e. decision makers and influential advocates), what factors (conditions, problems, interests, etc.) most contributed to the county's decision to develop an integrated human service agency?		X		X
In your opinions what factors (conditions, problems, interests, etc.) most contributed to the county's decision to develop an integrated human services agency?			X	
What would you say were the 3 or 4 most important changes (aspirations, goals, visions, might also be words here), the prime movers were seeking to bring about through integration? (Prompt: were there informal as well as formal goals being sought?)		X	X	X
14) Other than those who proposed the reorganization, what groups and or individuals were most in favor of the idea of reorganizing? Which were most in opposition? (Prompt: consulting with groups, including representative on committees, negotiating, making concessions, etc).		X		X
How were the concerns of the groups who opposed integration addressed?		X		
What strategies did the prime movers or			X	X

	their assistants use to address your concerns regarding the reorganization?				
	What strategies did the prime movers or their assistants use to address your ideas and suggestions regarding the reorganization?		X	X	
	What strategies did the prime movers or their assistants use to keep employees informed of changes regarding the reorganization?		X	X	
	What strategies did the prime movers or their assistants use to keep community groups informed of changes regarding the reorganization?				X
	How effective were these strategies in building commitment or agreement with the idea of an integrated agency on the part of those who opposed or questioned it at the outset?		X	X	X
	What major actions or strategies were used by the prime movers to arrive at the final decisions regarding the structure and functions of the reorganized agency? (E.g. advisory committees, studies, consultants, community meetings, etc)		X	X	X
	When the reorganization was first being implemented (1-2 years), what were the major barriers to building commitment to the integrated agency and collaboration among staff from different predecessor agencies?		X	X	X
	During this period, what were the principal mechanisms or processes used to break down barriers to and promote collaboration and teamwork among staff of the previously independent agencies? (Prompts: physical relocation, staff training, reassignments of staff, new leadership, combining, community building exercises such as retreats, advisory committees, others, etc)?		X	X	X
	In general, were the strategies used during the early period of reorganization successful in effecting better collaboration and teamwork between staff from the various predecessor agencies?		X	X	
	To what extent did these strategies result in staff commitment to the new agency and its mission?		X	X	
	Do most staff now feel they identify with the new agency or the one they were from?		X	X	
	In your opinion, has collaboration between staff in the agencies prior to reorganization improved since reorganization? (Prompt: ask for examples)		X	X	X
	In your opinion, has information sharing		X		

(bridges between data bases, reducing the constraints of confidentiality) improved between program and departments since reorganization?				
Referring back to the changes sought by the prime movers, to what extent have these aspirations or goals been achieved at this point?		X	X	X
Has the department been able to achieve efficiencies as a direct result of reorganization?		X	X	
Can you give examples of such efficiencies and how they were achieved (E.g. Through economies of scale, elimination of redundancies, better cooperation)?		X	X	
Could you comment on whether the integrated agency has made it easier to blend federal or state categorical and discretionary funds (e.g. CalWORKS incentive funds), or use them more flexibly for cross program initiatives.		X		
Could you comment on whether the integrated agency has made it easier to blend federal or state categorical and discretionary funds (e.g. CalWORKS incentive funds), or use them more flexibly for cross program initiatives.		X		
Has structural reorganization made it easier or more difficult to communicate with the public and other important constituencies about the goals, programs and accomplishments of the departments? (Examples of either, or both)		X	X	
How are clients now served differently by the integrated agency than they were by predecessor organizations before reorganization? (Prompt: ask for specifics).		X		X
In your judgment would clients who were previously served by the independent agencies believe they are receiving better service from the integrated agency? (Probe for specifics: better in some areas than others?)		X	X	
What changed for you when the reorganization was implemented? Different job, different duties? Different co-workers? Different supervisor? Different program head? Different location of work? Others? Which of these changes were positive, desirable, or beneficial for you professionally? Which were negative, undesirable, or not beneficial?			X	
Please describe the nature of your involvement with (name of integrated				X

agency).				
If a member of a formal organization, please describe briefly the community organization or interest group you represent. (Probe for name, size, year founded, goal or mission, etc).				X
If not employed by an organization, what is your profession or occupation? (e.g. Lawyer, planner, housewife, etc.)				X
How did you initially become involved with the local agency?				X
At the time the reorganization was completed and the new agency established how would you describe your assessment of likelihood of achieving the goals that were set for it?				X
In your opinion do most significant community groups support the purposes of the integrated agency? How would you describe the current state of community support for the new agency among consumer advocacy organizations? (Prompt: ask for examples)				X
In your opinion, is the interested community more informed about the integrated agency than it was about its predecessor organizations? More supportive of it?				X
Can you think of other positive outcomes that have resulted from the reorganization? Any negative outcomes?				X
Any other comments, or observations important to understanding the implementation or performance of the integrated agency?	X	X	X	X

COLLABORATION COUNTIES:  
QUESTIONS & RESPONDENTS

	CAO & BOARD	EXECUTIVE STAFF	SUPERVISORS & FRONT LINE STAFF
What is occurring at the County Board level to encourage county collaboration?	X		
As a county supervisor (or CAO), do you focus on, inquire about, or otherwise expect human service agency directors to report on accomplishments in the area of interagency collaboration. Will the Board routinely say to (Name DSS Director), "What are you doing to work with (Name another HHSA agency) (ex. Public Health) to address a particular issue?"	X		
What would you say Board of Supervisors	X		

	can/should do to encourage public agency collaboration?			
	Do you encounter provisions in state or federal legislation that constrain or impede the blending of funds for collaborative program efforts?	X		
	Please describe recent human service interagency collaborations (last 3-5 years) you consider most important to your county.	X	X	
	As you think about these collaborative efforts, please comment on the barriers (issues, constraints) that you and/or others in your county have had to deal with?	X	X	
	In your experience, what are the key factors that contribute to successfully initiating and sustaining interagency collaboration in your county?	X	X	X
	What have been the outcomes of these collaborations for: Ask for examples of each and if there is documentation. Better services to clients? More efficiency or improved used of resources? Leveraging more funds?	X	X	X
	If you were advising another County Supervisor/new human service agency executive on how to build more interagency collaboration in their county collaborative with other county what would you tell him/her about what to do and not do?	X	X	
	On the whole, do think there is room for improvement in collaboration? In what areas?	X		
	Have you seen economies of scale or other efficiencies that resulted from the creation of super-agencies or interagency collaborations?	X		
	If you were able tomorrow to mandate an integrated agency to promote more interagency collaboration or coordination by bringing together (Name HHSA agencies in the county/primary public human service partners), would you? If so why?	X	X	X
	Please comment on conditions in the local, state, or federal climate that encourage (facilitate) or discourage (hinder) interagency collaboration among county human service agencies?		X	X
	If you had the power to create an integrated agency with your primary public human service partners in this county, would you? If not, why? If so, why?		X	
	Answer the following questions with reference to the most recent attempts to improve service or administrative coordination between your agency and other county human service agencies.  During the past 3-5 years, have there been significant efforts to improve: Interdepartmental coordination of services to clients			X

	<p>served jointly by your department and other county departments? (Probe for examples)</p> <p>Coordination of administrative processes to increase efficiency, reduce costs, etc.?</p> <p>Blended funding (using funds from different categorical sources) to improve coordinated service delivery?</p>			
	<p>Please indicate the 3-4 county human service agencies with which your agency has the most common clients.</p> <p>For each of these agencies, please list by name and title the interagency collaborative programs or projects (as defined previously) with your agency.</p>			X
	<p>Now, please describe the 1 or 2 collaborations that you consider the most important for your agency as whole. (E.g. in terms of number of clients served, the impacts on clients, public perceptions of the agency, etc. Note: the group is free to use what ever criteria it wants)</p>			X
	<p>What factors contribute to collaboration in your county? (Prompts – director support/ leadership, Board directives, funding necessities, county size etc)</p>			X
	<p>WISH LIST: What type of collaboratives would you like to see in your county? Between which agencies? Why?</p> <p>Do you think this collaboration is likely to occur and/ or would receive agency support? Why or why not?</p>			X
	<p>In your experience, what are the key factors that contribute to successfully initiating and sustaining interagency collaboration in your county?</p>			X
	<p>What strategies would you suggest to strengthen collaboration in your county?</p>			X
	<p>How would you suggest agencies build trust between one another in order to increase collaboration?</p>			X
	<p>Do confidentiality issues serve as barriers to effective collaboration?</p>			X
	<p>What are your agency policies re: sharing information with other agencies?</p>			X
	<p>Are there certain professionals that are more likely to share information than others? Who? Why do you feel this is the case?</p>			X
	<p>How would you suggest resolving the confidentiality issue?</p>			X
	<p>What types of leadership skills are effective in building successful interagency collaboration?</p>			X

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