

Interagency Working Groups:
Allegiances Across Agency Borders

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ABSTRACT

This study explores interagency collaboration among agencies within the executive branch of the federal government. Given the mandate to collaborate, conveyed through the Government Results and Performance Act Modernization Act (2010), along with the well-documented institutional challenges of working across agency borders in highly bureaucratic cultures, empirical studies to advance theoretical development are much needed. Cross-boundary studies are often conducted under the umbrella of network theory; however, they have generally explored collaboration across different levels of government (i.e., Federal, state, and local), across sectors (public, private, and non-profit), and among private-sector firms. This study, while likewise exploring multi-organizational collaboration, is situated within the context of public-to-public interorganizational collaboration. The study draws from a sample of interagency groups characterized as examples of action (Agranoff, 2007), transformational (O'Toole, 2014), or orchestrated networks (Müller-Seitz, 2012; Provan and Kenis, 2008). These interagency groups were created expressly to solve a collective problem, with support from an organizing entity.

This study adopts from network theory the premise that organizations purposefully working together can achieve better results jointly than independently (O'Toole, 1997; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Koliba, et al. 2010; Keast, et al., 2014). It also draws from the few extant

empirical studies of public-public collaborative efforts (Jensen, 2017; Scott & Thomas, 2015; Fountain, 2013; Lambert, et. al, 2013; Bardach, 1998; Lynch, 1997; Raach & Kass, 1995; Guetzkow, 1950), from which I surmised that interagency collaboration might be influenced by the differing allegiances of the individual members: (a) their organizational allegiances, (b) their professional allegiances, and (c) the relational allegiances that permeate day-to-day operations and create the structures needed to sustain the group's ongoing legitimacy. As several scholars have noted, more research is needed on the motivational underpinnings of individuals within interorganizational networks (Das & Kumar, 2011; Tasselli, Kilduff & Menges, 2015); such research might advance a fundamentally new understanding of how to manage, structure and govern interorganizational networks (Provan & Lemaire, 2012).

This empirical study examined the allegiances that motivated individuals within four interagency working groups to contribute to the aggressive government-wide goals mandated by GPRAMA. Using a mixed-methods approach, my study featured the use of an original survey, complemented by in-depth interviews, administered to a sample of experts. My data suggested an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and the perceived effectiveness of interagency working group efforts. My data also suggested that the motivational value of professional allegiance varies by type of professional, that weaker allegiances may signal the willingness to compromise, that the power of relational allegiances becomes stronger over time, that relational allegiance is especially important during a change in leadership, and that conscious design of interagency working groups can promote the likelihood of successful collaborations. Through this work, I hope to contribute to the scholarship on purpose-oriented interorganizational networks, while also helping public managers to collaborate across agency borders in order to better achieve results.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

This study probes the unique motivations of federal workers to collaborate across agency borders. The Government Results and Performance Act Modernization Act (GPRAMA, 2010) mandated greater collaboration among agencies; GPRAMA, along with the well-documented institutional challenges of horizontal collaboration within highly bureaucratic cultures, there is great need for empirical studies to advance theoretical development. Such cross-boundary studies are often conducted under the umbrella of network theory; however, they have generally explored collaboration across different levels of government (i.e., Federal, state, and local), across sectors (public, private, and non-profit), or among private-sector businesses. My research, while likewise exploring multi-organizational collaboration, is situated within the specific context of public-to-public interorganizational collaboration among executive branch agencies – entities with generally equal standing. Moreover, I will be studying interagency working groups that exemplify action (Agranoff, 2007), transformational (O’Toole, 2014), or orchestrated (Müller-Seitz, 2012; Provan & Kenis, 2008) networks. Interagency working groups are created expressly for the purpose of solving a collective problem, with support from an organizing entity such as the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

My study adopts from network theory the premise that organizations purposefully working together can achieve better results jointly than independently (O’Toole, 1997; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Koliba, et al. 2010; Keast, et al., 2014). It also draws from the few empirical studies of mostly public-public collaborative efforts that currently exist (Jensen, 2017; Scott & Thomas, 2015; Fountain, 2013b; Lambert, et. al, 2013; Bardach, 1998; Lynch, 1997; Raach & Kass, 1995; Guetzkow, 1950). The earliest study (Guetzkow, 1950) focused on bureaucratic processes such as frequency and duration of meetings and tightness of agendas, finding that 55 to

60 percent of judged effectiveness was not associated with any of the factors studied. Both Raach and Kass (1995) and Lambert, Lewis and Seawall (2013) posited that interagency efforts were riddled with *ad hoc* processes and personality-driven deliberations, and that inexperienced leaders tended to decrease group effectiveness. Thus, they stressed the criticality of having effective processes in place (a notion that goes back to Hult & Walcott, 1990) for the crises that will inevitably erupt. Bardach (1998) acknowledged the barriers to interagency collaboration, but also highlighted “value creating opportunities” (p. 53) that could motivate individuals to contribute to the collective effort. His empirical data suggested that, while good leadership helps, it is not essential. Fountain (2013) lamented the lack of empirical studies to help advance cross-agency collaboration theory, but pointed to “narratives of promising practice” (p. 109). It is widely accepted that trust and attraction (i.e., “relational allegiances,” Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2006) can stimulate positive results in networks (Isett, 2011), but interagency working groups are often comprised of individuals previously not known to one another, so other variables should also be studied. Scott and Thomas (2015) highlighted the importance of just the collaborative group itself, but to the multiple institutions within which the group was embedded. Jensen (2017) suggested that results-oriented interagency efforts might be predicated upon the motivation to be part of something novel, important, and ultimately rewarding.

Summarizing the literature to date, I surmised that interagency collaboration could be influenced by the differing allegiances of the individual members: (a) their organizational allegiances, (b) their professional allegiances, and (c) the relational allegiances that permeate day-to-day operations and create the structures needed to sustain the group’s ongoing legitimacy. As several scholars have noted, more research is needed on the motivational underpinnings of individuals within interorganizational networks (Das & Kumar, 2011; Tasselli, Kilduff & Menges, 2015). Such research might advance a fundamentally new understanding of how to manage, structure and govern interorganizational networks (Provan & Lemaire, 2012). Given the recent mandate to collaborate, the need for theoretical development in the realm of public-to-public collaboration is particularly acute.

This empirical study examined the allegiances that motivated the individual members of four interagency working groups to contribute to the aggressive government-wide goals mandated by GPRAMA. Using a mixed-methods approach, my study featured the use of an original survey, complemented by in-depth interviews, administered to a sample of expert

individuals. My data suggested an inverse relationship between the strength of organizational allegiance and the perceived effectiveness of interagency working group efforts. My data also suggested that the motivational value of professional allegiance varies by type of professional, that relatively weak allegiances, overall, may signal the willingness to compromise, that the power of relational allegiances becomes stronger over time, that strong relational allegiance is especially important when it is necessary to maintain continuity during a change in leadership, and that conscious design of interagency working groups can promote the likelihood of successful collaborations. Through this work, I hope to contribute to the scholarship on multiple allegiances within purpose-oriented interorganizational networks, while also helping public managers to collaborate across agency borders in order to in order to better achieve results.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my mother, Lynda Repaire Hopkins (1941-2017), and father, Richard Lee Hopkins (b. 1939), whose strong propensity to publish continues to inspire me!

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In balancing academics with a full-time professional career, I've done it with the help of my friends, my colleagues, and my fellow students, many of whom are now alumni. My network of peer advisors included a qualifying exam study group, which disbanded in 2010 after we had passed our exams, and my dissertation support group, which endured for several years. Through both of these groups, I've developed quality friendships that sustained me through the process, and that I hope will continue.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Since late 20th century, various calls for smaller government and lower taxes have saddled public-sector agencies with scarce resources and vexing problems that increasingly cut across the agencies' jurisdictional borders. In order to execute their missions, agencies have become increasingly reliant upon purpose-oriented interorganizational networks (McGuire & Agranoff, 2011) to deliver public services. The challenges of working within such networks have become a mainstay in the public administration literature (Verkuil & Fountain, 2014), but there is relatively little empirical research on the microfoundations of purpose-oriented networks comprised of multiple public-sector entities. This study of individuals within interagency working groups contributes to that scholarship, while also aspiring to help public managers with staffing decisions relative to interagency projects.

Background. “Purpose-oriented interorganizational networks” (Nowell & Kenis, 2019) is a relatively new term that evolved from the term “goal-directed interorganizational network” (Saz-Carranza & Ospina, 2011), which itself emanated from the definition of a whole network: “a group of three or more organizations connected in ways that facilitate achievement of a common goal” (Provan, Fish & Sydow, 2007, p. 7). While network goals may not be solidified at the outset of collaborative efforts, purpose-oriented interorganizational networks are created expressly to bring about clarity and coordination among multiple entities for a specific, shared purpose (Kilduff & Tsai, 2003). This specificity distinguishes purpose-oriented networks from “emergent” networks (Provan & Kenis, 2008; Müller-Seitz & Sydow, 2012), such as communities of practice and information-sharing networks. Although other studies of purpose-

oriented networks have been conducted, they have generally explored collaboration across different levels of government (i.e., coordination across federal, state, and local agencies), across sectors (e.g., outsourcing, partnerships, research consortia), and among private-sector business concerns (e.g., joint ventures, strategic alliances). What all of these arrangements have in common is an orientation toward shared purposes, typically to be achieved through a series of projects, with support from an organizing entity. Purpose-oriented networks can be characterized as examples of “action” or “transformational” (Agranoff, 2007; O’Toole, 2014, respectively), “orchestrated” (Müller-Seitz & Sydow, 2012; Provan & Kenis, 2008) networks.

My research, while likewise exploring purposeful collaboration within multi-organizational networks, is situated within a scarcely touched area of scholarship: multi-lateral collaboration among agencies within the executive branch of the United States (U.S.) government. Specifically, my focus is on several interagency working groups, which were created for the purpose of solving cross-cutting problems and convened by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These interagency working groups arose from a statutory mandate to collaborate, which came through passage of the Government Results and Performance Act Modernization Act (GPRAMA) in late 2010.

Purpose of the study. The demands of layering a purpose-oriented network over the strongly bureaucratic cultures of federal agencies presents both institutional (Hecllo, 1977) and goal-congruency conflicts (Lundin, 2007). Institutional conflicts arise from the U.S. government’s system of checks and balances, which features fragmented authority (Farber & O’Connell, 2017), tempered by congressional controls. Moreover, interagency work naturally introduces goal conflicts: actors from different agencies often have mixed motives, logics, priorities, and incentives (Hjern & Porter, 1981). These problems, when coupled with

GPRAMA, present a compelling practical need for empirical studies that will advance the development of theory. Such research could advance a fundamentally new understanding of how to manage, structure and govern interorganizational networks (Provan & Lemaire, 2012).

Because more research is needed, particularly on the motivational underpinnings (Das & Kumar, 2011; Tasselli, et al., 2015) of individuals within interorganizational networks, I designed an empirical study of individuals within several interagency working groups, aimed at understanding the allegiances (or strong loyalties, whether to an organization, to a profession, or to relationships with others) that motivated them to collaborate.

The notion of allegiances as motivational forces resonates, as well, with my professional experience. As a policy advisor within a federal agency, I am viewed as an expert on a narrow range of issues, and participate in a few select interagency working groups. Through that work, I have collaborated closely with colleagues from other agencies to solve collective problems for which solutions were not clear. Some of my projects were related to the cross-agency priority (CAP) goals under GPRAMA, but none were elevated to the level of the President's Management Agenda (PMA) items, as the CAP goals were. I was therefore familiar with the landscape for cross-agency collaboration and agree that interagency working group efforts are often stymied by the constraints identified decades ago: their lack of stability and their lack of resource munificence (Provan & Milward, 1995). While agencies often volunteer meeting spaces and part-time staff, there is rarely funding for new initiatives, such as building a data repository or dedicating staff to an effort full-time. To further complicate the efforts of interagency working groups, external events (e.g., regulatory changes or new interested parties) can potentially destabilize groups and change their priorities. These constraints and dynamics stimulated my

interest in the motivations underlying the sometimes multiple roles played by working group members.

My study, in addition to exploring the allegiances of individuals, aims to uncover the perceived effectiveness of the working groups, as judged by the individual members and external stakeholders. Ultimately, the research endeavors to ascertain the relationships, if any, between perceived effectiveness and individual allegiances. Through this research, my aim is to contribute to the scholarship on purpose-oriented interorganizational networks within the public sector. At the same time, I hope to offer all public managers charged with orchestrating cross-agency collaboration a better understanding of the intrapersonal conflicts inherent to boundary-spanning work (March & Simon, 1958; Thomson, 1967).

Conceptual framework. As detailed in Chapter 2, this study adopts from network theory the premise that organizations purposefully working together can achieve better results jointly than independently (O’Toole, 1997; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Koliba, et al. 2010; Keast, et al., 2014). It also draws from the few empirical studies of public-to-public collaborative efforts that currently exist, as well as my direct professional experience.

The notion of achieving better results together was explored by Guetzkow (1950), who focused on bureaucratic structures for interagency committees; he found only modest relationships between structures and effectiveness. Subsequent scholars (Raach & Kass, 1995; Lynch, 1997; Lambert, et al., 2013) noted problems with the general lack of structure in public-to-public collaboration, and stressed the criticality of having rational processes in place. The significance of management and leadership has been duly downplayed (Daley, 2009) and championed (Ward, et al., 2018) in the context of cross-agency collaboration.

Scholars have also pointed to shared accountability, thoughtfully selected goals, and historical collaborative experience (Daley, 2009; Ward, 2018) as success factors, but findings from those studies have been inconsistent. Given that interagency working groups lack the more obvious drivers of effectiveness (i.e., resource richness and stability), it seems that successful interorganizational networks must be fueled by personalities and relationships, a notion closely akin to “collaborative capacity building” (Weber & Khademian, 2008) or interagency collaboration capacity (Bardach, 1998). At the individual level, whether serving as leader, subject matter expert, agency representative, or colleague/friend, cross-agency boundary spanners must reconcile a lot of variables when representing their agencies’ interests (Hult & Walcott, 1990) in ways that also maintain relationships, as well as their professional integrity. An individual’s willingness to contribute (Barnard, 1938), balancing the competing interests of agency, profession, and relationships in service of the greater good, could stem from allegiances, whether to organization, to specific people, or to broader purposes, such as professional networks.

Scott and Boyd (2017) suggested that the level of individual commitment could be a key driver of effective interorganizational collaboration in the public sector. Personal commitment may arise from the prospect of “value-creating opportunities” (Bardach, 1998, p. 53), or from the sense of being part of something novel, important, and ultimately rewarding (Jensen, 2017). This relatively consistent finding has been described as salience: individuals tend to be motivated to collaborate on matters they consider salient (Leach, et al. 2002; Lubell, 2005). Regardless of a person’s work setting (public sector, private sector, or non-profit organization), an individual impulse is generally not enough to spark a collaborative relationship; environmental factors such as professional norms, relationships, and organizational values will likely come into play.

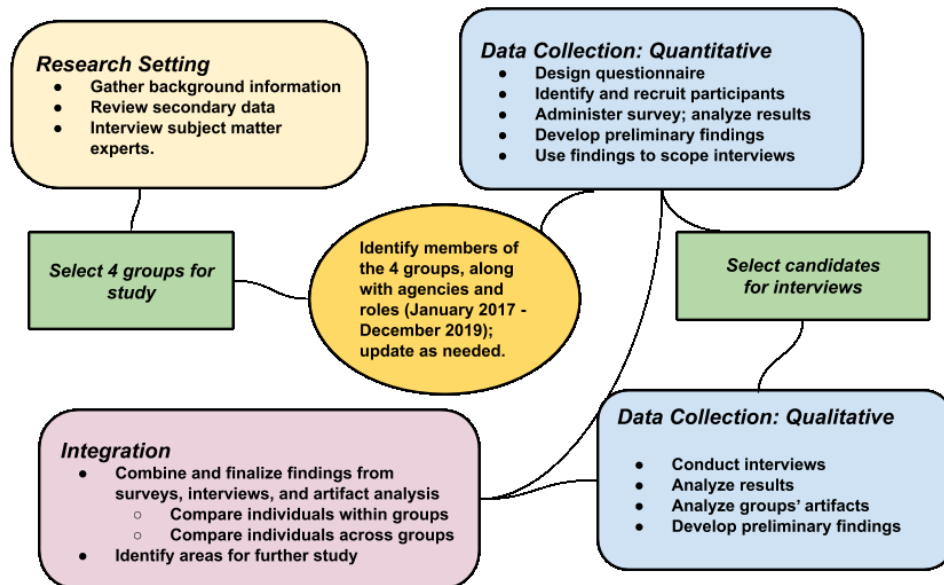
Accordingly, collaboration within interagency working groups might be influenced by the interplay of these factors within individual members: (a) their organizational allegiances, (b) their professional allegiances, and (c) the relational allegiances that come from social relationships, permeating day-to-day operations and promoting accountability (Powell, 1990), thereby forming the structures needed to sustain the group's ongoing legitimacy.

Research Question. My primary research question centered upon what type of relationships, if any, might exist between individual interagency working group members' allegiances and the perceived effectiveness of those working groups. Based on the scholarship to date, as well as my experience, my expected findings were: (1) The strengths of individual allegiances for groups perceived as effective will differ from those perceived as not effective; (2) groups whose members have high levels of professional allegiance will be judged as moderately effective at the group level; (3) groups whose members have high levels of relational allegiance will be judged as highly effective at the target-community level; and (4) organizational allegiance levels will be inversely related to perceived effectiveness at all levels. Conversely, I expected to find that: (5) the perceived effectiveness of groups will affect allegiance to the project (the interagency working group) itself, thereby promoting further engagement and additional effectiveness.

Research Approach. The below flowchart (Figure 1.1) illustrates my mixed-methods research process, which encompasses three chapters of this dissertation. As depicted below, my research process was somewhat iterative.

Figure 1.1

Research Process



As detailed in Chapter 3, my preliminary data collection commenced with gathering background information, reviewing secondary data (mostly from reports, such as Government Accountability Office reports), and consulting with subject matter experts on the many interagency working groups created as a result of GPRAMA. To keep the research scope manageable, I chose four interagency working groups from the universe of 15 groups, identifying two for which strong evidence of effectiveness was found, and two for which little evidence of effectiveness was found. Chapter 3 outlines my rationale for selecting those four as a strategic sample for this study.

The next phase of my research involved primary data gathering. My process, as fully described in Chapter 4, entailed identifying some 99 individuals who had served on any of the four working groups during the current presidential administration (i.e., on or after January 2017). This temporal boundary was intended to control for any potential political influences that

may have been present, had staff from the starkly different, previous presidential administration been included in the study. After identifying the prospective research participants, I invited them to take part in my survey, which was designed to collect the individuals' perceptions of group effectiveness and measure the dimensions of their allegiances. Upon completion of the survey, participants were invited to take part in a semi-structured, in-depth interview, which was aimed at obtaining a richer understanding of the survey results. (Note: The survey results informed my interview design; my interview data, in turn, informed the survey data.) Although many of the survey participants agreed to interviews, in order to obtain a sample more representative of all four interagency working groups, I recruited additional interviewees through some of the subject matter experts I had consulted during my background information gathering. The interviews all took place during the autumn of 2019. During the interviews, I requested artifacts of each group's work from the interviewees in order to augment the interview data.

My analyses of the surveys and the interviews were divided into two chapters. In Chapter 5, the quantitative data analysis and findings are detailed; I provide descriptive statistics on the respondents' demographic attributes, as well as analyses of variation (ANOVA). Using ANOVA tests, I compared the four groups in terms of their allegiance scores and their perceived effectiveness scores. The ANOVA tests indicated that variations in group means for each dimension of allegiance were more than could be expected to occur by chance; however, those differences were not statistically significant. Despite this lack of quantifiable evidence, some interesting findings arose from my analysis of allegiances based on individual demographics. For example, following Freidson (2001) and Hecllo (1977), I had expected to find a positive correlation between the barriers to entry for specific professions and individual levels of professional allegiance, but my survey data did not reveal any such relationship for federal

government employees. On the other hand, as expected, I found that relational allegiances for political appointees (most of whom obtained their jobs on the basis of relationships) was much higher than that of career employees.

Chapter 6 contains my qualitative data analysis. Following Maxwell (2005), my approach entailed systematically separating the qualitative data analysis into two steps, first fracturing (Strauss, 1987) and analyzing the data, and then reconnecting the data to other events and statements, creating a meaningful narrative. Thus, rather than merely counting the frequency with which a particular item entered the conversation, I was able to check any preconceived notions against the actual data. This process enabled me to extract parent themes and emergent subthemes, which were reflected in my final, integrative analysis.

My concluding chapter, Chapter 7, synthesizes my quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Additionally, the final chapter provides my overarching findings, as well as ideas for further research. Overall, it is evident that the results of interagency collaboration are influenced somewhat by the differing allegiances of the individual members. Both organizational and professional allegiances seem to have an impact on perceived interagency working group effectiveness. Interestingly, relational allegiances seemed non-consequential in the context of my strategic sample of individuals from four GPRAMA-driven interagency working groups. This sample included individuals who, for the most part, had no prior experience – professionally or socially – with the other members outside of the working group scenario. Thus, my survey and interview questions, which attempted to separate relational and professional allegiances, may have produced different results if the two dimensions of allegiance had been combined. In future studies of public-to-public, purpose-oriented interorganizational networks, it might be fruitful to adjust the dimensions of allegiance to be measured based on the population to be surveyed.

Given the mandate to collaborate, as conveyed through GPRAMA, the need for theoretical development in the realm of public-to-public collaboration is particularly acute. Through this study, I advance theory on how perceived network effectiveness might be influenced by interagency working group members' allegiances – and conversely, how perceived effectiveness might impact those allegiances. Further, this study of the motivational underpinnings of purpose-oriented networks may help public managers in their quest to effect better results from interagency working groups.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

What motivates people to contribute fully in a collaborative environment, in which multiple public agencies are working together to achieve goals? Interagency working group efforts have been described variously as “crabgrass in the garden of government” (Seidman, 1980, p. 207), the Tower of Babel (Cocoran, 2006), and a “hodgepodge of jerry-rigged arrangements constrained by a...patchwork of authorities...shortfalls in resources, and unwieldy processes” (Gates, 2010, p. 4). Given that many complex public policy issues fall across agency lines (O’Toole, 1997), and therefore require a multi-organizational approach (Kettl, 2008; Lemaire, 2012), it is somewhat surprising that there are few empirical studies to help improve cross-agency collaboration (Hill & Lynn, 2003; Kelman, 2007) within the public sector. There are, however, “narratives of promising practice” (Fountain, 2013b, p. 109).

This chapter opens with a discussion of interagency working groups as purpose-oriented interorganizational networks (Nowell & Kenis, 2019). I then explore notions emerging from the limited empirical studies of purpose-driven, public-to-public collaboration, and relevant concepts from the broader scholarship on multi-sector and private-sector networks. In the third part of this chapter, I discuss a previously overlooked variable, the allegiances of individual working group members, as a way to provide some illumination regarding the microfoundations, as well as the dynamics (Ahuja, Soda & Zaheer, 2012) of multi-agency undertakings, which may influence public administrators’ basic understanding of how to manage, structure and govern interorganizational networks (Provan & Lemaire, 2012).

Part I. Purpose-Oriented Interorganizational Networks

Theoretical Background. The term, “purpose-oriented interorganizational network” (Nowell & Kenis, 2019), evolved from the term “goal-directed interorganizational network” (Saz-Carranza & Ospina, 2011), which itself evolved from Provan, Fish and Sydow’s definition of a whole network: “a group of three or more organizations connected in ways that facilitate achievement of a common goal” (2007, p. 7). Whole networks are involved in pursuing common goals; as such, they are goal-directed entities created to coordinate efforts around a specific shared purpose (Kilduff & Tsai, 2003). However, the “goal-directed” moniker connotes that such networks would have fairly well-defined objectives in their early formative stages, and that is not always the case. Accordingly, “purpose-oriented” better characterizes the reality of networks that exist for a specific purpose (Nowell & Kenis, 2019), and differentiates them from networks that are emergent or serendipitous (Provan & Kenis, 2008; Müller-Seitz & Sydow, 2012). Similar distinctions among types of networks were drawn by Agranoff (2007), who contrasted “action networks” (p. 10) with informational networks, developmental networks and outreach-oriented networks, all of which could involve information exchange, resource sharing, educational efforts, analysis of problems, and recommendations for solutions. Action networks, like purpose-oriented interorganizational networks, are differentiated by the fact that they purposefully and collaboratively decide upon and implement courses of action.

The theory on purpose-oriented interorganizational networks borrows much from general network theory, including the notion that entities can achieve better results collectively than independently (O’Toole, 1997; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Koliba, et al. 2010; Keast, et al., 2014). For purpose-oriented interorganizational networks, which exist in order to get things done, there is considerable interest in effecting the actions needed to achieve these objectives.

Effectiveness, then, in an interorganizational network, involves securing effort from an assortment of entities, each of which may have different cultures, goals, and technologies (Lemaire & Provan, 2017). These divergent organizational characteristics present myriad problems, which stem from mixed motives, logics, priorities, and incentives (Hjern & Porter, 1981) and present opportunity costs and accountability issues (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Moe, 1995). Opportunity costs come in the form of individuals spending time away from their home organizations; accountability issues stem from the distractions associated with coordination, negotiation, and persuasion (Rethemeyer, 2007), all of which are central to interorganizational networks with a purpose.

Interagency Working Groups. Like other purpose-oriented interorganizational networks, interagency working groups typically include three or more interdependent yet autonomous entities that come together to produce outcomes, whether tangible or intangible, that no single entity could produce alone (Alter & Hage, 1993; Isett & Provan, 2005; Klinj & Koppenjan, 2004; Kettl, 2008). Interagency working groups are purposefully convened to address these complex problems, and their goals tend to be developed and articulated after problems are fully analyzed, often from multiple perspectives within a given operating context. Like other interorganizational networks, interagency working groups offer vast potential for the advancement of strong, enduring solutions, given their seeming freedom from bureaucratic control, which makes possible more flexibility, more inclusiveness, and more information-sharing.

My experience, as well as that of others (e.g., Raach & Kass, 1993; GAO, 2012; Lambert et al., 2013), however, suggests that interagency working efforts are often stymied by the very constraints identified decades ago by Provan and Milward (1995). They lack abundant resources;

they are rarely funded adequately; and personnel issues are rarely fully addressed (Lynch, 1997). In addition, they lack stability, given their changeable membership rosters and the heterogeneous values often associated with membership fluidity. They are subject to shocks, just as other types of interorganizational networks (Carboni & Milward, 2012) are; these can radically alter both their internal operations (e.g., through the addition of new members) and their goals (e.g., through redirection under a new presidential administration). Given that interagency working groups often lack the more obvious drivers of effectiveness (i.e., resource richness and stability), I perused the literature for insight on other factors that may influence interorganizational network effectiveness, as addressed in the next part of this chapter.

Part II. Empirical Studies of Purpose-Oriented Interorganizational Networks

At the interorganizational level, purpose-oriented networks can take numerous forms. In private-sector settings, phenomena such as interfirm alliances, joint ventures, and temporary organizations (e.g., Braun, Ferreira & Sydow, 2013) have been studied. In multi-sector settings, including public-private collaboration, the scholarship has centered upon outsourcing, partnerships, and research consortia. In public-sector settings, purpose-oriented networks are manifested in task forces, standing committees, and interagency working groups. The scholarship has been segregated into studies of emergent networks and studies of orchestrated (Provan & Kenis, 2008; Müller-Seitz & Sydow, 2012) or purpose-oriented networks, which is my focus in this review. Studies of orchestrated networks have tended to focus on structural factors (e.g., administrative structures, management constructs, etc.), or have been ego-centric from the point of view of a particular organization (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; McEvily & Zaheer, 2006). In the forthcoming sections, I discuss the scholarship on purpose-oriented collaborative efforts within

the public sector, followed by studies of similar collaboration in different sectors, as well as among sectors.

Collaboration within the Public Sector. Although there are numerous publications on how to collaborate in an interagency setting (e.g., GAO, 2014a), these practical playbooks are not well-grounded in empirical evidence. The few empirical studies of purpose-oriented, public-to-public networks that currently exist have addressed several attributes posited to impact the fulfillment of network purposes (Guetzkow, 1950; Raach & Kass, 1995; Lynch, 1997; Bardach, 1998; Daley, 2009; Fountain, 2013b; Lambert, Lewis & Sewall, 2013; Scott & Thomas, 2015; Jensen, 2017; Scott & Boyd, 2017; Ward, Varda, Epstein & Lane, 2018). In the earliest study, Guetzkow (1950) focused on the judged effectiveness of interagency committees, considering bureaucratic structures, such as the frequency and duration of meetings and the tightness of agendas, finding only modest correlation between structures and effectiveness. Subsequent scholarship, on the other hand, noted problems with the general lack of structure in public-to-public networks, such as *ad hoc* processes, personality-driven deliberations, and inexperienced leaders (Raach & Kass, 1995; Lambert, et al., 2013), which resulted in confusion and intra-group competition (Lynch, 1997). These studies stressed the criticality of having rational processes in place, a notion that goes back to Hult and Walcott (1990), for the conflicts that inevitably erupt as groups develop and pursue collective goals.

Even within the scholarly literature, there are relatively few consistent findings. The importance of management and leadership has been duly downplayed (Daley, 2009) and championed (Ward, et al., 2018). Other factors, such as shared accountability (Ward) and carefully selected goals (Ward, et al.) have been suggested as drivers of effective public-to-public collaboration in certain contexts, as have historical collaborative experience (Daley;

Ward) and the level of individual commitment to network purposes (Scott & Boyd, 2017). Individual commitment may arise from the prospect of “value-creating opportunities” (Bardach, 1998, p. 53), or the sense of being part of something novel, important, and ultimately rewarding (Jensen, 2017). Overall, one relatively consistent finding centers upon salience: Individuals are particularly motivated to collaborate on work they consider salient (Leach et al., 2002; Lubell, 2005). Regardless of whether individuals work within a public-sector, private-sector, or non-profit organization, however, the individual impulse is generally not enough to spark a collaborative relationship. Environmental factors, such as organizational values, will almost certainly come into play.

Purpose-driven interorganizational networks in other settings. Interorganizational collaboration has also been investigated in private- and multi-sector settings, such as strategic alliances, outsourcing, partnerships, contracts, joint ventures, research consortia, or temporary, project-based organizations. Dagnino (2016) noted that in studies of private-to-private collaboration within a particular industry, network formation was widely studied, as were governance and motivation issues. However, these topics typically arose in terms of the “strategic center” role (Lorenzoni & Baden-Fuller, 1995), which is somewhat akin to the “lead organization” (Provan & Kenis, 2008) in public-to-public or multi-sector collaboration. For instance, Paquin and Howard-Grenville’s longitudinal study (2013) centered upon network orchestrators and their role in strategically shifting priorities over the lifecycle of the network.

Additionally, there is abundant scholarship on temporary organizations in the realm of classical project management. This literature addresses how to motivate, communicate and build commitment in a team environment (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995); however, the team members are usually conceived as separate from their home organizations (Engwall, 2003). While

temporary or project-based organizations are dominated by specific tasks or projects that are seemingly more central to their members than to the members of a permanent organization (Katz, 1982; Bakker, 2010), it is unrealistic to view individuals as completely separate from their home organizations, even in the context of temporary organizations, as organizational allegiance (see discussion in the third part of this chapter) may be embedded in individual team members' attitudes and behavior.

In the arena of research and development consortia, Doz, Olk, and Ring (2000) suggested that their formation may follow two paths, prompted either by changes in the environment and common interests among potential partners, or by a triggering entity or orchestrator that actively recruits members. Once the lead organization has conceived of an idea and identified valuable partners, efforts are needed to attract partners and mobilize knowledge, resources and capabilities (Human & Provan, 2000; Cattani & Ferriani, 2008). To attract partners, efforts might include proving the credibility of the concept, along with motivating partners to cooperate and contribute, while managing any perceived risks (Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000; Dyer & Hatch, 2006).

Collaboration in any setting can help individuals and organizations promote their capabilities and connect to others in synergistic ways (Bryson, et al., 2006). Collaboration can bring together differing expertise, information bases, constituencies, and values, and thereby strengthen policy decisions (Verkuil & Fountain, 2014). There are also common challenges, regardless of the collaborative setting: All purpose-oriented interorganizational networks must attract support, respond to environmental changes, and motivate and maintain commitments from disparate entities (Lemaire, 2012), both individual people and organizations. There are some unique problems in public-sector collaborative settings, however, as described in the next section.

Uniqueness of public-to-public, purpose-oriented networks. The special problems associated with collaboration among public-sector entities are driven by two interrelated forces that exist at the agency level and are manifested in the patterns of interaction (see Ostrom, 2011) among individuals within the interagency network, where administrative turf may be guarded and productive engagement may be difficult. These forces are: (1) the need for both autonomy and resources, and (2) agencies' differing, often non-quantifiable incentives (Wilson, 1989). While resource needs such as capital and labor exist in all settings, the need for autonomy, in the sense of having enough political support to be empowered to get things done, is especially pronounced in public-sector settings. In this context, autonomy is related to separation of powers, interagency conflict, and the "hidden stimulus" (Bragaw, 1980) that comes from actors outside the network. The interrelated problem of incentives stems, at least in part, from the often-unclear measures of success in public-to-public collaboration, as well as the strongly bureaucratic world in which the collaboration occurs. The network-within-bureaucracy phenomenon can heighten institutional (Heclo, 1977), as well as goal-congruency conflicts (Lundin, 2007), which affects the development and sustainability of collaborative efforts.

Resources and autonomy. While private firms obtain commitments through promises of capital from shareholders and materials from suppliers, public-sector agencies obtain resources with sets of contingencies from their legislators. Thus, the provision of resources is conditioned upon restrictions on the use of resources. Within a representative democracy, such issues can linger indefinitely; there are continuous debates over the details of resource provision (Wilson, 1989, p. 197).

Within the public sector, fragmented authority (Fountain, 2013) with administrative autonomy tempered by congressional controls, is a way of life. For this reason, public managers

must become adept at using a variety of tools to achieve greater autonomy, thereby reducing pressure from politicians. Selznick (1957) defined autonomy as a condition of independence that permits a group to create and maintain a distinctive identity (p. 121). Autonomy is arguably more important in some cases than funding, as evidenced by the historical reluctance of several agencies to take on programs not core to their mission areas (e.g., the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the food stamp program, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and narcotics) (Wilson, p. 195). Certainly, autonomy is often derived from the agency's mission itself (Jensen, 2017, p. 175), particularly in the realm of national security. "High autonomy" (Wilson, p. 195) means the agency has a supportive constituency, coherent tasking, and a widely shared sense of mission. Interestingly, Carpenter (2001) suggested that one tool for increasing autonomy is the cultivation of strong professional networks. Although Hecl (1977) observed that horizontal relationships among bureau chiefs and other program supervisors were often not necessary because their agencies operated on different statutes with "distinct constellations of constituents, pressure groups, and congressional committees" (p. 129), he also noted that cross-agency networks frequently develop among professionals with similar positions in different agencies. In fact, relationships with external peers are central to Wilson's definition of professional as an employee with reference groups "outside of the agency (1989, p. 60).

As the variety of government activities has grown, the likelihood of any one agency having uncontested jurisdiction in a certain domain has shrunk. Maintenance of a public agency can mean not only coping with political threats, but also coping with rival organizations at different levels of government, or even in different sectors. To increase autonomy, then, organizations must protect their "turf." Arising from the desire to keep competing entities at bay, territorial behavior can occur in any interorganizational context. The notion of bureaucratic

political battles (Niskanen, 1971) is not unique to the public sector. Indeed, senior leaders battle over budgets, staffing, and influence with other senior leaders within most organizations. While there are imperialistic organizations headed by growth-minded executives everywhere, there are also organizations headed by cautious, skeptical executives.

As is the case elsewhere, turf battles are structured in myriad ways. At the federal government level, however, some of the conflict is by design (Farber & O’Connell, 2017). Conflicts often erupt on topics of rulemaking, adjudication, and policymaking in general. Shown below is Farber and O’Connell’s typology of agency conflict. With hierarchical relationships, conflicts have a clear path to resolution: The top agency, with appropriate constraints, decides. With advisory and symmetrical relationships, conflict resolution is more varied: This could involve the use of interagency working groups and collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), such as voting rules and mediation.

Table 2.1

Typology of Interagency Relationships

Type	Description	Examples
Soft hierarchy or Mixed hierarchy	One agency can effectively overturn the decisions of other agencies (in limited contexts).	DOJ’s Office of Legal Counsel can overturn other agencies’ legal decisions; DNI has budgetary and personnel-selection authority over some other intelligence-community agencies.
Hard hierarchy	One is formally above others in a particular realm	OMB/OIRA must clear (i.e., approve) the rulemaking of all other executive branch agencies; DOJ represents all other agencies in litigation (agencies cannot employ outside counsel); EPA must clear environmental impact analyses for all agencies.

Advisory; monitoring authority	One agency has the authority to make decisions, but others can exert some degree of influence.	GAO; Agency inspectors general; Multi-agency boards or councils.
Symmetrical	Two agencies have equivalent yet overlapping authority.	Food and Drug Administration (FDA, within HHS) works with USDA on food regulation; FDA works with the Drug Enforcement Administration on drug approvals.

Note: This table was adapted from “Agencies as adversaries” by D.A. Farber & J. O’Connell (2017), which appeared in *California Law Review*, 105 (5) on page 1407.

In order to maintain legitimacy, government executives spend much time courting constituencies by currying favor and placating critics (Wilson, 1989), sometimes at the expense of optimally running their agencies. Only rarely are these two responsibilities complementary: As Hult and Walcott (1990) observed, executive branch agencies must juggle “dueling demands” (p. 3), those that are performance-based (i.e., aimed at efficiency and effectiveness) and those that are democratic (i.e., responsive to desires of others outside of the agency). These critics or outside actors are what Bragaw (1980) called the “hidden stimulus.” They take part in the year-to-year activities of a federal agency, and are comprised not only of the agency’s constituents, but also other entities such as OMB and the president, Congress and its committees, the Congressional Budget Office, and other public interest groups.

Non-quantifiable incentives. Another key force that distinguishes public-to-public collaboration is that public organizations have different incentives. Most agencies cannot be run like businesses: They cannot retain earnings, set objectives, or even allocate resources entirely as they see fit (Wilson, 1989). Instead, management within government tends to be driven by the constraints that flow from using appropriated funding. This notion extends to public-sector interorganizational networks, as well: In making decisions about which resources, if any, to offer

in an interagency setting, agencies may express statutory or regulatory concerns that constrain their participation.

Moreover, lacking a clear path to potential profitability through their projects, whether interorganizational or otherwise, public organizations are accustomed to being rated on the appearance of success, rather than success, *per se*. For federal agencies, easy-to-visualize success stories could range from NASA landing a person on Mars, to the Department of Defense (DoD) winning a war, or to the Department of Energy cleaning up radioactive waste. However, many agency goals are controversial, hard to visualize, and hard to measure: My current job, for example, involves drafting policies that are consonant with new and existing statutes, but that do not impose unnecessary burdens on the implementing agencies. Given the array of intractable issues that confront public organizations, the appearance of success, which blends personal reputation, influence, and charisma with desirable ideologies or policies, matters all the more.

Similarly, rewards for government executives are often intangible. Compared to pay levels in the private sector, financial compensation for government executives is low, especially considering the responsibilities accorded them. Nonpecuniary rewards are offered instead, based more on the ideal of “doing good work” (Freidson, 2001, p. 127) than to economic gain, and the related notion of identifying with salient causes or programs. However, even the strong a strong sense of mission and achievement felt by employees when they start in federal agencies can evaporate over time. Kaufman (1960), in his study of bureau chiefs, pointed to the problem of waning motivation:

The annual cycles repeat. Things change and then change back again. The old problems persist. The rhetoric stays the same. Few people can sustain much enthusiasm under these conditions. And with that comes the drum fire of criticism and complaint, denunciation and derision, and civil servants. Elected officials take great sport in attacking them. They are portrayed as stupid meddlers or clever villains (Kaufman, p. 79).

Conclusion. By pooling resources and interweaving individual talents into a new whole (Bland, 2018), interorganizational networks offer great potential for collaborative advantage; however, any advantage is contingent upon the willingness of each entity to share knowledge and resources with the others (Donatia, Zappalaab & González-Romá, 2019). As is the case with other types of networks, the sustenance of purpose-oriented interorganizational networks requires the cultivation of positive, trusting relationships among the different entities involved (Braun et al., 2012). The majority of the scholarship, which is focused on network structures or at the organizational level of analysis, fails to illuminate phenomena elsewhere (Provan, Sydow & Podsakoff, 2018), especially at the team and individual levels (Schilke & Cook, 2013). In his book on getting agencies to work together, Bardach (1998) surmised that effective collaboration was predicated upon creative, public-spirited people, and that more research was needed on the psychology of “purposive practitioners” (p. 6). Subsequent scholarship (e.g., Das & Kumar, 2011; Tasselli, Kilduff & Menges, 2015; Kilduff & Brass, 2010) also noted the need for more research on the motivational underpinnings of individuals, which stem from their personal attributes, as well as the extent of their engagement in agential relationships on behalf of their organizations (Gulati & Srivastava, 2014), their perceptions of their roles, their relationships with other members and leaders, and their sources of inspiration. Manifestations of these qualities are sometimes collectively referred to as interagency collaboration capacity (Bardach, 1998), collaborative capacity building (Weber & Khademian, 2008), project citizenship behavior (Braun, Müller-Seitz & Sydow, 2012), or a mutuality mindset (Horton, 2018).

While there is little doubt that such qualities and motivations are embedded in the individual psyche, individual motivations are scarcely severable from their operating environments (Bardach, 1998; Carboni, 2019). There is a pronounced gap in the literature on

purpose-oriented interorganizational networks in the public sector, particularly in studies that attempt to explain the cognition and motivations of individuals. Such behaviors, as well as the motivations underlying them, are the focus of the next part of this chapter.

Part III. The Motivation to Contribute

As O'Toole (2014) once said of networks in general, the motivations of individuals to participate in purpose-oriented interorganizational networks could be as mixed as the actors themselves, but the extant research suggests that motivation is a product of both the individual will and the environment. The juxtaposition of those two forces, within the context of purpose-oriented networks, is considered in this final section of the chapter, which draws from management and organizational psychology concepts, such as goal-congruency, boundary work, trust-commitment, and allegiances.

Individual allegiances within an interorganizational setting. A member's "willingness to contribute" (Barnard, 1938, p. 84) likely stems from multiple sources, both from within the individual psyche and from the external environment. Hult and Walcott (1990) suggested a "problem contingency approach" that accounted for externalities and human psychology, which is similar to the configurationalist stance, embracing the trifecta of structure, governance and context (Raab, Mannak & Cambré, 2015; Cristofolio & Markovic, 2015) in network theory. Years later, Provan, Sydow and Podsakoff (2018) proposed a behavioral theory that also reflected the duality of macro-level network structure and individual action (Giddens, 1984). Their notion of "project citizenship," which is the manifestation of high levels of commitment to the network's work, views "organizational citizenship" (Organ, 1988; 1990) as a strong factor in meeting project goals, but also acknowledges the importance of relationships among individuals, even after the projects terminate. Based upon evidence that such allegiances could enhance

performance (Autry, et al., 2008), these so-called “citizenship behaviors” (Braun, et al., 2012) might also influence effectiveness in a multi-organizational setting. Citizenship behaviors are related to what Cooper (1991, p. 7) called “ethical citizenship,” which involves engaging positively within a community, cooperating with others, and doing the right things. Within a purpose-oriented interorganizational network community, ethical citizenship could be exhibited through discretionary behaviors aimed at positive collaboration; these behaviors would likely transcend the individual’s job description and other formal agreements.

While notions of “project citizenship” and “organizational citizenship” are interesting and superficially attractive, after deeper consideration of the meaning of citizenship, I chose to use a different term throughout this study of interagency working groups, a phenomenon within the field of public administration. As defined in Article IV of the U.S. Constitution, citizenship is a privileged activity that comes with both rights and obligations. Citizenship is interwoven with concepts such as interdependence, associations and affiliations, and civic virtue. *Allegiances*, on the other hand, converge to create a strong sense of loyalty. An allegiance to a nation or state would stem at least partly from citizenship. In contrast, an allegiance to an institution, such as a profession or an organization, usually involves membership or employment, after which relationships develop and governance structures grow.

In general, allegiances are a product of professional, relational, and organizational biases, but these biases do not always produce harmonious results. At times, individuals’ professional views may diverge from those of their agencies or from those of the purpose-oriented network. Certainly, like most boundary-spanners,¹ the individual members of interagency working

¹ Originating in the field of sociology, boundary work was conceived as a way to safeguard against the threat of scientific thought being diluted by non-scientific entities. Gieryn (1983) described boundary work in terms of strategic behavior and contingent circumstances. Later scholarship emphasized that boundary workers (or

members must reconcile a lot of variables when representing their agencies' interests in ways that also maintain their professional integrity (Hult & Walcott, 1990). At times, the dilemmas that come from working across boundaries can be fraught with intrapersonal conflict. For example, Bland (2018) suggested that failure by managers to identify and resolve the conflicts inherent to boundary spanning could undermine any collaborative advantage. Still, a cross-boundary orientation may be conducive to policy making (Schneider, 2009), provided that both sides are committed to co-production based on mutual goals and interests (Guston, 2001).

Goal Congruency. Shared goals can motivate collaboration, both at the organization level and individual level (O'Toole, 2003, p. 239). In fact, goal alignment is tied to many of the elements of individual motivation cited earlier, such as salience and association with a significant program. Certainly, an opportunity to create value might resonate with an individual's professional values, as well as the desire to cultivate relationships across government. Being part of something novel and potentially rewarding might also align with professional goals. Because humans are boundedly rational (March & Simon, 1958), they will support interorganizational project goals to the extent that they resonate with their own professional interests (Scott & Thomas, 2017), or to the extent that project goals are congruent with agency goals.

Risk perception. Importantly, risk perception also plays strongly into interorganizational project members' willingness to participate. Das and Kumar (2011) created a "promote or prevent" continuum to illustrate the notion that goal *incongruity* can also call actors to action. When project goals are perceived to promote an organization's mission, that organization may have an expansive outlook, taking a reward-maximizing approach to the project. When project goals seem to deter an organization's mission, that organization may advocate for the retention

"spanners") are often confronted with difficult choices among competing values; this implies that the lines of demarcation may be flexible and socially constructed.

of existing programs and policies, in an attempt to prevent bad things from happening. Thus, depending on the alignment of goals, some project members are piqued to promote the group's goals; others are provoked to prevent attainment of the group's goals.

Trust. Trust-commitment theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) suggests that commitment is a function of trust, and committed people will “do whatever it takes to ensure the group achieves something of value” (Scott & Boyd, 2017, p. 9). Certainly, trust and attraction (i.e., “relational allegiances,” Bryson, et al., 2006) can stimulate positive results in networks (Isett, et al., 2011), but interorganizational networks are often comprised of individuals and organizations previously not well known to one another. The conventional wisdom is that trust among agencies, or at least among the individuals who work together, accumulates over time (Isett, et al, 2011; Lundin, 2007). Trustworthiness and trust are instrumental, as they support expectations of reciprocity that are important to reducing transaction costs in network collaborations. Lundin, however, suggested a more nuanced notion – that motivation to cooperate was a function of goal congruity and trust. Congruent goals did not promote cooperation if trust was lacking; conversely, trust did not ensure cooperation when goals were very different.

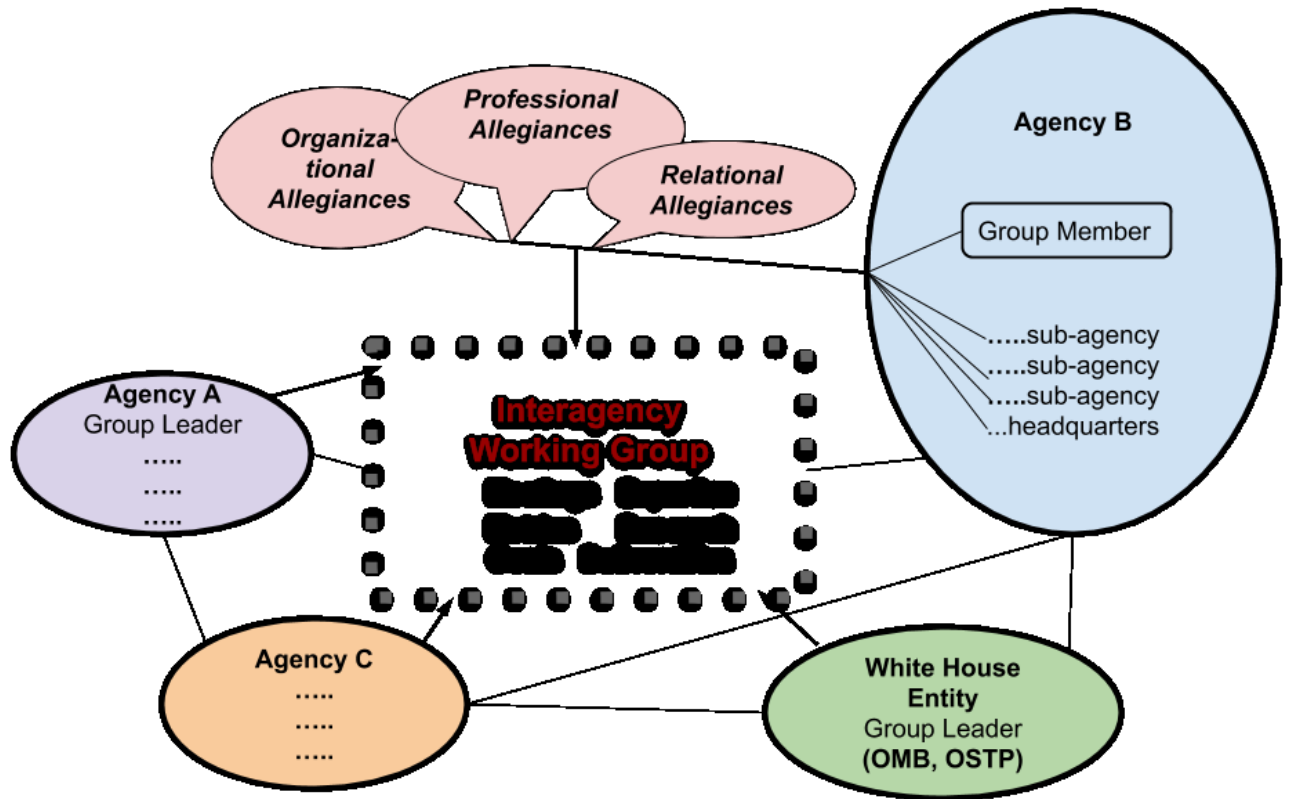
Accordingly, both trust and goal congruity seem necessary to motivate positive contributions to an interorganizational effort. Likewise, trust and goal congruity are both related to allegiances, or a high level of loyalty to something (whether to an organization, to a profession, or to interpersonal relationships). Allegiances may inspire individuals to engage in project-centric behavior (Braun, et al., 2012), such as performing tasks in an altruistic manner (i.e., putting other team members before themselves), being conscientious, courteous, helpful, and sportsmanlike (Organ, 1988), and working to increase trust and likeability (Braun, et al., 2012), thereby improving relationships. Allegiances are socially embedded in systems, including

multi-organizational networks. My personal experiences, consistent with those of others, suggest that members of multi-organizational networks are highly influenced by their relationships with others (O'Toole, 1997), including relationships with the working group leader (Raach & Kass, 1993). These relationships will be colored by organizational, professional, and interpersonal allegiances, which sometimes motivate and sometimes constrain each member's willingness to participate constructively in the group, whether that entails sharing meaningful information at meetings, engaging with others to advance goals, offering expertise, conducting research, or producing deliverables.

Depicted in the diagram below is a model of how allegiances may come into play within the context of interagency working groups. Agency B is shown prominently in order to portray the multiple allegiances at play within and among all interagency working group members. The member from Agency B, like all of the other interagency working group members, is a boundary spanner, and is influenced to some extent by organizational allegiances (and to the entities within his or her agency, including its subagencies or bureaus and its headquarters). Additionally, the Agency B member is bound by some extent by professional norms and standards, as well as relational (interpersonal) allegiances. All of these potentially influential allegiances underpin the interactions among members of the interagency working group, as they work together to fulfill the collective purposes for which the group was established. Individual allegiances can be operationalized on three levels: organizational, relational (interpersonal), and professional.

Figure 2.1

Model of Interagency Collaboration



Organizational allegiance is manifested by the network members who behave in ways that enhance the functioning of their permanent agencies. These individuals may suggest solutions that enhance their agency’s image to others, or even solutions that involve sending work (and resources) to their organizations. Within the federal government, employees tend to be deeply committed to their agencies’ missions (Hult & Walcott, 1990),² which range from preserving the nation’s forests (Kaufman, 1960) to social services and military readiness. To

² Importantly, the authors also note that public servants typically understood and accepted the limits of their authority.

foster this strong commitment, Kaufman described institutional methods of building solidarity, such as training and indoctrination, filling vacancies through promotion rather than recruiting from outside, publishing “house organs” that kept employees informed, providing channels for complaints, forming athletic teams, sponsoring social functions to gathering “the clan,” and rotating personnel throughout the organization (pp. 81-82). In addition to institutional methods, strong organizational allegiances can be partially explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which assumes that employees put forth effort based on their perceptions of how well their employers support them (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2000), a notion closely paralleling the Weberian allusion to economic needs driving human behavior and the concept of an “employment contract” (March & Simon, 1958, p. 91). In the management literature, there are numerous studies on organizational commitment and employee perceptions of promotional opportunities, favorable job conditions, pro-worker policies, compensation, job satisfaction, and leadership. These studies have featured inconsistent results, however, because social exchange theory implies that organizational allegiance is likely to decrease if employees do not view their employers as reciprocating (Shim & Faerman, 2017).

Public-sector workers have often been observed taking personal initiative in the face of adversity (e.g., during government shutdowns resulting from budgetary lapses). Engagement behaviors are not aroused solely by the prospect of future benefits. Perry (2000) noted that theories, such as social exchange, which are based on individuals’ self-interest, are limited in explaining public workers’ prosocial behaviors. Perry suggested that public servants had intrinsic motivation or a sense of moral obligation to help others. This idea has spawned a great deal of exploration in the realm of public service motivation, defined as “a predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations” (p. 368). In fact,

public service motivation has been reified as an overarching construct that explains a distinct orientation of public-sector workers. Several studies (Kim, et al., 2006; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Pandey et al., 2008; Gould-Williams, et al., 2013; Crewson, 1997; Leisink & Steijn, 2009; Taylor, 2007) have suggested linkages between public service motivation and organizational allegiance. However, there is debate over whether prosocial values are inherent or a product of socialization (i.e., through employees' interactions with coworkers and leaders). Accordingly, other dimensions of individual allegiances – those that may result more directly from social influences surrounding a person's profession or interpersonal relationships, might be productively explored.

Professional allegiance broadly targets future opportunities and alliances, or across-project behavior. Professionals in public administration typically enter the bureaucratic labor market with the necessary education and experience required for their positions (Rosenbaum, 1984; Spilerman, 1986); however, there are also specialists within government (e.g., attorneys, accountants, forensic scientists, etc.) who must have specific credentials and advanced education. The credentialing process, replete with additional studies, require much personal investment and financial sacrifices (Freidson, p. 102), so there is a high level of commitment by those practicing within certain professions to advance and maintain their integrity. Even in less specialized professions, any work that requires the exercise of discretion or an “ethic of craftsmanship” (Mills, 1951, p. 220-223) tends to be intrinsically rewarding and thus commands strong allegiance. Professional allegiance comes, in part, from a set of values residing in the profession itself. Once individuals begin working within that profession, their association with like-minded professionals generates common intellectual, social and economic interests; thus, the work becomes institutionalized by certain jurisdictional boundaries (Hecl, 1977). Professional

allegiance is manifested when members of networks press for actions and decisions that are consonant with their professional values or standards, regardless of whether those values and standards are also priorities of their agencies.

Relational allegiance, a concept underlying the theory of networks, is about accountability that comes from social relationships. To paraphrase Powell (1990), interpersonal networks run through organizations regardless of context or structure.

Networks are particularly apt for circumstances in which there is a need for efficient, reliable information. The most useful information is rarely that which flows down the formal chain of command in an organization or that which can be inferred from shifting price signals. Rather, it is that which is obtained from someone you have dealt with in the past and found to be reliable (Powell, pp. 303-304).

Certainly, individuals within a network may be inspired by the opportunity to work with specific members and leaders who are known to them, either by direct historical association or by reputation. Somewhat akin to “project culture” in the entertainment business (Ferriani, et al., 2009), where each project builds upon the last, relational allegiances frequently arise in software development and advertising (Carillo, et al., 2017) and construction and engineering (Bresnen, et al., 2004). Relational allegiances are particularly important in multi-organizational networks with unclear boundaries (Provan, et al., 2018), as the group formation process does not have to start from scratch each time, but instead can build on existing structures, routines, and relationships.

Conclusion. By looking at the willingness of purpose-oriented interorganizational network members to contribute as a function of their individual allegiances, which stem from socialization with institutions and the accompanying value systems and reward systems, I can add to the relatively scant scholarship on public-to-public collaboration. The differing allegiances of individual members, whether organizational, professional or relational, can permeate the day-to-day operations of a network, helping to create the structures needed to

sustain the group's ongoing legitimacy, and possibly influencing its effectiveness. Based on the scholarship to date, my expected findings are:

(1) The strengths of individual allegiances for groups perceived as effective will differ from those perceived as not effective. This expectation is predicated on studies suggesting that salience motivates effective collaboration (Jensen, 2017; Lubell, 2005; Leach, et al., 2002) in networks, and salience is created, in large part, by individual allegiances (Hecló, 1977).

(2) Groups whose members have high levels of professional allegiance will be judged as moderately effective at the group level. This expectation is based on the notion that professionals have specific standards (Freidson, 2001) that may not be upheld by all members of the interagency network. Professionals will perform to their own standards, and will produce something of value, but will judge group-level effectiveness as only moderate.

(3) Groups whose members have high levels of relational allegiance will be judged as highly effective at the community level. This expectation extends from Powell's argument that the most productive exchanges, particularly in terms of information transfer, are those that result from relationships with people who have proven to be reliable over time (1990);

(4) Groups whose members have high levels of organizational allegiance will be judged as less effective at all levels. This expectation is based on the notion that federal agencies are designed for some level of interagency conflict (Farber & O'Connell, 2017). Additionally, individuals who affiliate strongly with their agencies may have difficulty balancing the needs of their organizations with the needs of the network (Milward & Provan, 2006) and are therefore less flexible in working toward collective goals.

Conversely, I expect to find that: (5) the perceived effectiveness of groups will affect individuals' commitment to the project (i.e., the interagency working group) itself, thereby

promoting further engagement and additional effectiveness. This notion is embedded in shared goals and accountability, which relate to being part of a winning team (Ward, et al., 2018).

As detailed in the forthcoming chapters, my study is designed to contribute to four of the topics of ongoing debate within the network effectiveness literature (Kilduff & Brass, 2010)³ – (1) the attributes of individual and organizational actors, (2) the notion of agency or representation, (3) the thought processes of the actors, and (4) the motivation to cooperate or compete with other actors. Through this study, I also hope to fill some space within two broad categories of network effectiveness research (Tasselli, Kilduff & Menges, 2015). The first category encompasses the microfoundational (Ahuja, et al., 2012; Kilduff & Brass, 2010) aspects of network effectiveness, given my study’s attention to the motivations of individuals, whether these come from social influences, professional teams, organizational allegiances, or interpersonal relationships. The second category is governance (Provan & Kenis, 2008) or dynamics (Ahuja, et al., 2012) at the group level, given the study’s coverage of power, attraction, and potential interagency conflicts.

In the next chapter, I will delve into the details of a special type of purpose-oriented network – interagency working groups established via GPRAMA, and how I selected a sample of individuals for this study.

³ The only “key debate” (Kilduff & Brass, p. 317) not substantively covered in my study is the specification of network boundaries.

Chapter 3

Research Setting

Interagency working groups reflect a hybrid-type organizational model (Kettl, 2008) that capitalizes on the advantages of purpose-oriented interorganizational networks, enabling the member agencies to collaborate on solving some of the most vexing problems in modern public administration. Yet interagency working groups are comprised of members who represent some of the most quintessentially bureaucratic organizations in the United States – executive branch agencies (Fountain, 2013). Against this backdrop, the ongoing tension between network and hierarchy provides a rich backdrop for my study of the interplay between allegiances – whether to personal relationships, to organization, to profession, or some combination of the three – and effectiveness. As noted in the previous chapter, there is little scholarship expressly covering purpose-oriented interorganizational networks in the public sector. Given the unexplored nature of this area, this chapter is intended to provide background on the setting for my research, as well as the process by which I selected my sample. The chapter’s first half is devoted to the background and history of interagency working groups in general, as well as the GPRAMA-driven working groups in particular. The second half of the chapter details my case-selection methodology, through which I extracted a relatively homogeneous sample of purpose-oriented interorganizational networks for my study.

Part I. Background and History

Interagency Engagements: Types and Goals. Engagements across agency borders, *per se*, have occurred throughout the history of the United States. Elazar (1962) documented a study of collaboration at both the federal and the state government levels. O’Toole and Montjoy (1984)

detailed numerous cooperative arrangements for administering public programs. Hall and O'Toole (2000) compared public programs under two presidential administrations some 28 years apart and found similar degrees of interagency activity. There are numerous mechanisms that enable agencies to work together, but interagency activities generally fall into three categories (Yodsampa, 2013):

Coordination: Individual agencies maintain their autonomy and independence, but align certain resources, capabilities, strategies, and processes in support of shared goals. This happens quite a bit with the Department of State and the Department of Defense, who coined the term “interagency process” (Raach & Kass, 1995).

Collaboration: Individual agencies maintain their independence but voluntarily work together toward a shared goal, sharing resources and capabilities in pursuit of that specific goal (Yodsampa, 2013).⁴

Integration: Individual agencies merge certain elements together into a new entity for a specific purpose. For example, the inspectors general from 12 agencies worked jointly on a board designed to ensure transparency on American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) spending between 2009 and 2015 (Kamensky, 2017a).

The mechanisms for enabling interagency collaboration, coordination, or integration include the use of: (1) presidential assistants and advisors, in which designated appointees are focused specifically on issues of great magnitude; (2) national strategies and initiatives, which create broad frameworks for addressing issues; (3) designation of leadership, sometimes called a “lead agency” (GAO, 2012a, p. 5), in which one entity is accountable for an initiative, even if that entails efforts from other entities that have different statutory authorities; (4) designation of shared leadership, in which more than one governmental entity is responsible for an initiative, (5) geography-based offices and co-location, in which collaboration is encouraged through proximity; (6) positions and details, in which key individuals are designated

⁴ Yodsampa used the term “cross-boundary collaboration” to describe intergovernmental efforts, which occur among federal, state and local governments. Cross-boundary collaboration is beyond the scope of this study.

to collaborate with other agencies or departments, either through liaison positions or personnel details;⁵ (7) special interagency offices, which are set up to cover a policy area, but also require effort from other entities; (8) interagency agreements, which may transfer resources among two or more agencies or departments; (9) joint program efforts, in which budgets are managed by more than one agency, but the agencies work together on training, exercises, or policy development, (10) conferences and communities of practice, in which members of different organizations share common problems and solutions or develop consensus on items of mutual interest; and (11) permanent or *ad hoc* groups (GAO, 2012a) typically established by congressional mandate or executive order. The final mechanism for encouraging collaboration, permanent or *ad hoc* groups, can take the form of interagency task forces, councils, commissions, committees, or working groups. While interagency working groups are the primary focus of my study, there are a multitude of methods, as well as combinations of methods, for staffing the working groups. Personnel details and interagency agreements for the transfer of resources, for example, might be woven into the design of an interagency working group or added later on. Certainly, however, the integration of new members into the core group, once established, can affect the dynamics within interagency working groups.

Interagency Working Groups. Of the many mechanisms available for promoting interagency engagement, working groups have risen to prominence in recent years. A search of the *Federal Register* between 2011 and 2019 revealed some 123 artifacts mentioning interagency working groups. Of those, 20 were presidential documents (e.g., executive orders, proclamations, and memoranda) and the remainder were public notices of interagency working group activities.

⁵ A personnel detail occurs when an employee with specialized skills or knowledge is designated to perform specific tasks for another agency while remaining employed by his or her home agency (GAO, 2012a).

During recent administrations, executive orders were often used to formally establish interagency working groups. Between 2011 and 2016, nine groups were created to address topics such as gender equality, opportunities for minorities, and support for veterans of the military services. Between 2017 and 2019, under the Trump administration, four new interagency working groups were created and one from the Obama administration was officially disbanded.⁶ In addition to the 20 presidential documents, 103 public notices on various interagency working groups' public meetings, reports, proposed standards, and other activities appeared in the *Federal Register* between 2011 and 2019. The public notices communicated that interagency working groups were covering policy areas ranging from nanotechnology to Nazi war crimes, from aquaculture to artificial intelligence, and from faith-based partnerships to global change. Clearly, there is no lack of diversity in the world of interagency working groups.

When studying the phenomenon of interagency engagement, however, given the dozens of extant working groups with disparate goals, one challenge is to find several with similar goals, systems of governance, backgrounds, and resources. Help with this challenge came in the form of the GPRA Modernization Act (GPRAMA, 2010). Through GPRAMA, both statutory and administrative foundations were set for systematic, purposeful action toward cross-agency and cross-jurisdictional goals. GPRAMA mandated cross-agency collaboration on ambitious government-wide goals, known as cross-agency priority (CAP) goals. By investigating only the GPRAMA-driven interagency working groups focused on the CAP goals, I could extract a relatively homogeneous sample of the vast universe of interagency working groups throughout the federal government.

⁶ Under the Trump administration, the new groups were set up to review environmental laws, improve access to citizenship data, and empower certain minorities. The disbanded group had been assessing the social cost of greenhouse gases (an environmental concern).

Government-wide Goals. The CAP goals, and the working groups set up to support them, were aimed at rational, efficient, more business-like public administration. This notion can be traced back to Woodrow Wilson (1886), and was evident in the work of the Brownlow Commission in the 1930s, the Hoover Commissions of the 1940s and 1950s, the Grace Commission of the 1980s, and the Volcker Commission of the 1990s (Scheer, 2010). Over the past two decades, however, the need for inter-governmental coordination and management improvement has been brought into even sharper focus. The sharpened focus is due to the emergence of technologies that have expanded the capacity for communication and collaboration across organizations (Stephens & Wikstrom, 2007), as well as to certain events of national importance (e.g., post-9/11 emergency response exigencies).

Management Improvement: Pre-GPRAMA. Many of the management-improvement and coordination aspirations of the current CAP goals under GPRAMA can be traced back to the mid-1990s, when the Clinton administration advanced a set of initiatives collectively referred to as electronic government (E-Gov). The E-Gov initiatives attempted to use communications technology to more efficiently deliver public services. Organized by the flow of services (e.g., public-facing, internal-facing, or cross-cutting), the E-Gov initiatives are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Cross-Agency E-Gov Initiatives

Government-to-Citizen Initiatives

USA Service: personalize services in secure environment

EZ Tax Filing: file tax returns electronically

Online Access for Loans: find education loans

Recreation One Stop: find information on national and state parks

Eligibility Assistance Online: verify eligibility for federally funded programs

Government-to-Business Initiatives

Federal Asset Sales: purchase unneeded government property

Online Rulemaking Management: comment and monitor proposed regulations

Simplified and Unified Tax and Wage Reporting System: file wage forms electronically

Consolidated Health Informatics: access database of medical information

One Stop Business Compliance: ensure compliance with laws and regulations with e-filing

International Trade Process Streamlining: combine content from 20 sites to more efficiently convey export-import processes

Government-to-Government Initiatives

E-Vital: Access vital records to governmental agencies

E-Grants: Access federal grant services online

Disaster Assistance and Crisis Response: Coordinating private and public disaster preparedness, prevention and relief services

Geospatial Information One Stop: Making information available to national and state agencies

Safecom: Coordinating wireless projects programs for state and national agencies

Internal Effectiveness/Efficiency Initiatives

E-Training: centralize site for governmental training

Recruitment One Stop: improve the website advertising federal job openings

Enterprise Human Resources Integration: centralize information at the federal level

Integrated Acquisition Environment: consolidate functions common to different agencies

E-Records Management: regulate maintenance, storage and archival of federal records

E-Clearance: consolidate and centralize government officials' security clearance data

E-Payroll: merge 22 federal payroll systems in two partnerships

E-Travel: provide travel services online

Cross Cutting Initiatives

E-Authentication: verify the identity of users of government websites

Source: This table appeared in an archived article on the E-Government initiatives, available at <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/omb/egov/c-presidential.html>

Many of the E-Gov endeavors carried over to the George W. Bush administration. Rebranded the “Quicksilver Initiatives,” they were management-improvement and service-enhancement programs that attempted to achieve efficiencies through technology (OMB, 2002). The administration looked for ways to systemically improve operations (Shea & Werfel, 2019), such as reducing duplicative information systems and streamlining common business functions (e.g., travel and payroll authentication). Examples of multi-agency projects included Grants.gov, Benefits.gov, and Business.gov. Each project had an implementation team, along with an OMB sponsor and access to nominal funding (Kamensky, 2017a). Buoyed by communications technology, the Bush administration embraced networks for collaboration on these initiatives. Shown in the table below are the initiatives launched under the George W. Bush administration.

Table 3.2

Initiatives under the Bush Administration

Government-wide Initiatives

Strategic Management of Human Capital
Competitive Sourcing
Improved Financial Performance
Expanded Electronic Government
Budget and Performance Integration

Program-Level Initiatives

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
Privatization of Military Housing
Better Research and Development Investment Criteria
Student Aid Programs and Financial Management
Housing and Urban Development Management and Performance
Broadened Health Insurance Coverage through State Initiatives
A “Right-Sized” Overseas Presence
Reform of Food Aid Programs
Coordination of Veterans Affairs and Defense Programs and Systems

Source: This was extracted from The President's Management Agenda, Fiscal Year 2002, published by the U.S. Executive Office of the President, and is available at <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/omb/budget/fy2002/mgmt.pdf>.

In the early 2000s, some additional cross-agency efforts were undertaken in parallel to the Bush administration's management-improvement and programmatic priorities. The cross-agency approach was an outgrowth of factors such as the piecemeal development of certain federal programs, as well as the complexity of public needs that requires multiple agencies to contribute resources and expertise (GAO, 2000). At that time, one of the mechanisms for multi-agency collaboration was christened a "national strategy." National strategies are sets of initiatives that collectively provide structure for addressing issues that cut across levels of government, sectors, and even countries (GAO, 2012a), such as international crime control, national drug control, counterterrorism, and technology crimes (Kamensky, 2017a). Unfortunately, though, national strategies did not necessarily ensure programmatic success (GAO, 2003). In fact, a bipartisan task force cautioned against the temptation for such "grand national initiatives" (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2017, p. 3), affirming that the success of highly impactful programs is predicated upon market forces, Congressional endorsement, and leadership from an entity with adequate infrastructure.

By 2004, despite the efforts of multiple presidential administrations, using an array of mechanisms for interagency collaboration, GAO had noted ongoing problems with mission fragmentation and program overlap: "Interagency collaboration is needed to ensure that crosscutting programs are mutually reinforcing and efficiently implemented" (GAO, 2004b, p. 52). Notwithstanding these documented problems, no legislative action was taken at that time. Six years later, in 2010, Congress finally introduced bills aimed at a unified, government-wide approach to solving systemic problems (U.S. Congress, 2010).

Enacted in January 2011, GPRAMA enhanced the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA, 1993), which was put in place during the 1990s to help resolve performance and

management problems and drive more accountability for results (GAO, 2017). GPRAMA focused attention on crosscutting issues, mandating that OMB coordinate with agencies to develop outcome-oriented, management improvement goals for the entire federal government, known as cross-agency priority (CAP) goals. At least every four years, coincident with the second year of the presidential term, OMB was required to update the CAP goals. In the event of significant changes to the operating environment, OMB was empowered to adjust goals as needed, with appropriate notification of Congress.⁷ In addition to the CAP goals, GPRAMA required agency heads to set agency-level strategic goals every four years. The agency-level goals were appropriately called agency priority goals (APGs); they sometimes overlapped with the CAP goals.

GPRAMA also codified new roles, such as Chief Operating Officer (usually a deputy secretary within an agency), Performance Improvement Officer, and Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO). The statute also established the Performance Improvement Council (PIC), to be chaired and staffed by OMB, along with agency Performance Improvement Officers from more than 24 agencies (GAO, 2012b). By specifying these key roles and requirements, GPRAMA deployed tactics that were ostensibly as impactful as national strategies, but also mandated collaboration among OMB and executive branch agencies, jointly taking action to obtain results.

Management Improvement: Post-GPRAMA. The first set of CAP goals was published in February 2012 as part of the President's Budget for fiscal year 2013 (PB-13). Technically interim CAP goals, they were to be finalized within one year of initiation. There were 14 interim goals altogether: Nine addressed cross-cutting policy areas and five were directed at management improvement. GAO reviewed information from the PB-13 submission, along with the

⁷ The authority to adjust the CAP goals is codified at 31 U.S.C. § 1120(a).

accompanying performance plan, and noted that OMB did not involve all appropriate parties (GAO, 2012b). GAO also made efforts to identify all relevant agencies and programs with the potential to contribute to 10 of the 14 interim goals.⁸

During the summer of 2013, the Obama administration finalized the interim CAP goals, despite the fact that the OMB director had just been appointed and other key positions were vacant. The federal chief information officer (CIO) deputy director held brainstorming sessions with his colleagues and chose the first official set of CAP goals based on their potential impact, coupled with the political need to address certain policy areas (Kamensky, 2017a). In February 2014, as part of the President's Budget for fiscal year 2015 (PB-15), OMB announced these CAP goals for fiscal years 2014 through 2017. There were a total of 15: seven were aimed at cross-cutting policy areas, while eight were focused on improving management (OMB, 2014). At that time, the CAP goals were thematically organized around efficiency, effectiveness, economic growth, and people and culture. Five of the 15 goals were continuations of CAP goals from the interim period: Cybersecurity, Climate Change, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education, Strategic Sourcing and Open Data (GAO, 2014b).

Although the early goal setting was accomplished in a timely manner, the establishment of goals, *per se*, did not serve as a meaningful catalyst for action. Certainly, the impediments frequently faced by purpose-oriented interorganizational networks, such as accountability gaps and opportunity costs (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Moe, 1995), emerged within the groups formed to support the early CAP goals. Their struggles were manifested in problems with reporting and progress measures (GAO, 2014b; GAO, 2016c). In response to GAO's

⁸ OMB drew extensively from GAO's 2012 analysis, as evidenced by the quarterly reports issued during the early years of the CAP goals. These early reports also listed many of the relevant programs and agencies; however, as the goals matured and relevant programs changed, the staffing of the working groups also changed.

recommendation that OMB strengthen its reviews of the cross-agency goals (GAO, 2014b), OMB issued better guidance to the working groups, including templates for reporting and assistance with creating metrics and milestones to gauge progress. When GAO reported (2016) that OMB had improved CAP goal implementation, but needed to be more transparent about progress measures, OMB instituted regular progress reviews with its deputy director for management or its deputy director for budget, as appropriate, approximately three times per year. Additionally, progress is reported on Performance.gov and other public-facing performance dashboards.⁹

In addition to these changes, which addressed structural variables associated with network effectiveness, other aspects of these GPRAMA-driven interagency working groups needed attention. As networks grounded in a firmly bureaucratic world (Fountain, 2013), the groups also needed assistance with leadership, management and governance (Lemaire & Provan, 2017; Rethemeyer, 2007; Hjern & Porter, 1981), access to resources, both financial and human capital (Provan & Milward, 1995; Lynch, 1997), and the authority to act, in some cases.¹⁰ Each of these challenges is discussed in forthcoming paragraphs. In the event that an individual interagency working group had a markedly different experience with any of these attributes, I have noted that within the preliminary group assessments in the latter half of this chapter. For the most part, though, the interagency working groups had similar experiences, structures, and contexts for action, making them a relatively homogeneous sample.

⁹ Although Performance.gov was launched in 2012, soon after GPRAMA's enactment, its transparency and usability were critiqued in multiple reports (GAO, 2013; GAO, 2016b). As of 2018, the content on Performance.gov is more usable, with downloadable data on key performance indicators; however, all quarterly progress reports from work done prior to the Trump administration had been removed, so it is difficult to gauge continuity of progress in some cases. Other public dashboards are available on Data.gov and AcquisitionGateway.gsa.gov.

¹⁰ The network effectiveness literature often categorizes these aspects of group experience under governance/microdynamics and context/microfoundations (e.g., Tasselli, Kilduff & Menges, 2015).

Leadership. Soon after GPRAMA's enactment, the CAP goal working groups were staffed and led by the Executive Office of the President (EOP) within OMB (GAO, 2012b). Agencies could volunteer individuals for the core working group, or agencies could serve as implementation champions, but non-OMB agencies could not lead the groups. The leadership model for CAP goal working groups changed in 2015, when the working groups shifted to a model in which OMB staff and senior agency personnel served side by side as goal co-leaders (GAO, 2016c, p. 6). This approach approximated the George W. Bush administration's "lead agency" or "managing partner" approach (Fountain, 2013) to cross-agency efforts. Interestingly, for the Smarter IT Delivery and the Insider Threat goals, there were more than two co-leaders (Kamensky, 2017a). The multi-leader approach was viewed as useful, since multiple leaders could connect to more stakeholder networks and could more effectively encourage action. In 2015, for instance, the co-leaders from the Smarter IT Delivery goal came from the EOP, the U.S. Digital Service, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. By combining agency expertise with the EOP's convening authority, it was hoped that the multi-leader approach would increase the likelihood of the interagency working groups' success.

The extent of leadership engagement varied significantly across working groups, though. Variations in leadership engagement were attributable to at least two factors: the extent of congruency (Lundin, 2007) between agency-level goals and CAP goals, and (2) the extent of congruency between a CAP goal and the personal or professional interests of a particular leader. As an example of congruency between cross-agency and agency-level goals, the Customer Service CAP goal aligned with the Social Security Administration (SSA)'s strategic plan, so the co-leader from SSA was highly engaged (Kamensky, 2017a). To exemplify a CAP goal aligning with a leader's interests, the Category Management CAP goal was energized by a professionally

invested leader (Kamensky, 2017a): Anne Rung, who headed the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) within OMB from 2014 to 2016, made great efforts to promote the success of Category Management, which initially targeted commercial products. Ms. Rung left OFPP in late 2016 to lead Amazon’s public-sector sales division, where she helps connect agencies with commercial products. Similarly, David Mader, who served from 2014 to 2017 as controller of the Office of Federal Financial Management OMB, championed the Shared Services CAP goal, encouraging federal agencies to centralize their mission-support functions. In January 2017, Mr. Mader took a chief strategy officer position with Deloitte Consulting LLP, where consulting on shared services represents a significant part of its portfolio.¹¹

Management and Governance. While OMB established an overarching governance framework and processes for the working groups, most of the meaningful action occurred within the groups themselves. The working groups adopted some of the pre-existing governance mechanisms (e.g., steering committees, councils) that had been created under other relevant programs during prior administrations. Interestingly, though, not many White House-chartered executive councils (e.g., the Chief Human Capital Officers’ Council and the Chief Information Officers’ Council) were actively involved. Staff from the executive councils noted that they were usually accorded more credibility when developing policy than when leading implementation. OMB staff seemed to be more successful with implementation than policy making (Kamensky, 2017a). From a day-to-day management perspective, to encourage progress via collaboration and knowledge learning, some of the interagency working groups had full-time program management offices (PMOs). These are closely akin to network administrative offices (NAOs) discussed by

¹¹ In fact, shared services are tagged as a way to achieve “orchestrated harmony,” according to Deloitte’s web site (see <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/operations/solutions/about-our-shared-services-practice.html>).

Provan and Kenis (2008). Early adopters of the PMO model included the working groups on Infrastructure Permitting, Veterans' Mental Health, and Insider Threat. A few years later, the Category Management group followed by establishing a PMO within the General Services Administration (GSA).

Authority to Act. To gain traction, issues needed to be grounded in formal authority, such as statutes or executive orders, to legitimize them sufficiently for agencies to participate. For every one of the CAP goals, there was general pre-existing authority in the form of executive orders or presidential memoranda. Additionally, in several of the cases, new specific authorities emerged after the interagency working groups were underway.

Financial and Human Resources. It took several years for the interagency working groups to obtain the resources necessary to build capacity and effectively pursue the CAP goals. For most of the goals, funding was not available until the spring of 2016, when OMB provided \$15 million from the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 to support CAP goal initiatives (GAO, 2016c). While there were some disparities in funding levels for the various groups, the differences were consistent with the nature of the specific goals, as will be discussed in the second part of this chapter. The amounts allocated ranged from \$4.75 million for the Infrastructure Permitting goal, which involved commercial real estate across the country and extensive travel requirements, to \$250,000 for Category Management, which initially entailed staff time and technology to support outreach and communication among agencies.

Table 3.3*Allocation of Transfer Authority for Cross-Agency Priority Goals*

<u>Cross Agency Priority Goal</u>	<u>(FY16\$)</u>
Infrastructure Permitting	\$4,750,000
Customer Service	\$2,500,000
Lab-to-Market	\$1,900,000
Job-Creating Investment	\$1,300,000
Crosscutting CAP Goal Support	\$940,000
People and Culture	\$860,000
Veterans' Mental Health	\$750,000
Climate Change	\$600,000
STEM Education	\$600,000
Shared Services	\$550,000
Category Management	<u>\$250,000</u>
Total Transfer Authority	\$15,000,000

Source: Office of Management and Budget (reprinted in GAO, 2016c)

In addition to the financial resources, some talented collaborators were made available through a system of personnel details to OMB. Some of these details were orchestrated by the White House Leadership Development Program (WHLDP), launched through GSA as part of an SES reform effort (GAO, 2016c). By late 2015, some of these competitively selected WHLDP fellows were seated in the White House complex, commencing one-year details to provide additional leadership and coordination in support of the existing CAP goals. Both these and subsequent WHLDP fellows have continued to support the CAP goal working groups, performing roles such as project management, meeting facilitation, and metrics tracking and development. Having full-time, dedicated personnel provided additional stability to the working groups, enabling more progress than had been accomplished previously (Kamensky, 2017a). In addition, the Fellows helped to guide interagency conversations, keeping the groups focused on the big picture (personal communication, J. Mattingley, September 26, 2019). Maintaining group

momentum was challenging for many of the reasons common to all purpose-oriented networks, according to Mattingley, but the Fellows program was structured to minimize conflicts over authority and accountability.

Progress. Each working group is required to report progress via quarterly reports and key performance indicator (KPI) metrics on Performance.gov, a public portal. Performance.gov includes only the reports issued since 2018, making it difficult to track the progress of the CAP goals. According to GAO analyst Peter Buck (personal communication, July 8, 2019), there was no “tidy hand-off” from the Obama to the Trump administration in January 2017. OMB was reluctant to declare success or victory at that point; there was limited evidence or even assertions that particular subgoals or initiatives had been achieved, given the very long-term nature of many of the CAP goals, according to GAO analyst Sarah Veale (personal communication, July 8, 2019). To bridge the gap between efforts under the two administrations, I relied upon other secondary data sources, as detailed in the second section of this chapter.

As noted previously, the GPRAMA-driven working groups shared very similar attributes. For example, all transitioned from a model in which the OMB drove the activity (GAO, 2012b) to one in which agency experts were co-leading the charge (GAO, 2017). Their individual members were similar: they were federal employees, predominantly senior executive service (SES) or general schedule (GS)-15 level, but a few were high-potential employees at the full-performance level¹² within their respective agencies. The working groups had similar timelines for deliverables, as well as equivalent quarterly reporting requirements. Given their relative

¹² “Full performance level,” within the federal civil service, denotes that employees have ascended to the highest grade possible for their positions. “Full performance level” varies with the employee’s duties and sphere of influence. For example, a line manager within a field activity may be a GS-13, while a line manager at a headquarters activity may be a GS-15.

homogeneity, I chose to start with all of the interagency working groups formed to support the CAP goals, and to extract a sample of four of these groups for intensive study.

To completely understand the research setting, I first took inventory of all CAP goals that have existed since GPRAMA was signed into law in January 2011 and obtained a sense of their history. Certainly, even before there were CAP goals, there were closely related initiatives under the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, as depicted in Table 3.4 (below). The first GPRAMA-driven CAP goals were established during the Obama administration; the second, under the Trump administration.¹³

Table 3.4

Comparison of CAP Goals across Administrations

Clinton / Bush Initiatives (1993-2009)	Interim / Final Goals (2013, 2014-2017) ¹⁴	Goals (2018-2021)
STEM Education	STEM Education	
Veterans Affairs and Defense Programs and Systems (Bush)	Veteran Career Readiness / Service Members' and Veterans' Mental Health	
Safecom (Clinton)	Broadband	
	Job Training / Job-Creating Investment	
Better Research and Development Investment Criteria (Bush)		Lab-to-Market
International Trade Process Streamlining (Clinton)	Exports	

¹³ Pursuant to GPRAMA, the CAP goals must be revisited every four years; this cycle corresponds roughly with presidential terms (GAO, 2017).

¹⁴ A sixteenth CAP goal was added during the last quarter of fiscal year 2016; it addressed recently adopted amendments to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This goal, however, was not continued under the Trump administration for FY 2018-2021 (Performance.gov).

One-Stop Business Compliance (Clinton)	Entrepreneurship and Small Business	
	Energy Efficiency / Sustainability / Climate Change	
	Infrastructure Permitting Modernization	Modernize Infrastructure Permitting
E-Clearance (Clinton)	Insider Threat and Security Clearance Reform	Security Clearance, Suitability, Credentialing
Improved Financial Performance / Elimination of Fraud and Error in Student Aid Programs (Bush)	Financial Management / Improper Payments	Getting Payments Right
Budget and Performance Integration (Bush)		Federal IT Spending Transparency
		Results-Oriented Accountability for Grants
	Benchmarking	Shifting From Low-Value to High-Value Work
E-Training, Recruitment One Stop, Enterprise Human Resources Integration (Clinton); Strategic Management of Human Capital (Bush)	Human Capital / People and Culture	People - Workforce for the 21st Century
	IT Management / Data Center Consolidation / Smarter IT Delivery	IT Modernization (includes Cybersecurity)
E-Authentication (Clinton)	Cybersecurity	
Privatization of Military Housing (Bush)	Real Property Management	
USA Service, EZ Tax Filing, Online Access for Loans, Recreation One Stop, Eligibility Assistance Online (Clinton); Expanded Electronic Government (Bush)	Customer Service	Improving Customer Experience

Integrated Award Environment (Clinton); Competitive Sourcing (Bush)	Strategic Sourcing / Category Management	Category Management
		Major Acquisitions
Geospatial Information One Stop, Health Informatics (Clinton)		
	Open Data	Data as a Strategic Asset
E-Payroll, E-Travel, E-Records Management (Clinton)	Shared Services	Sharing Quality Services

The Groups that Got Away. As illustrated above, some of the CAP goals have endured across two starkly different presidential administrations (Balutis, 2019). However, other CAP goals have experienced shifts in priorities, and still others have completely disappeared. For example, for many decades, there have been government-wide initiatives or goals in support of the veterans of the U.S. armed forces. Under GPRAMA, there was a veteran-oriented CAP goal that grew markedly – from helping veterans transition to civilian careers (2013), to helping veterans access mental health services (early 2014), to carrying out some 19 executive actions (late 2014). According to one of the WHLDP Fellows, who created strategy and coordinated the interagency working group supporting veterans, these actions were prompted by a wave of executive orders (Kamensky, 2017a) issued during the Bush and Obama administrations. There was immense interagency activity throughout 2015 and 2016, with three cabinet-level agencies involved.¹⁵ By January 2017, the working group leaders believed that the incoming Trump administration would endorse continuation of their work in support of the veterans. However, three weeks into the new administration, the Fellow was invited to the EOP offices for a close-out meeting. “You’re not rostered at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building as a permanent

¹⁵ The agencies were the HHS, the DoD, and the VA. The group was led by the Executive Office of the President.

career federal employee. Anyone not rostered is subject to being kicked out, and you're one of them," the Fellow recounted the prelude to surrendering both the White House badge and the blue badge for access to the West Wing. The Veterans' Mental Health goal was removed from the roster of CAP goals in 2018.

Similarly, the Climate Change CAP goal grew in scope between early 2014 and 2015, when a new executive order set ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets. According to an EOP employee, in January 2017, the WHLDP Fellows dedicated to the Climate Change working group had to be quickly rehoused and change projects: "They were not going to be working on climate change," the employee flatly stated, alluding to political realities. Early in the Trump administration, as mentioned previously, a different (non-GPRAMA) working group that had been studying the social cost of greenhouse gases was disbanded, and the executive orders that reflected sustainability concerns were rescinded. Not surprisingly, the Climate Change CAP goal was also formally abandoned in 2018.

Other CAP goals that disappeared under the Trump administration, as denoted by the grayed-out spaces in Table 3.4, include those focused on STEM education, broadband, exports, small business matters, and real property management. Some have been deemed no longer of vast national importance. "With the economy improving and the prospect of bipartisan action on government reform" (Balutis, 2019, p. 2), both government leaders and scholars believed that progress could be made on such "drivers of transformation" (Performance.gov, 2019) as IT and personnel modernization, acquisition reform, and management. Some former CAP goals have been folded into agency-level priority goals (APGs); others have been incorporated into ongoing CAP goals. For example, the erstwhile Exports CAP goal is currently part of an APG at the

Department of Commerce on removing trade barriers. Cybersecurity, formerly a CAP goal in its own right, is now a subgoal within the Information Technology (IT) Modernization CAP goal.

Part II. Case Selection: Extracting the Sample

Case Selection. To study potential differences in the motivations or allegiances of the individual members of interagency working groups, I needed to identify four relatively similar groups, while also neutralizing possible political influences within the groups. Accordingly, I began with the 14 groups that have been in existence during the Trump administration (January 2017 and beyond): Lab-to-Market, Major Acquisitions, Credentialing, Sharing Services, Grants, Getting Payments Right, Infrastructure Permitting, Data, IT Spending Transparency, IT Modernization, Category Management, Customer Experience, Workforce, and Shifting from Low-Value to High-Value Work. From those 14, to further assure relative homogeneity among the candidate groups, I checked each group's composition against the definition of "purpose-oriented interorganizational network" to be operationalized for this study (see Chapter 1). Essentially, to fit the definition, each of the interagency working groups must consist of three or more relatively equal organizations, in terms of power and influence. Since the decision-making authority associated with CAP goals is vested in the groups' leaders and key staff (GAO, 2016c), I culled the names and agency affiliations of those individuals from the interagency working groups' quarterly reports on Performance.gov, as of June 2019.

By mapping the agency affiliations of these named principals, I discerned that some groups had fewer than three agencies in decision-making roles. In fact, two groups were powered by only two entities – OMB and its implementation partner, GSA. Five groups were led by OMB plus only one other agency. Although I could find no documentation of why so few agencies

were involved in the decision making of these working groups, Kamensky’s coverage (2017a) of group formation during the Obama administration noted that OMB faced extraordinary pressure to establish and initially staff the CAP goals; it is likely that the Trump transition team took a slower, more deliberate approach to selecting and staffing goals when that opportunity arose in 2018¹⁶. For the six teams that did meet my operational definition of “purpose-oriented interorganizational network” (that is, the teams that involved three or more agencies in decision making roles), it appears that key OMB career staff remained in place through the transition, thereby providing somewhat of a buffer from external shocks (Carboni & Milward, 2012), as well as stability (Provan & Milward, 1995) to those groups. Shown below are all 14 of the current CAP goals, along with the number of agencies involved and my determinations on whether to consider each interagency working group for this study.

Table 3.5

CAP Goals and Agencies Providing Key Staff (source: Performance.gov, June 2019)

Name of Goal	Number of Agencies	Names of Agencies	Active in January 2017?	Candidate for Study?
Lab-to-Market	2	Commerce, OSTP	No	No
Major Acquisitions	2	Commerce, OMB	No	No
Sharing Services	2	OMB, GSA	Yes	No
Grants	2	OMB, HHS ¹⁷	No	No

¹⁶ The notion that CAP goal implementation was slow and deliberate under the Trump administration was reinforced by the interviews I conducted later in my study.

¹⁷ For the CAP goal “Results-Oriented Accountability for Grants,” as of September 2019, there were five named agencies involved: the National Science Foundation, HHS, the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, and OMB. However, at the time I culled the data on the leaders and key staff for each goal, the most recent report for the Grants CAP goal (September 2018) listed only two agency members: OMB and HHS.

Infrastructure Permitting	2	GSA, OMB	Yes	No
IT Spending Transparency	2	OMB/GSA, ¹⁸ Education	No	No
Low-Value to High-Value Work	2	OMB, HUD	Yes	No
Getting Payments Right ¹⁹	4	Labor, Treasury, OMB, HHS	No	No
Credentialing	3	OPM, ODNI, DoD	Yes	Yes
IT Modernization	4	OMB, GSA, DHS, USDA	Yes	Yes
Open Data	3	Commerce, SBA, OMB	Yes	Yes
Category Management	5	DoD, GSA, OMB, VA, DHS	Yes	Yes
Customer Experience	3	OMB, GSA, VA	Yes	Yes
Workforce	9	OMB, OPM, DoD, Treasury, HHS, DUD, DHS, NSF, Interior	Yes	Yes

After excluding eight of the 14 groups based on their too-narrow composition, I was left with six purpose-oriented interorganizational networks as candidates for my study: Customer Experience, Credentialing, Workforce, Data, IT Modernization, and Category Management. My next step, in the effort to ensure that the groups were comparable in terms of goal complexity,

¹⁸ OMB and GSA are considered a uniform voice in this case, as GSA is OMB's *de facto* implementation arm, and the OMB and GSA representatives had identical functions and would thus have very similar perspectives.

¹⁹ Although Financial Management/Improper Payments was one of the initial CAP goals, it did not become one of the final CAP goals under the Obama administration, so was not in existence in 2017.

was to gauge the potential impact of each group. This task was straightforward, as the authors of GPRAMA had provided a framework, which is codified in subparagraph (a)(1) of 31 U.S. Code §1120, which states that the government-wide priority goals must include:

- “(A) outcome-oriented goals covering a limited number of crosscutting policy areas; and
- (B) goals for management improvements...including—
 - (i) financial management;
 - (ii) human capital management;
 - (iii) information technology management;
 - (iv) procurement and acquisition management; and
 - (v) real property management.”

In practice, the management-improvement goals required under 31 U.S. Code §1120 (a)(1)(B) were called “management goals” (OMB, 2017, p. 2) or “mission-support” goals (Fountain, 2013b, p. 31) during the Obama administration. The cross-cutting policy-area goals required under 31 U.S. Code §1120 (a)(1)(A) were called “mission-oriented goals” (Fountain, p. 31) under the Obama administration. Under the Trump administration, however, the CAP goals were stratified into four categories, which were not obviously aligned with the statutory language: mission priority area, functional priority area, cross-cutting, and key drivers of transformation (Performance.gov, 2019).

To gauge the possible impact for each goal, I overlaid the Trump-era categories onto GPRAMA’s framework. The mission-oriented or mission priority area goals were narrower in scope, while the management-improvement goals (framed as key drivers of transformation, functional priority areas, or cross-cutting) were generally broader and potentially more impactful. Shown in Table 3.6 (below) are the candidate CAP goals, along with their categorizations, as either codified in statute or operationalized by the respective administration. As shown below, five of the six candidate goals were among those considered to be broadly and

highly impactful. The Credentialing CAP goal was the only goal to fall into a narrower, less-impactful category.

Table 3.6

CAP Goals and Impact Ratings

Name of Goal	Goal Category (2014-2017)	Goal Category (2018-2021)	Level of Impact
Credentialing	Mission	Mission	Narrow/Lower
IT Modernization	Management	Key Driver	Broad/Higher
Open Data	Management	Key Driver	Broad/Higher
Category Management	Management	Functional	Broad/ Higher
Customer Experience	Management	Cross-Cutting	Broad/ Higher
Workforce	Management	Key Driver	Broad/ Higher

Despite the fact that the Credentialing goal arose from such dramatically negative circumstances as the 2011 WikiLeaks incident and the 2013 Navy Yard shootings, Credentialing affected a relatively small segment of the American population – that is, certain federal employees who need thorough background investigations before they can perform their duties. In 2015, the Credentialing working group shifted its focus to cybersecurity after the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) data breach was made public. At that point, they focused on developing processes to support a trusted federal workforce, while partnering with “insider threat” programs designed to identify, deter, and mitigate problems that could impact the workforce or national security (Performance.gov, 2018). Credentialing, while important, was more targeted and not as broadly impactful as the other five CAP goals, which involved government-wide reforms to address “root cause” challenges (Weichert, 2019, p. iv), such as

workforce investment, technology modernization, data availability and customer service that bolster the success of any organization including the federal government.

Preliminary Assessments of Effectiveness. With the five remaining candidate working groups, all of which had a systemic government-wide focus, I endeavored to assess their effectiveness. There were no public-domain reports to aid in differentiating among the groups on two of the levels identified by Provan and Milward (2001): the whole-network level and the member level. All of the PRAMA-driven interagency working groups have been described as effective conduits of public-to-public collaboration (Kamensky, 2017a). Their interactions have provided a means of dispersing the natural tensions between OMB and other agencies, resulting in better mutual understanding (Fountain, 2013). Even at the target-community level, there is no single scorecard comparing progress across groups. Accordingly, I attempted to gain a balanced view by analyzing each group's key performance indicators (KPIs), as well as the quarterly status reports on Performance.gov (March 2018 through December 2019). I also culled background data from reports from the GAO, the Congressional Research Service, the National Academy for Public Administration, the IBM Center for Government, and Federal News Radio. In addition, I reviewed "Government Matters" webcasts, and interviewed subject matter experts from government, industry, the nonprofit sector, and investigative journalism.

The need for so many sources was driven by two factors: (1) the limitations inherent to self-reported data, and (2) the limitations inherent to GAO reporting. For the first factor, although the quarterly status reports on Performance.gov have a veneer of objectivity (templates and ongoing metrics), it is important to remember that OMB co-leads all of the working groups, and OMB publishes the reports on Performance.gov. Given the close relationship between OMB's leadership activities and the publicly presented performance data, threats to validity arise

from organizationally self-reported data. At the end of the Obama administration, for example, OMB published a wrap-up of CAP goal progress; this was largely a collection of success stories, with little attention given to subgoals that were abandoned or milestones not met. For the second limiting factor, GAO adheres to generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS), which view performance measurement as the ongoing monitoring and reporting of accomplishments, especially progress toward established goals (GAO, 2018b). In the case of the CAP goals, until 2018, most of the espoused goals and subgoals tended to be outputs, rather than outcome-oriented (Kamensky, 2017a). Most of them focused on outputs such as the policies issued or activities conducted (e.g., the number of meetings held, the number of people attending certain events). Because outcomes are a function of policy, action, and time, very few of the GAO reports could endeavor to address outcomes. For insight on outcomes, I turned to the subject matter experts described above.

For each of the five candidate groups, I gathered secondary data and generated preliminary assessments of effectiveness at the target-community level.²⁰ In the forthcoming sections of this chapter, each discussion begins with an overview and history of the CAP goal. By addressing historical goals and accomplishments, I could more capably produce a balanced assessment of each group's progress between 2017 and 2019, considering the base from which the assessed progress began, as many of the goals and working groups existed in some form well before 2017. In addition to this overview and history, I have summarized reports and insights culled from a variety of sources. At the end of the chapter, I have provided a cross-group comparison chart, showing the two interagency working groups for which evidence of

²⁰ In Chapters 5 and 6, details on the group members' perceived effectiveness are presented and compared to the external evaluators' views. These combined perspectives are used in my final assessments of effectiveness for the four selected interagency working groups.

effectiveness was available, along with two for which such evidence of effectiveness was not found.

People and Culture / Workforce for the 21st Century

Background. For decades, both politicians and the public have clamored for changes to the federal human resources system. The system is riddled with constraints – some statutory, some regulatory, and some cultural – to hiring and rewarding the best employees, removing the worst employees, and engaging employees at all levels. Dozens of studies and reports have been published, widely acknowledging systemic problems (Kettl, 2018), but there not been a major overhaul since the Civil Service Reform Act (1978). Moreover, legislative attempts to improve the workforce, such as changes to the job-classification system²¹ and the use of performance-based pay, have been derailed. Federal strategic human capital management has remained on GAO’s High Risk List since 2001.²² To address pervasive federal workforce issues, President Obama issued a memorandum on hiring in 2010 (EOP, 2010). Human Capital Management was also included among the interim CAP goals from PB-13 (GAO, 2014b); the goal name was later changed to People and Culture. Under the Trump administration, it was renamed Workforce for the 21st Century (hereinafter referred to as “Workforce”). Under both administrations, the overall intent was to create a framework for strategic human capital management in order to improve federal government services.

Governance and Management. Although vibrant communities of interest eventually grew around various aspects of the Workforce CAP goal, no interagency working group members

²¹ The federal job classification system is grounded in two statutes: the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (1978) and the Classification Act (1949).

²² GAO’s High Risk List spotlights government operations that are most vulnerable to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, or that are in need of transformation.

were initially dedicated to the effort full-time. Interestingly, although the group's scope overlapped with that of the Chief Human Capital Officers' (CHCO) Council, the CHCO Council served only as a "strategic partner" (Kamensky, 2017a, p.21) with nominal interaction with the working group. OMB and OPM jointly led the group, and a multitude of other agencies contributed key personnel (Performance.gov, 2018) to the effort.

Subgoals. As of January 2017, the Workforce group had been pursuing three subgoals, which included: (1) promote a culture of excellence and engagement, (2) improve recruiting efforts, and (3) enhance management efforts, starting with reforms to the Senior Executive Service (SES). By 2018, the subgoals had evolved to include reskilling, which involves looking within federal agencies for talent and retraining selected individuals for functions such as information technology (IT) development and support (J. Hyland, personal communication, September 17, 2019). The other two subgoals essentially continued two existing subgoals, which were reframed as strategic hiring and performance management/employee engagement (Balutis, 2019).

Progress: 2017 through 2019. As of 2017, for the subgoal on engagement and performance, the Workforce group had improved a website, UnlockTalent.gov, which provides data on some 13,000 work units across the country (up from approximately 300 units in 2012). It is unclear, though, how extensively agencies have used the data. Similarly, the group had promulgated expectations²³ to agencies on improving engagement, and had published guidance on rewarding strong contributors, but it is difficult to assess the outcomes of these actions, as the expectations were basic and the guidelines merely prescribed adherence to relevant laws and set

²³ These expectations were conveyed through a joint Memorandum from OMB and OPM, entitled "Strengthening Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance Memorandum," (December 2014).

forth procedures for workforce funding plans.²⁴ Thus, the high-level expectations will not likely impact existing practices at the agency level.

Between 2017 and 2019, the group conducted more research and analysis on relevant topics, such as leave and pay, historical reform efforts, and performance management. They enlisted the support of RAND Corporation for a study on poor performance. They provided additional templates and updated guidance to agencies and orchestrated several events.²⁵ To address the question of whether the more recent efforts led to improvements, the Workforce group adopted a single key performance indicator (KPI), the employee engagement index (EEI). Created in 2010, the EEI attempts to quantify employees' feelings about their leaders, their supervisors, and their work itself – all feelings that can influence engagement (OPM, 2019). The EEI reflects data drawn from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), which is administered each year. These FEVS data included federal employees' answers to questions²⁶ on performance feedback, training and development, performance ratings, performance recognition and rewards, collaborative management, job resources, work-life balance, and Merit System principles (OPM, 2016). The indices shown in Table 3.7 (below) reflect the percentages of respondents who selected “agree” or “strongly agree” in response to the associated questions, divided by the number of responses received (Performance.gov, 2019). According to OPM

²⁴ The guidance states: When granting awards for SES members, Senior-Level (SL) and Senior Professional and Scientific (ST) employees, as well as non-SES/SL/ST employees, agencies must continue to follow the requirements found in law and regulation (5 U.S.C. chapter 45 and 5 C.F.R. part 451). In addition, agencies may provide performance awards for SES members in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 5384 and 5 C.F.R. § 534.405.” Further, the procedures on workforce funds state that Agency Workforce Fund Plans will guide agency spending toward the strategic use of employee awards and recognition.

²⁵ The activities of the Workforce group are detailed on Performance.gov, available at <https://www.performance.gov/CAP/workforce/>

²⁶ OPM's approach to computing EEI scores, including the survey questions, appears on pages 25 and 26 of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Technical Report (2018). OPM's methodology for non-response adjustments is provided as Appendix E to that document, available at <https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2018/2018-technical-report.pdf>

(2019b), between 2012 and 2017, the government-wide EEI had risen 3.1 percent; between 2017 and 2019, the EEI rose another 1.5 percent.

Table 3.7

Employee Engagement Index Scores from Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey Data

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Governmentwide	65	64	63	64	65	67	68	68
Very Large Agencies	65	63	62	63	64	66	67	68
Large Agencies	67	66	66	67	68	69	69	70
Medium Agencies	66	65	65	67	69	71	71	71
Small Agencies	67	67	66	68	69	71	70	70
Very Small Agencies	66	64	67	65	71	72	69	69
Number of Observations						> 485,000 46%	598,003 41%	615,395 (43%)

Note: These data were produced by OPM (2019b), *Employee Engagement Index Results by Agency*, a collection of data reports, from <https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/data-reports/>.

For the subgoal on recruiting and hiring, long before GPRAMA, OPM had identified the existing hiring authorities and flexibilities and mapped processes for major agencies to improve their practices. In 2016, GAO catalogued some 105 different hiring authorities, but found that agencies used only about 20 of them, and those accounted for 91 percent of the hiring actions. In response, late in the Obama administration, the Workforce group launched a “Hiring Excellence” campaign to educate agencies and help them to improve hiring processes. In 2016, the Workforce group published a joint OPM-OMB memo mandating that agencies engage in “proven practices,” such as actively involving the hiring managers in the hiring process and ensuring that HR specialists had some knowledge about the positions being filled (OMB, 2017),

both of which are basic to the recruiting and hiring process. In 2017 through 2019, continuing efforts under this subgoal included more outreach and focus groups, more guidance and reports, and a memorandum on notifying applicants of their status during the hiring process.²⁷ To measure the effectiveness of these efforts, the Workforce group used a KPI that reflected federal employees' responses to two FEVS questions,²⁸ on hiring people with the right skills and one on satisfaction with recruiting and hiring. Overall, the percentage who responded positively (i.e., with "agree" or "strongly agree") to the right-skills question rose from 42 percent in 2018 to 44 percent in 2019. The percentage affirming satisfaction with recruiting and hiring remained at 46 percent for both years. Although modest progress has been made, the improvement efforts associated with the Workforce group's second subgoal remain a long-term challenge (Neal, 2019), even putting the national security at risk with respect to recruiting and hiring healthcare and cybersecurity professionals (GAO, 2019a).

For the subgoal targeted at improving leadership, by 2017, the Workforce group had convened a White House Advisory Group, which was set up to identify non-legislative solutions to address problems with the SES. The advisory group called for improving succession plans, streamlining the SES hiring and promotion processes, creating a formal onboarding program, increasing rotations of SES members among agencies as part of executive development, raising the bonus opportunity cap, and making adjustments to fix salary imbalances.²⁹ By 2017, OPM had developed baseline metrics to assess accountability, pay, awards and executive mobility; however, it is unclear whether these metrics are being collected and used (GAO, 2019a).

²⁷The memorandum was promulgated by the Executive Office of the President on May 11, 2010, and is entitled "Improving the Federal Recruitment and Hiring Process." 75 Fed. Reg. 27157.

²⁸ The two FEVS questions were "My work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills," and "I am satisfied with the quality of recruiting and hiring services."

²⁹ The White House Advisory Group's recommendations were reflected in Executive Order 13714 (December 15, 2015).

Finally, regarding the subgoal on reskilling, during 2018 and 2019, the group conducted planning and outreach, and launched the Career Compass Challenge to produce a prototype. However, there is little evidence from which to assess progress at this point.

General Assessment. Overall, while successful accomplishment of the Workforce goals could have a tremendously positive impact, there is little evidence that the Workforce group made substantive progress between 2017 and 2019. As detailed in Appendix G, neither the engagement/performance subgoal nor the recruiting and hiring subgoal appears to be on track. For the relatively new subgoal on reskilling, it is too early to assess progress. Overall, the artifacts of the Workforce group’s work showed little evidence of progress.

Customer Service / Customer Experience

Under GPRAMA, all federal agency performance plans are mandated to measure progress toward customer services goals, with metrics such as quality, friendliness, and satisfaction.³⁰ In 2014, Customer Service was designated a CAP goal. This goal is rooted in many of the E-Gov initiatives under the Clinton administration, ranging from mechanisms for online national park reservations to online tax filing to one-stop advice for small businesses. Under the George W. Bush administration, a similar government-wide goal was tagged Expanded Electronic Government (Fountain, 2013). In its current form, the CAP goal has been retitled “Customer Experience” (CX); it aspires to create a “modern, streamlined, and responsive customer experience across government³¹.”

³⁰ The metrics of friendliness, quality and satisfaction were listed on GAO’s Federal Customer Service Key Issues page, available at https://www.gao.gov/key_issues/federal_customer_service/issue_summary

³¹ The CX goal is articulated fully on Performance.gov, at <https://www.performance.gov/CAP/cx/>

Background. In 2011, President Obama issued Executive Order 13571 (2011), which mandated that agencies develop customer service plans. In response, individual agencies pursued an array of initiatives, but not in a coordinated fashion (GAO, 2014c). When GAO examined customer-service efforts that were underway (e.g., Customs and Border Patrol, U.S. Forestry Service, Federal Student Aid, National Park Service, and Veterans Benefits Administration), GAO concluded that customer service standards were not being met (GAO, 2014c).

Governance and Management. When CX was designated a CAP goal, the first co-leaders of the working group were from OMB and the Social Security Administration, one of the “high-impact service providers” (HISPs), in customer experience parlance (Dorris, 2019). The group identified some 16 HISPs (e.g., the Social Security Administration, the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) and brought them together to form the Core Federal Services Council, which was staffed by a White House Leadership Development Fellow. The council was disbanded in 2017, but OMB was subsequently provided with other resources to help manage the interagency effort (A. Boland, personal communication, 2019). In 2018, OMB amended Section 280 of Circular A-11, Managing Customer Experience and Improving Service Delivery, to provide guidance to agencies on strengthening their CX programs. Additionally, for example, CX teamed with the American Council for Technology and Industry Advisory Council (ACT-IAC), a non-profit partnership of public-sector and private-sector organizations, to develop tools, address common problems, and share solutions.

Subgoals. During the Obama administration, the CX working group set forth four subgoals: (1) improve the core federal programs that touch a significant number of citizens and businesses, (2) develop standards, practices and tools, which included a customer experience maturity assessment model, (3) create mechanisms for feedback and transparency, and (4) focus

on the front line, supporting those who serve the customers, and celebrating success. In tandem with the subgoal on core federal programs, many agency-specific initiatives had already begun, in response to the 2011 executive order. Under the third subgoal, the Feedback USA tool was incorporated into kiosks at passport processing centers, Social Security offices, Veterans' Affairs centers, and Citizenship and Immigration Services field offices. As part of the fourth subgoal, the Government Effectiveness Advanced Research (GEAR) Center, which administers the Gears of Government awards, was established.

Unfortunately, the group's numerous and varied activities had yielded few quantitative results by late 2016. The federal government had merited a score of 58 on Forrester Research's Customer Experience (CX) Index (Konkel, 2016); this is well below industry's average score of 70 on the same annual survey, which is administered to more than 122,000 adults. Of more than 300 services rated, the very lowest-ranked service was Healthcare.gov. Also near the bottom were OPM's USAJobs.gov, as well as the public-facing services of the Departments of Education and Veterans Affairs (VA), the Transportation Security Administration within the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Medicaid, and the Small Business Administration. It is likely that these metrics focused attention on improving digital services, which became one of the subgoals (called "strategies" in quarterly reports) for the CX group during the Trump administration. Additionally, several milestone-based tasks were transferred from the CX goal to the Shared Services CAP goal, and the Gears of Government awards were severed from the fourth CX subgoal, taking away many activities and milestones, ostensibly to focus the group on more immediate results.

In 2018, the CX group set forth some new subgoals. One was to improve digital services; another broadly related one was to increase transparency to drive accountability. The CX group

also continued its work on improving the customer-service standards of HISPs. Under the HISP subgoal/strategy, the group articulated a supporting strategy on maintaining a customer focus;³² this later morphed into managing CX at the enterprise level.³³

Progress: 2017 through 2019. By 2017, the group had worked to improve customer interactions, develop tools and resources, and increase opportunities for customer feedback and transparency (OMB, 2017). They had convened gatherings of HISPs with the goal of developing plans and policy recommendations. They had worked with ACT-IAC to produce a customer experience playbook.

At the HISP level, there were mixed assessments. GAO (2020) reported that the IRS offered fewer customer-oriented services, such as online filing³⁴ and two-way communications, than some state governments and foreign governments. Another GAO study on IRS activities, specifically on tax appeals (2018), recommended that the IRS communicate more about the appeal process and its milestones. When assessing the DOT's outreach efforts on air-passenger rights, GAO (2019) noted that DOT had increased customer service ratings, but there were also more complaints; more transparency can sometimes lead to more questions and complaints. In its assessment of the SSA, GAO (2019) pointed out that, given that 80 million U.S. citizens were nearing retirement and would need more services, the SSA needed to modernize its customer service process. Moreover, GAO (2017, 2018) reported that while SSA offered more alternative

³² Maintaining customer focus, as a strategy, appears in the early 2018 quarterly reports, such as the one available at: https://www.performance.gov/CAP/action_plans/FY2018_Q1_Improving_Customer_Experience.pdf

³³ Managing customer experience, at the enterprise level, appears in the 2019 quarterly reports, such as the one available at: https://www.performance.gov/CAP/action_plans/june_2019_Improving_Customer_Experience.pdf

³⁴ The IRS's lagging online filing capability was attributed, in large part, to the agency's arrangement with FreeFile, which offered free services for some citizens, but in the long run, was more costly than beneficial to U.S. taxpayers.

service approaches, such as customer-service kiosks, SSA had no way of determining whether these approaches were working.

Overall for 2017 and 2018, the federal government’s score on Forrester’s CX Index rose only one point, to 59 (Parrish, 2018), although there were greater increases for certain federal programs and services. Somewhat in contrast, the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score for federal government showed modest decreases. The ACSI model, which is based on interviews with more than 2500 users, contains measures for four drivers of citizen satisfaction: timeliness and ease of processes, professionalism and courtesy, perceptions of website quality, and the quality of information provided. The ACSI scores for federal government were 69.7 in 2017, 68.9 in 2018, and 68.1 in 2019 (University of Michigan, 2018; 2019).³⁵

General Assessment. Acknowledging the relatively stagnant scores from external surveys, the CX group has stressed that positive changes in survey scores will be a long-term outcome. As documented in Appendix I, the group’s subgoals have matured, becoming more focused over time, and portending better results in the future. As of December 2019, however, there was little evidence to support more than a moderate progress rating for the CX group.

Open Data / Data as a Strategic Asset

Each day, the quality of choices made by citizens is directly impacted by the availability of data. The Open Data CAP goal, later renamed Data as a Strategic Asset and hereinafter referred to as “the Data goal,” was created via PB-15 (GAO, 2014b). At that time, information on government resources, in general, was already abundant: the one-stop directory of all

³⁵ The American Customer Satisfaction Index data are available at <https://www.theacsi.org/news-and-resources/customer-satisfaction-reports/>

government websites, known as Firstgov.gov (GSA, 2000), which migrated to USA.gov, had been deployed more than a decade ago. However, specific agency-created data sets were not widely available. The Data goal reflected President Obama’s commitment to transparency (EOP, 2009). Maintaining that such openness would strengthen democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness (GAO, 2017), this CAP goal working group focused on unlocking data, while also engaging external stakeholders on the usefulness of government data.

Background. Before Data even became a CAP goal, efforts were underway, having been prompted by Executive Order 13642 (2013), its implementing directive (OMB, 2013) and related statutes.³⁶ The Federal Interagency Open Data Working Group was formed,³⁷ leveraging support from the Chief Information Officers (CIO) Council and representatives of each of the 24 Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Act (1990)³⁸ agencies, as well as some smaller agencies. The group was supported by a small staff within GSA; staff responsibilities included coordinating and standard-setting across the Data community, as well as managing Data.gov, a repository where agencies could register their data. Presidential Innovation Fellows were also assigned to help agencies share their data. Considering this group’s resources and visibility, it is hard to imagine better conditions for success. However, like most interagency working groups, the Data group’s early members grappled with common data definitions and data usage, which complicated efforts to

³⁶ Executive Order 13642, “Making Open and Machine Readable the New Default for Government Information,” was followed by OMB Memorandum M-13-13: “Open Data Policy - Managing Information as an Asset,” and years later the Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (2019). Other related statutes were the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (2014), which amended the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (2006), requiring OMB, the Department of the Treasury, and other federal agencies to establish data standards.

³⁷ Source: <https://digital.gov/communities/open-gov/>

³⁸ The CFO Act agencies include the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, HHS, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation, Treasury, the VA, and the Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Agency for International Development, GSA, OPM, the National Science Foundation, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Small Business Administration.

standardize data set attributes across agencies. Moreover, each agency had different systems and security policies (Fountain, 2013), so opening data across even virtual agency borders was initially difficult. Consistent with Lemaire and Provan (2017), differing agency cultures and technologies were present, and could stymie even the most progressive efforts at collaboration.

Governance/Management. When the Data goal became a CAP goal, the group's efforts transitioned to governance by the CAP goal co-leadership model; thus, the CIO Council was less actively involved (Kamensky, 2017a). Efforts were led by the federal CIO from OMB, the federal chief technology officer from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and the deputy secretary of the Department of Transportation. These actors convened regular meetings of the federal data community, with focused outreach to agencies, as well as public roundtables on privacy, data quality, and applied research data (OMB, 2017). Unlike most of the other CAP goal working groups, the Data group proactively engaged stakeholders (Kamensky, 2017a) that were external to government. By working outside of government boundaries, the Data group required even more vigilant management and governance.

Additionally, over time, the focus for the Open Data group evolved to strategically using the data. Some of that vision came from Nancy Potok, Ph.D., chief statistician of the U.S., who was appointed an Open Data co-leader in 2017. Dr. Potok had previously helped run the 2000 Census (Kamensky, personal communication, August 28, 2019), which gave her a strong practical grounding in data science, as well as large-scale project management. By the end of the Obama administration, OSTP had identified a variety of examples of practical data usage from both government and private-sector entrepreneurs. For example, the College Scorecard was created by the Department of Education to help citizens compare thousands of institutions of higher education, with statistics on student debt, federal loan-repayment rates, college-

completion rates and post-college earnings of alumni. The Census Bureau designed the Opportunity Project, which provides information about housing, schools, jobs, transportation, and quality of life in communities. As a private-sector example, Zillow.com leveraged federal census data, labor statistics, and housing data to generate estimates of home and rental values, enabling consumers to make more informed choices (OMB, 2017).

Progress 2017-2019: By January 2017, federal agencies had made nearly 200,000 datasets publicly available, and had begun to document their data sets in a common format, improving the likelihood of discoverability for researchers. Additionally, platforms were created to integrate federal government data with state and local government data, making better information available to citizens. Concurrently, public-private efforts (e.g., the Data Coalition) aimed at releasing data had commenced (OMB, 2017). Between 2017 and 2019, the Data group segued from opening and using the data to the next logical phase, long-term data governance. The Data group has one far-reaching espoused goal for 2018-2021, to be achieved through two parallel work streams: (1) developing principles, practices and action plans, and (2) the Data Incubator Project (GSA & OMB, 2019).

General Assessment. As of December 2019, the Data group had achieved every single milestone under these two work streams on time. Importantly, the group identified their target community early, and included a chart showing external organizations in all quarterly reports. As such, the group members were possibly motivated by this reminder of the potential impact of their work. Moreover, the group's activities appeared to be directly supportive of the ultimate goal of long-term, high-quality data management across government; the broad subgoals served as focusing strategies, and actions were always logically presented. The same format was used for all reports, and a timeline was updated every time, with the status of supporting actions

plotted on that timeline.³⁹ As such, progress was very easy to follow in the quarterly reports. To increase visibility and awareness even more, the project timeline was also published on Strategy.data.gov. In terms of both management and project execution, the Open Data working group stood out as a highly effective one. According to Kamensky (personal communication, August 28, 2019), the Data group also helped with passage of the Evidence-Based Policy Making Act, as well as establishing Chief Data Officer positions in agencies. Because the Data group has a well-documented record of meeting aggressive milestones (see Appendix J) and producing highly impactful artifacts, such as the Federal Data Strategy, the group merited a high preliminary effectiveness rating.

Smarter Information Technology (IT) / IT Modernization

Modernizing information technology (IT) within the federal government is hardly a new issue (Wennergren, 2019). As the backbone for nearly all 25 of the Clinton-era E-Gov initiatives, modernized IT was reflected in the E-Government Act of 2002 and the Expanded Electronic Government (Government Executive, 2003) initiatives under the George W. Bush administration. In 2010, just prior to the passage of GPRAMA, the federal chief information officer (CIO) unleashed an ambitious plan to reform federal IT management, to encompass cloud computing, better program management (more strongly linking IT acquisition and deployment), and rigorous analysis to identify duplicative investments across agencies and address underperforming IT investments. The initial roster of CAP goals included IT Management

³⁹ Unplanned events were documented, as well, but those were tracked separately from the planned activities that directly supported the subgoals.

(GAO, 2012b); it was later refreshed with a new name, Smarter IT Delivery. It was again renamed in 2018, this time to IT Modernization (hereinafter referred to as “the IT goal”).

Post-GPRAMA, before the IT goal was officially designated a CAP goal, OMB had embarked on the process of filling critical IT talent gaps, through setting up the U.S. Digital Service (USDS) and 18F, both within GSA. The USDS, a cadre of private-sector technical experts, performed temporary duty within the federal government to improve agencies’ citizen-facing services. 18F, on the other hand, stemmed from the Presidential Innovation Fellows program, in which federal employees who were also “forward-thinking technologists” (Balter, 2015) worked with agencies under one administrative umbrella. In 2013, the urgent need for change came into sharp focus with the troubled rollout of Healthcare.gov, a program of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): It was clear that the federal government lacked enough capable people and mature IT development processes (Kamensky, 2017a).

Governance and Management. In support of the IT goal, four individuals were designated to co-lead group efforts: There were two from OMB and USDS, one from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and one from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Entities such as the President’s Management Council (PMC) and the CIO Council were also involved periodically, but were not actively involved with the group (Kamensky, 2017a).

Subgoals. When the CAP goals were implemented in 2014, there were three subgoals under the IT goal: (1) attracting and retaining IT talent; (2) improve the federal IT acquisition process to entice quality vendors to work with agencies; and (3) create better business processes and practices, including data center consolidation, which aspired to save \$3 billion by closing at least 1,200 data centers by fiscal year 2015 (GAO, 2012b). In 2015, however, the working group began focusing on broader issues than they had envisioned (Kamensky, 2017a), particularly with

the advent of the Federal IT Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA, 2014), arguably the most significant IT legislation since the Clinger-Cohen Act (1996). FITARA expanded oversight of over \$90 billion in federal IT spending annually (GAO, 2019b), so implementation required effort from a multitude of entities. Despite all of these efforts, GAO (2016a) revealed that 75 percent of the federal IT budget was still going to the maintenance of outdated legacy systems,⁴⁰ and some 3,427 IT staff were employed just to maintain programming languages, such as COBOL and FORTRAN.

In 2018, the IT goal broadened to encompass the twin pillars of IT: modernization of systems and cybersecurity risk management (Chenok, 2019). Cybersecurity had previously been a CAP goal in its own right, endeavoring to “achieve 95 percent use of critical cybersecurity capabilities on federal executive branch information systems by 2014, including strong authentication, Trusted Internet Connections, and Continuous Monitoring” (GAO, 2012, p. 40). When cybersecurity was folded into the overall IT Modernization goal, the IT group was able to exploit the previous work of the cross-agency Chief Information Security Officers Council, as well as the Joint Cybersecurity Metrics Working Group (Kamensky, 2017b). The other twin pillar, systems modernization, included efforts to improve the IT workforce and enhance mission effectiveness, which involved data center consolidation, embracing cloud, and improving project delivery. In 2019, the mission-effectiveness efforts were reframed as “enhancing services,” with tasks aimed at removing barriers, accelerating adoption, improving delivery, and embracing new solutions (GSA & OMB, 2019)⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Some of these systems were over 50 years old, including the main IRS tax database and the nuclear missile launching system (GAO, 2016a).

⁴¹ The category of efforts tagged “enhancing services” was found in the 2019 quarterly reports, such as the one available at: https://www.performance.gov/CAP/action_plans/june_2019_IT_Modernization.pdf

Progress: 2017-2019. By the beginning of 2017, the IT group had advanced its process-improvement subgoal by publishing resources such as the Digital Services Playbook and the U.S. Web Design Standards. However, neither the IT workforce subgoal nor the procurement subgoal were portrayed as success stories in OMB’s 2017 end-of-administration summary. Regarding the data center initiative, GAO (2016) reported that more than 3,000 consolidations had occurred. This number of consolidations greatly exceeded the 1,200 data-center target set in 2012, but it is unclear whether the target was changed between 2012 and 2016. It is also unclear whether the cost-savings goals,⁴² which were reduced from \$3 billion (GAO, 2012b) to \$2.7 billion, were ever demonstrated (Performance.gov, 2019). Of the workforce-modernization tasks, only one was completed on time. Four had experienced schedule slips with no evidence of completion; one experienced a schedule slip but was completed. Two have milestones beyond the period of my study (FYs 2020 and 2021). Among the “enable modern, security computing solutions” tasks, five were completed on time: All involved OMB issuing policy updates. Three other tasks experienced mild schedule slips of one or two quarters, and one slipped an entire year (end of FY 2019), with no evidence of completion. Additionally, several tasks planned for completion in FY 2018 and early 2019 were apparently never finished: The working group merely stopped reporting on them.

In 2018, the IT working group was able to develop KPIs for the cybersecurity metrics (e.g., mobile device management, access control, and data protection), as well as the cloud-based email adoption metrics. These metrics were dynamic; they were monitored and reported every quarter. Ultimately, though, only one (mobile device management) of the 11 KPIs met its targets

⁴² A \$3 billion cost-savings goal, to be achieved by FY 2015, was espoused early in the history of the IT goal (GAO, 2012b), but later quarterly reports on Performance.gov conveyed a \$2.7 billion cost-savings goal. None of the quarterly reports, as of December 2019, took credit for having attained the goal.

even once. Also in 2018, the IT group launched several projects supported by the new Technology Modernization Fund (TMF),⁴³ with the goal of having 100 percent of project repayment schedules on track by the end of FY 2019. According to GAO (2020), the TMF-funded projects were significantly behind on their repayments, and were unlikely to catch up until 2025. Additionally, several tasks planned for completion in 2018 and 2019, such as project risk mitigation and enterprise information systems, were apparently never finished: the working group simply stopped reporting on them. From an overall IT Modernization standpoint, the most troublesome testimony (GAO, 2019b) addressed legacy systems: by 2019, some agencies were still using IT systems with obsolete hardware, outdated programming languages (e.g., COBOL), and security vulnerabilities. Of the 10 most critical systems, only seven had modernization plans; of those, only two had acceptable modernization plans. Between 2010 and 2019, agencies had implemented only 60 percent of GAO’s recommendations, which covered cybersecurity, data center consolidation, and management of software licenses.

General Assessment. According to David Wennergren (personal communication, September 26, 2019), who leads the ACT-IAC, a spectrum of solutions exists to achieve the benefits of IT modernization; there is much work yet to be done. The IT group has set forth standards, policies, and best practices, but such efforts do not automatically lead to success. “[A]gencies don’t need any more policies around cybersecurity and technology,” asserted Greg Touhill, OMB’s former chief information security officer. “The success measure is not the number of policies, but how well [they are executed]” (Federal News Radio, 2017). As reflected in the GAO reports cited above, as well as the quarterly reports on Performance.gov,⁴⁴ which are

⁴³ The Technology Modernization Fund was a working-capital fund that enabled agencies to replace legacy systems with newer, less expensive systems, despite irregularities with the federal budgeting cycle. This fund stemmed from the Modernizing Government Technology Act (2017).

⁴⁴ The quarterly reports are available at <https://www.performance.gov/CAP/it-mod/>.

summarized in Appendix F, IT modernization at the target community level has been modest at best. There is little evidence that IT workforce and the procurement subgoals are on track; and for the cybersecurity subgoal, only one of the KPIs has ever been met. Overall, the IT group has not demonstrated results that evidence effectiveness at the target-community level.

Strategic Sourcing / Category Management

Procurement of goods and services is among the “most revisited, reformed, and reviled” activities of government (Besselman, Arora & Larkey, 2000, p. 423), as it serves as a tangible illustration that tax dollars are being spent. When some \$400 billion of appropriated funds (GAO, 2017) are at stake, there is understandably much scrutiny. Not surprisingly, then, far-reaching public procurement initiatives existed long before Strategic Sourcing (later retitled “Category Management”) became a CAP goal. Under the George W. Bush administration, for instance, the Competitive Sourcing goal served the same purposes. Under Clinton, an initiative known as Integrated Acquisition Environment had similar aspirations; at that time, the focus was on using IT to integrate common acquisition functions across agencies. Overall, these goals and initiatives reflected ideals of procuring goods and services more efficiently and effectively, while fulfilling commitments to socioeconomic programs, such as ensuring opportunities for small businesses and entities in historically underutilized business (HUB) zones.

Background. Strategic Sourcing, an idea that migrated over from the private sector, involves a range of activities, such as centralizing procurement functions, categorizing goods and services, focusing on the total cost of ownership, and conveying policies. This concept emerged at OMB many years before it appeared among the interim CAP goals announced via PB-13. The Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI) program was set up in 2005 to encourage multi-agency sourcing of common goods and services, thereby reducing duplication of efforts. Because

procurement is typically decentralized within agencies, an early challenge was to get agencies to collect, aggregate, and analyze their procurement spending data. OMB created a cross-agency Strategic Sourcing Leadership Council (SSLC) to encourage agencies to move in that direction (Laurent, 2019). Despite OMB's efforts with FSSI, GAO (2013) reported that only about five percent of federal spending was then done through FSSI. Once Strategic Sourcing became a CAP goal, OMB established KPIs for fiscal years 2014 and 2015; these included cost savings, agency adoption, and small business utilization.

Midway through the Obama administration, the Strategic Sourcing goal evolved into Category Management, which is another idea borrowed from the private sector (particularly the retail industry) but refined by the United Kingdom for the public sector. Unfortunately, in the United States, the renaming of the CAP goal created the misperception that new goal was merely an extension of the old goal, and agencies were reluctant to comply (GAO, 2015). The Category Management working group used GSA's Acquisition Gateway, an online portal, to explicitly state that Strategic Sourcing was just one aspect of Category Management. Other aspects include defining clear spending strategies, premised upon market intelligence and strong technical knowledge, as well as managing supply chain risk (Laurent, 2019) – in other words, attending to the program-management side of procurement.

Governance and Management. This working group followed a highly structured approach, with efforts to ensure sustainability over time (Kamensky, 2017a). The group actively acknowledged the extent to which Category Management must align with agency goals in order for the initiative to be viable. In late 2014, the SSLC was reconstituted as the Category Management Leadership Council (CMLC), which included the largest-spending agencies (e.g., the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security and Energy, HHS, the VA, GSA and NASA).

Additionally, each of the CFO Act agencies designated individuals to coordinate with the CMLC. In concert with the interagency collaboration, there were multiple top-down directives on Category Management, which came in the form of OMB memoranda.⁴⁵

Subgoals. In 2012, the original CAP goal centered upon strategic sourcing to reduce the unit costs of certain products and services by at least 10 percent in 2013 and 2014 (GAO, 2012b). However, it was unclear at that time how agencies should measure savings to meet that target (Kamensky, 2017a). GAO found that agency officials were either confused or hesitant about calculating cost savings. Such reluctance to document savings is consistent with Bardach (1998, p. 175), who found that agencies have a general aversion to reporting anything that could result in resource reductions. The Category Management working group has since clarified guidance to agencies via the Acquisition Gateway and other communications. By 2018, the goal had matured, embracing both government-wide and agency-specific dimensions. It included the following subgoals: (1) save dollars and improve mission outcomes through best-in-class solutions for each category that offers best value for the government, and (2) evaluate the performance of these solutions regularly, and develop best practices for pricing, maintain small business utilization goals, and train the procurement workforce. The agency-specific strategies included annual goals to increase the use of best-in-class solutions and align spending to category management principles, while sharing data on prices paid, terms and conditions, and contractor performance across government (Performance.gov, 2019)⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ These OMB memoranda included “Transforming the Marketplace: Simplifying Federal Procurement to Improve Performance, Drive Innovation and Increase Savings” (Dec. 4, 2014); Category Management Policy 15-1: “Improving the Acquisition and Management of Common Information Technology: Laptops and Desktops” (Oct. 16, 2015); Category Management Policy 16-1: “Improving the Acquisition and Management of Common Information Technology: Software Licensing” (June 2, 2016); Category Management Policy 16-2: “Providing Comprehensive Identity Protection Services, Identity Monitoring, and Data Breach Response” (July 1, 2016); and others subsequently.

⁴⁶The agency-specific strategies are available at: <https://www.performance.gov/CAP/category-management/>

Progress: 2017-2019. According to Laurent (personal communication, 2019), agencies are beginning to change their buying behavior, which is a key step in implementing Category Management in its purest sense. As documented in Appendix H, which summarizes the quarterly reports and KPI metrics on Performance.gov as of December 2019, the government-wide targets for best-in-class contracting, cost avoidance, and small business utilization have been met or been exceeded. Additionally, most milestones have been achieved on time, and most unfinished tasks are on target for timely completion.

General Assessment. After many years of effort, the Category Management working group has been effective in meeting its goals and influencing more collective buying behavior across the federal government. Accordingly, I included it among the effective GPRAMA-driven working groups for my study.

Part III. Conclusion

Caveats and Complexities. It should be noted, relative to the information presented in this chapter, that the differences among groups were sometimes small and nuanced. The highly impactful CAP goals are broad, with interrelated elements and numerous subgoals and multiple strategies. Thus, from a policy perspective, some goals and initiatives would need to be considered jointly (GAO, 2018a), whether at CAP-to-APG or CAP-to-CAP levels. For example, Category Management overlaps with at least two other CAP goals: Shared Services and IT Modernization. Similarly, Customer Experience relies upon both IT Modernization and Workforce improvements. These overlapping CAP goals, as well as efforts springing from relatively new statutes and initiatives will be more effective if they complement each other, rather than operating independently and potentially duplicating effort, or worse, or even working at cross-purposes (GAO, 2018a).

Moreover, the APGs also overlap, sometimes prominently, with the CAP goals. For example, GSA has an APG on expanding its centralized service offerings, a goal that intersects with Shared Services, Category Management, and other CAP goals. Similarly, OPM has an APG on improving hiring processes, which is a major thrust of the Workforce CAP goal. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has an APG on data governance, which is a significant part of the Data CAP goal. Further, the Departments of State and Agriculture both have APGs on IT modernization, which is also a CAP goal. The Departments of Energy and Homeland Security both have cybersecurity APGs, the Department of Justice has an APG on combating cyber threats, and the Department of Education has a privacy/data security APG: all of these efforts align with the IT Modernization CAP goal. Thus, while the overall government-wide working group for IT Modernization may have been rated less than effective for the purposes of this study, there are likely successes at the agency level that were not covered in my analysis which aimed solely to identify candidate interagency working groups for further study.

Overall, upon considering the progress ratings with the impact ratings for each of the five candidate groups, I surmised that the evidence supported a neutral rating for the CX group. The KPIs for the CX group showed relatively stagnant metrics, and the group has adopted mature, focused project management for a relatively short time period. Two of the other candidate groups, Open Data and Category Management, evidenced relatively target-community effectiveness. The Category Management group has met its goals on schedule, and has succeeded in influencing the behavior of procurement officials across the federal government. The Data group successfully published the Federal Data Strategy, and has influenced important legislation. For the other two groups, IT Modernization and Workforce, I found only limited evidence of effectiveness. The IT group has made modest progress between 2017 and 2019, but

only one of its 11 KPIs has ever been met. The Workforce group, likewise, showed only modest progress, and neither of its long-standing subgoals appears to be on track. The below ratings reflect the aggregate views, both published and unpublished, discussed throughout this chapter.

Table 3.8

Goals and Overall Evidence of Effectiveness

Name of CAP Goal	Impact Rating	Evidence of Progress	Preliminary Rating
Data as a Strategic Asset	Broad/Higher	Strong	High
IT Modernization	Broad/Higher	Relatively weak	Low
Category Management	Broad/Higher	Strong	High
Customer Experience	Broad/Higher	Moderate	Neutral
Workforce	Broad/Higher	Relatively weak	Low

By selecting four groups from the 14 current GPRAMA-driven interagency working groups, with two preliminarily rated low based on relatively weak evidence of progress and two rated high, I hoped to make comparisons across groups to determine whether the allegiances of the individual members of both sets of groups differed in a meaningful way. To address my research question, which centers upon allegiances that may motivate individuals to collaborate constructively, I needed to obtain data from the members of both sets of groups. That effort is chronicled in Chapter 4, where I transition from case-selection methodology to case-analysis methodology.

Chapter 4

Methodology

This study leveraged a mixture of methods, combining quantitative with qualitative techniques, to explore the existence of relationships between the allegiances of the individual members of interagency working groups and the judged effectiveness of such groups. My quantitative technique included the administration of a survey; the survey was chosen for the collection of consistent data across several interagency working groups in order to determine whether any relationship exists. Moreover, although direct observation of interagency working group members' behaviors was not a viable option, the members themselves were seemingly accessible. My qualitative technique included semi-structured interviews, which endeavored to explore the drivers behind individual allegiances and the reasons for the perceived effectiveness of four interagency working groups.

Consistent with my mixed-method approach to data gathering, I exploited a variety of analytical methods. My research involved gauging group effectiveness at the three levels advanced by Provan and Milward (2001): (1) the target-community level, (2) the network or interagency working group level, and (3) the organizational or agency level. These judgments were based on the perceptions of the individual members themselves, as well as those of external evaluators (see Chapter 3). My research also explored three dimensions of the individual members' allegiances: (1) organizational allegiances (Hult & Walcott, 1990), (2) professional allegiances (Hecló, 1977; Freidson, 2001), and (3) relational or interpersonal allegiances (Bryson, et al., 2006). Thus, my study explored linkages between perceived group effectiveness at multiple levels and multiple dimensions of allegiances.

My research process was somewhat iterative. My data collection commenced with a survey instrument and continued with semi-structured interviews. The survey results informed the interviews, which in turn informed the survey data. At the heart of the process were the study participants, who often suggested additional sources of information. These sources provided more secondary data and artifacts, which augmented the secondary data I had identified and reviewed earlier in the study.

The first part of this chapter discusses my quantitative methods, which commenced with a survey of individual group members from four of the GPRAMA-driven groups identified for my strategic sample. This survey was designed to quantitatively identify the dimensions of the members' allegiances, as well as their judged effectiveness of their respective interagency working groups. These survey data were used as an explanatory launching point to evaluate my working hypotheses, to identify prospective interviewees, and to refine my interview guide. To interpret the survey data, I used descriptive statistics, primarily analyses of variation.

The second part of this chapter covers my qualitative methods – data-gathering efforts that culminated in semi-structured interviews that characterized the dimensions of allegiances and perceived effectiveness, exploring the reasons behind participants' effectiveness ratings and drivers of their allegiances. To interpret the interview data, I exploited a deliberate two-step process (Maxwell, 2005), which involved breaking down the data into discrete parts to detect emergent themes and subthemes, and then reconnecting these parts in a meaningful way to create a narrative capturing each group's experience, as well as possible connections between individual allegiances and perceived effectiveness. My quantitative findings appear as Chapter 5; my qualitative findings, as Chapter 6. All findings are brought together in Chapter 7, which also contains the implications of my study and suggestions for additional research.

Part I. Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

After selecting the subset of four interagency working groups for this study (Data, Workforce, Category Management, and IT Modernization), I had planned an introductory briefing with the OMB staff involved in orchestrating the efforts of the various interagency working groups in support of the CAP goals. Through this briefing, I hoped to gain a better understanding of OMB's process for selecting goal leaders and group members, as well as assistance with identifying individuals for the study. Despite multiple outreach efforts with key OMB staff members, my communications were not answered. Thus, I proceeded without the insights and introductions that could have been useful at this early stage,⁴⁷ relying instead on the background research and secondary data described in Chapter 3.

Quantitative Data Collection. To collect the quantitative data, I chose to administer a web-based questionnaire, as it allowed me to reach interagency working group members throughout the United States at a low cost and a relatively rapid speed. Moreover, I utilized Qualtrics to securely capture and retain the data. My survey questions were designed to measure the interagency working group members' perceptions of effectiveness, in tandem with the strengths of their various allegiances. The questionnaire, provided as Appendix D, had the following major sections: (1) background information on the individual, (2) leadership and structural questions, (3) effectiveness questions, (4) allegiance questions, and (5) an invitation for a follow-on interview. The responses to most questions employed either a seven-point scale (i.e., from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree") or a five-point scale (from "nearly every day" to "not at all") to quantify both the strength and the direction of allegiances and perceived effectiveness.

⁴⁷ *Note:* I was able to speak with several OMB employees later, during the qualitative data-gathering phase.

Background Questions. The survey included several questions on participants' roles and number of years in the interagency working group, as well as the nature of their service (political appointee or career civil servant), level of seniority (pre-professional through SES), and OPM job series. Respondents' educational levels were not deemed important, as there is little difference along educational-attainment lines. Although not all federal government positions require a specific level of educational attainment, most employees at the levels of seniority needed to serve on interagency working groups have a bachelor's degree at minimum.

Leadership and Structural Questions. Because leadership is an important subtopic within the context of allegiances and perceived effectiveness, I included three survey questions on leadership styles – directive leadership, technical contributor leadership, or facilitative leadership (Span, et al. 2011). There were also questions on whether the leader inspired the respondents, as well as whether the leader was someone whom they admired. Since admiration is assumed to raise motivation or inspiration, I compared the responses and analyzed the variation in the two scores. Bureaucratic structures are another interesting subtopic within the context of perceived effectiveness, so I included a question on the frequency of interagency working group meetings.

Effectiveness Questions. Given the complexity of effectiveness determinations, I leveraged the network effectiveness scales of Provan and Milward (2001) to elicit interagency working group members' perceptions of effectiveness from multiple angles. My survey included a question on the extent to which each group's efforts benefitted its target community (i.e., the population the group was attempting to serve). For the four cases chosen for this study, benefits to the community could include enhancing federal service delivery through better technology, a better-aligned federal workforce, greater access to data for decision making, and improved procurement practices, all the while maintaining or reducing costs. In addition, I included

questions on whether the network (i.e., the interagency working group) itself was effective enough to sustain the involvement of its individual and agency members.

Allegiance Questions. My questionnaire also included attitudinal and behavioral questions aimed at measuring the strength of members' allegiances (Braun, et al., 2013). These questions reflected the altruism scales of Podsakoff et al. (1990), as well as loyalty behaviors (Van Dyne, et al. 1995), compliance-oriented behaviors,⁴⁸ initiative-taking behaviors⁴⁹ (Moorman & Blakely, 1995), and "civic virtue" or relationship-maintenance behaviors (Organ, 1988). Many of these responses, which fall into the realm of organizational and project citizenship behavior, served as screening mechanisms to confirm that the respondents were, in fact, exhibiting good project citizenship behavior (Sydow & Braun, 2018). My broader purpose with respect to the survey, of course, was to understand what *motivates* these behaviors. Accordingly, my instrument was designed to elicit data on the direction of members' allegiances by offering choices that reflected either an organizational or professional-network orientation.

Recruiting survey participants. Through perusal of quarterly progress reports on Performance.gov and some pre-survey conversations with the authors of relevant GAO testimony and reports (GAO, 2012b; GAO, 2016a; GAO, 2016c; GAO, 2017b; GAO, 2018a; GAO, 2019b), I was able to identify 77 individuals who had served on the four selected interagency working groups since January 2017⁵⁰. By limiting my sample to individuals who had actually served on the working groups, I engaged in "purposeful sampling" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88), "criterion-based selection" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 69), or recruiting "privileged

⁴⁸ Examples of compliance behaviors include observing timelines, following instructions, respecting others' time, and using collaboration technology effectively.

⁴⁹ Examples of initiative-taking include making suggestions and encouraging others.

⁵⁰ None of the individuals from the four selected interagency working groups were involved with more than one group. However, for some of the smaller working groups, certain OMB employees concurrently held leadership positions on multiple CAP goals.

witnesses” (Weiss, 1994, p. 17). Such sampling decisions are appropriate when the specific information being sought is not available elsewhere. In addition, I limited the timeframe for service on the working groups to January 2017 through late 2019 (i.e., within a single presidential administration) in order to neutralize any political influence within the groups.

Fortified with a preliminary sample of individuals, I located their contact information via public-domain sources, including federal government event sites and LinkedIn.com, a professional networking site. I recorded the prospective participants’ email addresses, social media messaging mechanisms, agency affiliations, and working group assignments on a spreadsheet; this was also used to track our subsequent correspondence. My initial outreach began in June 2019, when I sent personalized survey invitations to all for whom I had email addresses and messaged those for whom I had only social media reference points. These invitational emails and messages contained a link to my study, which was available on the Qualtrics platform. However, I also asked the prospective participant for referrals to others whose names may not appear in public documents, in the event that the prospect was not involved in the day-to-day operations of the interagency working group. A generic copy of the recruitment emails and messages is provided as Appendix C. In accordance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines, my plan was to send no more than two follow-up reminder messages to each prospect. The informed consent form, presented in Appendix A, was incorporated as a preliminary question in the online survey.

Although I could offer no extrinsic rewards to participants, my invitations attempted to offer salience, convenience, and intrinsic rewards – all elements that help prospects to make informed consent decisions, while increasing their likelihood of response (Groves, et al., 2004; Goyder, 1987). In my communications, I clearly identified myself as a Ph.D. student, and

promoted my research as salient to all federal employees who wanted to improve the outcomes of interagency working groups. I also noted the brevity of the survey, which was tailored for administration both in stable and mobile office settings, and designed to take less than 10 minutes, on average, to complete. Finally, I offered participants the intrinsic reward of contributing to the scholarship in a highly practical area of governance.

The first wave of feedback came quickly; much of it was in the form of undeliverable email notifications. Of the initial 77 communications sent, only 47 appeared to have reached the intended prospects. The other 30 were intercepted by spam filters, by filters against external organizations, and by well-intentioned subordinates. However, a few helpful recipients indicated that, although they held decision-making authority regarding the efforts of their working groups, they were not at all involved in day-to-day collaboration. They provided me with 45 additional names and contact information for working-level group members. In turn, I invited the additional prospective participants to take my survey. These 45, coupled with the original 47, resulted in a 92-member sample.

Approximately two weeks later, because follow-up communications are believed to encourage participation (Andrews, Nonnecke & Preece, 2003, p. 192), I sent reminders to all of the prospects within the sample who had neither taken the survey nor opted out. A second wave of feedback came mostly in the form of: (a) non-response, (b) automated out-of-office email responses, and (c) “happy to help.” Additionally, there were three responses stating that the prospective participant had consulted with an Office of General Counsel, and that participation in such surveys was highly discouraged. The mere fact that these prospects had sought the advice of General Counsel demonstrates some agency allegiance, as they were seemingly concerned about violating agency policy, either real or perceived, on taking surveys.

In August 2019, after assessing the response rate and noticing an unbalanced representation of participants from the four groups, I rallied my own professional network for the purpose of identifying additional prospects from the underrepresented groups. My colleagues from other agencies supplied seven additional prospects. I invited those seven to take my survey; this brought my total sample size from 92 to 99. The same day, I sent a second (and final) follow-up message to all prospects from the original sample who had neither taken the survey nor opted out.

By the time I closed my survey in early September 2019, only 20 complete responses had been recorded in Qualtrics. One participant had responded twice, and one participant had claimed membership in an interagency working group that differed from the four selected for my study. Accordingly, I rendered those two responses unusable. My final response rate was 18.2 percent. Summarized below are the demographics associated with the usable responses, by the interagency working group name, as well as by the participants' OPM job series, the nature of their employment (permanent or political appointee), their level of seniority, and their roles in their interagency working groups.

While there is no widely accepted norm for response rates (Baruch & Holton, 2008), my 18.2 percent response rate was lower than expected. This may have stemmed from the fact that federal employees are routinely reminded to exercise good cybersecurity hygiene, and may be fearful of clicking on emailed hyperlinks from sources outside their organizations. Other reasons could be consistent with the findings of Fenton-O'Creevy (1996), who studied the response patterns of people with sufficient seniority to serve as organizational representatives. They found that senior-level employees tended to not participate in surveys, due to being overly busy, to not being clear on the benefits of survey participation, or to simply having policies against doing

surveys. Baruch (1999) studied response rates in articles published within the management and behavioral sciences disciplines, finding that response rates for studies such as mine, which involved organizational representatives, tended to be lower than those for studies of people in general: The *Journal of International Business Studies*, which published more articles involving senior managers as subjects, showed an average response rate of 32.19 percent with a standard deviation of 21.9. Response rates within one standard deviation from the mean (such as my 18.2 percent rate) were acceptable, based upon that journal's publication criteria.

Quantitative Data Analysis. Using the survey data downloaded from Qualtrics, I cleaned the data by redacting all personally identifying information, while also removing duplicative or incomplete entries. The spreadsheet containing the raw survey data is provided as Appendix K. Using these data, I created a model to calculate the allegiance scores, as well as the perceived effectiveness scores. Then, due to the small number of observations, I conducted simple analyses of variation between the perceived effectiveness of a particular interagency working group and individual members' organizational, professional or relational allegiances. Using the quantitative data, I also explored the questions of whether variation could be attributed to other variables, such as demographics, professional roles, group roles, and the leadership styles found in each of the four groups.

Measuring allegiance. As discussed in Chapter 3, individual motivations stem from multiple, interacting variables, such as trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), relationships (Bryson, et al., 2006), time spent together (Isett, et al, 2011), risk perception (Das & Kumar, 2011), shared goals (O'Toole, 2003), organizational allegiances (Hult & Walcott, 1990), and professional affiliation (Hecllo, 1977; Freidson, 2001). Accordingly, my approach to measuring allegiances in three dimensions was by necessity imprecise, but it was applied consistently to all individual

responses. Moreover, the measures were not intended to be absolutes; rather, they allowed me to make comparisons. Shown below are the survey questions, organized by the dimension of allegiance measured, along with the rating scheme or scale to be used.

Table 4.1

Questions on Allegiances

Question Number	Question	Rating Scale	Dimension Measured
9	I would describe myself in terms of my profession (e.g., attorney, engineer, financial analyst)	1 to 7	P
24	My work with this interagency group will advance my professional goals.	1 to 7	P
25	This interagency group has provided networking opportunities that could significantly influence my future.	1 to 7	P
10	I would describe myself in terms of my Federal position (e.g., DHS Director, OMB Analyst, etc.)	1 to 7	O
26	My agency's mission could be negatively impacted by the outcome of this interagency group.	1 to 7	O
27	My agency's mission could be enhanced by the outcome of this interagency group.	1 to 7	O
28	My agency goals have conflicted with those of the interagency group.	1 to 7	O
13	I've kept in touch with many of the interagency working group members, even after our projects are completed.	1 to 7	R

29	I've helped other group members when they've had heavy workloads.	1 to 5	R
30	I've offered advice to other group members when they've needed it.	1 to 5	R
31	I've tried to balance interests when there were disputes among group members	1 to 5	R
32	I've connected others to resources	1 to 5	R
38	Before this interagency working group formed, I previously worked with one or more of the other members.	1 to 5	R
39	Before this interagency working group formed, I previously worked with its leader.	1 to 5	R
41	I've been drawn to the work, to some extent, by the opportunity to work with certain people on the interagency working group.	1 to 7	R
42	I've been drawn to the work, to some extent, by the opportunity to work with the leader of this interagency working group.	1 to 7	R
43	I would rather... attend my agency's annual picnic or baseball outing, or attend a luncheon or social event sponsored by my professional society or trade association	1 1	O P
44	I would rather... work with my agency colleagues to draft standard operating procedures, or consult with outside colleagues on professional standards or certification requirements	1 1	O P
45	I would rather... visit a museum exhibit that features the history of my agency (or its predecessors), or visit a museum exhibit that provides more insight on the history of my profession or trade	1 1	O P

46	I would rather...		
	give recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget on ways the Executive Branch could improve processes, or	1	O
	give recommendations to my agency on ways to improve its processes	1	P
47	I would rather...		
	volunteer to coordinate a holiday gathering for my professional society/trade association, or	1	O
	volunteer to spread holiday cheer with my agency colleagues	1	P

Note: The dimensions to be measured were coded as follows: “P” denotes professional, “O” denotes organizational, and “R” denotes relational.

As conveyed above, the responses to the allegiance questions were scored in two different ways. First, for allegiance questions that solicited either/or choices, the answers were tallied as one point for the type of allegiance signaled. For example, on the question regarding volunteering for an agency-level vice a professional-society duty, one point was accorded to either the organization or professional dimension, depending on the response. Secondly, for the allegiance questions that brought forth responses on either a five-point or seven-point Likert scale, the answers were coded in terms of the ratio of each rating to the maximum-possible rating. For example, “agree” translated to 6 on a scale of 1 to 7, with the highest rating being “strongly agree” or 7, and the score was 6:7.

Although Likert scales are recognized as ordinal scales for which ratios and means are not a traditional analytical method, I used this method (which equates to ordinal approximation of a continuous variable), which allows for variables with five or more categories to be used as continuous variables, because no damage would result to the overall analysis (Johnson & Creech,

1983; Norman, 2010; Sullivan & Artino, 2013; Zumbo & Zimmerman, 1993). For the purposes of this mixed-method study, which attempted to measure human cognition *not only* in terms of Likert-scale responses, but also in terms of pairwise comparisons – and in terms of qualitative interview data – there was no real harm in treating the Likert-scale responses as ordinal approximations of continuous variables.

After quantifying the responses to each of the allegiance-oriented questions, I normalized the overall scores for each of the respondents. Because my survey allowed for a reasonable number of incomplete responses, a few respondents skipped a few of the allegiance questions. In order to normalize the scores, I summed all of the individual-question scores and divided by the number of questions answered. For instance, a group member who scored 4.29 on organizational allegiance and answered seven questions would receive an adjusted score of 0.61 for organizational allegiance.

Shown below are the formulas used for each of the dimensions of allegiance:

A_O = Organizational allegiance

$$A_O = [(Q_{10}/7 + Q_{26}/7 + Q_{27}/7 + Q_{28}/7) + A] / R$$

A = number of choices in paired comparisons suggesting allegiance to agency

N = number of questions for which responses were provided

A_P = Professional allegiance

$$A_P = [(Q_9/7 + Q_{24}/7 + Q_{25}/7) + P] / N$$

P = number of choices in paired comparisons suggesting allegiance to profession

N = number of questions for responses were provided

A_R = Relational allegiance

$$A_R = [(Q_{13}/7 + Q_{29}/5 + Q_{30}/5 + Q_{31}/5 + Q_{32}/5 + Q_{38}/5 + Q_{39}/5 + Q_{41}/7 + Q_{42}/7) / N$$

N = number of questions for which responses were provided

Measuring effectiveness. The effectiveness questions solicited opinions ranging from “extremely poorly” to “extremely well,” quantified on a seven-point Likert scale for all three levels of effectiveness. Following the rationale described above for the allegiance questions, I coded the answers to the effectiveness questions in terms of the ratio of each rating to the maximum-possible rating on the scale. For example, “very well” on a scale of 1 to 7, with the highest rating being “extremely well” or 7, translated to 6:7.

Allegiances and perceived effectiveness. To finish my quantitative analysis, I aggregated the three effectiveness scores and the three allegiance scores and grouped them by interagency working group. This comparison produced rudimentary measures of the relationships between each dimension of allegiance and perceived effectiveness. To check for other influences on allegiances and perceptions, I also grouped the scores by several demographic variables: These included the participants’ seniority levels, their OPM job series codes, the nature of their employment (appointee or career), and their roles on the interagency working groups. My analyses are presented in Chapter 5.

Part II. Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis.

Given the limitations of survey research, namely that the questionnaire by itself could not allow respondents to fully communicate their allegiances and their evaluations of interagency working group effectiveness, I engaged in qualitative research methods to complement the quantitative methods, yielding a richer, more realistic view of the survey results. Following Maxwell (2005, p. 82), qualitative methods have four components: (1) site and participant selection, (2) the research relationships established with participants, (3) the data collection, and (4) the data analysis. Each of these components is discussed below.

Site and participant selection. As noted in the last section of this chapter, while the response rate for the survey was relatively low, more than 60 percent of the survey participants indicated willingness to engage in a follow-up interview. As was the case during the quantitative portion of my study, I sought “privileged witnesses” (Weiss, 1994, p. 17) who had served on the four selected interagency working groups between January 2017 and late 2019, which was the same timeframe used for the quantitative survey. I recruited in hopes of balancing the participation of all four interagency working groups, particularly given the heavy representation of the Data group in the pool of survey participants, to adequately capture the diversity of interagency working group members and examine cases critical to exploring my research questions (Maxwell, 2005). In order to obtain a more representative sample, I connected with two directors of the White House Leadership Development Program, both of whom had placed some of their program fellows on assignments involving the interagency working groups supporting the CAP goals. The director of the cohort that served during the 2017 timeframe provided names of several individuals who had gained ample perspective to analyze the effectiveness of the working groups. In addition, I identified interviewees via former colleagues.

However, despite extensive recruiting, scheduling and rescheduling efforts, several prospective participants, even after they had committed to the interviews, either could not make the time or would not sign the consent form. Slightly more than half of the 15 interviewees authorized by my IRB were from the Data as a Strategic Asset group, as shown below.

Table 4.2

Interview Participants

Working Group Name	Number of Participants
Category Management	
White House Fellows	1
Survey Participants	2
Total	3
Data as a Strategic Asset	
White House Fellows	2
Survey Participants	6
Total	8
Information Technology Modernization	
Survey Participants	1
Peer-identified interviewee	1
Total	2
Workforce for the 21st Century	
White House Fellows	1
Survey Participants	1
Total	2

Interview participants were given the option of telephone calls or in-person meetings. Two interviews were conducted in person – one at the participant’s office, and the other at a cafe near the participant’s home office. The remainder of the 13 interviews took place via telephone. From the in-person interviews, I was able to gather richer data about the context of the person’s work situation (e.g., colleagues, office set-up, motivational pictures around the desk, etc.). The telephone interviews had some advantages, as well: these participants were often teleworking from home offices and could answer questions with more candor than in an office setting where they could ostensibly be overheard.

Research relationships established with participants. When approaching each participant, I introduced myself as a Ph.D. student, but also a long-time federal employee with some exposure to interagency working groups and their dynamics. My hope was to engage with them as partners in research, amplifying the notion that their participation might someday help interagency work become more satisfying and productive for the individuals involved. By positioning myself as someone who understood congressional mandates, OMB priorities, and agency missions, I encouraged most of the participants to converse freely about the things that really matter (individual motivations and experiences and interagency working group effectiveness). Perhaps not surprisingly, those who partnered most readily and gave information most freely were those who also had academic aspirations.

At least 24 hours prior to each interview, I provided each participant with a synopsis of the interview questions, along with the consent form (see Appendix B for the generic version) to confirm his or her voluntary participation in my study. In one case, the interviewee was unable to submit a signed copy of the consent form, but the interviewee provided verbal consent on the telephone prior to the start of the interview. In all 14 other cases, the interviewees emailed signed

consent forms prior to the interview time. All interviews were audio-recorded, and they ranged in length from 28 minutes to 55 minutes. At the conclusion of each interview, I offered to answer any questions that the participants had. Every participant inquired about the next steps in the research process, and all except for one requested a copy of the dissertation. In the spirit of partnership, I reminded each participant that all data collected for this study would be aggregated to the highest meaningful level, and that no one would be identified by name or position. Confidentiality was assured. After each interview, I saved the recordings, identified only as “interview #1,” “interview #2,” etc. (without the participants’ names), on the secured portion of my Virginia Tech Google drive.

Data collection. Beginning in September 2019, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the 15 selected interagency working group members and leaders. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate for exploratory research because they provide some consistency in terms of the general questions, but allow flexibility for more extensive dialogue, as needed (Barriball & While, 1994). My interview guide, provided in Appendix E, was used to structure the interviews; however, I had the discretionary latitude to deviate from the script, in order to explore specific topics as needed.

Interview Questions. Like the surveys, the interview questions on effectiveness used Milward and Provan’s (2001) typology of network effectiveness – service to the target community, service to the individuals in the network itself, and service to the agencies involved in the network. For insight into individual allegiances, the interviews elicited information on the interagency working group members’ professional connections and the members’ conception of the ideal working group. In addition, for one allegiance question, the interviews adopted the “vignette method” (Hodgins, Millar & Barry, 2006, p. 1982), which posed a scenario specific to

the interagency working-group context and elicited behavioral responses to the scenario. This was important to the exploration of allegiances because it provided a relatable example, rather than an abstract notion, while permitting a wide range of responses. All in all, my questions were designed to identify linkages among the participants' allegiances, whether to relationships, to their organizations, or to their professions, and their perceived effectiveness of the interagency working groups' efforts. I also endeavored to gain insights on other possible sources of motivation.

Data analysis. To analyze the interview results, I first transcribed verbatim the substantive content from each session, adding notes on non-verbal cues, such as dramatic changes in the speed of vocal delivery, pauses, laughter, and other inflection points, which provided some insight into the participant's emotions. Then, based on each transcript, I drafted a memorandum (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to capture what I heard in the data, while energizing my own thinking. After reviewing the memoranda, I developed ideas about data categories and relationships (Maxwell, p. 96), as well as connecting strategies to be employed at the end of the qualitative data analysis. By consciously breaking the analysis into two steps, I first "fractured" the data (Strauss, 1987, p. 29), and then reconnected it in a meaningful way. Rather than merely counting the frequency with which a particular item entered the conversation, I was forced through this data-fracturing process to check any preconceived notions and ideas against the data, *per se*. It also enabled me to rearrange the data for meaningful comparisons, as well as to extract parent themes and emergent subthemes. This was an iterative process that required some refinement as I went along. Shown in Appendix L are the core interview questions, the desired insights, and the manner in which I planned to parse, code and reconnect the data on events and statements, integrating them into a coherent, broader narrative.

Following the rubric in Appendix L, I reviewed the interview memoranda once again, inserting codes that corresponded to the findings (along with illustrative snippets from the conversations). As portrayed above, some of the primary categories were agency culture (coded “O”), which include ingrained bureaucratic structures and a particular stance on CAP goals; professional orientation (coded “P”), which encompasses an individual’s academic and experiential background and future goals; and interpersonal relationships (coded “R”), which includes history on how the group came together and continues to work. Some interesting emergent subthemes, associated particularly with the “How were you recruited?” question, centered upon the nature of the participant’s work assignment, which could bring forth a blend of allegiances, such as: (1) scenarios in which individual members are detailed to a different agency for the express purpose of supporting an interagency goal; (2) scenarios in which individual members are recruited as “fellows” but maintain ties and workloads from their home agencies; (3) scenarios in which individual members are assigned to support an interagency goal based on their positions; (4) scenarios in which individual members are assigned to support a goal in which they have expressed interest; and (5) scenarios in which individual members volunteer to support a goal even if they are not formally assigned or detailed as a result of official agency action. The nature-of-involvement category spilled over into the responses to a lot of other questions, ranging from group formation to “What’s next?”

In numerous cases, the participants provided responses that did not correspond to any of the expected codes, so I coded those “D,” denoting new and different constructs for analysis. For example, one subtheme that arose during the conversations about interagency working group roles and the initial motivation to get involved far transcended the “promote or prevent” triggers (Das & Kumar, 2011) from the organizational perspective. Instead, the subtheme veered into

professional development territory, encompassing activities, benefits and impediments.

Activities included creating policy, learning new things, working with different people. Benefits included gaining exposure to new ideas and people, gaining perspective on OMB and Congress. Impediments included perceived constraints, differing priorities among group members, and frustration over a lack of recognition or reciprocity.

Once the first step (data fracturing) was complete, I moved onto the second step, in which I connected the above-discussed themes and subthemes to the interviewee's other statements, creating a coherent story to depict each interviewee's setting. From there, I wove the individual stories into an interagency working group-level narrative, which also included an analysis of events and efforts, many of which were extracted from artifacts of each group's work.⁵¹ Through these artifacts, I was able to glean more insight on each group's leadership styles, internal bureaucratic structures, and decision-making processes. I compared the groups' goals and subgoals to schedules, considering external dependencies and how the groups engaged with those external stakeholders. In many cases, I examined schedule slippage and percentage of tasks completed, as well as cost (typically cited as the need for resources to accomplish something), and outcomes such as stakeholder satisfaction (if available). Through the qualitative analysis, the interviews, I developed preliminary findings not only on the allegiances of individuals and the perceived effectiveness of these groups' efforts, but on possible reasons for linkages between the two. These are discussed in Chapter 6.

⁵¹ Some of these artifacts were provided during the interviews; others came from the secondary data discussed in Chapter 3.

Part III. Integrative Analysis.

During this phase, I considered all of the data – primary and secondary, qualitative and quantitative – and synthesized my findings. Through this combination of approaches and analyses, the validity of my research was higher: I cross-checked different sources for answers to the same types of questions about each working group (Yin, 2013). At the end of this phase, I developed an overall perceived-effectiveness score, as well as overall strength-of-allegiance factors, for each of the four interagency working groups. These scores contained both numerical and adjectival elements.⁵² Once all of the data were integrated, my study culminated in an exploration of within-group differences, as well as across-group differences.

All in all, by employing this mixed-method approach, I obtained a richer view of the actions, the accomplishments, the perceptions, and the relationships within each of the four working groups. Through this study of how individual members' allegiances might influence perceived group effectiveness – and conversely, how perceived effectiveness might impact members' allegiances – I hope to help public managers, or managers of any temporary “project work” (Sydow & Braun, 2018), to better understand how members of interorganizational working groups are motivated to collaborate in pursuit of collective goals.

⁵² For example, an overall organizational allegiance score of .675 (based on the surveys) would be accompanied by a description, such as: “The group members were largely assigned because of their subject-matter expertise, but their agencies also believed that they had the political skills necessary to represent their organizations. Still, only one of the interviewed group members highlighted agency mission as a reason to get involved.”

Chapter 5

Quantitative Findings

At the inception of my research study, which endeavored to explore the relationship between individual allegiances and the perceived effectiveness of interagency working groups, I expected to find that: (1) the strengths of allegiances for groups perceived as effective differ from those perceived as not effective; (2) groups whose members have high levels of professional allegiance are judged as moderately effective; (3) groups whose members have high levels of relational allegiance are judged as highly effective; and (4) groups whose members have high levels of organizational allegiance are judged as less effective. My fifth expected finding, on perceived effectiveness motivating individuals to continue contributing to the project, was not addressed by the survey data, but will be covered in Chapter 6.

As detailed previously, my mixed-method approach generated both quantitative and qualitative results. This chapter provides the results from my quantitative survey, while Chapter 6 conveys my findings from the interviews and artifact analyses. This chapter is divided into four parts: background, findings on perceived effectiveness, findings on allegiances, and conclusion.

Part I. Background.

As noted in Chapter 4, I received 18 usable survey responses; however, other forms of response emerged, as well. Notably, when invited to take the survey, three prospective participants voiced concern over violating agency or ethics rules, and two ultimately refrained from taking the survey.⁵³ These individuals' concerns, centering upon the interpretation of

⁵³ One prospect revealed: "From a legal perspective, [my agency] does not have authority for employees to spend official time completing private research requests. Separate issues exist in that [my agency] must not favor

agency rules, could suggest high levels of organizational allegiance. However, given the non-consent of these prospective participants, I could not integrate these hints of organizational allegiance into the forthcoming analysis. The third individual, after receiving answers to insightful questions about my own organizational affiliations and my intentions, did elect to participate in the survey, so that person's data are integrated into the below analysis.

To create a context for understanding the interagency working group members' perceptions of effectiveness and the strengths of their various allegiances, I collected background information on the individuals, such as their "project citizenship behaviors" (Sydow & Braun, 2018), their perceptions of their group leaders and certain bureaucratic structures, and their demographic attributes.

Demographics. The survey included several background questions on participants' roles within the interagency working group, as well as the nature of their public service (political appointee or career civil servant), their levels of seniority (mid-level professional through SES), and their OPM job series codes. Shown in Table 5.1 are the demographics of the respondents, by interagency working group, by type of professional, by nature of employment, by level of seniority, and by working group role(s). Respondents could choose more than one role: six respondents chose multiple roles, while 12 chose only one role.

any private institution or individual, and that [my agency] is required to protect non-public information that is protected by statute or otherwise not released to the general public."

Table 5.1*Demographics of Individual Working Group Members*

	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
<u>Working Group</u>		
Category Management	4	22.22%
Data as a Strategic Asset	7	38.89%
Information Technology Modernization	2	11.11%
Workforce for the 21st Century	5	27.78%
<u>Type of Professional</u>		
130 - Foreign Affairs Series	1	5.56%
201 - Human Resources Management Series	1	5.56%
301 - Misc. Administration and Program Series	1	5.56%
340 - Program Manager	2	11.11%
343 - Management and Program Analyst	3	16.67%
601- General Medical and Healthcare Series	1	5.56%
603 – Physician’s Assistant Series	1	5.56%
1101 - General Business and Industry Series	1	5.56%
1529 - Mathematical Statistics	2	11.11%
1530 - Statistics Series	1	5.56%
2210 - Information Technology Management	1	5.56%
No answer	1	5.56%
SES - unspecified	2	11.11%
<u>Nature of Employment</u>		
Permanent (Career)	16	88.89%
Political Appointee	2	11.11%
<u>Level of Seniority</u>		
Senior Executive (SES)	6	33.33%
Expert (more than 10 years of experience)	6	33.33%
Mid-level professional	4	22.22%

Senior manager	2	11.11%
<u>Role in Working Group*</u>		
Advisor	2	11.11%
Agency Representative	8	44.44%
Subject Matter Expert	8	44.44%
Task or Project Leader	6	33.33%
Working Group Leader	7	38.89%

Notably, of the 18 usable responses, more than one-third came from the Data group. The Data group’s relatively high level of participation is consistent with its own historic mission, which was to maximize the availability of data, thus improving research tools and enabling better decision making. The Workforce group also provided several respondents; in fact, two of the Workforce respondents applauded my research study, signaling that they saw the value of efforts to improve the staffing and management of interagency working groups. Only two respondents came from the IT Modernization group. (Note: one respondent identified as having dual membership in both IT Modernization and Category Management working groups but completed the survey as a Category Management member.) The low representation from the IT Modernization group could be attributable to the group’s high level of sensitivity to cybersecurity concerns.

In terms of professional attributes, some 16.67 percent of respondents identified themselves as management and program analysts. The second-highest percentage (11.11 percent) identified as program managers, mathematics/statistical professionals, or unspecified senior executive service (SES) members. In terms of level of seniority, 33.33 percent reported that they were at the SES level. Another 33.33 percent reported being at the expert level with more than 10 years of experience in their professions. The remainder were senior managers or mid-level

professionals. Of the total pool of respondents, 89 percent were permanent career employees, and 11 percent were political appointees.

With respect to roles within the interagency working group, the respondents were evenly divided between agency representative roles and subject-matter expert (SME) roles. One-third of the respondents indicated that they performed multiple roles, sometimes straddling both representational and SME domains. Most of the task or project leaders reported that they were also SMEs. Most of the working leaders reported that they were also agency representatives.

Structural Questions. Because structures are another interesting subtopic within the context of perceived effectiveness, I included a question on the frequency of the interagency working group meetings. Seven respondents reported biweekly meetings, one reported monthly meetings, two reported quarterly meetings, and eight reported weekly meetings. Within groups, only the Workforce group unanimously reported that their meetings were biweekly. The other three groups reported different meeting periodicities; in fact, individuals within the Category Management group reported that meetings were weekly, biweekly, and quarterly. These differences in reported meetings could have be due to members' differing levels of involvement.

Leadership styles and attributes. Because leadership is an important subtopic within the context of allegiances and perceived effectiveness, I included survey questions on leadership styles, following (Span, et al., 2011): directive (i.e., commissioner), technical contributor (i.e., co-producer), and facilitative. The leadership questions did not seek answers that were mutually exclusive, as the adoption of a particular leadership style could depend on the situation. There were also questions on whether the leader inspired the respondents, as well as whether the leader was someone whom they admired. Since admiration and inspiration are both assumed to promote

motivation, I compared the responses and analyzed the variation in the two scores. Presented below are the median scores, by group, for each of the questions.

Table 5.2

Leadership Styles and Impressions (Median scores, scale of 1 to 7)

Question	Data Group	Workforce Group	Cat Mgt Group	IT Mod Group
Leader gives clear direction	6.0	5.0	6.5	6.0
Leader is technical contributor	7.0	4.6	5.3	5.5
Leader is primarily a facilitator	3.0	5.4	5.3	2.5
Leader is admired	6.0	6.2	5.8	4.5
Leader inspires	7.0	6.0	5.3	4.0
Variance: Admired vs. inspires	50%	2%	13%	13%

Note: For this and subsequent tables with limited space, Category Management is depicted as “Cat Mgt” and IT Modernization is depicted as “IT Mod.”

The Category Management group rated their leaders the highest in terms of giving clear direction, while the Workforce group rated their leaders lowest on clear direction. In terms of technical contribution, the Data group rated their leaders highest, while the Workforce group rated their leaders lowest. In terms of facilitation, the Workforce group rated their leaders highest, and the IT Modernization group rated their leaders lowest. There is sometimes an inverse relationship between leaders’ attention to facilitation and leaders’ attention to technical contribution, so the Data group’s leaders are a case in point. The Workforce group yielded the highest scores for leader admiration, while the IT Modernization group yielded the lowest leader admiration scores. On the question of whether the leader inspired members to contribute, the Data group scored highest, and the IT Modernization group was again the lowest. It is important to remember, however, that there were only two respondents in the IT Modernization group, so it

is unlikely that their scores were representative of the whole IT Modernization population. Regarding the variance between the inspiration scores and the admiration scores, three of the groups had only slight variances, ranging from 2 to 12.5 percent. For the Data group, however, the variance between the inspiration score and the admiration score was 50 percent. Collectively, while the Data group agreed that they admired their leaders, they *strongly* agreed that they were inspired by their leaders.

Commitment to the project. Participants' responses to the questions in Table 5.3 served to bolster construct validity by confirming that they were, in fact, demonstrating commitment to their interagency working group endeavors. As noted in Chapter 4, the questions were based on the altruism scales of Podsakoff et al. (1990), as well as loyalty behaviors (Van Dyne, et al. 1995), compliance-oriented behaviors, initiative-taking behaviors (Moorman & Blakely, 1995), and "civic virtue" or relationship-maintenance behaviors (Organ, 1988). Responses to these questions, which delved into organizational and project citizenship behavior (Sydow & Braun, 2018), confirmed that the respondents indeed reported behaviors that manifested commitment to the project. Although I perused the data for differences by working group, I saw no patterns in terms of commitment to the project; accordingly, I kept the data from all four groups together. Table 5.3 summarizes the questions, along with the responses, across the four groups.

Table 5.3*Scores on Behaviors Associated with Project Commitment (Scale of 1 to 7)*

Question	Percentage Responding “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”
Remained committed to group's goals	94.44%
Made suggestions for improving processes	94.44%
Predicted problems before they arose	88.33%
Proposed new ideas for the group	94.44%
Kept self informed about project-related news	83.33%
Complied with group's rules	88.89%
Honored commitments to group	88.89%
Notified task leads of delays	83.33%
Improved performance based on others' input	38.89%
Defended group if criticized by outsiders	44.44%
Described group positively to outsiders	83.33%
Attracted to group's work	83.33%

As reflected above, the vast majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they exhibited behaviors⁵⁴ that demonstrated commitment to the working groups' projects. The only areas in which less than 80 percent of respondents provided a lower than “agree” response were those related to potentially negative events: defending the group if criticized by outsiders, and improving personal performance. Responses to those two questions tended to be neutral, as respondents likely felt the questions were not applicable.⁵⁵ It is reasonable to expect that most

⁵⁴ Questions reflected the altruism scales (Podsakoff et al., 1990), as well as loyalty (Van Dyne, et al. 1995), compliance (e.g., observing timelines, following instructions, respecting others' time, and using collaboration technology effectively, individual initiative, whether making suggestions or encouraging others to do so (Van Dyne et al., 1995; Moorman and Blakely, 1995), and civic virtue or relationship maintenance (Organ, 1988).

⁵⁵ One respondent, in fact, suggested a “not applicable” option for questions such as these.

interagency working group members would report that they manifest the positive behaviors, given the roles they performed and efforts they undertook. Still, these findings suggest that the respondents were, in fact, committed to their working groups' projects. My broader purpose with respect to the survey, of course, was to understand what might motivate the behaviors associated with project commitment.

Part II. Findings on Allegiances.

Allegiance Questions and Scores. The survey included 22 questions on individual attitudes and behaviors that were aimed at measuring the strength of members' allegiances. My coding methods and formulas are detailed in the first part of Chapter 4. In the forthcoming sections, which cover each allegiance dimension, the overall calculated scores are displayed in tables that show the median overall scores by group, with an accompanying analysis of variance (ANOVA) aimed at determining whether the four groups differed in a meaningful way in terms of individual allegiances. For the ANOVA results below, the hypothesis and null hypothesis were as follows:

H_1 = at least one μ differs from the rest

$H_0 = \mu_1 = \mu_2 \dots = \mu_k$ (i.e., all means are equal)

The results in the tables include F critical values (or F statistics), which address whether the variations among group means for the various dimensions of allegiance are more than would be expected to occur by chance. In other words, if all means had been equal, the F critical value would be close to 1.0, and the null hypothesis would be accepted. The P-values reflect the likelihood that any observed differences among groups are due to chance: The lower the p-value, the higher the explained variance, or the odds that an observed difference really exists due to the independent variable.

Organizational Allegiance. As shown in Table 5.4 (below), the individual scores for organizational allegiance ranged from 0.42 (Workforce column; minimum row) to 0.89 (Data column; maximum row). At the group level, the median scores for organizational allegiance had a fairly tight range (i.e., from 0.55 for the Category Management group to 0.66 for the IT Modernization group). Standard deviation was lowest for the Category Management group.

Table 5.4

Organizational Allegiance Scores (Scale: 0 to 1)

Statistic	Data	Workforce	Cat Mgt	IT Mod
Median	0.59	0.61	0.55	0.66
Mean	0.63	0.62	0.57	0.66
Range	0.37	0.43	0.15	0.21
Min	0.51	0.42	0.51	0.55
Max	0.89	0.85	0.65	0.76
Standard Deviation	0.12	0.16	0.06	0.15

The F critical value was 3.34, as detailed in Table 5.5 (below), suggesting that variation among group means for organizational allegiance was more than would be expected to occur by chance. However, the p-value of 0.83 was considerably greater than the alpha level of 0.05, so the results were not statistically significant. Only 16.78 percent of the variance in group means for organizational allegiance might be explained by group affiliation. Moreover, there was generally more variation within groups than there was among the four groups.

Table 5.5*Organizational Allegiance: Analysis of Variation*

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.01	3	0	0.29	0.83	3.35
Within Groups	0.23	14	0.02			

Professional Allegiance. As shown in Table 5.6 (below), the individual scores for professional allegiance ranged from 0.23 (in the Category Management column) to 0.86 (in the Data column). At the group level, the median scores for professional allegiance had a fairly tight range, from 0.44 for IT Modernization to 0.55 for the Category Management group.

Table 5.6*Professional Allegiance Scores (Scale: 0 to 1)*

Statistic	Data	Workforce	Cat Mgt	IT Mod
Median	0.46	.51	0.55	0.44
Mean	0.52	.48	0.53	0.44
Range	0.5	.59	0.22	0.2
Min	0.36	.23	0.39	0.34
Max	0.86	.82	0.61	0.54
Standard Deviation	0.17	.23	0.105	0.14

As shown in Table 5.7 (below), the F critical value was 3.34, which suggests a greater variation than would be expected to occur by chance. However, the p-value of 0.90 was considerably greater than the alpha level, so the results were not statistically significant. Only 10.15% of the variation in group means for professional allegiance might be explained by group affiliation.

Moreover, for professional allegiance, there was more variation within each groups than there was among the four groups.

Table 5.7

Professional Allegiance - Analysis of Variation

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.02	3	0.01	0.19	0.9	3.34
Within Groups	0.48	14	0.03			

Relational Allegiance. As shown in Table 5.8 (below), the individual scores for relational allegiance ranged from 0.41 (see Category Management column) to 0.98 (see Data column). Median scores at the group level ranged from 0.66 (Category Management) to 0.82 (IT Modernization). Standard deviation was lowest for the Workforce group.

Table 5.8

Relational Allegiance Scores (Scale: 0 to 1)

Statistic	Data	Workforce	Cat Mgt	IT Mod
Median	0.77	0.79	0.66	0.82
Mean	0.79	0.79	0.64	0.82
Range	0.32	0.29	0.43	0.08
Min	0.66	0.62	0.41	0.78
Max	0.98	0.91	0.84	0.86
Standard Deviation	0.11	0.01	0.18	0.05

As shown in Table 5.9 (below), the F critical value was 3.34, indicating more variation than would be expected to occur by chance. The p-value of 0.15 was somewhat greater than the alpha level, suggesting that these results are closer to being statistically significant than the results for either professional or organizational allegiance. Some 84.77 percent of the variation in group means for relational allegiance might be explained by group affiliation; however, there was again more variation within each group than among the four groups.

Table 5.9

Relational Allegiance - Analysis of Variation

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.1	3	0.03	2.06	0.15	3.34
Within Groups	0.22	14	0.02			

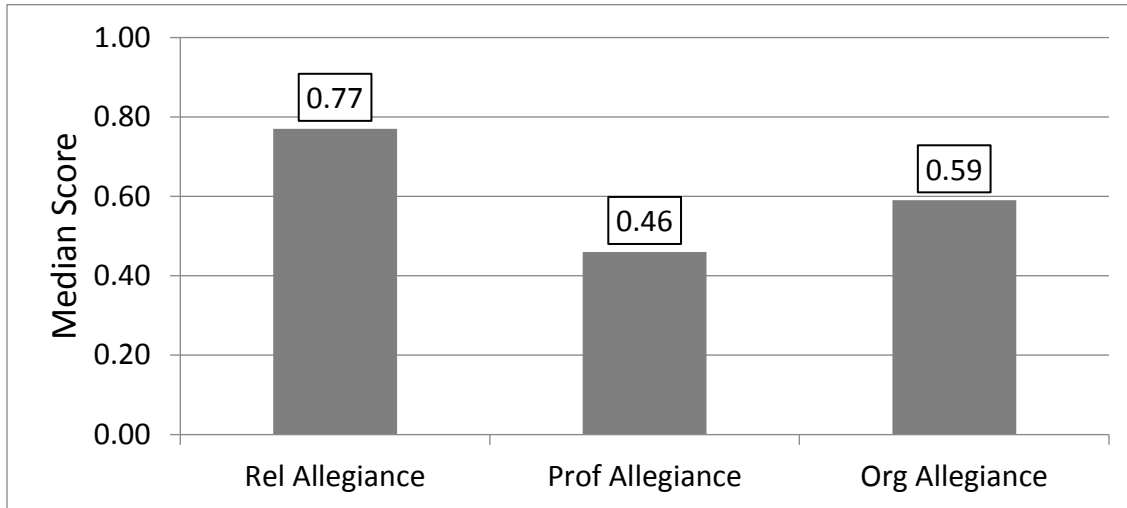
Allegiance Scores by Working Group. Turning to the four interagency working groups, although the survey data suggested more variation among individuals within each group than across the various working groups, I did identify some interesting patterns, as detailed via the figures and paragraphs below.

Data Group. Based on the survey data, members of the Data group appeared to have the second-weakest allegiances overall of the four working groups in this study, with a combined median score of 1.82 on a scale of 0 to 3. In addition, the Data group collectively had the second-lowest median professional allegiance score, with a score of 0.46 (on a scale of 0 to 1) and the second-lowest median organizational allegiance score. Based on the secondary data (see Chapter 3), the Data group was deemed highly successful at the target-community level. Given that the

group's members had relatively weak organizational allegiance scores, the data do suggest an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness.

Figure 5.1

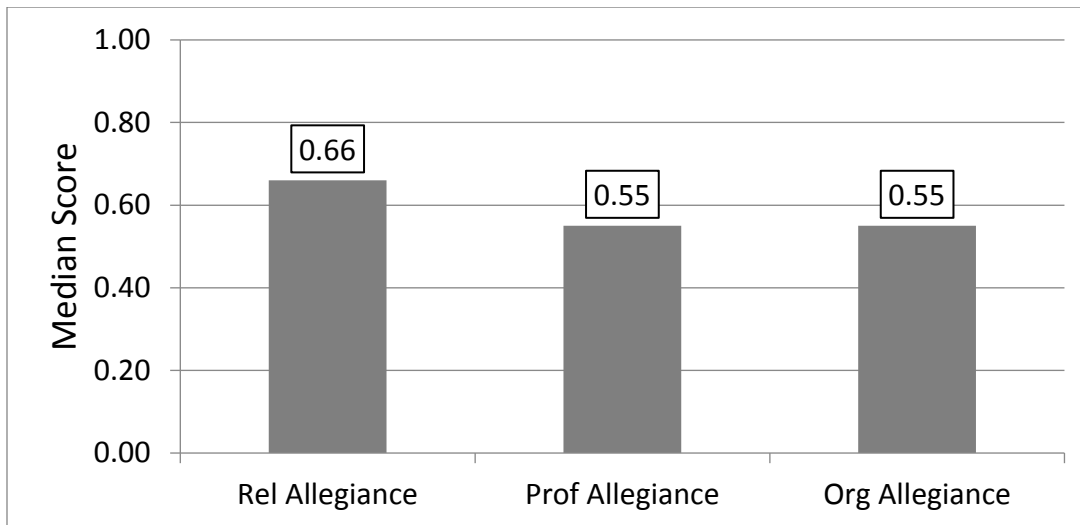
Data Working Group: Strengths of Allegiances



Category Management Group. Based on the survey data, members of the Category Management group appeared to have the weakest overall allegiances of the four working groups in this study, with a combined score of 1.76 on a scale of 0 to 3. For both organizational and relational allegiance, the Category Management group had the lowest median scores of all four groups. Figure 5.2 provides an illustration. Like the Data group, Category Management was deemed generally successful in service of its target community. Thus, the notion that high relational allegiances motivate people to collaborate is not supported by these survey data. These data do, however, support the notion that organizational allegiance is inversely related to perceived effectiveness at the target-community level.

Figure 5.2

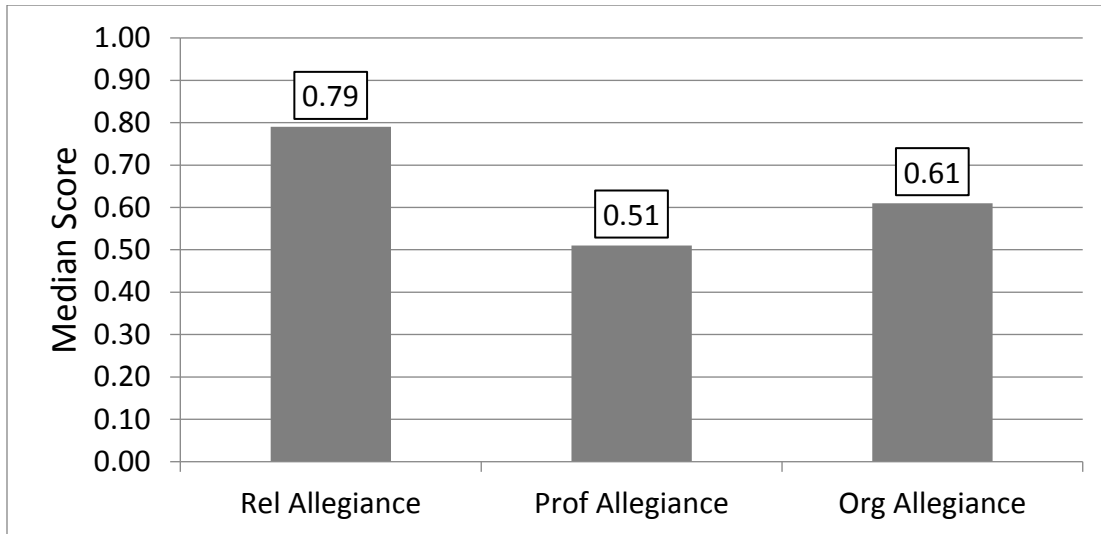
Category Management Group: Strengths of Allegiances



Workforce Group. Based on the survey data, the median scores for members of the Workforce group were 0.61 for organizational allegiance, 0.51 for professional allegiance, and 0.79 for relational allegiance, with a the second-highest overall score of 1.91 on a scale of 0 to 3. Figure 5.3 provides an illustration. As noted in Chapter 3, the secondary data furnished little evidence of effectiveness for Workforce group at the target-community level. Since the Workforce group had relatively high relational allegiances, then, the survey data provide no support for a direct relationship between relational allegiance and perceived effectiveness. However, the group’s organizational allegiance was also relatively high, providing some support for the notion of an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness.

Figure 5.3

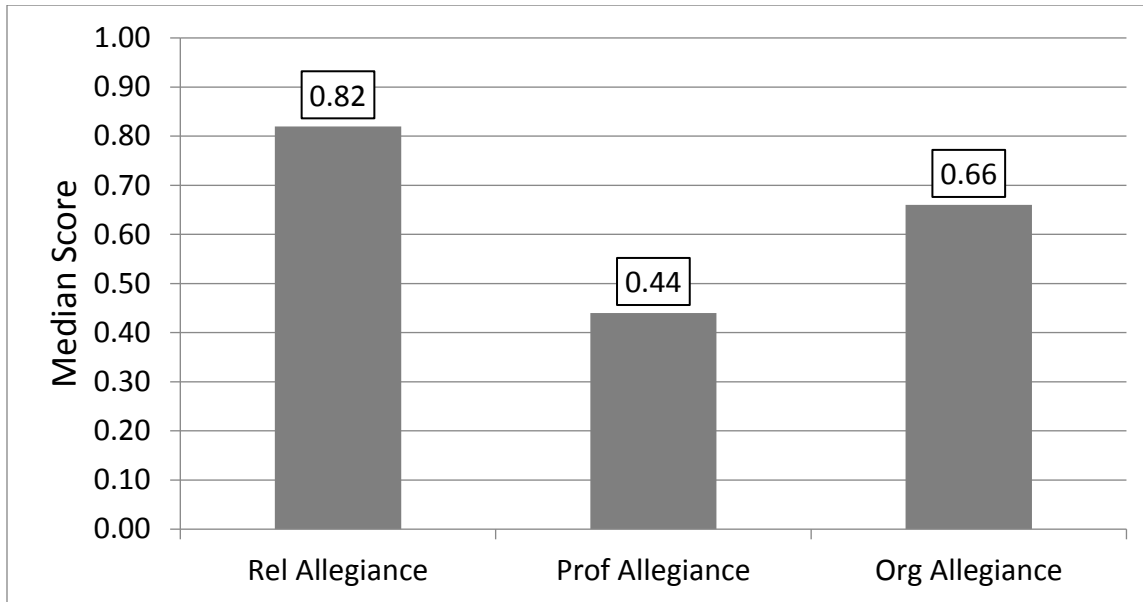
Workforce Group: Strengths of Allegiances



IT Modernization Group. Based on the survey data, members of the IT Modernization group scored 0.66 for organizational allegiance, 0.44 for professional allegiance, and 0.82 for relational allegiance, resulting in the highest overall score of 1.92 on a scale of 0 to 3. The IT Modernization had the highest relational and the highest organizational, but the lowest professional allegiances. For the IT group, I found only limited evidence of effectiveness at the target-community level. Thus, there is some support for the notion that organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness are inversely related, but there is no support for the notion of a direct relationship between relational allegiance and perceived effectiveness.

Figure 5.4

IT Modernization: Strengths of Allegiances



Preliminary Observations on Allegiances. In terms of judged effectiveness at the target-community level (see Chapter 3), the Category Management and Data groups were both deemed highly effective by external evaluators. Interestingly, those two groups had the lowest allegiances overall. This might suggest that having a *lack* of strong allegiances – or perhaps, a willingness to compromise that is less present with individuals who affiliate strongly with their agencies (Milward & Provan, 2006) – can also motivate effective collaboration.

When evaluating the survey results on allegiance, I identified both differences and commonalities. First, regarding the relationship between professional allegiance and target-community effectiveness, the survey data showed no real patterns: distinctions appeared to more clear along the lines of the types of professionals participating in the survey. The Category Management and Workforce groups were comprised mainly of business and human resources management professionals, while the Data and IT Modernization groups were comprised of

statisticians and data scientists: it is possible that different types of professionals are motivated by different dimensions of allegiance. Secondly, the survey data suggest that organizational allegiance and effectiveness at the target-community level are inversely related. Third, the survey data provide little evidence that relational allegiance and target-community effectiveness are positively correlated.

Demographic Factors and Allegiances. Because my survey data suggested that no statistically significant variances existed among the group means for any of the three dimensions of allegiance, I checked several demographic variables for potential influences on allegiances. Those variables were the participants' OPM job series, their seniority levels, the nature of their employment (appointee or career), and their roles on the interagency working groups.

OPM Job Series. Following Hecló (1977), I expected to find a positive relationship between professions with higher barriers to entry and professional allegiance. Using the survey data, I coded each OPM job series according to the requirements for an entry-level job in that labor category. For jobs with no specific educational requirements, I used "1" as the difficulty score, indicating relatively low barriers to entry. For jobs requiring a bachelor's degree with specific coursework, I scored the difficulty as "2." For jobs requiring a specific bachelor's degree, I scored the difficulty as "3." For SES jobs, given that specialized leadership experience and vetting processes are required of SES candidates, I used "3" as the difficulty score. For jobs mandating a specific degree or certification higher than a bachelor's degree, I scored the difficulty as "4." As shown in Table 5.10, the highest score for professional allegiance indeed came from the respondent with the highest difficulty score, which was Physician's Assistant.

Table 5.10*Professional Allegiance and Difficulty of Entry*

OPM Job Series	Min	Max	Mean	Difficulty Score	OPM Job Series
Human Resources Management	0.34	0.34	0.34	1	201
Misc. Administration and Program	0.82	0.82	0.82	1	301
Program Manager	0.32	0.54	0.43	1	340
Management and Program Analyst	0.52	0.54	0.51	1	343
Foreign Affairs	0.52	0.52	0.52	2	130
General Medical and Healthcare	0.46	0.46	0.46	2	601
Information Technology Management	0.57	0.57	0.57	2	2210
Mathematical Statistics	0.41	0.63	0.51	3	1529
Statistics	0.36	0.36	0.36	3	1530
Unspecified	0.86	0.61	0.73	3	SES
Physician's Assistant	0.86	0.86	0.86	4	603

However, upon regressing all difficulty-of-entry scores against all professional allegiance scores, I found little evidence of a consistently strong relationship between the two variables.

As depicted in Table 5.11 (below), when regressing all professional allegiance scores against all difficulty-of-entry scores, I obtained an R^2 value of only 0.19. However, that R^2 value was higher than those resulting from regressing difficulty scores with either organizational or relational allegiance scores (0.01 and 0.02, respectively). Thus, while the data suggest weak relationships for all dimensions of allegiance to difficulty-of-entry scores, professional allegiance appears to be more strongly related to difficulty scores than are the other two dimensions.

Table 5.11

Professional Allegiance and Difficulty of Entry – Regression Statistics

Difficulty Scores and Professional Allegiances	
Multiple R	0.43
R Square	0.19
Adjusted R Square	0.13
Standard Error	0.15
Observations	18

Overall, the seemingly weak relationship between professional allegiances and job-entry difficulty could be explained by two things. First, OPM’s system for classifying white-collar occupations can be misleading. OPM job series codes do not always reflect individuals’ backgrounds or the work performed. For example, for job series 343 (management and program analyst), there are no explicit educational requirements, but within OMB and CFO Act agency headquarters organizations, 343s tend to have advanced degrees and extensive responsibilities. Similarly, for the job series coded 1101 (general business and industry), there are no explicit educational requirements, but the code is used for SES-level economists and cost engineers. Both 1101s and 343s could be highly credentialed individuals in positions with low entry-difficulty scores. Given these and similar problems with the federal job-classification system, I chose not to conduct further analysis using the difficulty-of-entry scores. Instead, I turned to ostensibly more relevant demographic attributes, such as nature of employment, level of seniority, and role on the interagency working group.

Table 5.12*Allegiances and Nature of Employment*

	Professional	Organizational	Relational
Career Employee	0.5	0.62	0.75
Political Appointee	0.52	0.62	0.88

Nature of Employment. Following Nesterczuk, Devine and Moffit (2001), who characterized appointees as personally loyal and fully committed to the president's policy agenda, I expected political appointees to have stronger relational allegiances than career employees. As shown in Table 5.12, the survey data suggest that political appointees do have stronger relational allegiances than the career employees. Based on this small data set, however, it also appears that appointees, relative to career employees, profess slightly stronger allegiances to their professions and equivalent allegiances to their organizations. This could be attributable to appointees' relatively brief time in government; as Kaufman (1960) pointed out, the sense of achievement that people feel when they start diminishes over the years.

Table 5.13*Allegiances and Level of Seniority*

	Professional	Organizational	Relational
Mid-level professional	0.48	0.62	0.68
Expert (more than 10 years)	0.58	0.6	0.82
Mid-level manager	0.54	0.51	0.84
Senior manager	0.34	0.76	0.78
Senior executive service	0.46	0.62	0.74

Seniority Levels of Respondents. To assess whether the seniority levels of respondents might impact their allegiances and their effectiveness ratings, I calculated allegiance scores for individuals at various seniority levels: SES, senior manager, mid-level manager, expert, and mid-level professional. Table 5.13 displays the results, which suggest that mid-level managers are highest on relational allegiance, senior managers are highest on organizational allegiance, and experts are highest on professional allegiance.

Table 5.14

Allegiances and Interagency Working Group Roles

	Professional	Organizational	Relational
Advisor	0.82	0.42	0.91
Alternate Representative	0.34	0.76	0.78
Primary Representative	0.43	0.55	0.8
Primary Rep (multiple roles)	0.4	0.68	0.73
Subject Matter Expert (SME)	0.66	0.55	0.77
SME (multiple roles)	0.49	0.62	0.77
Task or project leader	0.39	0.65	0.41
Working group leader	0.58	0.62	0.83

Working Group Role. To explore the existence of relationships between individual allegiances and roles on interagency working groups, I calculated allegiance scores for individuals performing each role. The roles included advisor, alternate representative and primary representative from agency, subject matter expert (SME), task or project leader, and working group leader. Respondents were able to select more than one role, and several did.

Accordingly, Table 5.14 includes two mixed-role categories: primary agency representative with multiple roles, which could include leadership roles, and subject-matter expert with multiple roles, which could include advisory or project-leadership roles.

As shown above, relational allegiance scores ranged from 0.41 to 0.91, on a scale of 0 to 1. Interestingly, the highest average relational allegiance score was held by those in the advisor role. The lowest relational allegiance score was held by those in the task or project leader roles. This is fairly consistent with the nature of the work. Advisors must engage with people and may therefore be more driven by relational allegiances. Task or project leaders are goal-oriented, so therefore may be driven by factors other than relationships. The professional allegiance scores ranged from 0.34 to 0.82. Again, the highest average professional allegiance score was held by those in the advisor role. The lowest professional allegiance score was held by those in the alternate representative role. The organizational allegiance scores ranged from 0.42 to 0.76, with the highest score held by those in the alternate representative role. The lowest organizational allegiance scores were held by advisors; this is consistent with the work required of advisors, who are often not tied to a particular organization, but rather are concerned with dispensing superior professional advice.

Overall, my findings on the three dimensions of allegiances suggest a great deal of variation within each of the four interagency working groups. From group to group, however, there is not a great deal of variation in allegiance scores. By studying other demographic variables, such as an individual's roles on working groups, their seniority levels, and the nature of their employment, I discovered several interesting relationships with allegiances. In the next part of this chapter, I present my survey findings on perceived effectiveness and integrate those with the findings just discussed.

Part III. Findings on Perceived Effectiveness

Effectiveness Questions. As emphasized in Chapter 3, as well as in the preceding part of this chapter, the secondary data reflected only external evaluations of effectiveness at the target-community level. Because network effectiveness is a nuanced and complex concept, involving questions broader than those addressing the target community, my survey leveraged the network effectiveness scales of Provan and Milward (2001) to elicit interagency working group members' perceptions of effectiveness from multiple angles – from the respondent's home agency perspective, the interagency working group's perspective, and the target community's perspective. The effectiveness questions solicited opinions ranging from “extremely poorly” to “extremely well,” quantified on a seven-point Likert scale. Responses were coded in terms of the ratio of each respondent's ratings to the maximum-possible ratings (for example, “very well” on a scale of 1 to 7, with the highest rating being “extremely well” or 7, translated to 6:7).

Perceived Effectiveness, by Group. I analyzed the individuals' effectiveness scores at the overall level, as well as by interagency working group. As discussed in Chapter 3, the secondary data revealed evidence of effectiveness for the Data and Category Management groups, but not for the IT Modernization and Workforce groups. Interestingly, from the internal participants' perspectives, effectiveness ratings at the target-community level were fairly consistent with those of the external evaluators. Data and Category Management were both rated relatively high by their internal members, while IT Modernization and Workforce were rated relatively low by their internal members. However, the survey respondents produced much additional insight on the previously unknown perceptions of effectiveness at the group and agency levels. Shown below are the median and composite perceived effectiveness scores for each of the three levels of effectiveness, by working group.

Table 5.15

Perceived Effectiveness by Group – Median Scores (Scale of 0 to 1)

<u>Rated Highly Effective by External Evaluators</u>		
<u>Data as a Strategic Asset</u>		
Target Community	0.86	0.86
Group	0.86	
Agency	0.86	
<u>Category Management</u>		
Target Community	0.86	0.81
Group	0.71	
Agency	0.86	
<u>Limited Evidence to Support Effectiveness</u>		
<u>Workforce for the 21st Century</u>		
Target Community	0.79	0.79
Group	0.86	
Agency	0.71	
<u>IT Modernization</u>		
Target Community	0.71	0.83
Group	1.0	
Agency	0.79	

Data group effectiveness ratings. The Data group, deemed effective by secondary data sources at the target-community level, tied for the highest score at that level (0.86) from its members. At the working-group level, the Data group’s median score was also 0.86, which tied for second highest among the four groups. As for agency-level effectiveness, the median score for Data group was again 0.86, which reflected a tie for highest among the four groups.

Category Management group effectiveness ratings. The Category Management group, also deemed effective at the target-community level based on secondary data sources, tied for the highest score at that level (0.86) from its internal members. At the agency level, the median score for the Category Management group was also 0.86, again tying for highest score among the four groups. At the working-group level, however, the median score was by far the lowest (0.71) of the four groups.

Workforce group effectiveness ratings. The Workforce group, for which limited evidence of effectiveness could be gleaned from the secondary data, also received a relatively low rating at the target-community level of 0.79 from its internal members. The Workforce group also received a relatively low median effectiveness score of 0.71 at the agency level. At the group-level, however, the Workforce group has a relatively high median effectiveness score of 0.86.

IT Modernization group effectiveness ratings. Members of the IT Modernization group, also deemed less effective at the target-community level based on secondary data sources, rated themselves relatively low on target-community effectiveness, with median score of 0.71. In terms of agency-level effectiveness, the IT group's median score was also relatively low, at 0.79. Nonetheless, the IT Modernization group members collectively scored themselves the highest, with a median score of a perfect 1.0, suggesting that individuals felt positively about the manner in which the group functioned.

Perceived Effectiveness, by Demographic Categories. In addition to exploring the perceived effectiveness by comparing ratings across the four different interagency working groups, I also delved into perceived effectiveness in terms of the individual group members' demographic characteristics.

Table 5.16*Perceived Effectiveness and Nature of Employment (Scale of 0 to 1)*

	Community Level	Working Group Level	Agency Level
Career Employee	0.81	0.74	0.79
Political Appointee	0.79	1.0	0.79

Nature of Employment. For perceived effectiveness by appointee versus career employee, the only area in which there were obvious differences was at the working-group level. The political appointees rated effectiveness at the group level much higher (a perfect 1.0) than the career employees did, with a score of 0.74. This is likely due to the fact that appointees, when involved in the GPRAMA-driven interagency working groups, tended to lead the groups; thus, group-level effectiveness could be a direct reflection on their own performance. As shown in Table 5.16, there were only negligible differences in effectiveness ratings, both at the target-community and the agency level.

Table 5.17*Perceived Effectiveness and Level of Seniority*

	Community Level	Working Group Level	Agency Level
Mid-level professional	0.82	0.86	0.82
Expert (more than 10 years)	0.77	0.66	0.77
Mid-level manager	0.86	0.57	0.57
Senior manager	1	0.57	0.86
Senior executive service	0.79	0.88	0.81

Level of seniority. The highest ratings in terms of target-community effectiveness at the came from senior managers; the lowest came from the experts. The highest ratings of working group-level effectiveness came from members of the SES. This is consistent with my observation in the previous paragraph, which addressed the leadership of working groups: because SES members tended to lead the working groups, group-level effectiveness could be a direct reflection on their own performance. On the other hand, the lowest ratings of group-level effectiveness came from individuals who identified as senior managers from their agencies, and perhaps could be more critical of efforts they were not leading. However, the highest ratings of effectiveness at the agency-level also came from the senior managers; this could signal that they were drawn to the work initially to realize a return on investment (ROI) for their agencies. The lowest agency-level ratings came from mid-level managers.

Table 5.18

Perceived Effectiveness and Interagency Working Group Role

	Community Level	Working Group Level	Agency Level
Advisor	0.86	0.71	0.86
Alternate Representative	0.86	0.86	0.81
Primary Representative	0.79	1	0.79
Primary Rep (multiple roles)	0.82	0.82	0.79
Subject Matter Expert (SME)	0.64	0.5	0.71
SME (multiple roles)	0.86	0.76	0.76
Task or project leader	0.86	0.71	1.0
Working group leader	0.76	0.86	0.76

Role on the Interagency Working Group. At the target-community level, the highest effectiveness scores came from those in advisory or representational roles (e.g. primary or alternate agency representatives); the lowest score, by far, came from the individuals who identified as SMEs. One possible explanation is that SMEs tend to be more critical in general than those in representational roles. In terms of group-level effectiveness, the ratings of advisors and representatives were markedly higher than those of SMEs. This could be attributable to agency representatives' sensitivity to intragroup conflict, and their appreciation when conflicts are appropriately resolved. At the agency level, the highest scores came from individuals who identified as task or project leaders; the lowest scores were once again produced by those in the SME category. Interestingly, the SMEs who reported having multiple roles appeared to be more generous in their ratings at all three levels. It is possible that SMEs, whose perspectives that are more technical than political, have different criteria for assessing effectiveness than other types of group members. When SMEs perform multiple roles, then, they may begin to judge effectiveness using a broader set of criteria.

Preliminary findings on perceived effectiveness. While the internal group members' ratings of effectiveness at the target community were consistent with the ratings of external evaluators, the survey data produced other interesting findings on perceived effectiveness. First, when the primary target community for a particular CAP goal was federal agencies in general, the perceived effectiveness at both target community and agency levels was usually similar: for example, the Category Management group had relatively high target-community ratings and very high agency-level ratings. Secondly, ratings of group-level effectiveness were sometimes positively correlated with agency-level effectiveness, but in other cases (e.g., the Category Management group), perceived effectiveness at the working-group level differed greatly from

perceived effectiveness at other levels; this suggests that other dynamics may have been at play within that group. Finally, by studying other demographic variables, such as an individuals' roles on working groups, their seniority levels, and the nature of their employment, I uncovered several additional interesting findings on perceived effectiveness.

Part IV. Findings on Allegiances and Perceived Effectiveness

In order to discern patterns between the three dimensions of allegiance and perceived effectiveness, I first analyzed the survey data for each of the four groups, and then brought them all together. Showcased in Table 5.19 are the composite scores for all four interagency working groups, along with a summary of their perceived effectiveness ratings.

Table 5.19

Allegiances and Perceived Effectiveness

Composite Effectiveness Ratings			Composite Allegiance Scores		
Rated Highly Effective by External Evaluators					
<u>Data as a Strategic Asset</u>					
Target Community	0.86		Organizational	0.59	
Group	0.86		Professional	0.46	0.61
Agency	0.86		Relational	0.77	
<u>Category Management</u>					
Target Community	0.86		Organizational	0.55	
Group	0.71		Professional	0.55	0.59
Agency	0.86		Relational	0.66	
Not Rated Highly Effective by External Evaluators					

Workforce for the 21st Century

Target Community	0.79	0.79	Organizational	0.61	0.64
Group	0.86		Professional	0.51	
Agency	0.71		Relational	0.79	
<u>IT Modernization</u>					
Target Community	0.71	0.83	Organizational	0.66	0.64
Group	1.0		Professional	0.44	
Agency	0.79		Relational	0.82	

Allegiances and Perceived Effectiveness, by Group. As discussed in the preceding part of this chapter, as well as in Chapter 3, the two groups generally deemed effective at the target-community level by both survey participants (internal to the group) and by external evaluators were the Data and the Category Management groups. The two for which only limited evidence of effectiveness was found (and seemingly validated by the internal participants themselves) were the IT Modernization and the Workforce groups.

Data Group. The Data group, which tied for the highest median effectiveness score at the target-community level, also tied for first place in terms of group-level effectiveness. As for agency-level effectiveness, the Data group tied for the second-highest median score. In terms of allegiances, the Data group appeared to have relatively weak allegiances overall, but particularly in the organizational dimension. Given the high perceived effectiveness ratings for the Data group, coupled with its relatively low organizational allegiance score, there is support for an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness. The bullets below summarize the results, thus far, from the Data group:

- Rated highly effective based on secondary data.
- Highest perceived effectiveness overall.
- Second-lowest allegiance levels overall.
- Relatively low organizational allegiance scores.

Category Management group. The Category Management group, also deemed effective at the target-community level based on secondary data sources, received relatively high ratings at that level from its internal members. The median score from the Category Management group on target-community effectiveness was 0.86. At the agency level, the median score was also 0.86. The high scores may be attributable to the group leaders' deliberate efforts at governance and attracting agency-level leadership involvement very early in the process (Kamensky, 2017a). At the working-group level, however, the median score was the lowest of all four groups, at 0.71. This low group-level score may reflect the downside of deliberate governance, which may have suppressed the full participation of some individuals. Based on the survey data, members of the Category Management group appeared to have the weakest allegiances overall of the four working groups. For both organizational and relational allegiance, the Category Management group had the lowest median scores. These low allegiance scores, coupled with the group's high perceived effectiveness scores, do not support the notion of a direct relationship between relational allegiances and perceived effectiveness. However, this case does support the notion of an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness. The bullets below summarize the results, thus far, from the Category Management group:

- Rated highly effective based on secondary data.
- Tied for highest perceived effectiveness at agency and community levels.
- Lowest on perceived effectiveness at the group level.
- Lowest allegiance scores overall.

Workforce group. The Workforce group, for which the secondary data provided only limited evidence of effectiveness at the target-community level, had a relatively low median score of 0.79 at that level. At the agency level, the group's median score was the lowest of all four groups, at 0.71. In terms of working-group level effectiveness, however, the group's median

score was 0.86. Since the Workforce group had the highest median score for professional allegiance, and the second-highest for relational allegiance, the survey data provide no support for notions that high relational and high professional allegiance are directly related to perceived effectiveness, except at the group level. The group's organizational allegiance was relatively high as well, supporting the notion of an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness. The below bullets summarize the results, thus far, from the Workforce group:

- Little evidence of effectiveness based on secondary data.
- Rated lowest of all groups on perceived effectiveness at the agency level.
- Rated second-highest of all groups on perceived effectiveness at the group level.
- Tied for highest allegiances overall.
- Highest median professional allegiance score.

IT group. The IT group, for which the secondary data also provided only limited evidence of effectiveness at the target-community level, had the lowest median score (0.71) at that level. However, the group's median score for effectiveness at the agency level was tied for second highest at 0.79; for effectiveness at the group level, the group's median score was a perfect 1.0. In terms of allegiances, the IT group was tied for the highest overall scores, with the highest relational and organizational allegiance scores, but the lowest professional allegiance scores. Given that the IT group had the second-lowest composite mean effectiveness score, there is some support for the notion of a direct relationship between professional allegiance and perceived effectiveness, as well as that of an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness. The below bullets summarize the results, thus far, from the IT group:

- Little evidence of effectiveness based on secondary data.
- Rated highest on group-level perceived effectiveness.
- Tied for highest allegiances overall.
- Highest median relational and organizational allegiance scores.
- Lowest professional allegiance score.

Allegiances and Perceived Effectiveness, all Groups. At the aggregate level, I elected to analyze three of the preliminary inferences quantitatively: (1) the relationship between relational allegiances and perceived effectiveness at the target community level, (2) the relationship between professional allegiance and perceived effectiveness at the group level, and (3) the relationship between organizational allegiance and overall perceived effectiveness. As a final check for any relationships between perceived effectiveness and allegiances, I conducted regression analysis using my full data set (n=17, as one respondent failed to record effectiveness ratings). The only relationship holding some promise is the relationship between group-level perceived effectiveness and professional allegiance; that regression produced an R² value of 0.12, which is generally acceptable for studies in the social sciences, such as this one.

Table 5.20

Allegiances and Perceived Effectiveness – Regression Statistics

	Organizational Allegiance	Professional Allegiance	Relational Allegiance	Combined Allegiances
Community	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01
Group	0.02	0.12	0.05	0.01
Agency	0	0.06	0.01	0.01
Mean of Levels				0.11

Summary of Quantitative Findings. While the internal group members’ ratings of effectiveness at the target community were fairly consistent with those based on the secondary data, the survey data produced other interesting findings on perceived effectiveness. At this juncture, the survey data suggest that: (1) allegiances for groups perceived as effective did *not* differ materially from those perceived as not effective; in fact, differences may be more

pronounced along demographic lines than along working-group lines; (2) groups with high professional allegiance scores were not judged as moderately effective, but the regression statistics hint at a positive relationship between professional allegiance and perceived group-level effectiveness; and (3) groups with high relational allegiance scores were not judged as highly effective. Finally, though, (4) an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness does seem to exist. Still, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, the fact that my survey only generated 18 usable responses created a small-*n* problem, though, making it impossible to generalize based on the small data set. Because the survey was only part of my total research plan, however, I augmented the quantitative data with the qualitative findings (to be discussed in the next chapter) and integrate both perspectives in my final chapter.

Chapter 6

Qualitative Findings

As discussed at the end of Chapter 5, my survey research was limited in the respect that the questionnaire did not provide adequate opportunities for respondents to fully communicate the rationale underlying for their effectiveness ratings, or to vividly address the dimensions of their allegiances. My interviews, therefore, were conducted to augment and enrich the findings from the survey data. Given that I had chosen a semi-structured interview format, I was able to tailor the questions somewhat, based on the interviewees' specific roles on their working groups. For example, my interviews with advisors to working groups, as well as individuals with coordinating roles, included more detailed questions about the types of behaviors they observed in others than on their own behaviors. In contrast, interviews with subject matter experts included more questions about the technical work of the group. I made these slight modifications because individuals with coordination roles have a different vantage point from which to observe group dynamics, and subject matter experts typically have the most detailed view of what problems the group is attempting to solve. Because the semi-structured interview method affords the researcher some latitude to collect feedback on the varied experiences of the interviewees, it is particularly appropriate for exploratory research.

This chapter is divided into six parts. The first part provides the basic demographics of the individuals with whom I conducted interviews. The second, third, fourth, and fifth parts convey findings on the four interagency working groups chosen for analysis, respectively: Data as a Strategic Asset, Category Management, Workforce, and Information Technology (IT) Modernization. The final part contains a summary of my qualitative findings. For the qualitative data analysis, as discussed in Chapter 4, I followed a two-step process. Initially, I fractured the

data (Strauss, 1987), and then I reconnected those pieces to other pieces from statements and relevant events in a meaningful way. I followed the rubric presented as Table 4.2, which contained the core interview questions, the desired insights, and the manner in which I planned to parse, code and connect the data on events and statements, integrating them into a coherent, broader narrative. Although, as expected, there was variation in the extent to which the interviewees engaged with my questions, I was able to glean some valuable insights about individual allegiances and perceived effectiveness.

Part I. Demographics.

Table 6.1 (below) provides the demographics of the interviewees. Notably, the Data group was overrepresented among the four interagency working groups, while the Workforce and the IT groups were underrepresented. An appropriate percentage of interviewees came from the Category Management group. All of the interviewees except for one were career employees; one was a political appointee. In terms of seniority, three interviewees were members of the senior executive service (SES), one was a mid-level professional, and the rest were senior-level professionals or managers. In terms of working-group roles, two were leaders and one was an advisor, while the others were agency representatives or subject matter experts (SMEs). The differing levels of representation will be discussed in Chapter 7, when I discuss the limitations of my study. Of the 15 interviewees, 10 had also completed my survey and five were new. Accordingly, some of the demographic information was culled from the interviews, while some of it was already in my possession.

Table 6.1*Demographics of Individual Working Group Members*

	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
<u>Working Group Name</u>		
Category Management	3	20.0%
Data as a Strategic Asset	8	50.0%
Information Technology Modernization	2	13.3%
Workforce for the 21st Century	2	13.3%
<u>Nature of Employment</u>		
Permanent (Career)	14	93.3%
Political Appointee	1	6.7%
<u>Level of Seniority</u>		
Senior executive (SES)	3	20.0%
Expert (more than 10 years of experience)	7	46.6%
Mid-level professional	1	6.7%
Senior manager	4	26.7%
<u>Role in Working Group*</u>		
Advisor	1	6.7%
Agency Representative	3	13.3%
Subject Matter Expert	7	46.7%
Task or Project Leader	5	33.3%
Working Group Leader	2	13.3%

Note: Some interviewees identified multiple roles for themselves.

Part II. Data as a Strategic Asset

Background. As noted in Chapter 3, the work performed by the Data group crosses many domains (public, private, non-profit, educational, and international). As such, the Data group's target community is broader than that of any other CAP goal chosen for this study. Accordingly, to serve such a broad purpose, the overarching group leaders invested a great deal of effort in management and personnel selection for each of their four subgroups, which focus on the four subgoals: Data Commercialization (i.e., public-private partnerships), Decision Making and Accountability, Data Management (i.e., access and use), and Enterprise Data Governance.

As a knowledge worker, particularly during my nine years as a programmatic cost estimator and educator, I was a regular consumer of several federal databases (e.g., those from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Naval Center for Cost Analysis), and was mindful of the need for astute data governance. Given my limited exposure to government-wide Open Data efforts, however, I turned to Sharon Boivin, Ph.D., senior advisor to the Department of Education's Chief Data Officer, for insight on how the Data working group was set up and managed. Having co-created a program that purposefully brought together talented professionals to populate the subgroups in support of the Data goal, Dr. Boivin provided an informational interview on one of her rare days away from the office. "When we started the Federal Data Strategy work, we knew that if we just tried to [work]...out of OMB, it would look like a compliance exercise," she explained (S. Boivin, personal communication, July 12, 2019). Instead, she and her colleagues drew from their decade-long history of recruiting, planning, and managing purpose-oriented interorganizational networks, with aspirations to make the work meaningful to everyone who was involved. In 2009, they had formed a group to work under a Gates Foundation research grant. "One of the most important things [we did] was...[to try] to

identify the motivation of each organization to be involved in this collaboration. What’s in it for them? How can we meet that need?” This statement about the primacy of understanding the motivation and sustainment of interagency working group members confirms the importance of research studies such as mine. “It worked out really well,” she reported of the 2009 endeavor. “The collaboration grew into a coalition. We had an expert panel, comprised of potential users of the data [resulting from the research], and we met a couple of times per year to let them know what we were doing, and make sure that we were meeting needs.”

Dr. Boivin and her colleagues used their team-development expertise to create “this thing called the Federal Data Fellows. We did not want agency representatives; we wanted people ‘in the weeds’ who really knew data,” she emphasized. For the first cohort, approximately 40 senior-level⁵⁶ federal employees were competitively selected for one-year, part-time details as Federal Data Fellows. Applicants were asked to rank-order their areas of interest and indicate where they could add the most value. Upon selection, the Fellows were assigned to subgroups that were best aligned with their expertise and interests. Additionally, from the pool of selected Fellows, subgroup leaders were selected based on their reputations. Dr. Boivin’s team met the candidate leaders for coffee to gauge their interest levels, and then recruited them for special details that required 50-percent dedication to the subgroups. To be successful leading data professionals, subgroup “leaders required both technical credibility and collaboration skills, which include knowing the desired outcome before [initiating] meetings, developing tight agendas, and being respectful of people’s time.” Once personnel were chosen, each subgroup had a kick-off meeting. “They sat down and...they were amazed,” Dr. Boivin recalled, expressing delight over how

⁵⁶ For the Federal Data Fellows program, successful candidates had to be at the GS-13, 14, or 15 level, which typically translates to a fairly senior level of expertise or management within an agency.

salient the topics were to this cadre of self-selected individuals, who said, ““Wow! I’ve never been in a group before where everybody cares about data!”” All in all, Dr. Boivin and her team expected that the Federal Data Fellows would not only provide differing professional perspectives, but be “ambassadors for the Federal Data Strategy back in their own agencies...[but] we had to help agencies see what was in it for them.” She made it clear that “we’re not just getting work out people, but also building a network of data-savvy people.” They learned from one another on the job, and also engaged in focused training sessions, obtaining new ideas from the Chief Statistician of the United States, as well as intensive training on the Evidence-Based Policy Making Act (2019), what it means for agencies and what it means for data.

For additional insight on the allegiances and perceptions of members of the Data group, I conducted eight interviews. Of those eight interviewees, five were Federal Data Fellows, who had worked within subgroups and offered very similar responses to many of the allegiance questions, as detailed in the forthcoming paragraphs. The other interviewees included two White House Leadership Development Program (WHLDP) Fellows and a political appointee, all of whom worked within the overarching CAP-goal working group.

Perceived effectiveness. Based on the secondary data (e.g., Performance.gov reports) gathered in preparation for my primary data collection, the Data group was fairly uniformly perceived as being highly effective at the target-community level. Based on the interview data, the individual members of the Data group also rated target-community effectiveness as high. Their effectiveness ratings at the agency level were moderately high, but at the group level, their collective ratings were only moderate, as summarized in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2

Data Group: Preliminary Interview Findings on Perceived Effectiveness

Level	Effectiveness Rating
Community	High
Group	Moderate
Agency	Moderate-to-High

Effectiveness: Target Community. Based on the interview data, the individual members of the Data group rated its effectiveness high at the target-community level. All of the interviewees identified the target community as not only federal agencies, but also state and local agencies, private-sector firms, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions – as well as individual citizens of the United States and the rest of the world. Even with such a vast target community, most of the interviewees were able to substantiate the high rating by identifying specific benefits to certain segments of that community. For one subgroup, the specific product was a prototype model; for another, it was training material; for yet another, it was a playbook or a case study. Even for the subgroup that published no standalone product, its members recognized that they had contributed to a larger effort, the Federal Data Strategy, which offered immense benefit to the target community. Only one interviewee answered the target-community effectiveness question in terms of what KPIs generally fail to capture, particularly in the realm of competing values (e.g., cycle time vs. safety), and how the federal performance system can be gamed. “CAP goals are sort of weird things. Like other performance measures, they’re intended to create an incentive to do more stuff, by measuring what is being done and setting targets” the interviewee noted, reflecting Dull (2009) on misaligned incentives. “What really happens is people look around for stuff to feed into the gristmill...[for reporting purposes].”

Effectiveness: Group. At the overall working-group level, of the three interviewees who were qualified to comment, one indicated that the Data group was a collaborative effort across government that required attention to the nuances involved with transparency: “Industry, the public...everyone got to chop on the Federal Data Strategy. Lots of people had something at stake...but there really wasn’t any one agency that weighed in more than any other.” Another interviewee portrayed the early stages of group formation as “Chief Data Officers sitting around thinking big thoughts [such as] the role of the federal executive in the Era of Big Data...creating pipelines for others’ professional growth.” At that early stage, there was no real conflict, as the principals were “just figuring things out.”

At the subgroup level, where operational efforts were underway, things were different. Although the four subgroups were very homogeneous in terms of size, composition, age, and level of complexity, the interactions among members varied, as did perceptions of effectiveness. One interviewee said, “We were all top-notch! It was hard and it was frustrating, but at the end of the year, everybody was proud of the work they had done.” Another interviewee was less positive: “We felt pretty good about the work we put out, but it fell off a bit at the end. With the government shutdown [December 2018 through January 2019], our work wasn’t as creative or substantive.” Another interviewee implied that some intragroup conflicts never came to the surface: “We never really got out of the group formation stage....Two-thirds of the way through, our leader got called back to his agency for some important projects, so then we had no leader...” Additionally, since none of the subgroup members were dedicated full-time to the Data projects, there was some angst about workload imbalances. Still, most interviewees were sufficiently attracted to the work that they invested extra time, either by teleworking (to save

commuting time) or reshuffling their home-agency priorities to accommodate their subgroups. All in all, the interviewees collectively rated group-level effectiveness as moderate.

Effectiveness: Agency. For the Data group, the interviewees’ perceptions of effectiveness at the agency level were moderately high. These high perceptions may have stemmed from the fact that the management team from the interagency working group made deliberate efforts to educate all agencies on the benefits of the Data CAP goal. Even when immediate, direct benefits were hard to identify, all of the agencies knew that benefits from the Data group would accrue over time, particularly in terms of having better data available for decision making. The only problem suggested by three of the interviewees involved opportunity costs – specifically, that the subgoals may have consumed too much of the interviewees’ time.

Table 6.3

Data Group: Detailed Interview Findings on Perceived Effectiveness

Theme and subthemes	Insights
Goals - fluidity - group level - subgroup level - individual level	Even when overall group-level goals are well understood, the subgroup goals and individual roles are often fluid and amorphous.
Effectiveness - community - contribution to something bigger	Target community and supporting efforts were well understood. Even when subgroups did not have standalone products for the target community, they contributed in other ways.
Effectiveness - group - dynamics - structure	Even with homogeneous structures among the four subgroups, interactions differed greatly. Some members suggested more structure, stronger subgroup leadership, and goal specificity. Some can “make it up as they go along;” others cannot.

Effectiveness - agency - return on investment (ROI)	Although immediate, direct benefits are hard to identify, agencies will benefit from this work. Some agencies allowed Data Fellows to return for a second year, if work was salient enough to the agency.
Other collaborative experiences - working groups - intra-agency efforts - multi-sector efforts - community of stakeholders	When working groups are orchestrated in a top-down manner, the same people are selected for all of the groups, but no one really has time to truly understand the problems they're trying to solve. Baseline individuals' technical knowledge important. To incentivize voluntary groups, reward with small items, as well as communication with supervisors.

All in all, the interview data suggest that the Data group was involved in globally impactful work and that they were highly effective in accomplishing it. Most of the interviewees had positive things to say about their personal involvement. "I was not only able to make a strong contribution, but felt that my contribution would be valued," said one. For two interviewees, the value of their work (both professional and agency-level standpoints) was so high that their agencies allowed them to remain on detail as Data Fellows for an additional year. Of the eight interviewees, seven had prior experiences with interorganizational working groups, and had numerous insights. One interviewee posited that internal, intra-agency working groups work best, consistent with Fountain (2013b), who pointed out that funds may often be transferred from one group to another within an agency, since the resources are in a single appropriations account. Similarly, projects within a single agency have clearer lines of authority and accountability. Still, the interviewee stressed the importance of working outside of the agency's hierarchy, because with groups that are orchestrated in a top-down manner, "the same people are selected for all of the groups, but no one really has time to understand the problem they're trying to solve." Another shared an experience with a community of stakeholders: "To incentivize the group, I offer a little reward or something special for them. Also, messaging out when we have successful things – to supervisors – helps get good participation."

Allegiances. For insight on allegiances, I analyzed the interviewees’ responses to the questions on their roles within the interagency working group, the processes by which they were recruited, the alignment of the interagency work with their regular work, the impact of the interagency work on the agency, their pre-existing relationships, and any intrapersonal conflicts that may have arisen, whether from their representational roles or from simple scheduling issues. Additionally, if comments associated with other questions conveyed insight on individual allegiances, I integrated those into my analysis, as well. Table 6.3 summarizes my findings.

Table 6.4

Data Group: Preliminary Interview Findings on Allegiances

Dimension	Allegiance Rating
Organizational	Moderate
Professional	High
Relational	Moderately High

Organizational Allegiance. The interviewees from the Data group collectively reflected moderate organizational allegiance. Only the political appointee repeatedly spoke on behalf of an agency, yet performing as agency spokesperson was the appointee’s regular responsibility. Of the five Data Fellows and the two WHLFP Fellows, six made comments that reflected only moderate organizational allegiance, relative to the Data group’s work. “The Fellowship is much more important than my agency work,” said one interviewee. Another interviewee said, with palpable enthusiasm: “The [Data subgroup] work is beyond the scope of my regular job – way beyond!” Given that both of the fellowship programs were billed as professional development opportunities, the individuals who self-select for such programs are typically less interested in

internal agency matters than in professional development. In practical terms, as well, the tilting of the allegiance scales away from the organization makes sense: the Data Fellows' roles were to provide professional expertise, with little to no agency representation necessary. The WHLDP Fellows' roles were to provide leadership, while representing OMB, an agency not permanently their own. Only one Fellow, when asked the dichotomous question on making a White House appearance versus responding to an agency-level inspector general query, offered an agency-centric response: "My boss writes my performance review, [so even if I'm] the prime communicator [at the White House], I'd ask someone else on the team to take the lead. [Then] I'd go do the report [for my boss]." Overall, while all of the interviewees understood and mentioned their agencies' needs periodically, it was clear that their professions were of greater importance to them.

Professional Allegiance. Through their comments, all of the interviewees (including the political appointee) manifested a high level of professional allegiance. "While I see [the Data subgroup] as an extension of my work...I think it is definitely a growth opportunity for my future career," said one interviewee, who shared aspirations of becoming a Chief Data Officer someday. Another interviewee affirmed, "[The Data subgroup] was a chance for me to grow professionally [and]...learn from other agencies." Most were recruited to support the Data CAP group because they had elected to take professional development assignments. Once on assignment, as noted above, their roles involved providing subject matter expertise or leadership. When confronted with the question on making a White House appearance or responding to the agency inspector general, nearly all interviewees opted for the White House task, but two articulated some level of concern over managing relationships with their home-agency supervisors. Regarding the novelty of the work itself, the interviewees were split evenly by those

for whom the Data subgroup work was “way beyond the scope” of what they normally did and those for whom the work was “very complementary” to their normal work. In fact, based on some other responses regarding group-level effectiveness, it is likely that some conflicts may have arisen from the fact that some subgroup members were highly experienced with strategic, policy-development work and some were not at all. It is difficult to maintain pure, egalitarian relationships when working group members’ knowledge and skill levels are very different.

Relational Allegiance. For the Data group members interviewed, relational allegiance was moderately high. It was highest for the political appointee, who had strong, long-term working relationships with many people on the interagency working group. “[As] Chief Information Officers, we all know each other. We are well connected,” the appointee noted, adding that such relationships are very positive. “All of us have been at other agencies... You run into a lot of similar people as you go through your career and across agencies... and it really helps [to get things accomplished].” Of the other seven interviewees, only one had even reputational knowledge of other group members. For the other six interviewees, new relationships had to be developed on during the assignment: “Everybody on our subgroup was in same situation: nobody knew anybody else,” said one interviewee. Another noted that the new colleagues were “...super nice, so we developed a friendly rapport pretty quickly. I will say our social interactions went very smoothly and easily from the beginning.” For most of the interviewees, then, relational allegiance was not what attracted them to the work; new relationships developed over time. In fact, two of the interviewees opted to extend their fellowships, and both mentioned meaningful relationships with the top-level management team as key drivers of their decisions. Table 6.5 provides additional detail and key insights from the interview data on the various allegiances of the Data group members.

Table 6.5*Data Group – Detailed Interview Findings on Allegiances*

Themes and subthemes	Key insights
Working group members - individuals - agencies	Lots of pre-coordination by the management team was done to ensure the subgroups were well staffed. Individuals who are experts themselves tend to think in terms of expertise, rather than agency affiliation. Personalities are also important (e.g., credit-takers vs. people who do not care about credit.).
Agency role vs. working group role	By pursuing professional interests, individuals can obtain meaningful work. Group role may not be ideal initially, but unexpected new worlds may open. Novel work can motivate, but strong management is needed when the work is not novel to everyone. When organizational and professional values align, there is also strong motivation.
Intrapersonal conflict	When organizational and professional values align, there is very little conflict. Not hard to represent agency while also proving professional point of view.
Competing priorities	When professionals are highly invested in their organizations or relationships, they will find a way to satisfy all parties.
Working group vs. agency mission	When individuals self-select for an interagency role, they often have a strong understanding of how the work will impact their agencies.
Relationships - history - current development	Relationships that develop within the context of the working group can be as important as the relationships that existed before. Relationships are highly important for those who decided to extend as Data Fellows.
Future - aspirations - agency work - relationships	Individuals can champion Data Strategy from home agency. Working group experience can lead to new projects within home agency. Future as Chief Data Officer is possible. Future as policy writer is possible.

Summary. The interview data suggest that the individuals' allegiances were more strongly oriented to the professional dimension than to the organizational or relational dimensions. Taking into account the history of the Data group, this professional orientation could be attributable to the manner in which individuals were recruited (i.e., through developmental opportunities). For the most part, they came forward to perform specific work they believed to be salient. Moreover, considering that professional backgrounds of most of the interviewees included the physical sciences, as well as mathematics and statistics, the interagency working group's management team was deliberate about finding ways to motivate the Data Fellows, including the selection of subgroup leaders with technical credibility. The management team thus paid attention to supporting the Data Fellows as professionals, while also providing them with the foundational skills and knowledge to serve as ambassadors for the Data subgroup's work back at their home agencies. Although the experiences of the Data Fellows differed from those of the WHLDP Fellows and that of the political appointee, as noted earlier in my narrative on the Data group, the interview data suggest that, collectively, the individuals supporting the Data group viewed themselves as highly effective in accomplishing globally impactful work. Their ratings were high at the target-community level, moderately high at the agency level, and moderate at the group or subgroup level.

Of my five expected findings, the Data group narrative supports four of them. First, the notion that high professional allegiances are associated with moderate group-level effectiveness ratings is reinforced, as the interviewees seemed to be high in professional allegiance and they pointed to more issues with group dynamics than anything else. Second, the notion that high relational allegiance is associated with high effectiveness ratings at the community level is supported. Although individuals were not initially drawn to the work via existing relationships,

the two Data Fellows who opted to extend for another year were strongly motivated by relationships. Moreover, the political appointee at the overall working group level confirmed that multiple relationships preceded the existence of the Data group, thus enabling certain strategies to take hold. Third, the notion of an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness (in general) is supported, as the interviewees within the Data group did not manifest particularly high organizational allegiance. Fourth, there is some support for the notion that perceived effectiveness will affect allegiance to the project itself, as most of the interviewees expressed positive feelings about future involvement with the Data group's work, even when back at their home agencies.

Part III. Category Management.

Background. For insight on the Category Management group, I conducted three interviews. The interviewees included two subgroup leaders and one subgroup member, who was responsible for developing tools to enhance efforts across all of the Category Management subgroups. Altogether, there were 10 subgroups, one for each of the acquisition categories to be managed: professional services, information technology, security and protection, industrial products and services, office management, transportation and logistics services, travel and lodging, human capital, and medical. As was the case for several of the CAP goals, the General Services Administration (GSA) served OMB in a “handmaiden”-type role, even reorganizing some of its divisions to support Category Management. In the words of two interviewees, GSA “owns the marketplace” for most of the categories to be managed, so it is logical for GSA to perform many of the leadership roles. For the medical category, however, agencies such as HHS, the VA, and the Defense Medical Agency, but did not contribute full-time leadership resources.

In the interest of full disclosure, Category Management falls within the realm of acquisition policy, where I have spent the bulk of my federal career. Thus, I had prior working knowledge of all three interviewees, as well as brief experience working directly with one of them. My technical knowledge, as well as my working relationships, made it natural to engage with these interviewees as research partners.

Perceived effectiveness. The Category Management group, for which the secondary data (e.g., positive KPIs and recognized impact) suggested high effectiveness at the target-community level, was likewise perceived as highly effective at that level by the interviewees. In terms of group-level and agency-level effectiveness, the interviewees rated the Category Management group as moderately effective, as detailed in the forthcoming sections.

Table 6.6

Category Management Group: Summary of Interview Findings on Perceived Effectiveness

Level	Effectiveness Rating
Community	High
Group	Moderate
Agency	Moderate

Effectiveness: Target Community. Early on, the co-leaders of the Category Management CAP goal identified the target community as program officials and contracting professionals. When describing the benefits of Category Management to that community, one interviewee echoed the Hippocratic Oath: “First, do no harm. In no way should we create more work [for them].” The interviewee pointed to educating more of the target community about future opportunities to leverage Category Management principles, rather than being “that big, bad

person [who forces rework] of existing procurements,” as the best practice. “Instead of [agency program offices] awarding all of these small contracts, we will take [them] under Category Management....and time is money, right? You don’t get the money back, but you get [more] time to concentrate on the mission.” Another interviewee stated that while program offices were being well served, Category Management was a tough concept to sell at first. The notion of helping programs achieve efficiencies and garner cost savings actually generated lots of pushback. “People don’t want to document savings, because they’re afraid others will take their money,” the interviewee pointed out. This assertion is consistent with Bardach (1998, p. 175). To help agencies to buy in to Category Management, OMB’s Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) eventually changed the phrase “cost savings” to “cost avoidance” in its policy documents.

All in all, after three years of educating agency program officials and contracting professionals on Category Management, the working group members strongly agreed that their effectiveness is high at the target-community level. “It’s sticking!” one interviewee said. “It stuck during Obama, and under the current administration....It’s really refreshing to see that what I think makes sense is resonating.” Over time, the Category Management CAP goal has matured to the point where new challenges might be productively undertaken. One interviewee alluded to a more expansive view, which emphasizes supplier relationship management; this was a big part of Laurent (2019)’s critique, as well. “Suppliers are existentially motivated to work for a higher business-tier⁵⁷ contract vehicle,” the interviewee stated, suggesting the need for contracting officers to understand and engage in supplier relationship management.

⁵⁷ In contracting, “higher business tier” means the entity is closer to the prime contract level. Although profits are not necessarily higher at the top tiers, recognition and the accompanying benefit of more follow-on business is more likely at higher business tiers.

Effectiveness: Group. In terms of group-level effectiveness, the interviewees rated the effectiveness as moderate overall. However, there were 10 subgroups, each of which potentially offered a different group experience, so this effectiveness rating may not reflect the entire Category Management working group. “I can’t really answer for all of them,” advised one interviewee, who was involved with a few of the subgroups. Based on the interview data, though, group dynamics were generally good: “There was no need for someone to orchestrate the meetings to keep them civil. Everyone is professional,” said one interviewee, who acknowledged that conflicts may not have fully surfaced. “Some people are just quieter.” Another interviewee revealed that strong personalities sometimes impeded collaborative efforts, and that leadership styles were needed at different times in subgroups’ lifecycles, pointing to the fact that not all 10 subgroups were at the same stage of maturity. Power differentials between OFPP and agencies, as well as among agencies of differing sizes, also sometimes muffled participation. “At first, OFPP did a good job of getting all of [the subgroup leaders] together...But I think that OFPP already [knew] what they wanted, [so] they weren’t very good about taking input,” an interviewee said, suggesting an area for improvement. When comments were solicited, OFPP followed its normal policy, which was ostensibly intended for commenters external to their organization, of giving no direct feedback. When that happens, “people just stop talking.”

From the perspective of individual agency voices being heard, “we have good conversations,” said one interviewee. “It’s mostly up to [the members] to speak,” said another. “There are more vocal members for sure.” During subgroup meetings, many of the smaller agencies’ representatives seemed to be “just listening in.” One interviewee said, “We encourage them to talk, but if they don’t, that’s not a deal breaker,” alluding to the relative impact of the smaller agencies’ purchasing power. One interviewee, who came from a subgroup known for its

cohesiveness, was to work directly with members and build trusting relationships. “If I have an idea or a question, I reach out to certain members individually. I tend to get more information that way.” Most members were senior-level people from agency policy offices; they could speak authoritatively about KPIs, as well as emergent needs in a particular category (i.e., needs that could not be fulfilled through existing contract vehicles that contribute to Spend Under [Category] Management, which was a KPI. For the Category Managers (i.e., the subgroup leaders), gaining knowledge of emergent needs was helpful. For the individual members, many enjoyed intellectual stimulation (i.e., “debating the merits of one policy or another”) arising from subgroup meetings, while others used the platform to advocate for their own agencies’ solutions.

Effectiveness: Agency. For the Category Management group, interviewees’ perceptions of agency-level effectiveness varied based on their backgrounds. For one interviewee, whose normal agency role was only loosely related to the working group’s mission, the return on investment was uniquely realized: “I didn’t go back [to my original agency],” the interviewee reported. “But what I learned about Category Management was very relevant to the agency where I went.” On the other hand, as might be expected, when interagency work was core to the individuals’ normal jobs, the work was viewed as a positive return on the agency’s investment. Moreover, such individuals could readily recommend ways to make the interagency work more meaningful, encouraging representation not only from upper-echelon policy officials, but also from working-level practitioners. “Often information is absorbed at the senior executive level, and heads are nodding ‘yeah, yeah, this is what we need to do,’ but...[that message] is not trickled down.” One interviewee stated emphatically, “New senior-level people are ideal, as they still have the working-level perspective.” These views suggest that the group could benefit from a mix of practitioners (or practitioner-savvy people), along with senior-level representatives.

Table 6.7*Category Management Group: Detailed Interview Findings on Perceived Effectiveness*

Themes and subthemes	Key insights
Goals - Start-up - Maturation - Leadership styles	Goals and metrics changed somewhat over time. As the goals mature, more attention will be needed to sustainment, and different types of leadership will be needed.
Effectiveness -Target community -Broader definition	As the goal matures, expansion of “target community” to include suppliers may be warranted.
Effectiveness -Group -Subgroups -Agency leaders	Groups included agencies’ functional leaders. Some agencies were strongly engaged, promoting their own solutions. Conflicts may have been suppressed. Even when strong personalities and dominating agencies are present, good work can be done.
Effectiveness -Agency -Agency vs. “greater good”	Agencies might be better served with more diverse representation, as agency leaders do not understand some problems. Even when agency has no ROI, the government as a whole can benefit.
Other collaborative experiences - working groups - intra-agency efforts - joint military exercises - efficiency-oriented groups	Same management and communication principles apply to all groups whose goals entail bringing about change to achieve efficiencies. Smaller-scale, shorter-term efforts seem easier, as network was already developed and deliverable was already focused. Joint activities among military services require “greater good” approach to the mission.

Effectiveness: Summary. The interview data suggest that the Category Management group was involved in very useful work, and that its subgoals are continuing to mature. As such, more attention to sustainment will be needed, with requisitely different types of leadership. Additionally, maturation of the goals might call for expanding the target community to include suppliers and other entities. At the subgroup level, certain agencies actively participated, with

some promoting their own solutions and others remaining quiet: some conflicts may have been repressed. Even when power differentials among agencies (and strong personalities) are present, though, productive work can be done. At the agency level, benefit could come from more diverse representation in the subgroups. Moreover, even if the agencies realized no direct return on their investment in this interagency work, benefits will accrue at a higher level. In comparison to other public-to-public collaborative efforts in which the interviewees had been involved, Category Management was broader in scope and more difficult, as its deliverables and the “action network” (Agranoff, 2008) surrounding them were less mature. One interviewee characterized Category Management as being similar to joint action among military services, as overcoming an agency-level perspective was key to success: “It was my full-time job to think about all sides. You’re out for the mission,” but a particular profession or agency may be the point from which an individual can influence other members’ behaviors and actions. Finally, similar principles will apply to all purpose-oriented networks that promote efficiency through change: as one interviewee said, “flooding the airwaves” to manage agencies’ perceptions about saving time and reducing workloads will ultimately minimize battles over administrative turf (Wilson, 1989).

Allegiances. Overall, as summarized below, the group’s interviewees were moderately high in professional and organizational allegiance, but only moderate in relational allegiance.

Table 6.8

Category Management Group: Summary of Interview Findings on Allegiances

Dimension	Allegiance Rating
Organizational	Moderately High
Professional	Moderately High
Relational	Moderate

Organizational Allegiance. The interviewees from the Category Management group collectively reflected moderately high organizational allegiance. Two of the interviewees had been with their agencies for more than 10 years, easily connected their agency roles to the CAP goal, and spoke with enthusiasm about their agency roles, whether they involved “working on behalf of my own marketplace” or getting numerous agencies to work together, “sharing and acting more as one.” The other interviewee had switched agencies multiple times in recent years: while expressing appreciation for each employer, the interviewee described most favorably the work experiences in which “overcoming” a single-agency perspective⁵⁸ was pronounced. When asked the either-or behavioral question, the interviewee replied without hesitation that the higher-echelon activity would take priority, pondering with some bemusement why an agency would even consider imposing a priority that could compete with the interagency one; this signaled a lower than average degree of organizational allegiance.

Professional Allegiance. The interviewees collectively manifested a moderately high level of professional allegiance through their comments. For one interviewee, who sought professional development through the WHLDP, found growth opportunities not through the subject matter itself, but from the vantage point of working in a high-level federal policy office. “I’ve never been in an environment like that. They are the generators of ideas...and the level of conversation was not something I was used to.” Even without a strong policy background, that interviewee was able to use the WHLDP experience to secure a policy position within a different agency later on. The other two interviewees had moderate levels of professional allegiance, providing appropriately detailed accounts of what the Category Management meant in terms of their organizational roles, but were less verbose about their specific professional backgrounds.

⁵⁸ As a contract negotiator, this interviewee is highly skilled at seeing the different sides of any argument; therefore, the ability to “overcome” a single perspective is considered a valuable attribute.

Relational Allegiance. For the Category Management group members interviewed, relational allegiance was moderate. In terms of prior connections, one interviewee indicated knowledge of several people in the subgroup before becoming its leader, one knew only one person in the subgroup, and one knew no one. The interviewee without any prior connections did overtly applaud the GSA program office, as well as OFPP and the executive councils, which enabled the interviewee to connect with the right people. For another interviewee, relationships did not seem to be a strong motivator within the context of the subgroup. “Most of the people [there] are not my peers. I don’t feel like I’m missing out on anything by not being in the room [metaphorically].” For one interviewee, interestingly, the Category Management work was enlivened through a side project with a previous colleague. “A friend of mine had been working with GSA on the President’s Management Agenda, and went back to her home agency, where she became aware of the need for sweeping changes to the government-wide contract auditing policy. I wondered, ‘Can we help them from the OFPP perspective?’” Although contract auditing was related to Category Management in multiple ways, there was “no mandate from the top.” As a grass-roots effort, the audit policy work was particularly satisfying for the interviewee, because “they were all so interested in it being successful.” Table 6.9 provides key insights from the interview data on the allegiance dimensions of the Category Management group.

Table 6.9*Category Management – Detailed Interview Findings on Allegiances*

Themes and subthemes	Key Insights
Working group members - individuals - agencies - dedication levels	When constant interaction with agencies is needed, it is helpful to have key staff dedicated to managing those relationships. Agency affiliation and specific expertise go hand in hand. More diverse perspectives from all agencies are needed. New senior-level people are ideal, as they still have the working-level perspective.
Agency role vs. working group role	When agency and roles align, there is strong motivation. When agency and interagency work differ greatly, growth opportunities can be motivational. When assigned by virtue of agency role, individuals can be motivated by the opportunity to make a difference. Even when professional interest motivates a person to initially engage, the actual work may not be consistent with professional goals.
Intrapersonal conflict	When organizational and professional values align in a “greater good of government” approach, there is not much conflict.
Working group vs. agency mission	GSA mission is strongly aligned with CAP goal. Even for agencies for whom the CAP goal was not initially relevant, involvement can help them recognize the goal’s merits.
Relationships - history - enrichment of work	Historical relationships did not spark initial engagement. Historical relationships did enrich the work and help individuals take it in new directions.
Future - maturation of CAP goal - aspirations - different types of work	Goal maturation pose sustainment challenges. Interagency experience can open up professional opportunities at different agencies.

Summary. For the Category Management group, the interview data suggested stronger professional allegiance than either organizational or relational allegiance. Taking into account the broader group narrative, the deliberate top-down approach of OFPP to supplant the prior

Strategic Sourcing goal with Category Management (a more expansive goal) may have required a systematic, professionalized management approach. Implementation of Category Management, OFPP realized, would require near-constant interplay between federal agencies and the “implementers,” one interviewee’s moniker for the Category Managers. This interaction was intended to bolster the perception that the CAP goal was jointly owned by agencies and OFPP. To energize the start-up work on Category Management, OFPP relied on the orchestration efforts of GSA’s professional staff, whose organizational allegiances were closely intertwined with relational and professional allegiances. GSA’s mission is inherently cross-agency, and that mission is achievable only through relationships with both government and industry partners. The interview data also suggest that the Category Management group has been highly effective at the target community level, and moderately effective at the group and agency levels.

Of my five expected findings, the Category Management narrative supports three of them, albeit not strongly in all cases. First, the notion that high professional allegiances are associated with moderate group-level effectiveness ratings is reinforced, as the interviewees seemed to be high in professional allegiance and they brought up several issues with group composition and dynamics. Second, the interview data somewhat support an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness at all levels. Individuals within the Category Management group viewed their efforts as generally effective and did not manifest high organizational allegiances; for some of the interviewees, however, it was difficult to separate the three allegiance dimensions. Third, there is some support for the notion that high perceived effectiveness will affect allegiance to the project itself, as all of the interviewees expressed future interest in the Category Management group’s work, which they viewed as generally effective.

Part IV. Workforce for the 21st Century

Background. To develop a better understanding of the Workforce group, I conducted two interviews. Both interviewees were key personnel from the government-wide group focused on the Workforce CAP goal. One of the interviewees was permanently assigned to the group; the other was dedicated through one-year personnel detail. The Workforce goal falls within human capital management, a field that has touched my federal career repeatedly, but most frequently during the four years I served in a supervisory role within the Department of Defense. As such, I am more aware than most federal employees of the statutes, rules, conventions, and constraints. While I had no prior working knowledge of the interviewees, both were interested in helping to further any academic research on interagency working groups. Their interest signaled that they understood the value of this research, which relates to personnel selection for impactful, cross-agency work assignments. Needless to say, it was easy to engage with the Workforce interviewees as research partners.

Perceived effectiveness. Based on the secondary data (e.g., Performance.gov, GAO) collected prior to administering the survey and conducting the interviews, I found little evidence of effectiveness at the target-community level for the Workforce group. Data from the individual interviews seemed to reflect similar perceptions, as summarized in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10

Workforce Group: Summary of Interview Findings on Perceived Effectiveness

Level	Effectiveness Rating
Community	Low
Group	Low
Agency	Moderately Low

Effectiveness: Target Community. At the target-community level, the interviewees noted dissatisfaction over what the group was producing, but pointed out that human resources (HR) problems within the federal government are among its “deepest, most systemically difficult” problems. Given that more than 500 overlapping statutes and regulations are at play within federal workforce arena, “we don’t have the answer.” In fact, a large portion of this group’s time has been spent attempting to determine which aspects of the problem can be addressed in a reasonable timeframe. True reform would require new legislation, which would take many years to enact. One interviewee noted, “If I’m asked the [effectiveness] question later on, I’ll [probably] look back and say we did something, but now in the midst of it, I’m not at all satisfied with what we are getting out.” Another interviewee suggested that there were some positive developments, but not as many as the group had hoped. Regarding the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of employee engagement scores, which are derived from the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) data, one interviewee suggested that attention to this particular KPI was misplaced, as many federal employees do not take the survey seriously. Another interviewee highlighted opportunities for improving employee engagement in general, outside the auspices of the FEVS itself, by demonstrating that federal managers were actually doing something about poor performers.

Effectiveness: Group. At the interagency working group level, the interviewees agreed that the right parties were present. The two agencies with the largest roles, OMB and OPM, were actively involved, but their differing perspectives sometimes created conflicts. “OPM knows the rules, [in terms of] what you can do today,” while OMB is positioned to formulate recommendations on which rules need to be changed. OMB’s role was to envision workforce issues that could be a decade away, while OPM’s stance was typically based on “not getting

sued.” To balance out the membership, one interviewee recommended additional support from communications and information technology (IT) professionals, and one stressed the need for more people who “just want to get in there and work.” Within the context of the working group, the interviewees agreed that individual members were “not speaking up enough,” but that was not because the leaders discouraged participation. “It’s actually more of a struggle to get them to say things,” one interviewee emphasized, acknowledging that this problem is common with geographically dispersed individuals, particularly when the group leaders lack the luxury of time to do to directly engage with individuals and build trust.

Reflecting upon the demographics of the federal workforce, one interviewee remarked that 85 percent of federal employees, and some of the Workforce group members, work outside of the Washington, D.C. area. However, the accountable individuals⁵⁹ for the Workforce CAP goal are all located in Washington, D.C., making it difficult to energize government-wide change proposals. “It can just be an echo chamber of who’s right here.” To assure a more functional group, an interviewee posited that “you almost need a full-time person at each agency to marshal efforts” and encourage information sharing. Another interviewee corroborated this notion, stressing that some of the best work came from HR practitioners outside the policy arena. “These people were very passionate,” and offered ideas from real-life experiences, an interviewee noted. “This is how you get a larger, more grass-roots effort going,” said another interviewee, “but they all have day jobs.” This clash between day-to-day duties and special, interagency working group duties made the Workforce group less effective than it could have been.

⁵⁹ “Accountable individual” is a term with origins in the Department of Defense (DoD) Financial Management Regulation 7000.14-R. The term originally denoted a person with responsibility for government funds, but its meaning has broadened to apply to any person responsible for a government program, including a CAP goal.

Another observation cited by an interviewee addressed the working group's seemingly low level of engagement with the nominal CAP goal leaders (i.e., the leaders named in the quarterly reports on Performance.gov). "I never really could figure out what they wanted me to do." On the few occasions when leaders communicated directly with the people at the working-group level, "you could just feel the energy level going up," and the group became more productive. According to one interviewee, however, this did not happen frequently. Most of the time, "the work seemed to occur within pockets," without strong overarching coordination. "I never got the sense that [the lack of coordination] was intentional," the interviewee stated, noting that both the nominal group leaders and the agency-level experts were stretched very thin.

Effectiveness: Agency. For the Workforce group, the interviewees' perceptions of effectiveness at the agency level varied because they had come from different agency backgrounds. For one interviewee, whose regular agency role was not related to the working group's mission, there was no return on investment at the agency level: "The experience gave me a broader view of government, which was very productive...for me [as a professional]." On the other hand, as might be expected, when the group's work was aligned with individual's normal job within an agency, then the individual viewed the work as a positive return on the agency's investment. "I'm a fan of [this work]," one interviewee stated, but signaled that there were opportunity costs, particularly for those from agencies other than OMB and OPM. This interviewee mentioned that, under GPRAMA, each individual agency was also required to set up agency priority goals (APGs) and create their own standards, so agencies had "no excuse" for not working to meet those standards. "If I had to sacrifice one thing or another, I'd kill the [CAP goals] and go with the APGs, because agencies will get those done." Table 6.11 captures the interview findings on the perceived effectiveness of the Workforce interagency working group.

Table 6.11*Workforce Group: Detailed Interview Findings on Perceived Effectiveness*

Themes and subthemes	Key Insights
Goals - New leader - Fluidity	Goals changed little, but took new direction due to the passion of one leader.
Effectiveness -Target community -Metrics	Metrics may matter less than perceptions. True progress requires sweeping changes (statutes, regulations).
Effectiveness -Group -Goal leaders -Agency representatives	Top leadership could have been more engaged. Day jobs clash with working group responsibilities.
Effectiveness -Agency -Agency vs. “greater good”	Agencies might be better served in a different way with respect to workforce goals. Even if agency had low ROI, the group’s work did benefit the professional.
Other collaborative experiences - working groups - international trade groups	Hard to compare interagency working groups with widely differing goals and members.

Effectiveness: Summary. Although the Workforce group’s goals slightly changed over time, the interviewees understood the need for change and were supportive. At the target-community level, the interviewees understood and could define the target community, but there was some ambivalence about the utility of the metrics. At the working-group level, the interview data suggested workload distribution issues. Although there was no debate that the Workforce group was involved in extraordinarily useful work, the interview data suggested that true progress at the target-community level will require significant statutory and regulatory changes. Moreover, at the both the target-community level and the agency level, greater effectiveness might require different resources or different organizing schemes, such as workforce

improvement APGs at each agency with agency-level liaisons to share information with other agencies. At the working group level, higher effectiveness might be achieved through additional communications capacity, with more involvement of the high-level goal leaders.

Allegiances. For insight on allegiances, I analyzed the interviewees’ responses to questions on their roles within the interagency working group, the processes by which they were recruited, the alignment of the interagency work with their regular work, the impact of the interagency work on the agency, their pre-existing relationships, and any intrapersonal conflicts that may have arisen, whether from their representational roles or simple scheduling problems. Additionally, if comments associated with other questions revealed insight on individual allegiances, I integrated those into my analysis, as well. Table 6.12 summarizes the findings on the Workforce interviewees’ allegiances in all three dimensions.

Table 6.12

Workforce Group: Summary of Interview Findings on Allegiances

Dimension	Allegiance Rating
Organizational	Moderately High
Professional	Moderately High
Relational	High

Organizational Allegiance. The interviewees from the Workforce group collectively reflected moderately high organizational allegiance, making positive statements about behavioral norms and programs within their agencies. “We do not leak [information],” one interviewee stated firmly. “We have solid processes,” another interviewee affirmed. When discussing representational experience, one interviewee offered vignettes from other interagency groups. Through those observations, the individual revealed a high level of organizational loyalty and

allegiance, citing some “not-shining moments” for the interviewee’s agency. In response to the question directly addressing organizational versus professional allegiance (an either-or scenario), one interviewee advanced a solution that entailed working diligently with agency management to determine which work was more appropriate for delegation to other individuals. This attention to agency needs revealed strong organizational allegiance. Regarding the potential impact of the Workforce working group on individual agencies, one interviewee highlighted special employee arrangements that fell outside of the mainstream issues with which OPM and OMB were most concerned. Thus, the fact that this interviewee identified agency-specific issues, even while performing a government-wide role on the Workforce group, signaled organizational allegiance.

Professional Allegiance. The interviewees manifested a moderately high level of professional allegiance through their comments. For one interviewee, loyalty to the HR profession was evident in the interviewee’s enthusiasm over working with political appointees and helping them to drive a certain vision with respect to workforce management. The individual identified as “...one of the SMEs...I knew who all of the other nerds were.” In contrast, another interviewee, who had no prior involvement with HR matters, described the recruitment process as being “basically secunded to work the CAP goal.” The interviewee’s word choice suggests a unilateral arrangement, one for which the interviewee would not have volunteered. As an indirect reflection of professional expertise, the interviewees did not provide agency-specific answers when confronted with the question about the ideal working group. One interviewee noted a combination of experts, some of whom happened to be situated within specific agency, but their expertise was more important than their agency affiliations. Another interviewee characterized the ideal working group as being comprised of the agencies who were “already doing good work” in the realm of Workforce, and could share insights and expertise with other agencies.

Relational Allegiance. For the Workforce group members interviewed, relational allegiance was high. One interviewee knew many people in the HR realm before joining the Workforce working group, and then actively recruited some colleagues for the interagency effort. “One of the reasons I chose [certain individuals] is because they have specific expertise...or [they] really know how to address performance.” Yet another reason for recruiting certain team members is to give them an opportunity to “show results, so that when [they] apply for an SES position, [they] can show what [they’ve] done.” According to one interviewee, although working group discussions “can be tense...sometimes we fiercely disagree, we respect each other professionally” and understand the limits of their respective authorities. “It really is all about relationships,” said another interviewee, referring to displays of conflict among individuals. “I don’t think [relationships] are damaged [permanently]....You get very tight when working under difficult circumstances, sometimes meeting and negotiating until midnight.”

Through their comments and actions, the interviewees also demonstrated a high level of sensitivity to the needs of others. One interviewee introduced me to other sources of information on human-capital topics, and one emphasized the importance of contributing to research efforts. One interviewee demonstrated ability to see things from the other side: “I definitely create a lot of work [for other agencies]. But [they] will tell you they’d much rather get involved rather than having something dropped on them - something ‘already baked’ that’s potentially disastrous.” Another interviewee concurred: “To get true interagency cooperation, must get [agencies] to realize that their interests are not mutually exclusive. For example, ‘pure science’ and commerce do not have to be incompatible.” Table 6.13 provides additional detail and key insights from the interview data on the allegiances of the Workforce group.

Table 6.13*Workforce Group: Detailed Interview Findings on Allegiances*

Themes and subthemes	Key Insights
Working group members - practitioners - agencies	Lots of coordination and input from agency-level practitioners needed to make the work relevant. Some agencies have issues that fall outside the mainstream. Certain professions are organic to particular agencies.
Agency role vs. working group role	Working on behalf of an agency other than permanent agency is a very different role.
Intrapersonal conflict	Novel work could motivate, but management must be strong. When organizational and professional roles align, there is also strong motivation. Work with manager to determine most appropriate course of action.
Working group vs. agency mission	When organizational and professional roles align, there is not much conflict. When there is conflict, relationships are what matter most.
Relationships	Relationships that develop within the context of the working group can be as important as the relationships that existed before.
Future - agency work - aspirations - different types of work	Agency work continues to evolve. Work will continue indefinitely. With proposed reorganization of certain agencies, the executive councils may be managed from a central location; that would help further CAP goals such as this one.

Summary. The interview data, as depicted above, revealed a fairly consistent mixture of professional, organizational, and relational allegiances. Taking into account the broader group narrative, relational allegiances resonated the most overall, while both organizational allegiance and professional allegiance were moderately high. In characterizing the ideal working group, the interviewees suggested that certain professions tended to be organic to particular agencies, sometimes complicating distinctions between professional and organizational allegiances in

some cases. Another interesting finding was in the realm of relationships: relationships that develop within the context of the working group can be as strong of a motivator as those relationships that predated the existence of the working group. Although there was no debate that the Workforce group was involved in extraordinarily useful work, the interview data suggested that true progress at the target-community level will require significant statutory and regulatory changes. Moreover, at the both the target-community and the agency levels, greater effectiveness might require different resources or different organizing schemes, such as workforce-improvement APGs at each agency with agency-level liaisons to share information with other agencies. At the working group level, higher effectiveness might be achieved through additional communications capacity, with more involvement of the high-level goal leaders.

Of my five expected findings, the Workforce group's narrative only strongly supports one of them. The notion of an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and effectiveness ratings in general is supported, as the interviewees manifested relatively high organizational allegiance and reported relatively low perceived effectiveness. Not supported is the notion that high relational allegiance is associated with high effectiveness ratings at the community level, since the Workforce group interviewees had the strongest relational allegiance, but the lowest perceived effectiveness at the target-community level. Also not supported is the idea that perceived effectiveness will affect allegiance to the project itself, as the interviewees expressed positive feelings about future involvement with the Workforce group's work, even though they rated their effectiveness in executing that work relatively low.

Part V. Information Technology Modernization.

Background. For IT Modernization, I conducted two interviews. One of the interviewees was a member of a subgroup; the other was the leader of a different subgroup. Under the IT

Modernization goal, there have been numerous project-focused subgroups over the years: example topics have included cybersecurity, systems modernization, improving the IT workforce, and data center consolidation. Having served for two years on a government-wide technology acquisition policy team, I have some familiarity with federal IT acquisition, as well as some of the statutory constraints that impede contracting for contemporary IT solutions. Although I had no direct experience with either of the IT Modernization group’s interviewees, the fact that we shared some common colleagues helped me to engage with the interviewees as a reputable research partner.

Perceived effectiveness. Based on the secondary data (e.g., GAO reports, quarterly progress reports on Performance.gov) reviewed in preparation for my primary data collection, the IT Modernization group was generally perceived less favorably by external evaluators than by the interviewees at the target-community level. As for the group-level effectiveness and agency-level effectiveness, the interviewees had very different perceptions, which likely stem from the individuals’ disparate roles on the subgroups. A summary of the overall effectiveness ratings appears below.

Table 6.14

IT Modernization Group: Summary of Interview Findings on Perceived Effectiveness

Level	Effectiveness Rating
Community	Moderate
Group	Moderately High
Agency	Moderate

Effectiveness: Target Community. At the target-community level, interviewees collectively portrayed the group's effectiveness as moderate. The interviewees also acknowledged the breadth of the target community for IT Modernization: it encompassed not only federal agencies, but also the agencies' industry partners, and indirectly, the U.S. taxpayers. The group's current KPIs, however, focus only efforts within federal agencies. If the target community is significantly broader, additional metrics should be considered. As discussed in Chapter 3, the subgoals under the IT Modernization initiative have changed over time; additionally, the group has encountered barriers, such as inadequate funding and cybersecurity concerns, to forward movement. Moreover, one interviewee suggested that major governance decisions were still languishing: "Chief Information Officers have the responsibility and accountability for everything [IT] in their agencies. If IT were to shift to [an enterprise-wide] model, that responsibility would go to the federal CIO at OMB." Likewise, authorities and budgets for Chief Data Officers and Chief Technology Officers were as-yet undocumented. Although the group's effectiveness at the community-level has been stymied by many things, one interviewee stressed the importance of continuing to strive for progress, nodding to efforts that have successfully solved a lot of problems for the Department of Defense (DoD), as well as civilian agencies. Another noted that, "for the DoD in general, the goal is well on its way."

Effectiveness: Group. At the group level, the interview data suggested a moderate to high effectiveness rating. "We really are a very well-oiled machine in terms of working together," one interviewee noted. "When we first started out with enterprise-type things, it was really hard for [the DoD] components to come to an agreement. Nowadays, there's none of that. Everyone's really very supportive...[of efforts to build] one system that's going to work for everyone." Another interviewee focused on the importance of communication within working groups: "I can

work with anyone...[because] I can speak a lot of different ‘languages,’” having worked extensively at DoD, the Federal Communications Commission, and other agencies. The only negative comment relative to group-level effectiveness centered upon sweeping changes in project-management philosophies, as driven by a new subgroup leader: “I prefer a well laid-out project management style...with plans of action and milestones, [but now the group’s work]...is all agile⁶⁰ stuff.” The interviewee stressed the enormity of the IT Modernization effort, as well as the reality that “it will take many, many years” and was, therefore, not appropriate for agile project management.

Effectiveness: Agency. For the IT Modernization group, the interviewees’ perceptions of effectiveness at the agency level were positive. Not surprisingly, for the interviewee whose normal job was well-aligned with work associated with the CAP goal, the work was viewed as a positive return on the agency’s investment. For the other interviewee, “it was definitely a positive [return on agency investment]....In a perfect world, though, [our agency] would be able to build its own system, but we are lucky that we have a lot of clout in the group.” This signaled the importance of the work to that interviewee’s agency, while implying that the agency’s motivation to participate may have stemmed from preventative tendencies (Das & Kumar, 2011). Table 6.15 (below) captures the interview findings on the perceived effectiveness of the IT Modernization interagency working group.

⁶⁰ Agile project management is characterized by short iterations or sprints (Project Management Institute, 2017) that allow for breaking large projects down in to smaller, more manageable tasks, thereby maximizing flexibility and adaptability to change.

Table 6.15*IT Modernization Group: Detailed Interview Findings on Perceived Effectiveness*

Themes and subthemes	Key findings
Goals - Current administration - Changing technology	Goals changed some, due to the current administration’s ideas about reorganizing agencies and reducing redundancies.
Effectiveness - Target community - Metrics	Given the breadth of target community, additional metrics might be appropriate.
Effectiveness - Group - New leader - “Multi-lingual” members	Agile project-management style may not fit long-duration interagency working group goals. Broad experience with different agencies helps smooth the communication process.
Effectiveness - Agency - Protection of agency interests	Having “clout” in a working group can help protect agency interests.
Other collaborative experiences - interagency working groups - multi-sector working groups	Communications capacity has dramatically improved collaborations over time. Shrinking resources can also encourage collaboration.

Effectiveness: Summary. As depicted above, based on the interview data, individuals supporting the IT Modernization CAP goals recognized the need for goal modification over time, as well as an increasingly broad conceptualization of the target community for the goal. At the working-group level, the subgroups worked well, with only a minor complaint about project management styles, which was likely driven by the leader’s over-zealous adherence to the Program Management Improvement Accountability Act (2016), according to the interviewee. From the individual-agency perspective, involvement in the IT Modernization group could help to influence systems-development decisions in ways that protected the agency’s interests. When comparing the effectiveness of the IT Modernization subgroup to similar subgroups over the

years, collaboration capacities have increased, according to one interviewee, echoing unity-of-command ideals: “The idea that we are one...is more prolific than it was in the past, where we had clearly separate desires. There’s more consolidation, [as well as] more joint base activities and joint organizations. I think that resource-wise, we’re not as strongly resourced as we once were...these days, we have a lot more work to get done in a shorter amount of time,” alluding to scarcity of time to quibble over small issues. “In the grand scheme of things, I need functionality more than I need a particular field to look a certain way on the web page.” The interviewee also nodded to changes in organizational views of technology: “Twenty years ago, IT systems needed to change so quickly [and that was hard], but today we work in an environment where...people are more willing to accept and work through change.”

Similarly, based on numerous prior interagency working group experiences, the other interviewee commented on change. “Technology itself is not a problem; rather, any agency culture or leadership team that refuses to move” can negate the best efforts of any interagency working group. On that note, the interviewee opined that members of the SES should not remain in positions for too long. “They should not build their own fiefdoms within agencies,” which can create strong resistance even to positive changes. In order to implement positive changes, the interviewee suggested, “SESers need to move around. Also having different perspectives [benefits the SESer], leading to enriched relationships across government.”

Allegiances. For insight on allegiances, I analyzed the interviewees’ responses to questions on their roles within the interagency working group, the processes by which they were recruited, the alignment of the interagency work with their regular work, the impact of the interagency work on the agency, their pre-existing relationships, and any intrapersonal conflicts that may have arisen, whether from their representational roles or simple scheduling issues.

Additionally, if comments associated with other questions revealed insight on individual allegiances, I integrated those into my analysis, as well. Table 6.16 summarizes the findings on allegiances in all three dimensions for the IT Modernization interviewees.

Table 6.16

IT Modernization Group: Summary of Interview Findings on Allegiances

Dimension	Allegiance Rating
Organizational	High
Professional	High
Relational	Moderate

Organizational Allegiance. The interviewees from the IT Modernization group collectively reflected high organizational allegiance, making positive statements about norms within their agencies. “Performance is just part of our culture,” one interviewee stated. “We have a mission and that mission is to support our warfighter.” Another interviewee pointed to a strong interagency work ethic: “We are concerned with systemic challenges, taking a ‘whole of government’ approach.” IT Modernization was part of both interviewees’ regular work duties, but the nature of their work was very different. For one interviewee, the interagency working group role involved shepherding a portfolio of IT solutions to user communities; the other interviewee’s role was providing expertise on the user experience “from top to bottom.” Both pointed out that their roles offered great benefits to their agencies. “We’re excited to develop a system that will be updated...and work better for us,” said one interviewee. “It’s in my agency’s best interest to promote these CAP goals,” said the other. “It’s also good government.”

Professional Allegiance. The interviewees also manifested a high level of professional allegiance through their answers to questions about the future. The interviewees indicated that IT Modernization would continue to be a priority for the federal government; as professionals, they would continue working on it. Although neither interviewee was an IT professional, both had strong appreciation for IT development, acquisition, and management. For one interviewee, future endeavors were interwoven with agency priorities: “I have a lot to offer, having lots of experience working with large changes...[knowing] what worked and what didn’t work...when you’re part of something from the bottom up, you’re more capable and set to assist with full implementation.” For the other, the future was filled with IT-related challenges, including cybersecurity advancements, human-centered design concepts, potential changes to appropriations law, and ongoing refinements of roles and responsibilities across the federal government. In response to the question directly addressing organizational versus professional allegiance (an either-or scenario), one interviewee indicated without hesitation that the higher-echelon activity would take precedence over an agency-level priority. This interviewee’s motivation to represent at the highest levels of government could reveal professional allegiance; alternatively, it could merely demonstrate a strong understanding of hierarchy.

Relational Allegiance. For the IT Modernization interviewees, relational allegiance was moderate. One interviewee knew many people in the IT Modernization working group becoming part of it. “From each component, there were IT experts and there were actual users. I did know some of the people” from the subgroup, which consisted of the Army, the Air Force, the Defense Logistics Agency, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, and DoD’s Washington Headquarters Service. Consensus building, the interviewee noted, has been key to getting “large initiatives off the ground.” Another interviewee was also familiar with the leaders of the working

group, and highlighted the importance of relationships: When working with members from difference agencies, “you are involved in the ‘art of the willing,’ so relationships are so key!” The interviewee affirmed that, “If you’re a trusted agent, it’s easier to move things forward,” harking back to the comment on SESers enriching relationships across government through diversifying their experiences. Table 6.17 (below) provides additional detail and key insights from the interview data on the allegiances of the IT Modernization group.

Table 6.17

IT Modernization Group: Detailed Interview Findings on Allegiances

Themes and subthemes	Key Insights
Working group members - user experience - solutions - professional expertise - personalities	Representation can mean shepherding a portfolio of solutions to user communities; Representation could also mean knowing the user experience from top to bottom. Knowledgeable, hard-working people. “Anchor” agencies can get things going, but need certain professional expertise, too.
Agency role vs. working group role	If the interagency work is an extension of individual’s regular work (rather than something extra) it is more likely to get done.
Intrapersonal conflict	When organizational and professional roles align, there is strong motivation.
Working group vs. agency mission	When organizational and professional roles align in a “whole of government” approach, there is not much conflict. Consensus building is key to getting large initiatives “off the ground.”
Competing goals	The higher-echelon activity will take precedence; hierarchy is understood and not questioned.
Future - agency work	Having “clout” in the working group can protect agency’s interests.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aspirations - different types of work 	<p>Promoting CAP goals is core to certain agencies' missions. Interagency work (particularly the technical content) can be core to a professional's identity.</p>
<p>Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new leader 	<p>Even with a new subgroup leader who has a very different style and priorities, the subgroup will work well because of the strong working relationships among other group members.</p>

Summary. The interview data, as summarized above, included a mixture of professional and organizational allegiance, with a moderate amount of relational allegiance. In fact, the IT Modernization group's organizational allegiance appeared to be the strongest of all four groups, but its professional allegiance was also high. The interviewees shared different ways of envisioning an interagency working group, suggesting that "anchor agencies" were needed to get large initiatives moving, but hard-working people with professional expertise were critical to keeping projects alive. Another interesting finding was in the realm of relationships. Prior knowledge of other working group members seemed to be very important to ensure continuity during a change in leadership. As noted earlier, the interviewees' perceived effectiveness ratings were moderate at the target-community level, moderately high at the group level, and moderate at the agency level.

Of my five expected findings, the IT Modernization narrative supports only two of them. First, the notion that high professional allegiances are associated with moderate group-level effectiveness ratings is reinforced, as the interviewees seemed to be high in professional allegiance, and moderate in their rating of group-level effectiveness. Second, the notion of an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and effectiveness ratings (in general) is supported, as the interviewees within the IT Modernization group manifested strong organizational allegiance and were relatively low, when compared to the other groups, in terms of perceived effectiveness.

Part VI. Conclusion.

This part summarizes my qualitative findings, gleaned from the interview data on perceived effectiveness and the three dimensions of individual allegiances. Of my five expected findings, two were well supported by the interview data. First, the notion that high professional allegiances are associated with moderate group-level effectiveness ratings is reinforced by three groups (Category Management, IT Modernization, and Data). The interview data for those three groups suggested high professional allegiance and moderate perceived effectiveness at the group level. Second, the notion of an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and effectiveness ratings (in general) is supported by all four groups, as the interviewees either (a) manifested relatively low organizational allegiance, and rated their groups' effectiveness highly, or (b) manifested relatively high organizational allegiance and perceived their groups' effectiveness as relatively low.

On the other hand, two of my expected findings were only modestly supported. First, the notion that perceived effectiveness will affect allegiance to the project itself was supported by the Data and the Category Management groups, as most of the interviewees expressed positive feelings about future involvement with the work, even when back at their home agencies. This notion was not supported by the Workforce group, as the interviewees expressed positive feelings about future involvement with the work, even though they rated their effectiveness in relatively low. Second, the notion that strong relational allegiance is associated with high effective ratings at the community level is somewhat supported by the Data group. Although the interviewees with only one year invested in a subgroup revealed moderate relational allegiance, the longer-term members manifested high relational allegiance, as well as high effectiveness ratings at the community level. However, the interview data from the Workforce group clearly

did not support the notion that strong relational allegiance is associated with high perceived effectiveness at the community level. The Workforce group interviewees had the strongest relational allegiance, but the lowest perceived effectiveness at the target-community level.

My qualitative findings across the four groups are summarized in Table 6.18. By comparing individual allegiance ratings for the groups perceived as effective from the groups perceived as not effective, I can explore my expected findings on the differences between those two categories of groups.

Table 6.18

Summary: Allegiances and Perceived Effectiveness, All Groups

Group	Perceived Effectiveness			Allegiances			Description
	TC	Group	Agency	O	P	R	
Data	High	Mod High	Mod	Mod	High	Mod-High	Highest PE. Strong P allegiance, but 2 nd weakest allegiances overall.
Cat Mgt	High	Mod	Mod	Mod High	Mod High	Mod	2 nd highest PE, tied for weakest allegiances.
Workforce	Low	Low	Mod Low	Mod High	Mod High	High	Lowest PE, strong allegiances.
IT Mod	Mod	Mod High	Mod	High	High	Mod	2 nd lowest PE; strong allegiances.

Note: In the Allegiances and Notes columns, “O” denotes organizational, “P” denotes professional, and “R” denotes relational. In the Effectiveness column, “TC” denotes “target community.” In the Notes column, “PE” denotes perceived effectiveness.

As shown in Table 6.18, the interview data provide limited support for the notion that individual allegiance ratings for the groups perceived as effective would differ from those of the groups perceived as not effective. The Data group had the highest perceived effectiveness, and Category Management has the second-highest perceived effectiveness overall. Interestingly, Data and Category Management, the two “highly effective” interagency working groups, had the second-lowest and the lowest allegiance scores, respectively, of all four groups. On the other hand, both the IT Modernization and the Workforce group had stronger allegiances, but lower perceived effectiveness than the other two groups. The seemingly inverse relationship between perceived effectiveness and allegiances, then, might suggest that individuals who are not strongly influenced by their organizations (Milward & Provan, 2006), their relationships, or that their professions tend to be better at handling the pressures of coordination and negotiation (Rethemeyer, 2007), which underlie the willingness to compromise and collaborate at the interagency level.

While interesting, though, the cross-group differences suggested by the interview data are relatively small. It is possible that perceived effectiveness may stem less from allegiances than from the individual’s role on the interagency working group, the individual’s profession, or the individual’s level of seniority. The interviewee’s agency might factor strongly into the individual’s perceptions. For example, some agencies (e.g., GSA and OMB) are inherently intergovernmental; they exist for the purpose of working with other agencies. OMB tends to rise above the others⁶¹, in a hierarchical “hard” conflict (Farber & O’Connell, 2017). When analyzing the statements of GSA and OMB employees engaged in interagency working groups, it was

⁶¹ The “hard hierarchy” construct does not always apply, as individuals within DoD tend to downplay the authority of OMB, nodding instead to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, which they perceive to have stronger authority than OMB.

difficult for me to distinguish between professional allegiance and organizational allegiance, as both motivations pointed to the same target, the work of the interagency working group. From the perspective of interviewees working for agencies that routinely perform cross-agency work, though, some good insights were offered. In fact, one commented: “Motivation is an individual thing, rather than an agency representative or professional allegiance thing.” When convening an interagency working group, the interviewee, reflected:

Things start out with a bang. Everyone’s interested. Over time you realize who’s going to stick and who’s not. Many [people at the time of group formation] don’t have a realistic idea of the time required, [so they drop out]...and you end up with a cohort of people who give valuable input. This is just a part of working-group dynamics.

That interview, plus several others, suggested that people remain committed to interagency collaborations for three reasons: (1) *They need it*. “It’s a value-add at the get-go. Those who stay might be struggling...[because] they don’t know how to do something...and believe might be easier to work collectively with others,” said one interviewee, reflecting Milward and Provan (2001)’s concept that networks offered the great benefits to smaller entities with modest resources. (2) *They have a stake in the outcome*, which could be as simple as having performance plans that include the working group’s goals. “Those who are ‘voluntold’...are not going to stick around. Unless they have a stake in the project, they’re going to fall off.” (3) *They crave intellectual stimulation*. “From an intellectual standpoint, some enjoy debating the merits of [certain policies]. Even if they weren’t ‘rah, rah’ [in favor], they enjoy standing up for what they think is the right thing to do....or the most effective way to spend government money.”

In addition to the three reasons articulated above, the interviewees who served on interagency working groups as part of a fellowship program added that they were motivated by valuable learning opportunities. In fact, most of the Fellows I interviewed have since volunteered for more interagency or intra-agency collaboration. In terms of learning, many interviewees

expressed the opinion that working across agency borders can promote understanding and enhance relationships. One of the Fellows, who had worked on behalf of OMB, related an experience that encapsulated the working relationship between OMB and other agencies:

When starting up a new project with principals from multiple agencies, I did a series of getting-to-know-you meetings. In one case, I showed up [at the Pentagon] and shook hands with [everyone]...at the table and the [most senior person] was running a little bit late. We were all sort of awkwardly looking at our watches and the [senior person] came in with a binder in his hands. He smacked it down on the table and said, 'Okay, what are you here to tell me to do *now*?' So that set a great tone for the rest of the meeting. He was very clearly thinking that I was there to make his life more miserable. Unfortunately, that's not irrational. A lot of the time, when I hear from OMB, it's just another compliance exercise. Or another data call...where it's unclear where those data are even going.

Certainly, having been on both sides of this, it's heightened my sensitivity to that dynamic. Being an agency person is a perspective that many people working in [EOP or OMB] don't have. I think a lot of people get fired up about working there, and don't have a good view of how they can wreck the day of the person they're reaching out to. [When seeking data from an agency person, OMB should] think very carefully about the value of what you're asking for. If there's not a clear value proposition to you – one that you can clearly articulate – they will do it cynically, they'll do it half-assedly, they'll just be very bitter... or all of the above.

Certainly, gaining a better understanding of how the actions of one agency impacts the others in a purpose-oriented collaboration is one component of "interagency collaboration capacity" (Bardach, 1998). In my final chapter, I will integrate these qualitative findings with the quantitative findings, taking my analysis of interagency working groups another step further.

Chapter 7

Integrative Analysis and Conclusion

The research presented in this dissertation was designed to advance the scholarship on public-to-public, purpose-oriented interorganizational networks (Nowell & Kenis, 2019) by exploring the motivations of interagency working group members. Specifically, it explored the relationships between the perceived effectiveness at multiple levels (Provan & Milward, 2001) of four interagency working groups, and the allegiances – stemming from professional, relational, and organizational biases – held by the individuals within those groups. The conceptual framework for this research (Chapter 2) was augmented with a history of the interagency working groups identified for the study (Chapter 3). My expected findings, as presented in Chapter 2, argued that certain dimensions of individual allegiances may impact the perceived effectiveness of interagency working groups. As detailed in Chapter 4, my mixed-method study examined organizational allegiance, relational allegiance, and professional allegiance by deploying an original survey of, complemented by in-depth interviews with, the individual members of four interagency working groups set up to pursue several aggressive, government-wide goals, as mandated by GPRAMA.

Given the potential importance of allegiances, I first quantitatively analyzed the relationship between individual allegiances and perceived effectiveness, as well as relationships between other demographic variables and perceived effectiveness. For perceived effectiveness at the target-community level, my survey data largely corroborated my findings from the secondary data (e.g., GAO reports and OMB reports): the internal group members had perceptions similar to those of the external evaluators. Regarding relationships between perceived effectiveness and

individual allegiances, however, the survey data provided very limited support for my expected findings. I then qualitatively examined relationships between individual allegiances and perceived effectiveness (Chapter 6). Although my qualitative data provided very little or no support for two of my expected findings, it did support two of my other expected findings, and clarified the context of my fifth expected finding. Bringing it all together in the first part of this chapter, I integrate the quantitative and the qualitative perspectives, and discuss my overall findings. In the second part of this chapter, I address the implications of my findings, which enable us to better understand purpose-oriented interorganizational networks such as interagency working groups, as well as the individual motivations underlying these networks. Finally, in the third part of this chapter, I share concluding thoughts and suggest areas for future research.

Part I. Integrative Analysis - Findings

In ascertaining whether relationships exist between individual allegiances and perceived effectiveness, I considered all of the data – primary and secondary, qualitative and quantitative. For the survey, there were 18 usable responses; for the interviews, there were 15 participants. Ten of the survey respondents also participated in the interview, so some consistency among ratings and scores was expected. The only group in which such consistency was found, however, was the Data group, which was highly represented in both samples. Category Management, which was proportionately represented in both samples, produced mildly inconsistent results. The other two groups were underrepresented in both samples; not surprisingly, their results were not very consistent. However, with those caveats in mind, I synthesized the findings from the surveys with findings from the interviews, and checked them against my expected findings. At the end of this part, I provide an overall summary, as well as several findings of special interest.

Perceived effectiveness, by group. Table 7.1 (below) provides a comparison, by working group, of the survey and interview ratings of perceived effectiveness, using target community, network (i.e., working group), and organization (i.e., agency), consistent with Provan and Milward (2001). The survey scores appear in the second column; the interview ratings are shown in the third column. The extreme right-hand column contains the composite scores. The composite scores were calculated by translating “high,” “moderately high,” “moderate,” “moderately low,” and “low” to numerical values ranging from 5 (“high”) to 1 (“low”). Then I normalized the interview score by dividing it by 5, and took a simple average of the normalized interview score and the survey score, which produced the composite score. Beneath the table, I discuss the numerical scores and adjectival ratings, by group.

When assessing the perceived effectiveness data, it is important to note one observation regarding the information in Table 7.1. This observation concerns the potentially overlapping beneficiaries of the groups’ efforts. When the target community is primarily federal agencies, as was the case with three of the four groups studied, effectiveness ratings tend to be similar in those two realms. On the other hand, when the target community is extremely broad, as was the case with the Data group, the target-community ratings tend to differ from agency-level effectiveness ratings.

Table 7.1*Perceived Effectiveness – Scores and Ratings*

Perceived Effectiveness	Survey Score	Interview Rating (Adjectival)	Interview Rating (Numerical)	Composite Score
<u>Data Group</u>				
Target Community	0.86	High	1	0.93
Group	0.86	Moderately High	0.8	0.83
Agency	0.86	Moderate	0.6	0.73
<u>Category Management Group</u>				
Target Community	0.86	High	1	0.93
Group	0.71	Moderate	0.6	0.66
Agency	0.86	Moderate	0.6	0.73
<u>Workforce Group</u>				
Target Community	0.79	Low	0.2	0.50
Group	0.86	Low	0.2	0.53
Agency	0.71	Moderately Low	0.4	0.56
<u>IT Modernization Group</u>				
Target Community	0.71	Moderate	0.6	0.66
Group	1.00	Moderately High	0.8	0.90
Agency	0.79	Moderate	0.6	0.69

Data group. The Data group was deemed highly effective at the target-community level by secondary data sources, as well as the survey respondents and the interviewees. In fact, the Data group had the highest survey scores of all four groups for target-community and group-level effectiveness. The interview data generally corroborated the survey findings at the group level, but a few problems with group dynamics were divulged.

Category Management group. At the target-community level, the Category Management group was deemed highly effective by the secondary data sources, the survey respondents, and the interviewees. At the agency level, Category Management was rated high by the survey respondents, but only moderate by the interviewees. One explanation is that the interviewees were answering the agency-level effectiveness question from the perspective of agencies in general, while the survey respondents were answering in terms of their own agencies. At the working-group level, the survey respondents scored themselves the lowest of all four groups, signaling that the group's top-down governance structure, which likely enhanced the group's perceived effectiveness at the target-community level, may have suppressed full participation from the group members. The interview data generally corroborated the survey findings on group-level effectiveness, which the interviewees rated as moderate.

Workforce group. At the target-community level, there was less evidence of effectiveness for the Workforce group in secondary data sources, and the survey respondents and interviewees had similar impressions. Based on the interview data, progress at the target-community level will require significant statutory and regulatory changes, as well as different resources or strategies. At the agency level, the Workforce group was rated relatively low on effectiveness by the survey respondents and the interviewees. At the group level, however, the survey produced high perceived effectiveness scores, but the interview data suggested problems with recruiting and sustaining participation, as well as workload-distribution issues. Recommendations for additional communications capacity, as well as more high-level leadership involvement, were shared.

IT Modernization group. At the target-community level, there was less evidence of effectiveness in the secondary data, and the survey respondents and interviewees generally concurred. At the agency level, the IT group had one of the lower survey scores, along with a

moderate rating based on the interview data. In terms of group-level effectiveness, the IT group scored highest of all four groups, but the interview data produced only a moderately high rating. One explanation is that most of the survey respondents were in group leadership positions, so they may have viewed group dynamics as reflective of their own performance. The interviewees who did not have leadership roles had different perspectives.

Table 7.2 (below) provides a comparison, by working group, of the survey scores and collective interview ratings of individual allegiances in three dimensions: professional, relational, and organizational. The survey scores appear in the second column; the interview ratings are shown in the third column. The extreme right-hand column contains the composite scores. The composite scores were calculated by translating “high,” “moderately high,” “moderate,” “moderately low,” and “low” to numerical values ranging from 5 (“high”) to 1 (“low”). Thus, a “moderately high” would translate to 4. Then I normalized the interview score by dividing it by 5, and took a simple average of the normalized interview score and the survey score, which produced the composite score. Beneath the table, I provide some discussion of the numerical scores and adjectival ratings, by group. When assessing individual allegiances, is important to note one observation regarding the information in the table below. The observation is that some participants were working on behalf of agencies other than their home agencies. Similarly, some participants had professional roles that were enmeshed with the efforts of the working group. In both cases, the professional dimension of allegiance was sometimes difficult to separate from the organizational dimension.

Table 7.2*Individual Allegiances – Scores and Ratings*

Allegiance Dimensions	Survey Score	Interview Ratings (Adjectival)	Interview Rating (Numerical)	Composite Score
<u>Data Group</u>				
Organizational	0.59	Moderate	0.6	0.60
Professional	0.46	High	1	0.73
Relational	0.77	Mod-High	0.8	0.79
<u>Category Management Group</u>				
Organizational	0.55	Mod-High	0.8	0.68
Professional	0.55	Mod-High	0.8	0.68
Relational	0.66	Moderate	0.6	0.63
<u>Workforce Group</u>				
Organizational	0.61	Mod-High	0.8	0.71
Professional	0.51	Mod-High	0.8	0.66
Relational	0.79	High	1	0.90
<u>IT Modernization Group</u>				
Organizational	0.66	High	1	0.83
Professional	0.44	High	1	0.72
Relational	0.82	Moderate	0.6	0.71

Data Group. Based on the survey data, members of the Data group showed the second-weakest allegiances overall of the four working groups. The survey data also suggested that members of the Data group collectively had the second-lowest levels of professional allegiance, but the interview data supported a high professional allegiance rating. The stark contrast in results indicated the need for more research: the strong professional orientation conveyed during the interviews reflected a perspective that might be unique to the Data Fellows, who were recruited via an elite developmental opportunity and retained with technically savvy leaders. In

terms of relational allegiance, the interview data revealed a moderately high level of relational allegiance, as well, which resulted in a relatively high composite score on relational allegiance for the Data group.

Category Management. Based on the survey data, the Category Management group had the weakest allegiances overall of the four working groups. In fact, the survey data portrayed this group as having the lowest organizational and relational allegiances, but relatively high professional allegiances. The interview data supported a moderate score for relational allegiance, but moderately high scores for both organizational and professional allegiance. The variations could be attributable to differences in my sample: the survey respondents came from a variety of different agencies, but the interviewees were mostly professional GSA staff members, whose organizational and professional allegiances are closely intertwined with one another, and to a lesser extent, with relational allegiances.

Workforce. Based on the survey data, members of the Workforce group had the second-highest median scores in all three allegiance dimensions. The survey data supported very high relational allegiance, as well as moderately high professional and organizational allegiance. Overall, this group was accorded the highest composite score on relational allegiance, with the second-highest score on organizational allegiance.

IT Modernization group. Based on the survey data, members of the IT Modernization group had high organizational and relational allegiance, but low professional allegiance; the IT Modernization group was the second-highest scoring group in terms of overall allegiance. Based on the interview data, though, the IT Modernization group manifested a mixture of professional and organizational allegiance, with a moderate amount of relational allegiance. The composite

scores were the highest of all four groups for organizational allegiance, second highest for professional allegiance, and second lowest for relational allegiance.

Individual allegiances and perceived effectiveness. Table 7.3 (below) provides a comparison, by working group, of the composite scores, which take into account both the survey scores and the interview ratings for individual allegiances and perceived effectiveness. Using this data, I explore the total data set in terms of my expected findings, which were as follows: (1) The strengths of individual allegiances for groups perceived as effective will differ from those perceived as not effective; (2) groups whose members have high levels of professional allegiance will be judged as moderately effective at the group level; (3) groups whose members have high levels of relational allegiance will be judged as highly effective at the target-community level; and (4) organizational allegiance levels will be inversely related to perceived effectiveness at all levels. Conversely, I expected to find that: (5) the perceived effectiveness of groups will affect allegiance to the project (the interagency working group) itself, thereby promoting further engagement and additional effectiveness.

Table 7.3

Individual Allegiances and Perceived Effectiveness – Scores and Ratings

Perceived Effectiveness	Composite Score	Allegiance Dimension	Composite Score
<u>Data Group</u>			
Target Community	0.93	Organizational	0.60
Group	0.83	Professional	0.73
Agency	0.73	Relational	0.79
<u>Category Management Group</u>			
Target Community	0.93	Organizational	0.68

Group	0.66	Professional	0.68
Agency	0.73	Relational	0.63
<u>Workforce Group</u>			
Target Community	0.50	Organizational	0.71
Group	0.53	Professional	0.66
Agency	0.56	Relational	0.90
<u>IT Modernization Group</u>			
Target Community	0.66	Organizational	0.83
Group	0.90	Professional	0.72
Agency	0.69	Relational	0.71

Expected finding #1. First, there was limited support for the notion that the strengths of individual allegiances for groups perceived as effective would differ from those perceived as not effective. This expectation was predicated on studies suggesting that salience motivates effective collaboration (Jensen, 2017; Lubell, 2005; Leach, et al., 2002), and that salience emanates from individual allegiances (Hecló, 1977). As noted in Chapter 5, different types of professionals – and those in different working group roles – may value and manifest such allegiances differently. For example, the Category Management and Workforce groups were comprised mainly of management professionals, while the Data and the IT Modernization groups were comprised mainly of statisticians and data scientists: it is likely that different types of professionals have differing sources of motivation. As shown in Tables 7.6 and 7.7, the composite perceived effectiveness scores were: the Data group (0.83), the Category Management group (0.77), the IT Modernization group (0.75) and the Workforce group (0.53). The Data group, with the highest overall perceived effectiveness, had relatively high levels of relational allegiance and professional allegiance, but relatively low levels of organizational allegiance. The Category

Management group, with the second-highest perceived effectiveness, had relatively weak allegiances in all three dimensions. The IT Modernization group, with the third-highest perceived effectiveness, had relatively high allegiances overall; in the organizational-allegiance dimension, this group scored highest of all. The Workforce group, which ranked lowest in terms of perceived effectiveness, had high relational allegiance, relatively low professional allegiance, and relatively high organizational allegiance. Thus, while differences existed among the four groups, the most pronounced differences appeared to be in the relationships between specific dimensions of allegiance and perceived effectiveness. For example, high professional allegiance seemed to be associated with high perceived effectiveness overall, except in the case of the Category Management group.

Table 7.4

Relationship between Professional Allegiance and Perceived Group-Level Effectiveness

	Composite Professional Allegiance Score	Composite Group-Level Perceived Effectiveness Score
Data	0.73	0.83
Category Management	0.68	0.66
Workforce	0.66	0.53
IT Modernization	0.72	0.90

Expected finding #2. Secondly, looking specifically at professional allegiance, I posited that high professional allegiance would be associated with moderate group-level effectiveness ratings. This expectation was embedded in notions of professional standards (Freidson, 2001) and professional networks (Wilson, 1989) to which not all members of an interagency network would subscribe. As shown in Table 7.4 (above), this notion is *not* reinforced by the two groups manifesting the strongest professional allegiance (Data and IT Modernization), as those two

groups actually had the two highest levels of perceived effectiveness at the group level. Conversely, the two groups with weaker professional allegiance had lower levels of perceived effectiveness at the group level. This finding is consistent with regression analysis in Chapter 5.

Table 7.5

Relationship between Relational Allegiance and Perceived Target-Community Effectiveness

	Composite Relational Allegiance Scores	Composite Target-Community Perceived Effectiveness Scores
Data	0.79	0.93
Category Management	0.63	0.93
Workforce	0.90	0.50
IT Modernization	0.71	0.66

Expected finding #3. Third, looking specifically at relational allegiance, I posited that high relational allegiance would be associated with high target-community effectiveness ratings. As shown in Table 7.5 (above), this notion was not well supported. One explanation is that the members of the four interagency working groups had relative short tenures in their groups, so their relational allegiances were not maturely formed.

Table 7.6*Relationship between Organizational Allegiance and Perceived Effectiveness*

	Composite Organizational Allegiance Scores	Composite Overall Perceived Effectiveness Scores ⁶²
Data	0.60	0.83
Category Management	0.68	0.77
Workforce	0.71	0.53
IT Modernization	0.83	0.75

Expected finding #4. Fourth, the notion of an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and effectiveness ratings (in general), consistent with the “conflict by design” nature of federal agencies (Farber & O’Connell, 2017), was somewhat strongly supported. As displayed in Table 7.6 (above), the participants either manifested relatively low organizational allegiance, and rated their groups’ effectiveness highly, or manifested relatively high organizational allegiance and perceived their groups’ effectiveness as relatively low.

Table 7.7*Relationship between Perceived Effectiveness and Future Work*

	Mean Composite Perceived Effectiveness Scores ⁶³	Enthusiasm for Future Work
Data	0.83	High
Category Management	0.77	High
Workforce	0.53	High
IT Modernization	0.75	Moderate

⁶² The composite score was calculated by taking a simple average of the three composite scores for perceived effectiveness at the community, group, and agency levels.

⁶³ See previous footnote.

Expected finding #5. Finally, the notion that perceived effectiveness will affect allegiance to the project, a concept embedded in shared goals and accountability (Guston, 2001), as well as being part of a winning team (Ward, et al., 2018), was explored through the qualitative data. My semi-structured interviews contained a question on each interviewee's next venture, and most of the Data and the Category Management interviewees expressed positive feelings about future involvement with the work, even when back at their home agencies, as displayed in Table 7.7 (above). Interviewees from the Workforce group, likewise, conveyed positive feelings about their future involvement with the work; that group, however, manifested low perceived effectiveness. Accordingly, this notion was only mildly supported by my data, which suggest that continuing commitment to a project may be largely an individual feeling, arising independently of the perceived effectiveness of an effort.

Summary. All in all, by employing a mixed-method approach, I obtained a richer view of the actions, the accomplishments, the perceptions, and the relationships within each of the four working groups. Although only one of my expected findings (i.e., that there is an inverse relationship between the strength of organizational allegiance and the perceived effectiveness of an interagency working group) was supported in the end, several interesting findings emerged:

- The motivational value of professional allegiance tends to vary by type of professional.
- Relatively weak allegiances, overall, may signal more willingness to compromise.
- Relational allegiance tends to become stronger over time: relationships that develop within the context of the working group can be as strong of a motivator as those relationships that predated the existence of the working group.
- Strong relational allegiance is especially important when it is necessary to maintain continuity during a change in leadership.
- Conscious design, with thorough consideration of the necessity of agency representatives vice subject matter experts, can promote the likelihood of successful interagency working group efforts.

Part II. Limitations and Future Research Ideas.

This part of the chapter addresses the limitations of my study, as well as some ideas for future empirical research in the relatively unexplored territory of purpose-oriented interorganizational networks in the public sector. Several limitations of this research project are worth noting, as they posed threats to validity.

Sample size. First, in an effort to draw a manageable sample of relatively homogeneous individuals, I focused on four interagency working groups, which were comprised of individuals who had served on or after January 2017 (i.e., during the current presidential administration). Although my survey was disseminated to 99 prospective participants, only 18 usable responses were received. As discussed in Chapter 4, this low response rate is clearly a small sample size, posing threats to external validity. Similarly, my interviewees (while carefully selected) included only 15 people. Thus, generalization on the basis of so few data points is not appropriate, but my study does offer rich prospects for future empirical research. My response rate was not unusually low relative to other surveys of senior government personnel. Representation is perhaps a more significant limitation, in terms of external validity.

Uneven representation. Within my sample, there were wide variations in the extent of representation from each of the four groups. Likewise, the Data group was overrepresented in my pool of interviewees. Members of the Data group were clearly the most generous in providing data; in fact, one of the group's orchestrators even agreed to a detailed background interview on one of her rare days off. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Data group had relatively ideal conditions for success (e.g., the authority to act and at least some resources), which helped them to attract a cadre of thoughtful managers. The management team carefully selected personnel for the subgroups, and gained support from both statistical and programmatic agencies. The Data

group appears to serve as a shining example of what is possible in the realm of interagency working groups. However, the sheer availability of data from the Data group influenced my findings, both on the quantitative front and in the qualitative arena. The other three groups, perhaps, had equally thoughtful leaders, carefully selected personnel, and agency support, but I was unable to gather enough evidence to render a clear picture in the other three cases.

Methods and measures. This research also has the limitations associated with survey and interview methods, as well as measures, posing threats to internal validity. In terms of survey and interview samples, selection bias is one such limitation. Although my survey was deployed to the whole population of identified members of the four interagency working groups, many could not be identified. Of those who were identified, and who subsequently self-selected to take the survey and participate in interviews, the sample may not be representative of the working groups with which they were affiliated. For example, based on the feedback initially generated by my survey invitations (see Chapter 4), I received non-responses from numerous high-level political appointees and upper-echelon career employees. Therefore, my survey likely missed some important perspectives. Moreover, given that most of the survey respondents also expressed interest in doing follow-up interviews, a high level of self-selection existed there, as well.

Closely related to self-selection is the limitation arising from self-reported data, which cannot be fully confirmed for accuracy. Other limitations were posed by the survey instrument. Although my survey included many questions that have proven reliable for measuring perceived effectiveness and certain types of allegiances, the respondents interpreted some of the questions differently, particularly those surrounding agency perspectives, which resulted in inconsistent findings. Moreover, my survey instrument offered limited choices for respondents; it could not fully capture their impressions, attitudes, beliefs, and motivations. Although I used the survey in

tandem with semi-structured interviews in order to give the participants opportunities to more fully articulate their experiences, limitations stemming from self-reported data still exist. To mitigate this validity risk for future researchers, one approach might entail engaging as a participant-observer on various interagency working groups, enabling researchers to gain first-hand knowledge of individual behaviors, group dynamics, and work-execution patterns. Alternatively, to gain more insight on perceived effectiveness, it might be fruitful to supplement the secondary data sources, such as those described in Chapter 3, with original surveys of the target community that stands to benefit from government-wide goals such as the CAP goals. For example, a survey of contracting officers and program officials within agencies may produce very different effectiveness scores on Category Management than those produced by the individuals within the various Category Management groups and subgroups.

Finally, the research was limited somewhat by my measures, both of allegiances and of perceived effectiveness. Allegiances, like many other aspects of the human psyche, are difficult to characterize, measure, and sever from the operating environment (Carboni, 2019), but I attempted to consistently achieve this for all research participants. In certain cases, though, the dimensions of individual allegiances were especially hard to discern. Those cases included individuals who were working on behalf of agencies other than their home agencies, as well as individuals with professional roles that were enmeshed with the working group's efforts. Although both of these types of individuals offered insightful anecdotes and arguably the best working knowledge of how interagency working groups can be made to function well, the professional and organizational dimensions of their allegiances were hard to separate. Future researchers on allegiances may benefit from selecting a sample of individuals who are not performing such nuanced roles. A study containing only a mix of subject matter experts and

agency representatives, for example, would produce interesting results. The challenges associated with reaching this agency-representative subset of interagency working group participants, however, are profound. As mentioned in Chapter 4, it is difficult to garner participation of the very senior-level professionals who are empowered to speak on behalf of their agencies, and harder still to elicit their feelings on work-related matters.

Additionally, because the majority of respondents and interviewees had no previous exposure to the other members of their interagency working groups, their relational allegiances were difficult to detect. Only one of the interviewees suggested that relationships with other members had initially attracted them to the interagency working groups; rather, most interviewees and respondents had served on their respective groups for only a short time. As the CAP goals (and the working groups in support of them) continue to mature, relationships will likely grow, providing additional clarity on relational allegiances.

Perceived effectiveness, another product of the human psyche, also posed measurement challenges. When studying the effectiveness of purpose-oriented networks aimed at enhancing internal operations, as I was, researchers might find overlap among the targets for the group's work (e.g., target community and organization may be one and the same).

Historical events. Finally, dramatic historical events tend to change individuals' outlooks, and changing outlooks can impact internal validity. For this research, my data gathering was done in the autumn of 2019, and my dissertation drafts were finalized in the spring of 2020 – in the heart of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic –when individuals were quarantined to their homes on a nearly nationwide basis, financial markets were on the verge of collapse, and global relationships were forever changed. If my research were to have been conducted post-COVID-19, I would expect much different results, both in the strengths of individuals' allegiances and in

their ratings of the interagency working groups' effectiveness in pursuit of the CAP goals.

Future research. Despite the limitations outlined above, particularly the caution against generalizing on the basis of so few data points, my study does offer some rich insights, as well as vibrant prospects for future empirical research in the realm of public-to-public collaboration through purpose-oriented interorganizational networks. Some ideas for further investigation include: (1) whether there is an inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness, (2) whether allegiances are more impacted by network affiliation or by the demographics of individuals, and (3) whether intentional management and personnel selection result in stronger allegiances and higher perceived effectiveness.

First, the exploration of a possible inverse relationship between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness would provide useful insight to managers of purpose-oriented networks who require positive action in a relatively short period of time. With additional empirical data to support this idea, such managers could focus their recruiting efforts more efficiently, and perhaps sustain certain types of efforts more effectively. Secondly, more research into the question of allegiances being associated with demographic attributes rather than affiliation with a certain interagency working group, would likewise help network managers to focus their recruiting and personnel selection efforts. Additionally, the insights produced by this second line of research might enhance their day-to-day management of interagency working group efforts, by providing more clarity on what types of work are salient to which types of professionals. Finally, more investigation of linkages between intentional management, stronger allegiances, and higher effectiveness would help to enrich network managers' understanding of how much intentionality is appropriate with respect to managing their goals and their groups.

Part III. Implications and Concluding Thoughts.

Getting results through interorganizational networks has become increasingly important in modern public administration (Verkuil & Fountain, 2014; McGuire & Agranoff, 2011). Through this research, I advanced the scholarship on purpose-oriented interorganizational networks by exploring a previously overlooked variable, the allegiances or “citizenships” (Braun, et al., 2012) of individuals. As discussed in Chapter 3, the specific purpose-oriented networks I chose for this research were four interagency working groups, which have evolved as a result of GPRAMA within the federal government. Over time, these four groups were confronted with change, they adopted different leadership models, and they applied varying levels of rigor with respect to personnel selection; yet, they continue to work on some of the most vexing management problems in public administration (i.e., information technology, human resources, acquisition, and data governance).

For all of the reasons suggested in the literature (e.g., accountability issues and opportunity costs), as well as my direct professional experience, I knew that empirical research was needed in order to advance the scholarship on practices that will increase the effectiveness of interagency working groups. In fact, the visceral reactions I received when discussing this research idea with nearly every federal employee who had ever served on an interagency working group (“Ugh! Do those things ever work?”) inspired me to finish. In the words of Jane Fountain (2013, p. 79), the ecosystem for collaborative interagency efforts, “is not ‘self-organizing’ and self-adapting. It requires considerable framing, jostling, encouragement, facilitation, and follow through.” My findings reinforce this notion, as the working group that consistently emerged with the highest perceived effectiveness ratings was astutely and thoughtfully managed, with ongoing attention to the motivations of individuals.

Additionally, my research reinforced the notion of tension between organizational allegiance and perceived effectiveness (Farber & O'Connell, 2017). Accordingly, unless agency goals are congruent with interagency working group goals, individuals with strong organizational allegiances may have difficulty balancing the needs of their agency needs with the needs of the network (Milward & Provan, 2006); therefore, the network may be perceived as less effective.

Regarding the relationship between professional allegiance and perceived effectiveness, my research suggested that the strength of this relationship varies by type of professional. My initial expectation followed Freidson (2001), Wilson (1989), and Hecl (1977). In interagency working group settings, I assumed that heterogeneous groups of professionals would have differing standards, which would drive some dampening of perceived group-level effectiveness. Because my findings on this relationship were inconsistent, I surmise that some working groups were, in reality, more homogeneous groups of professionals, who may experience higher perceived effectiveness than the more professionally diverse groups. Additionally, different types of professionals seem to have varying levels of professional allegiance, and therefore may experience the interagency working group setting very differently.

Regarding the relationship between relational allegiance and perceived effectiveness, which stemmed from scholars such as Powell (1990) and (Bryson, et al., 2006), my findings were inconsistent. However, these findings did reinforce the idea that relational allegiances require time to take root, and most of my research participants had invested only a relatively short time with their respective working groups. Results from a longer-term study, or from a different sample of working-group participants, might yield different findings. Given that many purpose-oriented interorganizational networks in the public sector lack the luxury of much time, however, to mature as a high-performing group and achieve their goals, my research suggests

that purposeful design of interagency working groups will contribute to higher perceived effectiveness overall. The design effort should entail thorough consideration of the types of personnel needed, their levels of expertise, their professions, and their aspirations – all relative to the nature of the group’s goals.

While not all interagency working groups have missions as expansive as those described in my study, most interagency working groups do consume considerable amounts of individuals’ time and energy – as well as agency resources. Thus, my contribution to the scholarship on purpose-oriented interorganizational networks is also intended to help smooth the operations of future groups. Insights gleaned from this study may improve public managers’ understanding of the psychology of purposive people, who can collectively build capacity (Bardach, 1998; Weber & Khademian, 2008), which could lead to better results with cross-agency goals and ultimately translate to better delivery of public services. Not only might this enhance the work of public managers, but it could help others charged with leading similar, temporary project-based work (Sydow & Braun, 2018) in private-sector or multi-sector collaborations.

As one final closing thought, my dissertation drafts were finalized in the spring of 2020. Had this research been conducted post-COVID-19, I would expect much different results, both in the strengths of individuals’ allegiances and in their ratings of the groups’ effectiveness in pursuit of the CAP goals. In fact, it is possible that that some of the CAP goals may be adjusted in the coming months. Regardless of the specific mechanisms used for performance enhancement, however, there will be more need for cross-agency – and more intergovernmental – cooperation and collaboration than ever before.

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Appendices

Ethics Documentation

A – Informed Consent for Survey

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Appendix A – Informed Consent for Interview

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Interagency Working Groups: Allegiances Across Agency Borders

Investigator(s): Robin Lemaire, PhD: rlemaire@vt.edu / 540-231-0664

Kathlyn Hopkins, Ph.D. candidate: loudin@vt.edu/540-955-7197

I. Purpose of this Research Project

The purpose of this survey is to ascertain what types of relationships, if any, exist among the perceived effectiveness of interagency working groups and the allegiances of their members. Interagency working groups are increasingly being used to solve complex, government-wide problems. For the purpose of this survey, “effectiveness” is defined as the accomplishment of espoused goals within schedule and within budget (if applicable) for the betterment of the group’s customers – whether at the working group (i.e., network) level, the target community level, or the agency level. It is expected that up to 100 participants may be involved in the research through surveys and interviews. The aggregated research results will be electronically published as part of a dissertation, presented to the candidate’s dissertation committee at Virginia Tech, and presented back to the community of participants upon request.

II. Procedures

By clicking “I agree” below, you will be led through an online survey that should require approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey consists of questions inquiring about the effectiveness of an interagency working group with which you have served (or are still serving), the nature of your role(s) in the working group, and your professional, organizational, or relational ties to the working group.

III. Risks

There are few known physical, mental, or emotional risks resulting associated with participation in this research. Providing candid feedback on interagency working group members and leaders might create minor discomfort, given the likelihood that you may be working with those individuals in the future. This risk will be mitigated by the fact that your survey responses will be kept strictly confidential. All responses will be aggregated at the highest meaningful level, thereby preserving your anonymity.

IV. Benefits

There are no direct monetary benefits or individual recognition resulting from

participation in this research. The findings, however, will inform the management of future interagency working group, and add to the scholarship on collaboration within the public sector. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

All data collected through surveys will be kept confidential. Only essential information that identifies individual respondents will be collected. The research team will have exclusive access to the data during the collection and analysis process, and all stored data will be password protected. The aggregate data (void of identifying information) may be shared with the Virginia Tech dissertation committee and the community of participants. The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VII. Subject's Consent

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent (please confirm by clicking "I have read the attached consent form and agree to participate in this research" below).

VIII. Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free to choose not to answer any questions that you choose, or not respond to what is being asked of you, without penalty. Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

IX. Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, irb@vt.edu or 540-231-3732.

I agree.

I do not consent

Appendix B – Informed Consent for Questionnaire

Title of Project: Interagency Working Groups: Allegiances Across Agency Borders

Investigator(s): Robin Lemaire, PhD: rlemaire@vt.edu / 540-231-0664

Kathlyn Hopkins: loudin@vt.edu / 540-955-7197

I. Purpose

The purpose of this survey is to ascertain what types of relationships, if any, exist among the perceived effectiveness of interagency working groups and the allegiances of their members. Interagency working groups are increasingly being used to solve complex, government-wide problems. For the purpose of this survey, “effectiveness” is defined as the accomplishment of espoused goals within schedule and within budget (if applicable) for the betterment of the group’s customers – whether at the working group (i.e., network) level, the target community level, or the agency level.

It is expected that up to 100 participants will be involved in the research through surveys and interviews. The aggregated research results will be electronically published as part of a dissertation, presented to the candidate’s dissertation committee at Virginia Tech, and presented back to the community of participants upon request.

II. Process

After signing below, please scan or photograph the signed consent form and email it to the Ph.D. candidate at loudin@vt.edu. Alternative, you may bring a signed hard copy to your interview. The interview consists of questions on the effectiveness of an interagency working group with which you have served (or are still serving), the nature of your role(s) in the working group, and your organizational, relational or professional ties to the working group.

You are being invited to participate in an interview. The researcher may ask if she can contact you again in the future with follow-up questions. The interview will be approximately 30 minutes in length and be conducted either via telephone or held in a location convenient to you. The interview will be audio recorded.

III. Risks

Potential risks to study participants are minimal. Although providing candid feedback on interagency working group leaders and other group members, particularly when addressing the challenges and barriers to collaboration that sometimes arise, may produce frustration and minor discomfort, these risks will be mitigated by the fact that interview responses will be kept strictly confidential. Moreover, all responses will be aggregated at the highest meaningful level, thereby preserving your anonymity. In the event that interviews are conducted in your own office, the risk of any co-workers’ overhearing the

conversation will be mitigated by keeping your office doors closed, our voices low, and any artifacts of the interview closely held.

IV. Benefits

There are no direct monetary benefits or individual recognition resulting from participation in this research. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage participation in the study. Study participants may, however, contact the researchers at a later time for a summary of the research results.

Participants will be involved in an effort to further both scholarly and practitioners' understanding of the motivational underpinnings of public-public collaboration. In today's post-Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act, the mandate to collaborate renders the need for scholarship in this area particularly profound. This study's findings will help managers of public agencies better understand how and why individuals collaborate in the interagency arena, opening opportunities to enhance work on government-wide priorities.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

The researcher's e-mail account will contain communications identifying potential and actual participants. These accounts are password-protected (with two-factor authentication), per Virginia Tech standards. Also, the researchers will code the responses of individual interviewees by number on audio recordings and transcripts: for example, "Respondent #17." Names will not be attached to interviews, and confidentiality will be protected.

At no time will the researchers release data collected in this study to anyone other than individuals working on the project.

The audio recordings of interviews and discussions will be secured in a password-protected online storage folder. The audio files will be transcribed by research team members who have undergone VT IRB training; those transcriptions will be stored as electronic files along with other project information in password-protected folders. The researchers will have access to the data. The audio recordings will be erased once they have been transcribed. The transcriptions will be kept for scholarly purposes only and will be kept in a password-protected folder.

It is possible that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for oversight of the protection of all human participants in research.

VI. Compensation

Individuals participating in the interview will not be directly compensated.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

Participants are free to withdraw from a study at any time without penalty. Participants are free not to answer any questions they choose without penalty.

VIII. Participant's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

- Participate in the interview

IX. Subject's Permission

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all of my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and voluntarily consent:

_____ Date _____

Subject signature

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, research subject's rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, I may contact: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, irb@vt.edu or 540-231-3732

Appendix C – Cover Letter (Email) for Questionnaire

Subject: Interagency Working Groups - Academic Research

Hello, *[Name]*–

Virginia Tech is conducting a study of interagency working groups and the federal employees who staff them. Given the recent mandate to collaborate via the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act, we know that more than a dozen interagency working groups have been formed – and you have been a key member of *[fill in the blank with the name of the group]*.

We would very much appreciate your views on this working group – its goals, its resources, and other factors underlying its success. We are administering online surveys that take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, with optional follow-on interviews that might take another 30 minutes of your time.

We are not auditors or journalists, and we are not seeking to elicit any information that you feel uncomfortable in divulging. We adhere to strict protocols designed to protect the anonymity of our respondents. Please note that the research instruments will include questions about the leaders of the interagency working group. Also note that, if you elect to participate in an interview, the results may be audio recorded. However, any identifying information (including your name, title, and role within the group) will be detached from our interview transcripts and any associated notes. Instead, you will be identified by an alias and your identity will be obscured in any materials we disclose.

For more information, please contact me via email (loudin@vt.edu) or by phone (540-955-7197). Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!
Kathlyn Hopkins, Ph.D. candidate
Virginia Tech

Appendix D – Questionnaire

Q1. The purpose of this survey is to ascertain what types of relationships, if any, exist among the perceived effectiveness of interagency working groups and the allegiances of their members. Interagency working groups are increasingly being used to solve complex, government-wide problems. For the purpose of this survey, “effectiveness” is defined as the accomplishment of espoused goals within schedule and within budget (if applicable) for the betterment of the group’s customers – whether at the working group (i.e., network) level, the target community level, or the agency level. It is expected that up to 100 participants may be involved in the research through surveys and interviews. The aggregated research results will be electronically published as part of a dissertation, presented to the candidate’s dissertation committee at Virginia Tech, and presented to the community of participants upon request.

By clicking “I agree” below, you will be led through an online survey that will require approximately 10 minutes to complete. The survey consists of questions about the effectiveness of an interagency working group on which you have served, the nature of your role in the working group, and your professional, organizational, or relational ties to the working group.

There are few known physical, mental, or emotional risks resulting associated with participation in this research. Providing candid feedback on interagency working group members and leaders might create minor discomfort, given the likelihood that you may be working with those individuals in the future. This risk will be mitigated by the fact that your survey responses will be kept strictly confidential. All responses will be aggregated at the highest meaningful level, thereby preserving your anonymity.

There are no direct monetary benefits or individual recognition resulting from participation in this research. The findings, however, will inform the management of future interagency working groups, and add to the scholarship on collaboration within the public sector. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

All data collected through surveys will be kept confidential. Only essential information that identifies individual respondents will be collected. The research team will have exclusive access to the data during the collection and analysis process, and all stored data will be password protected. The aggregate data (void of identifying information) may be shared with the Virginia Tech dissertation committee and the community of participants. The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study’s data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free to choose not to answer any questions that you choose, or not respond to what is being asked of you, without penalty. Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information was in the invitational email. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, irb@vt.edu or 540-231-3732.

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

- I agree

Q2. Your Name (or pseudonym, for tracking responses only)

- Name

Q3. On which interagency working group did you serve?

- Improving Customer Experience
- Category Management
- Data, Accountability, Transparency
- People - Workforce for the 21st Century
- Shifting from Low-Value to High-Value Work
- IT Modernization

Q4. Which years have you served on this interagency working group? (Please check all that apply, but the following questions will focus on the two most recent years.)

- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019

Q5. Are you a political appointee?

- Yes
- No

Q6. What is your Office of Personnel Management labor category (e.g., 1515, 1102, 0801)? If unsure, see categories here: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/#url=List-by-Title>

- OPM job series
- I am still not sure

Q7. What was your role on this interagency working group? (Please check all that apply.)

- Primary representative from your agency
- Alternate representative from your agency
- Subject matter expert
- Working group leader
- Task or project leader
- Advisor
- Outsider (not group member)

Q8. What is your level of seniority?

- Pre-professional (i.e., still in school)
- Entry-level professional
- Mid-level professional
- Expert (more than 10 years)
- Mid-level manager
- Senior manager
- Senior executive service
- Agency head

Q9. I would describe myself in terms of my profession (e.g., attorney, engineer, financial analyst).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q10. I would describe myself in terms of my Federal position (e.g., DHS Director, OMB Analyst, etc.).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q11. How often did your interagency working group meet, either face-to-face or virtually?

- Weekly
- Biweekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Less often than quarterly
- Only as needed

Q12. I've been committed to the interagency working group's goals.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q13. I've kept in touch with many of the interagency working group members, even after our projects are completed.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q14. I've made suggestions to improve the group's approach to accomplishing its goals.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q15. I've predicted problems that could arise in the course of the project.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q16. I've proposed new ideas for the work, even when they were not explicitly requested.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q17. I've kept myself informed about external developments that might impact the project (e.g., Congressional hearings, GAO investigations).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q18. I've complied with the internal rules that were set at the outset of the interagency working group.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q19. I've paid great attention to my commitments with respect to this interagency working group.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q20. I've immediately informed the appropriate task leaders when having problems meeting deadlines.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q21. I've improved my performance if other members have commented negatively about my work.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q22. I've defended the interagency working group when a non-member has criticized it.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q23. I've described the interagency projects positively when someone from outside has asked me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree

Q24. My work with this interagency group will advance my professional goals.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q25. This interagency group has provided networking opportunities that could significantly influence my future.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q26. My agency's mission could be negatively impacted by the outcome of this interagency group.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q27. My agency's mission could be enhanced by the outcome of this interagency group.

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q28. My agency goals have conflicted with those of the interagency group.

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Only a couple of times
- Never

Q29. I've helped other group members when they've had heavy workloads.

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Q30. I've offered advice to other group members when they've needed it.

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Q31. I've tried to balance interests when there were disputes among group members.

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes

- Never

Q32. I've helped other group members gain access to resources, funding or information needed for the project (e.g., by connecting them to professionals in my agency).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q33. The leader of this interagency working group has provided clear direction.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q34. The leader of this interagency working group has contributed technical content to our work products.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q35. The leader of this interagency working group has primarily just facilitated our interactions.

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q36. The leader of this interagency working group is someone whom I admire.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q37. The leader has inspired me to contribute.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q38. Before this interagency working group formed, I previously worked with one or more of the other members.

- Nearly every day
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Once or twice
- Not at all

Q39. Before this interagency working group formed, I previously worked with its leader.

- Nearly every day
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Once or twice
- Not at all

Q40. In general, I am attracted to the work of this interagency working group.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q41. I've been drawn to the work, to some extent, by the opportunity to work with certain people on the interagency working group.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q42. I've been drawn to the work, to some extent, by the opportunity to work with the leader of this interagency working group.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q43. (Please choose one option from the following sets of pairs.)

I would rather...

- attend my agency's annual picnic or baseball outing
- attend a luncheon or social event sponsored by my professional society or trade association

Q44. I would rather...

- work with my agency colleagues to draft standard operating procedures
- consult with outside colleagues on professional standards or certification requirements

Q45. I would rather...

- visit a museum exhibit that features the history of my agency (or its predecessors)
- visit a museum exhibit that provides more insight on the history of my profession or trade

Q46. I would rather...

- give recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget on ways the Executive Branch could improve processes
- give recommendations to my agency on ways to improve its processes

Q47. I would rather...

- volunteer to coordinate a holiday gathering for my professional society/trade association
- volunteer to spread holiday cheer with my agency colleagues

Q48. How well has this interagency working group served the community it was targeted to help (based on its cross-agency priority goal)?

- Extremely well
- Very well

- Moderately well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Moderately poorly
- Very poorly
- Extremely poorly

Q49. How well have the members of this interagency group worked together to create value – in ways that perhaps transcended their original goals?

- Extremely well
- Very well
- Moderately well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Moderately poorly
- Very poorly
- Extremely poorly

Q50. How well have the efforts of this group served your agency (e.g., by connecting it to resources, enhancing its reputation, reducing its operating costs, or improving your customers' outcomes)?

- Extremely well
- Very well
- Moderately well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Moderately poorly
- Very poorly
- Extremely poorly

Q51. Will your organization recognize your work on this interagency working group?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure yet

Q52. How might your organization recognize the value of your work on this interagency working group?

- Recognition
- Awards of cash or time off
- New opportunities
- Other

Q53. Would you be willing to participate in a 20- to 30-minute interview, by telephone or in person (your preference) to follow up on these thoughts?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Might or might not
- Probably not
- Definitely not

Q54. Please provide your email address or telephone number for contacting you about an interview.

Thanks for contributing your insights on the topic of interagency working groups! Please contact me at loudin@vt.edu if you would like to receive the aggregated results of the survey.

Appendix E – Interview Guide

During this interview, we will delve more deeply into the question of what relationships, if any, exist among the perceived effectiveness of interagency working groups and the allegiances of their members. (As you know, interagency groups are increasingly being used to solve complex, government-wide problems, so we want to make them work as well as possible.)

For purposes of this interview, “effectiveness” means accomplishing goals – within schedule and budget – for the betterment of customers, whether at the group level, the target-community level, or the agency level. My questions may address each of those levels separately, so your feedback will differ, based on the level of analysis.

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Thanks so much for your time. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to bring that up as we talk – or later on, by contacting the project team listed in the consent document from Virginia Tech.

Your Name or Alias (for tracking responses only): _____

Context (C) - questions in descending order of importance:

(C-1) Thinking about [Data as a Strategic Asset, Category Management, IT Modernization, Workforce for the 21st Century], what was your role?

(Framing question, if needed: Were you expected to represent an organization or a particular point of view – or just good professional judgment?)

[Interviewer: pay close attention to this response, as large agencies have numerous offices, subagencies, and components. On the other hand, the participant could be a subject matter expert on a particular issue – or even an expert collaborator.]

(C-2) How were you recruited for this group?

[Interviewer: pay close attention to this also, as it may reveal whether the individual proactively chose the group – or whether the group and/or agency chose the individual because of his/her position or expertise. This may reveal unexpected allegiances.]

Allegiances - questions in descending order of importance:

(A-1) How does this interagency work mesh with what you normally do – or with your areas of expertise?

(Framing questions: How would you characterize this work - as a professional development activity, or an extension of your regular work? What are your professional goals? What organizations or societies, if any, are you part of? Does your agency support professional activities?)

(A-2) Please tell me about how you represent your agency – and also represent certain professional points of view. Is it hard to do both?

(Behavioral question: As an example scenario, suppose it is Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock. The working group is supposed to roll out a policy recommendation for the White House staff at 3 o'clock that day, and you are the key communicator. Unexpectedly, your supervisor emails you to request a draft response to your agency's Inspector General – and it's due at 2:30. There's no way you can do both – meet your boss's deadline and appear at the White House. What would you do? Why?

[Interviewer: Look for insight on which relationships are the most important to the participant, and how much effort he/she would make to mitigate the risk of harm to those relationships.]

(A-3) If you took my survey, you might remember that there were two questions about the impact of this group's work on your agency. One asked whether the group's work could enhance your agency's mission. The other asked whether the group's work could negatively impact your mission. How did you interpret those questions? What hypothetical examples can you think of?

[Look for hints of agency promotion or protection sensibilities – and how strongly the participant reacts to each category.]

(A-4) In a perfect world, imagine you could put together your own working group *[in support of the same goals]*, what agencies or experts would you include?

[This may shed light on the participant's views on the other agencies' missions and importance to the task at hand. It may also reveal that agency affiliations mattered little in terms of solving the problems at hand. If the participant shares specific names, that may reveal interpersonal allegiances or lack thereof.]

(A-5, only if there's time) Let's shift to people – the other group members and the leader.

- Did you know the leader before?
- If so, in what context?
- Did you know any of other members before?
- If so, in what context?
- How did your familiarity with the leader and other members impact your work?
- Were you drawn to the work because of these earlier interactions, or did that matter?

[Interviewer: pay close attention to this, as it may reveal the importance of relationships to the individual – how much do changes to relationships matter? What is driving those changes?]

Goals & Effectiveness

(E-1) Thinking about the group's goals, the leader, and the members, please tell me how things have been going –since you've been involved. *[Interviewer: Ask when that was, if you don't already know.]*

- Have the goals changed over time, or taken on a different emphasis?
- Can you point me to some examples of your products/projects?
- *[Interviewer: bring up any information from secondary sources about the group - and ask appropriate questions arising from that data]*

(E-2) Knowing the purpose of this interagency working group to be *[interviewer fill in the blank]*, I would like to get your take on how the group has been working toward this goal.

Target community: Who would you consider to be the community this group was set up to serve?

- How is (or will) the group's output be used to support that community?
- How might you measure the impact of your work?

Network: In terms of working together as a cohesive, productive group, how did things go?

- Was this truly an interagency effort, or did certain agencies seem to dominate the agenda?
- *[If applicable]* Was there a good reason for some agencies to be in the spotlight? What did you observe?
- If truly interagency, what did you observe?
- Were all voices heard? How did the leader handle conflicting opinions?

Agency: In terms of meeting your agency's needs, how did things go with this group? In other words, was your interagency work a positive or negative return on your agency's investment?

- Why do you feel that way?
- What could change internally (at your agency) as a result of this working group?
- Can you point me to any examples, in terms of agency projects or initiatives?

(E-3) Have you been on any other interagency working groups? How about within-agency working groups or task forces?

- If so, how effective do you think they were?
- Feel free to break your rating down into the three levels we talked about earlier – community, network and individual organization.
- Why do you feel that way?
- How do these other experiences compare to your experiences on this working group?

Conclusion

(1) What will happen when this interagency working group disbands? Will the work be transitioned to a permanent place?

(2) What's next for you?

Appendix F – IT Modernization



Appendix F - IT
Modernization.xlsx

Appendix G – Workforce for the 21st Century



Appendix G -
Workforce.xlsx

Appendix H – Category Management



Appendix H -
Category Manager

Appendix I – Customer Experience



Appendix I -
Customer Experience.

Appendix J – Data as a Strategic Asset



Appendix J - Data as
a Strategic Asset.xlsx

Appendix K – Survey Data



Appendix K - Survey
Data.xlsx

Appendix L – Rubric for Analyzing Interview Data

Interview Question	Desired Insight	Coding and Connecting
<p>What is your role on the interagency working group?</p>	<p>Was the person expected to represent his or her organization or a particular point of view – or just good, professional judgment?</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> O = Verbose on agency needs P = Stressed professional role D = Different (some other role) <u>Connect:</u> Reflect upon the group’s subgoals and structures and what roles would be needed. What makes sense? What does not make sense?</p>
<p>How were you recruited?</p>	<p>Did the person proactively choose this group – or did others in the group choose the person?</p> <p>Did the agency assign the person due to position – or because of known professional interest?</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> R = Relational; recruited by a colleague P = Professional interests; selected for role either by self or by agency (knowing this was in line with person’s interests) O = Selected by virtue of position in agency <u>Connect:</u> How strongly do position, agency, professional stance, and relationships factor into the group’s effectiveness? What seems to be most important?</p>
<p>How does this interagency work mesh with what you normally do – or with your areas of expertise?</p>	<p>Is the person doing his or her normal work in a different context – or is the person doing something entirely different? How does the person feel about that?</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> P = Professional growth; significant differences between regular work and agency work O = Agency will rely heavily on the group’s output <u>Connect:</u> Are novel work, new conditions, or new people strong motivators?</p>
<p>Please tell me about how you represent your agency, while also representing certain</p>	<p>Understanding potential conflicts, if any, and how the person handles them. If no potential conflicts are</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> O = Verbose about agency P = Verbose about profession R = Relational; mentions</p>

<p>professional points of view. Is it hard to do both?</p>	<p>mentioned, ask about hypothetical ones.</p>	<p>individuals <u>Connect:</u> What conflicts would naturally occur in this group setting? What conflicts would be surprising? How easy is it to talk about conflict? What is mentioned most? What tends to be left unsaid?</p>
<p>Behavioral question: There's no way you can do both – meet your boss's deadline and appear at the White House. What would you do? Why?</p>	<p>How does the person decide? What values are driving this decision? Which relationships are most important?</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> P = Appear at White House O = Meet agency boss's deadline R = Preserve relationships <u>Connect:</u> How much effort is made to mitigate the risk of harm to the relationships at issue?</p>
<p>Could the group's work could negatively impact or positively promote your agency's mission? What examples can you think of?</p>	<p>What are some possible motives for getting involved? Does fear factor in, or is potential negative impact even important to this person?</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> O = Impact on agency N/A = No impact on agency OE = Could provide examples <u>Connect:</u> "Prevent or promote" (Das & Kumar, 2011) mentality - where do most people fall on the continuum?</p>
<p>In a perfect world, imagine you could put together your own working group [in support of the same goals], what agencies or types of experts would you include?</p>	<p>What does this person view as important to the task at hand? Are specific agencies necessary, or specific types of professional expertise, or do the two go hand in hand?</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> O = Highlights agencies P = Highlights experts R = Relational; mentions specific people D = Mentions combination <u>Connect:</u> Reflect upon the group's subgoals and structures and what needs would exist. What makes sense?</p>
<p>Did you know the leader – or any of the other members – before, or were they all new? If you've worked with any of</p>	<p>How did the person's familiarity with the leader or and other members impact the work?</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> R2 = Knew multiple people R2a = Had heard of people R1 = Knew only one</p>

<p>them before, in what context?</p>	<p>Was the person drawn to the work because of these earlier interactions, or did that matter?</p>	<p>R1a = Had heard of one Ro = Knew no one <u>Connect:</u> Map familiarity to context, as well as how the group operated once formed.</p>
<p>Have the goals changed over time, or taken on a different emphasis? Can you point me to some examples of your products/projects?</p>	<p>Understand the goals – and how they have changed, if at all. Look at the group’s outputs.</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> GC = Changed SC = Somewhat changed NC = Not changed <u>Connect:</u> Map goals to outputs, as well as how members viewed change.</p>
<p>Target community: Who would you consider to be the community this group was set up to serve? How is (or will) the group’s output be used to support that community? How might you measure the impact of your work? How effective was the group in serving the community?</p>	<p>Get better idea of why the person rated effectiveness in a certain way.</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> CE = Could define community CN = Community undefined SE = Support understood SN = Support not understood ME = Measures exist MN = Measures do not exist D = Different response <u>Connect:</u> Map perceived effectiveness to factors above, as well as other emergent factors.</p>
<p>In terms of working together as a cohesive, productive group, how did things go? Was this was truly an interagency effort, or did certain agencies seem to dominate the agenda? Was there a good reason for some agencies to be in the spotlight? What did you observe? If truly interagency, what did you observe? Were all voices heard? How did the leader handle conflicting opinions?</p>	<p>Get better idea of why the person rated effectiveness in a certain way.</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> GF = Covered group formation CR = Covered conflict resolution WN = Mentioned workload distribution imbalances WE = Mentioned workload balances AD = Agencies dominated PD = Personalities dominated D = Different response <u>Connect:</u> Map perceived effectiveness to factors above, as well as other emergent factors.</p>

<p>In terms of meeting your agency's needs, how did things go with this group? In other words, was your interagency work a positive or negative return on investment (ROI) for your agency? Why do you feel that way? What could change internally (at your agency) as a result of this working group?</p>	<p>Get better idea of why the person rated effectiveness in a certain way.</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> O = Gave thoughtful consideration to agency OEC = Examples of change D = Different response <u>Connect:</u> Map perceived effectiveness to factors above, as well as other emergent factors.</p>
<p>Have you been on any other interagency working groups? How about within-agency working groups or task forces? If so, how effective do you think they were? Feel free to break your rating down into community, network and agency levels. Why do you feel that way? How do these other experiences compare to your experiences on this working group?</p>	<p>Comparison of the subject interagency working group to previous experiences. Expected differences include different goals, different composition, different timeline, different leadership.</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> N/A = No other experience D = Different experience EE = Effectiveness higher EL = Effectiveness lower DC = Cannot fairly compare <u>Connect:</u> Interviewee's feelings about this group versus prior groups and how the different circumstances played out, as well as why the interviewee might be motivated to collaborate in each context.</p>
<p>What will happen when this interagency working group disbands? Will the work be transitioned to a permanent place?</p>	<p>See if specific agencies or entities are mentioned, and how much the person cares about the future project.</p>	<p><u>Codes:</u> O = Mentions agency P = Mentions profession R = Mentions people <u>Connect:</u> Reflect on level of enthusiasm for the project's next phase, as well as what the interviewee sees as important.</p>