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Cooperation

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List of Abstracts, Creating Collaborative
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Management Networks, Services Cooperation, and Metropolitan Governance
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*Conference Paper Abstracts
Arranged in Alphabetical Order by Lead Author*

1. *An Economic Perspective on Coordination, Cooperation, and Consolidation in the Delivery of Public Services*

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With approximately 1,800 local communities in Michigan, with many of them operating independently in the delivery of services to their residents, there is a need to explore the potential public service cost savings benefits from coordination, cooperation, and outright consolidation (3Cs). All three forms of interactions have transactions in management costs, the dynamics of which could impact on the potential to realize benefits for taxpayers. Direct evidence of the benefits of these interactions are not well documented in the case of Michigan, but are important in motivating communities to consider joint activities. Potential collaborators need not only to know that others may have tried these interactions in the past, but also that they benefit from them.

This paper focuses on an economic perspective on the cost associated with the 3Cs in explaining the challenges associated with managing coordinated, cooperative, and consolidated relationships. The presentation presents research of interest to scientists in Michigan working together to develop relevant research to inform public policies related to the 3Cs.

2. *Interlocal Contractual Arrangements in the Provision of Public Safety*

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The range of interlocal contractual arrangements in the realm of public safety in Florida provides a research site to examine the extent to which these arrangements have been used by local governments. We developed a contractual perspective on interlocal contractual arrangements as relational contracts by arguing that their institutional designs are partly an effort of involved parties to reduce transaction costs that are the product of the properties of the services themselves; and partly by state statutes that allowed mix approaches to contractual arrangements. A relational contract is advantageous because it specified the activities to be rendered without unnecessarily intruding on the authority of the other jurisdictions. It is nonobligatory, voluntary, and easily terminated without legal consequences to either party. Alternatively, in the presence of regional politics and avoid future disputes, municipality and county governments can choose a more legally binding contract by using non-relational contract such as interlocal agreements, contracts or leases. Utilizing the data compiled by the Florida Department of Community Affairs, we identified 2,251 interlocal contractual agreements in the provision of public safety. Our results show that there is a positive and significant association between city-county relations and the type of contractual arrangement chosen to govern those relations. There are also evidence when specialized investment

required in the provision of public safety services, a non relational contract was preferred; and when measuring and monitoring the outcomes of the services are relative difficult, a relational contract was preferred. A single functional service area with similar policy and goal preferences also affected the transaction costs of negotiating, operating, and enforcing contractual arrangement; so did the number of collaborators involved in an agreement.

3. The Politics of Interlocal Cooperation: A Theory and a Test

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The underlying theoretical question addressed in this paper is how to make sense of the emergence or non-emergence of collaborative activities among local jurisdictions within policy domains characterized by multiple, overlapping governments. In this paper, I focus specifically on key factors that contribute to successful interlocal collaboration measured in terms of the receipt of federal funds. The argument developed below begins with the generation of spillovers by federal grants, spillovers that create incentives for interlocal collaboration. The likelihood that local jurisdictions are able to capitalize on such collaboration, however, is argued to be tempered by three sets of factors: first, the geographic proximity and density of local jurisdictions that might be involved in collaborative initiatives; second, the distribution of preferences of constituents within and across jurisdictions for types of collective goods; and third, the geographic scope and financial scale of the federal grant awards. Data from the 1997 Census of Governments and from the Federal Assistance Awards Database are utilized to test this argument for local collaborative efforts in more than twenty metropolitan areas during the late 1990s.

4. Which Local Governments Cooperate on Public Safety? Lessons from Michigan

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Despite the increased interest in voluntary services cooperation, little is known about the factors that encourage local governments to enter into collaborative services arrangements with each other. This paper addresses this question through an analysis of interlocal contracting arrangements for police and fire services reported by 464 local governments in Michigan. While the contracting of public services is increasing common in local governments across the country, collaborations on police and fire services have proved far more difficult to achieve. Public safety contracting presents a dilemma for public managers. On one hand, local governments devote a substantial part of their budgets to police and fire, and public safety employees may approach 25 percent of the unit's workforce and 40 percent of its total payroll. Given the importance of public safety expenditures in the budgets of local governments, it may be impossible to reduce the costs of local government without reducing spending on police and fire services. Yet the fear of lost jobs and lower quality services will often make contracting for police and fire highly controversial in the community. Also, collaborations involving police and fire services may become entangled with the "politics of place." Unlike other services areas where the contractor may be a private or nonprofit organization, public safety contractors are other local governments, and the baggage of past conflicts and rivalries attach to the issue. We group the factors expected to influence the incentives and feasibility of local governments to collaborate on public services into the following categories: the organization of local

governments in the county and variations in the unit's administrative structure, community demographics, and the fiscal capacity of the local unit. Using logistic and negative binomial regression, we analyze the effect of these factors on the frequency and extent of cooperation reported for police and fire services. We find important differences in the role played by these factors in the frequency and extent of cooperation reported across the two different service areas and within the different types of local units (city, village, and township).

5. Exploring Contextual Factors Influencing Interlocal Collaboration

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Our research contributes to the growing literature on collaborative public management by exploring empirically some of the contextual factors that explain variation in collaborative activity. Using a sample of 99 small cities in Iowa, we are testing several variables that may influence the extent of interlocal collaboration for each municipality. We look to internal factors such as community social capital, population, tax burden, professional management, trust in government, and information technology infrastructure and usage. We also test external contextual factors such as whether the city is in a metropolitan or micropolitan region (the latter being a new classification used by the Census Bureau). We find that the majority of theory and empirical research focuses on metropolitan areas. Here we examine patterns of collaboration in metro *and* non-metro small cities, thus examining the importance of the regional context, along with other community-level factors. This paper will use formal agreements (called "28e" agreements in Iowa, following the state statute they fall under) as the dependent variable, and data from an extensive survey of 99 small cities, along with other variables from the Census Bureau and other sources, as independent variables.

6. Institutional Collective Action and Local Governance

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This paper elaborates the institutional collective action framework and its applications to cooperative interlocal service agreements among governments in metropolitan areas. It begins by outlining the information, negotiation, enforcement and agency cost that pose obstacles to cooperative interlocal arrangements. Next it identifies how these transaction costs, and the ability of local actors to overcome them, depend on: 1) characteristics of services; 2) characteristics of communities; 3) political institutions; and 4) structures of policy networks. Specific propositions regarding evolution and effectiveness of interlocal cooperation are advanced and an agenda to investigate institutional collective action among local governments is presented.

7. *Public Administration and Shared Power: Understanding Governance, Networks, and Partnerships*

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Starting with the “consolidationist” and “fragmentationist” arguments in American local government and contemporary patterns of increasing jurisdictional cooperation and regionalization, this paper examines patterns of jurisdictional cooperation and power sharing in metropolitan regions, and analyses the influence of extrajurisdictional benefits on local government decisions to engage in regional agreements.

Our findings are based on a survey of local government officials in the Kansas City Metropolitan area. Cooperation is examined using an Axelrod-type prisoner’s dilemma scenario. Participants include elected officials, chief administrative officers, and department-level administrators—Police Chiefs, Parks and Recreation Directors, Fire Chiefs, and Public Works Directors. Results point to differences in patterns of jurisdictional cooperation between elected officials and administrators. In addition, our analysis demonstrates how cooperation is affected by jurisdictional traits, such as population size and geographic location.

8. *Cooperative Municipal Service Provision: A Political-Economy Framework for Understanding Intergovernmental Cooperation*

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We develop and apply a theoretical framework for understanding how local governments perceive the costs and benefits of intergovernmental cooperation. Our theory connects local government decisions to economic and political costs and benefits at both the local and regional levels, as well as the institutional context in which collaborative decisions take place.

9. *Networks of Local Governments: Examining Community Conferences as Mechanisms for Achieving Interlocal Cooperation*

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This study examines community conferences, a type of voluntary association of local governments to determine the effectiveness of these organizations in brokering several types of regional cooperation

including service-sharing arrangements. Network analysis is used to model patterns of service arrangements among eighteen urban communities to examine the link between service sharing and their affiliation through the community conference. Findings suggest that community conferences are effective networks for providing some forms of unduplicated services such as social service functions, and for achieving regional political representation, but they are not as effective in coordinating and integrating municipal services.

10. *Characteristics of Service, Network Structure, and Forms of Interlocal Cooperation in Service Production: Evidence from Florida*

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This paper empirically examines the interrelationships between service characteristics and the structure of networks among local jurisdictions using relational data across a set of diverse services from Pinellas County in Florida. In metropolitan areas, cities as well as counties work together to become increasingly efficient in public service delivery, and hence, engage into a variety of cooperative arrangements such as bilateral or multilateral service agreements. Increasing restraints on jurisdictions' fiscal capacity have further forced them to look for cooperative avenues. Extant literature suggests that types of public goods and services determine the choice of service production. Policy/management network scholars argue that different public goods and services lead to different collective action problems, which in turn, result in different network structures among actors. What is missing is that why certain public goods and services lead to certain network structure of service production. This paper pulls together institutional collective action, contracting, and policy/management network literature and argues that the attributes of services – asset specificity and metering difficulty - create different collective action problems that jurisdictions attempt to solve which then result different network structures leading to different forms of inter-local cooperation.

11. *Elements of Successful Interlocal Agreements: An Iowa Case Study*

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This paper explores the factors that contribute to successful interlocal agreements. Success is defined in terms of achieving agreement objectives, increasing the effectiveness of the public service, and increasing the efficiency of the public service. Influential factors of interest include the reason the interlocal agreement was created, the estimated costs and benefits of participation in the agreement, and the types and levels of communication between the parties to the agreement. The paper reports results from a survey of local governments (including cities, counties, school districts) in Iowa that have filed an agreement with the state. The sample of about 1250 respondents includes most of the major cities and counties in Iowa and many smaller governments as well. Results suggest that the most important reasons for creating agreements are to improve effectiveness and efficiency of services, and that most local governments are very satisfied with the success of the agreements.

12. *The Nature of Metropolitan Governance in Urban America: A Study of Cooperation, Conflict, and Avoidance in the Kansas City Region*

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In this study I determine the dominant pattern of governance in the Kansas City metro based on interviews with 46 city administrative officers in cities over 2,500 in population. Consistent with theories of cooperation, I found that the dominant governance strategy is intergovernmental cooperation in the delivery of public services punctuated by conflict and avoidance/defection when intergovernmental service delivery arrangements involve infrequent interaction between the parties and when the presence and influence of the regional council of government is minimal.