

DIMENSIONS OF THE INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN AREA AGENCIES ON AGING AND SOCIAL
SERVICES BLOCK GRANT AGENCIES

by

Marcia Porter Safewright

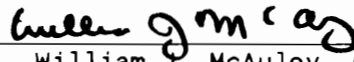
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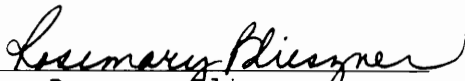
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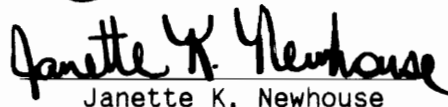
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(ABSTRACT)

This research employed a model of interorganizational relations (Van de Ven, 1976) based on social action theory to examine the interagency relationships between Title III/Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) agencies across the country. The specific purpose of this study was to investigate five AAA/SSBG agency relationships using case study methodology to determine the adequacy of Van de Ven's model in portraying the relationships. I also examined possible changes in the framework that might enhance its ability to characterize the relationships.

In general, qualitative data analysis supported the model's ability to depict the interagency relationships. The following factors were influential in the formation and continued functioning of at least three of the five interagency relationships: (a) resource needs, dependence, and exchange; (b) a commitment to serving older adults; (c) a commitment to the interagency relationship; (d) interagency communication, awareness, and information exchange; (e) interagency consensus (i.e., agreement between agency representatives on the goals and expectations of each agency in the relationship); (f) domain similarity (e.g., overlap in

client populations and geographic service areas); (g) informal means of interaction and communication; and (h) perceived effectiveness of the interagency effort by agency representatives.

Based upon the results of this investigation, I have proposed a revised framework that incorporates the major components of the original model but also simplifies and conceptually clarifies important relationship factors. It places more emphasis on the individuals involved in interagency relationships and is tailored to fit the special circumstances of social service agencies.

An important implication of these findings for further research is the need for examining other social service agencies with the original and revised framework to further enhance their usefulness in characterizing interagency interaction. Implications for practice include the use of this information about AAA/SSBG agency relationships to improve interagency collaboration, service delivery and planning, and public policy decisions.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	11
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Development of the Problem.....	1
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	7
Introduction.....	7
Title XX of the Social Security Act.....	7
Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).....	10
The Older Americans Act: Title III.....	13
Coordination Issues Between Title XX/SSBG and Title III of the OAA.....	17
Research Problem.....	19
Interorganizational Relationships.....	20
Reasons for Forming Interagency Relationships.....	20
Supportive Elements and Barriers to a Working Relationship.....	20
Theoretical Perspectives on Interorganizational Relationships.....	21
Exchange Perspective.....	22
Power-Resource Dependence Perspective.....	22
Mandated Relationship Perspective.....	23

Table of Contents (Continued)

	PAGE
Comparison of the Perspectives.....	24
Expectations for AAA and DSS Interagency Relationships.....	25
Van de Ven's Theoretical Framework and Related Model.....	27
Interagency Relationships as Social Action Systems.....	28
Situational Factors.....	28
Resource Dependence.....	29
Commitment.....	29
Awareness.....	31
Consensus.....	31
Domain Similarity.....	32
Structural Dimensions.....	33
Formalization.....	33
Centralization.....	34
Complexity.....	34
Process Dimensions.....	35
Resource Exchange.....	36
Information Exchange.....	36
Outcome Dimension.....	37
Expectations Regarding AAA/DSS Relationships.....	37
Research Hypotheses.....	39
The Formation of the Relationship.....	39
Maintenance of the Relationship.....	40
Current Relationship Processes and Structure.....	42

Table of Contents (Continued)

	PAGE
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....	44
Introduction.....	44
Procedure.....	44
The Sample.....	46
Data Collection.....	48
Measurement.....	50
Limitations of the Measurement.....	50
Data Analysis.....	51
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	56
Introduction.....	56
Cross-Site Results.....	61
Resource Needs, Dependence, Exchange.....	61
Commitment to Older Adults Through Joint Efforts.....	68
Commitment to Interagency Relationship.....	69
Interagency Awareness, Communication, and Information Exchange.....	71
Interagency Consensus.....	75
Domain Similarity.....	78
Centralization.....	79
Formalization.....	79
Perceived Effectiveness.....	81
Complexity.....	83
Additional Findings.....	85
Summary.....	88

Table of Contents (Continued)

	PAGE
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	90
Theoretical Relevance: Interagency Relationships as Social Action Systems.....	90
Situational Factors and the Formation of the Relationship.....	93
Maintenance Over Time and Current Relationship.....	94
Summary of Model Relevance to Expected AAA/DSS Interaction.....	99
Model Revision: Interpersonal/Perceptual Dimension.....	100
Revised Model.....	104
Agency Similarities/Differences.....	108
Relationship Motivation.....	108
Structure of the Relationship.....	109
Interagency Processes.....	110
Interpersonal/Perceptual/Attitudinal Factor.....	110
Research, Practice, and Policy Implications.....	111
Future Research Needs.....	111
Implications for Public Policy and Practice.....	114
Conclusions.....	115
REFERENCES.....	117
FOOTNOTES.....	120
APPENDICES.....	121
A. Interview Guides.....	121
B. Letter of Introduction.....	144
C. List of Documents Reviewed.....	147
D. Summary Sheet.....	149

Table of Contents (Continued)

	PAGE
E. Status Sheet.....	155
F. Individual Site Analysis.....	157
VITA.....	232

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE
Table 1. Hypothesis Summary for All Counties.....	62
Table F1. Hypothesis Summary for North County.....	159
Table F2. Hypothesis Summary for South County.....	177
Table F3. Hypothesis Summary for East County.....	193
Table F4. Hypothesis Summary for West County.....	206
Table F5. Hypothesis Summary for Central County.....	220

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Van de Ven's Model Dimensions of Interorganizational Relations.....	105
2. Revised Model of Interagency Relationship Factors.....	107

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Chapter I: Introduction

Development of the Problem

According to Rich and Baum (1984), the older proportion of the population in the United States has grown steadily in this century and promises to continue to grow over the near future. Currently, older adults sixty-five and over represent 11.3 percent of the total population, or one in every nine Americans. Those adults over the ages of seventy-five and eighty-five are increasing more rapidly than the overall elderly population.

Because the aging population is not evenly distributed, some states will be spending more of their resources on services to older persons than others (Rich & Baum, 1984). For those individuals with an interest in public policy and service delivery, the importance of these issues cannot be ignored.

Adults over the age of 60 have a variety of identified needs that include physical and mental health care, economic and financial assistance, employment, retirement counseling, housing and transportation, educational opportunities, and legal support (Rich & Baum, 1984). Because those aged sixty-five and over do not belong to a homogeneous group, their economic and health related ability to meet service needs without assistance varies a great deal.

In the United States, there is no national aging policy, nor is there a single overall program designed to meet all of the needs of the elderly population. Often there are several public and private agencies and organizations within a single community that attempt to meet similar needs of the aging population. Funding sources for the various organizations involved in service delivery come from a variety of public and private sources, resulting in multiple funding bases. Community service agencies may or may not take each other into consideration as they plan and deliver services for older adults.

Whether or not various agencies collaborate can have important ramifications for the service delivery system. Issues often cited as reasons for interagency collaboration include the following: (a) fragmented service delivery systems, (b) overlap in service definitions, (c) multiple funding bases, and (d) varying models for service delivery. However, agencies have their own missions, goals, and eligibility requirements; establish different operating procedures; and receive directives and funding from different governmental bodies at the local, state, and federal levels (McLaughlin and Covert, 1984). Such interagency differences can make cooperation much more difficult.

Among the agencies responsible for social services to older adults are local area agencies on aging (AAA) and departments of social services (DSS). The agencies are funded, in part, by two federal funding streams, Title III of the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Social Services Block Grant Program (SSBG), and they support many valuable social services for

the elderly population. Although AAAs generally have responsibility for Title III-funded services and DSSs are responsible for Social Services Block Grant-funded services, sometimes an agency may be responsible for both funding streams as they are applied to services for older adults.

Similarities and differences in the service structure supported by the funding streams exist. For example, the Title III and SSBG funding streams are primarily federally financed and state administered, while the programs and services supported by each are planned and delivered at the local level. Often, services provided to older people through Title III and the SSBG are similar in nature. However, the SSBG program funds services to children and adults of all ages, and its overall expenditures are much larger than Title III of the OAA. SSBG directly funds services to maintain self sufficiency, prevent dependency and abuse, and provide protective services among individuals with lower incomes.

In contrast to the SSBG, Congress enacted the Older Americans Act of 1965 to serve older adults exclusively. The 1973 Amendments to the OAA began an effort to establish a comprehensive service system providing for the needs of older adults (Rich & Baum, 1984). The OAA directs local AAAs to foster the development of a comprehensive, coordinated system of services and programs for older adults, and local SSBG agencies are often participants in this service system. Title III of the OAA provides for several diverse assistance programs including nutrition, home health care, legal services, transportation, and employment services. Although all adults over the age of 60 are eligible for Title III programs, the 1984

Amendments to the OAA established a principle of targeting services toward individuals in greatest social and economic need (Ficke, 1985).

Often AAAs and DSSs collaborate and enter into agreements or arrangements to better serve the segment of the aging population for which they have responsibility. According to Christensen and McLaughlin (1984, p. 2) "interagency collaboration can be viewed as a process in which two or more agencies work together to join separate programs and services for the purpose of providing a continuum of service alternatives" to a target population. Collaboration does not suggest that new organizations are created nor that existing agencies are reorganized. Collaboration does imply that priorities are changed to reach the common goal of providing services for a target population. It also implies that reduced funds and other resources may be utilized more efficiently to reach the common goal.

Currently, there is a gap in the existing literature about the nature of the collaborative relationship between agencies administering Title III and SSBG funds or the outcomes of these relationships. Portraying AAA/DSS relationships and making generalizations is difficult, in part, because the characteristics and operating procedures of the agencies are likely to differ from area to area. The specific research problem I address is two-fold: (a) what is the current nature of the interagency relationship between Title III and SSBG agencies, and (b) how can the application of a theory-based model be used to portray AAA/DSS interaction. There is no apparent investigation in the current literature that addresses these issues. Therefore, I applied a general theoretical model of

interorganizational relations to the relationships between Title III and SSBG agencies to address the research problem.

More specifically, I employed a model based on social action theory (Van de Ven, 1976) to conduct five case studies of interagency relationships between AAAs and DSSs across the country. In two applications of the model, Van de Ven studied the interaction of child care and health organizations. He concluded that it is important to determine the different reasons for interagency relationships if one is to understand the various patterns of coordination among organizations (Van de Ven, Walker, & Liston, 1979). He also suggested that although the model dimensions he proposed can be used to understand different types of interorganizational relationships, characteristics are likely to differ according to the needs of each individual relationship (Van de Ven & Walker, 1984). Because of its general nature, the model seemed appropriate for incorporating both common and unique characteristics of AAA/DSS relationships.

In using the model based on social action theory in this investigation, I expected to contribute knowledge regarding its applicability to the portrayal of Title III and SSBG interagency relationships. I also planned to examine ways of changing the model if it did not appear to adequately depict the interaction or if there appeared to be ways to refine it to better fit the circumstances of AAAs and DSSs. The proposed outcome was a better overall characterization of AAA/DSS interagency relationships. In general, more knowledge about AAA/DSS relationships could be used by

interorganizational relations researchers, public policy makers, practitioners, and applied researchers in gerontology and other social sciences to generate new research hypotheses regarding interagency relationships and to make better informed decisions regarding service delivery.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Seven principle topics are addressed in the review of literature: (a) Title XX of the Social Security Act, (b) Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), (c) The Older Americans Act: Title III, (d) Coordination Issues Between Title XX/SSBG and Title III of the OAA, (e) Interorganizational Relations, (f) Theoretical Perspectives on Interorganizational Relationships, and (g) Van de Ven's Theoretical Framework and Related Model.

Title XX of the Social Security Act

In 1974, Title XX was included in the Social Service Amendments to the Social Security Act. The Title consolidated most of the previous sections of the Social Security Act relating to social services. Title XX funds were distributed according to the size of the state's population. Each state was required to design a package of services and to define the populations eligible for them (Gelfand, 1984). Several services for older adults were funded in various states under Title XX. They included (a) adult day care, (b) foster care, (c) homemaker services, (d) nutrition programs, (e) senior centers, (f) protective services, (g) services in long-term care residences, and (h) funds for comprehensive community mental health centers. Eligibility for social services provided under Title XX was means tested. Under means testing, specific income criteria must be met for service eligibility.

Limitations in services for older adults resulted, in part, from federal requirements that states fund at least a specific group of mandated services across all age groups. Services mandated by Title XX included (a) adoption, (b) day care for children, (c) early periodic screening, (d) diagnosis and treatment of chronic and potential illnesses, (e) employment counseling, (f) family planning, (g) foster care for children, (h) information and referral, (i) protective services for abused and neglected spouses and children, and (j) services to the disabled, elderly and blind. Schram and Hurley (1977) examined the Title XX plan for New York State and estimated that 45 percent of the funds were spent on services for children. Based upon another study of Title XX state plans, Schram (1979) suggested that as much as 60 percent of all Title XX allocations may have been spent on children. The number of mandated services involving children and young families, funding allocations based on overall state size, and the requirement that at least 50 percent of the federal funds be spent on welfare recipients limited the Title XX funds available to serve older adults as a group (Lammers & Klingman, 1984).

Overall, there was disagreement in the literature of the late 1970's and early 1980's regarding whether older adults were receiving a fair share of Title XX funds. After examining New York's state plan, Schram and Hurley (1977) concluded that there was reason to doubt that elderly clients were receiving an equitable share of Title XX funds. Other articles also suggested that older clients were disadvantaged in the distribution of Title XX funds. Schram (1979) suggested that the intense

competition between various groups for Title XX funds had resulted in discrimination against the elderly population in the allocation of Title XX funds. Alfaro and Holmes (1981) stated that children and young families received the highest priority and the greatest share of Title XX funds. Their conclusion was based on their research involving data from interviews and documents from 12 state and area agencies on aging, 12 state and local Title XX agencies, and 114 service providers.

In contrast to this body of research, Gilbert and Specht (1982) examined Title XX service allocations for older clients during the first five years of the Title (1976-1980) and concluded that older adults had received their fair share of Title XX resources. Nelson (1982, 1983) examined Social Security Reporting Requirement Reports and Title XX Comprehensive Annual Service Plans (CASPs), and he concluded that, on the average, both older adults in general and elderly SSI recipients received a fair share of Title XX funds. However, this equity may differ depending to some degree upon the state of residence and the rural or urban characteristics of an area.

An objective comparison of the research by various authors is very difficult. There is great variation in the methodologies as well as the definitions of the older population's fair share of Title XX allocations. State plans and allocation records of Title XX agencies make comparisons between age groups difficult, because the figures are not broken down into specific age groups. Many services are delivered to "adults," not just adults over the age of 65 (Schram, 1979).

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)

The funding for Title XX was converted to the Social Services Block Grant Program (SSBG) by the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981 (Morell, 1982). The funding conversion was part of the consolidation of some 57 categorical grant programs into 9 different block grants. The SSBG was one of these nine new block grants. The previous funding by categorical grants provided allocations for specialized purposes. The activities of agencies administering the categorical grants were narrowly defined at the federal level, and the federal government played an active role in determining how these funds were administered (Estes, Newcomer, Benjamin, Gerard, Harrington, Lee, Lindeman, Pardini, Swan, & Wood, 1983). In contrast to the categorical grants, the new block grants provided funding for a wide range of activities within a much broader area of functions. The federal role was minimized and wide discretion was given to recipient governmental bodies for identifying problems, designing programs, and allocating resources (Estes, et al., 1983). Conversion to block grants was part of the New Federalism approach to public policy that proposed to reduce the bureaucracy of the federal government through decentralization. Decentralization transferred administrative responsibility for many social service programs to states and localities.

As part of decentralization, the establishment of the block grants offered states and local communities increased flexibility to determine program and population priorities at the local level (Beyle & Dusenbury, 1982). Although the block grant concept was received with enthusiasm by

many state and local governments, there was a 20 percent reduction in federal funds for the SSBG program, when compared to Title XX allocations (Lammers & Klingman, 1984). The reduced funding that accompanied the block grants gave greater funding responsibility to state and local governments, along with their increased discretion about allocating funds. Many areas could not afford to replace the funding losses.

Under the new Social Services Block Grant, the original goals of Title XX were retained, while several federal restrictions and requirements were dropped. The federal requirements for state matching funds, targeting of welfare recipients, and placing restrictions on income for eligibility were eliminated. States and localities could determine their own eligibility criteria. The reporting requirements to the federal government by those governmental bodies receiving funds were also lessened.

In summary, SSBG is a continuation of Title XX with much broader eligibility criteria, more state and local responsibility for supplying funds, and greater administrative discretion for the areas receiving federal funds (Lammers & Klingman, 1984). SSBG combined Title XX social services with the smaller Title XX programs for the training of state and local social service workers and day care for children.

The effects of the Social Services Block Grant on services to older persons, along with the accompanying reduction in funds, have not been easy to assess (Alfaro & Holmes, 1981; Gelfand, 1984). One result that could have occurred was increased allocation of funds to services for

older adults. However, Alfaro and Holmes suggested that the change in funding from Title XX to a block grant administered by the states would not necessarily change allocation of funds to different client groups.

There were several reasons for concern about the elderly population under SSBG funding. First, the agencies administering public social services at the state and local levels would be the same agencies that provided services under Title XX. There was concern that these departments would continue to operate under the same, or even greater, financial and bureaucratic constraints. Second, the reduction in funding under SSBG would likely result in increased competition for services among different client groups served by Title XX (Gelfand, 1984). Third, establishing eligibility criteria under the block grant approach would become an issue because states could ultimately determine the eligibility criteria for social services in their areas, without a great deal of federal direction. There was considerable apprehension that the older client population would not benefit from this new discretion about how funds were spent (Nelson, 1982; Nelson, 1983).

After 1984, there is little discussion in the literature about the way in which older adults benefit from services under Title XX and the SSBG program. How older adults benefit from the SSBG funded Title XX program now varies tremendously among states and localities. The variation in eligibility criteria, types of services, and reporting of expenditures continues to make generalizations about the effect of SSBG on the aging population in the United States very difficult.

The Older Americans Act: Title III

Issues surrounding the funding of services for older adults under the Older Americans Act (OAA) are quite different from those under SSBG. In contrast to the SSBG, the OAA serves older adults exclusively and is not a means-tested program. All adults over the age of 60 are eligible for services under the OAA. According to Gelfand (1984), the OAA's basic purpose is to "help older persons by providing funds to the states for services, training, and research" (p. 9).

The Act, passed in 1965, was the beginning of what is known today as the Aging Network. The OAA and the service system involved in carrying out its objectives are referred to as the Aging Network. The federal Administration on Aging was established to oversee the creation of a service system at the community level designed to meet the social and human service needs of the elderly population (Ficke, 1985). State units on aging and local area agencies on aging also make up the administrative structure involved in the implementation of the OAA (Rich & Baum, 1984).

Among the important factors that contributed to the passage of the OAA was the increasing number of older adults and the shift of responsibility for their well-being to government. This shift in responsibility began with the passage of the Civil Service Retirement Act in 1920 and the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935 (Ficke, 1985). Other legislation followed concerning the health, housing, nutrition, and transportation needs of older adults. Overall, there was a tremendous increase in public awareness of the aging population.

The Older Americans Act, as first enacted, included ten objectives for meeting the needs of older adults: (a) an adequate income in retirement, (b) the best possible physical and mental health, (c) suitable housing, (d) full restorative services, (e) opportunity for employment, (f) retirement in health, honor, and dignity, (g) pursuit of meaningful activity, (h) efficient community services, (i) immediate benefit from proven research knowledge, and (j) freedom, independence and the free exercise of individual initiative (Ficke, 1985). The Act, as currently amended, retains these major objectives. However, Rich and Baum (1984) stated that these objectives have little relationship to reality, because they are far too broad and idealistic for a single program with limited funding to address adequately.

Under the original Act, six Titles were designed to meet the objectives. Each Title had specific provisions concerning services to older adults. Subsequent amendments added provisions and established new Titles. One of the most important groups of amendments were those enacted in 1973. The 1973 Amendments to the OAA initiated a focus on establishing comprehensive and coordinated service systems to provide for the needs of older adults (Rich & Baum, 1984). Title III became more directly tied to this directive than any of the other Titles. Title III received the largest funding appropriation of any of the Titles, and this greater funding continues today.

The new provisions of Title III established by the 1973 amendments required state units on aging (SUAs) to divide their states into planning

and service areas (PSAs). The SUAs were also directed to designate networks of area agencies on aging (AAAs) to plan and develop comprehensive systems of services for older adults within their areas (Ficke, 1985). State unit on aging is a generic term for a variety of state governmental arrangements ranging from independent, single purpose agencies to those in multipurpose agencies, such as departments of social services or human resources departments. The existence of a state agency is required in every state to carry out Title III specifications. Each SUA develops policies and program directions for AAAs in their state.

Area agencies on aging are responsible for carrying out the Title III specifications at the local level. AAAs can be public or private, nonprofit agencies or offices. They are designated as the focal points within their PSA for planning, coordinating, developing, and pooling resources to create comprehensive systems of services for the older population (Kusserow, 1987).

AAAs foster the development of coordinated systems in several ways. They conduct needs assessments and develop area plans for state approval. Working with other agencies and organizations in the community is very important to the coordination effort. Contracting with local agencies to provide services, working with other agencies and organizations in the community to promote awareness of concerns affecting older adults, and seeking to stimulate additional funding resources for services to the elderly population adults contribute to the development of a comprehensive system. According to Ficke (1985), the successful achievement of the

Older Americans Act coordination goals are very dependent upon the success of state and area agencies and the Administration on Aging working with other agencies, organizations, and service providers in each local community.

The AAA takes a leadership role in a community for coordinating service provision for older adults. When AAAs were originally established, often there were existing agencies and organizations in the area already providing services (Ficke, 1985). Instead of establishing the AAA as a new direct service agency, the area agency's role became that of coordinator of services for older adults, and this role continues today. However, the resources and, more importantly, the power to bring other agencies in a community together was not adequately established by Congress (Stanfield, 1979). The entry of the new area agencies into localities where service agencies already existed was often seen by heads of the established programs as invasion of their territory. This perception of invasion often lead to problems in coordination between the AAAs and other agencies in the area, including the Title XX agencies.

Currently, the efforts of other public and private agencies serving older adults are supported and funded by Title III money. AAAs are generally prohibited from delivering direct services, with two exceptions: (a) a provided service must be directly related to the administrative functions of the agency, or (b) services of comparable quality can be delivered more economically by the AAA than by another provider.

A wide variety of services are supported under Part A of Title III and include activities associated with service access, in-home services, and legal services. Part B provides for supportive services in 18 categories. These categories include services related to housing, home health care, health and nutrition, transportation, employment, prevention of abuse, and services of an ombudsman for older adults in long term care facilities (Ficke, 1985). The 1984 amendments to the OAA provided a further mandate for targeting or assuring that the service needs of low-income and minority older adults, and all older adults designated as being in greatest social and economic need, receive priority.

Coordination Issues Between Title XX/SSBG and
Title III of the OAA

This background information on Title XX, the SSBG, and Title III enables a comparison of some important similarities and differences existing in the programs. Both programs support similar services to older adults. The primary goal of both agencies, in relation to older adults, is serving those in greatest need. They both operate at the local level to provide and support service needs specific to their localities. They both exercise considerable flexibility in how they meet the needs of their respective areas. On the surface, the need and logic for coordination of programs delivering similar services to similar and sometimes the same populations should be evident. The Title III focus on developing coordinated service systems at the local level should facilitate the relationship between the programs. There were, however, issues in the

late 1970s and early 1980s that made the coordination task more difficult than might be expected. The major issues were (a) SSBG agency representatives' perceptions of the AAA leadership role in coordination of community service provision to older adults, and (b) the missions of the agencies that resulted in differences in the definition of service need and entitlement.

AAAs found Title XX funds a likely target for mobilizing resources in the community for services to older adults (Gilbert & Specht, 1979). However, the differing perspectives of Title XX agencies and AAAs often led to problems in obtaining these funds for services to the elderly population. Title XX agencies interpreted their mission as one of serving only low income older adults (Nelson, 1982). In contrast, the AAAs, with universal access to services, wanted to counter the welfare image of Title XX. The basic difficulty in working together was this fundamental difference in approaches to need and entitlement (Nelson 1980; 1982).

According to Nelson (1982), each of the agencies had access to one half of a continuum of care. Older Americans Act clients had access to basic life-enhancement services primarily directed toward socialization, as well as information and referral, transportation, and legal services for improving the overall quality of life. On the other hand, older clients receiving Title XX services had access to basic life-maintenance services that help provide a level of economic maintenance and sustenance with little attention to the improvement of the overall quality of life. Nelson (1982) suggested the need for a compromise or "a melding together

of aspects of each program to better serve the interests of both the poor and the nonpoor who are in need of services" (Nelson, 1982, p. 24). Unfortunately, Nelson did not prescribe specific ways to achieve this "melding together" process.

From a similar perspective, Fritz (1979) suggested that other agencies may have been reluctant to coordinate with AAAs because they perceived that Title III programs adequately fulfilled the service needs of older adults. He stated that in reality older adults need services from several sources. Any single program does not have the necessary resources available to provide a complete continuum of care for all older adults. His perspective suggested that the elderly population is not a homogeneous group and that the needs of older people are as varied as those of any other age group.

Research Problem

Little has been written since 1983 about issues that might affect coordination between Title III and SSBG agencies. This gap in the literature suggests the need for further research that examines the nature of the relationships between AAAs and DSS in recent years. The specific research problem I address is two-fold: (a) what is the current nature of the interagency relationship between Title III and SSBG agencies, and (b) how can the application of a theory-based model be used to portray AAA/DSS interaction. The literature on interorganizational relationships suggests important issues to examine in interagency interaction as well as perspectives for addressing the research problem.

Interorganizational Relationships

Reasons for forming interagency relationships. Relationships between organizations develop for various reasons (Benjamin, Lindeman, Budetti, & Newacheck, 1984). One reason is that organizations operate under conditions of scarce resources and therefore require additional support (e.g., funding, political support, staff) to meet their goals. In this context, exchanges between organizations are essential to the attainment of the agencies' respective goals. This conceptualization follows Rogers and Whetten's (1982) definition of cooperation in which otherwise autonomous agencies form relationships for the joint accomplishment of individual operating goals.

Organizations may also establish relationships to influence the priorities and activities of other organizations in their environment. This reason for relationship formation applies to organizations that want to advocate their agency philosophy and gain power over other organizations in the environment. Relationships may also develop because a superordinate body (e.g., external influence such as parent agency or legislature) requires the agencies to work together.

Supportive elements and barriers to a working relationship. Several factors can support or present barriers to interagency relationships. Gamm (1981) reviewed the literature on interorganizational relations and summarized behaviors and perceptions that are generally supportive of joint efforts. Administrators and staff members who perceive another organization as having an operating philosophy compatible with their own

are more likely to support interagency relationships. If the other agency's staff is perceived as competent and performs tasks well, and the agency is perceived as important to the work of their own organization, relations are likely to be facilitated. He also suggested that relationships are more likely to continue if there is frequent and quality communication as well as person-to-person contact. Low conflict, good conflict resolution, and quality working relationships are other interpersonal factors that help to maintain relationships. Additionally, joint participation in a variety of program and administrative activities, and the presence of some domain consensus and awareness of each others' activities are helpful elements.

On the other hand, barriers to or sources of conflict often exist in interagency collaboration (McLaughlin and Covert, 1984). Common interpersonal issues are value and perceptual differences, personality clashes, lack of consensus, and communication problems. Individual staff member concerns such as pressures, divergent goals, and status threat can also impede effective collaboration. Issues that are more closely related to the agencies involved in collaboration, rather than the personnel, are lack of resources, environmental changes that may occur, ambiguous jurisdictions, physical communication barriers, and existing regulations.

Theoretical Perspectives on Interorganizational Relationships

Overall, a review of the literature on interorganizational relations suggests that serious difficulties exist in defining and explaining agency interaction. A major problem is that various studies and theoretical

perspectives use different definitions, and they tend to examine fragmented aspects of the interorganizational relationship (Rogers & Whetten, 1982). Three examples of theoretical perspectives that examine narrow elements of interagency efforts are the exchange perspective (Levine & White, 1961), the power-resource dependence perspective (Aldrich, 1976; Cook, 1977), and the mandated relationship perspective (Raelin, 1980).

Exchange perspective. Levine and White (1961) proposed a conceptual framework based on exchange between organizations. They defined exchange as any activity between organizations with actual or anticipated consequences for the realization of the participating agencies' goals. Among the proposed exchange activities were the exchange of clients, labor, information, and concrete resources such as funds and equipment.

According to Gamm (1981), Levine and White (1961) are generally credited with a "volunteristic conception" of interorganizational exchange. From this perspective, exchange is generally characterized as the voluntary development of a relationship resulting from the recognition of mutual benefits by organizations. The relationship reflects a high degree of cooperation among the parties. Levine and White suggested that their definition was also intended to include such activities as bargaining and interacting on unequal terms, but their perspective is usually applied to the voluntary formation of relationships.

Power-resource dependency perspective. From a somewhat different approach, Cook (1977) combined elements of the exchange perspective of

Levine and White (1961) with elements of Aldrich's (1976) power and resource dependence orientation to explain relationships. Cook proposed that there are power differences operating within many interorganizational relationships. As a result of differences in power, one organization may induce interaction with another to gain resources in an environment with scarce resources. Cook proposed that resource needs and power differentials between organizations often lead to interagency exchanges for the purpose of acquiring needed resources. From Cook's perspective, interactions are motivated less by the mutual benefits of the relationship than by the desires of individual organizations to fulfill resource needs and self-interest. In a relationship with power differentials, self-interest goals are frequently pursued at the expense of other organizations.

Mandated relationship perspective. Raelin (1980) examined a third basis for interorganizational relationships that focused on mandated agency interaction. This perspective is quite different from the exchange and power-resource dependency bases for relationships. Under the mandated approach, organizations are brought together by a directive that helps them to realize self-interest goals as well as mutual goals. The motivation for interaction under the mandated basis is the directive itself. "The mandate is an expression of an interorganizational decision shaped by either a personal effort on the part of a set of organizations interested in mutual advancement or by an institutional effort imposed on a set of organizations by the larger society" (Raelin, 1980, p. 58). One

type of mandated relationship is created by the establishment of a formal agreement, and the other type is externally imposed by a law. The mandated relationship is usually conceptualized as the product of an external influence.

Comparison of the perspectives. Organizations participating in mandated networks are assured at least some degree of permanence, because the mandate establishes the continuation of the relationship as one of the founding principles. In other words, organizations remain in the relationship for the time period established in the mandate. The quality of the relationship and the degree of goal attainment depends in large part on the degree of commitment given to carrying out the directive. If the representatives of those agencies involved are not committed to the relationship and see no benefits for their agencies, they may even ignore the mandate unless sanctions are applied.

In exchange networks, member organizations may choose to leave the network when their goals and interests no longer fit those of the other organization(s). Often, when the primary motivation for a relationship is resource exchange, the relationship can be superficial. The commitment here is often based on what each agency receives to meet its goals and, like the mandated relationship, enough mutual benefits must be perceived by those involved to continue the relationship. The level of communication between the organizations tends to be limited to the resource exchange process, and other issues or concerns may not be involved.

In the power-resource dependency-based relationship, an organization may leave the relationship when it no longer needs resources from another organization. The motivation is based less on mutual benefit than on how the more powerful organization can acquire resources from another establishment for its own goal attainment. The relationship tends to last as long as the more powerful agency can maintain its power differential and can exert influence on the other party. Communication tends to be one-sided with the more powerful party directing the flow of information.

In general, the motivation for these types of relationships may differ, but the nature and quality of the interagency interaction between agency representatives depends upon the general supportive elements for interorganizational relationships outlined by Gamm (1981). Quality communication, general consensus, and good conflict resolution are particularly important to the smooth operation of the relationship, whatever the motivation might be.

Expectations for AAA and DSS interagency relationships. The interagency relationships between Title III agencies and their local SSBG counterparts, for the most part, are not expected to fit precisely into one of the previously discussed conceptual frameworks. According to Raelin (1980), pure forms of any of the three relationship bases are not common, suggesting that hybrids of the approaches are likely to represent most interorganizational relationships. Aspects of each of these approaches may exist in AAA/DSS relationships. For example, interagency exchange may exist in AAA/DSS relationships in which the agencies exchange

Title III and SSBG funds, or exchange/share staff, materials, and/or building facilities. Client referral and information exchange are also likely forms of interagency exchange found in these relationships.

Regarding power issues, it is unlikely that there are great power differentials operating in AAA and DSS relationships. Although the AAAs are the designated "coordinators" for aging services in a community under the OAA, the AAA has no "power" over the actions of DSSs or other agencies. However, elements of the mandated relationship motivation are likely to exist. For example, the Older Americans Act mandates that Area Agencies on Aging work together with other community organizations to foster a comprehensive and coordinated system of services for older adults. This mandate is likely to affect the DSS and AAA relationships and may be the primary motivational force behind the formation of many relationships. Although the AAA has little "power" over other agencies, it will attempt to exert as much influence as possible to achieve coordination of community services. It is also likely that even if a AAA/DSS relationship begins as a mandated one, exchange efforts or resource dependence are likely to contribute to relationship maintenance over time. This is particularly true if the representatives perceive benefits for their respective agency over time.

In general, unique characteristics and reasons for forming and maintaining joint efforts are likely to exist in any particular AAA/DSS relationship as well as common factors across interagency relationships. Both of these elements, unique and common qualities, are important in

portraying the relationships of the AAAs and DSSs, and both types are addressed in this investigation.

Van de Ven's Theoretical Framework and Related Model

The previous discussion of interorganizational relationships suggests the complexity of studying these interactions. Therefore, a comprehensive theoretical framework appears to be an effective way to understand the reasons for the formation, maintenance, and current operation of interagency relationships. An effective framework should synthesize important elements of interorganizational relationships into a theory-based and multidimensional model for easier conceptualization of the overall relationship.

Perhaps the most comprehensive attempt at a theoretical model for explaining how and why agencies form and continue to operate in relationships was proposed by Van de Ven (1976). His perspective was broad enough to incorporate aspects of the exchange, power-resource dependency, and mandated bases of interaction. He also addressed most of the characteristics found in the review of interorganizational relationship literature by Gamm (1981) and interagency collaboration by Christensen and McLaughlin (1984). Van de Ven applied his model with some degree of success in two separate studies on child care and health organizations in Texas (Van de Ven, Walker & Liston, 1979; Van de Ven & Walker, 1984), thus lending support to practical application of the model.

Interagency Relationships as Social Action Systems

Van de Ven's (1976) theoretical framework for portraying interorganizational relationships is based on social action theory (Parsons, 1968; 1977) and describes the relationships as action systems which exhibit three basic elements of any form of collective social behavior. These elements are: (a) Behavior among members of the relationship is aimed at attaining the self-interest and collective goals of the members, (b) interdependent processes emerge involving the division of tasks and functions among members of the relationship, and (c) the relationship can operate as a unit with a unique identity that is separate from the system's individual members.

In his model, Van de Ven (1976) suggested that a number of basic dimensions should be examined to understand the emergence and functioning of interorganizational relationships. These dimensions are identified as (a) situational factors, (b) process dimensions, (c) structural dimensions, and (d) outcome dimensions. A summary of each of these factors and how they contribute to the emergence and functioning of a relationship is presented below. Organizations will be referred to as agencies in the following sections.

Situational Factors

Behavior in a social action system takes place within the context of its environment. This context involves certain conditions that are likely to contribute to or act as a force against the formation and continued functioning of an interorganizational relationship. In Van de Ven's

(1976) model, this environmental context is labeled situational factors. The situational factors are (a) resource dependence, (b) commitment, (c) awareness, (d) consensus, and (e) domain similarity.

Resource dependence. In general, agencies are not able to supply all the resources needed to carry out their goals and functions, and they often enter into relationships with other agencies to acquire resources. In this context, resources are defined as anything available or needed for the purpose of carrying out the self-interest goals of each agency, as well as the goals of an interagency relationship operating as a unit. Examples of resources are funds, materials, information, personnel, and client referrals between agencies.

Resource exchange and dependence contributes to the maintenance of the relationship if the exchange is perceived as beneficial to the agencies in reaching goals. In AAA/DSS relationships, the exchange of Title III and SSBG funds, materials and facilities, as well as client referrals are likely transactions.

Commitment. Another situational factor that may lead to the formation and maintenance of an interorganizational relationship is commitment to solving an environmental problem. Usually, something occurs in the external environment of the agencies that affects their common geographic or jurisdictional territory or an issue of mutual interest or concern. Awareness of their mutual interest may stimulate communication and bring the organizations together to work on a common issue. In AAA/DSS relationships, the common commitment is likely to be more effective

service delivery to older adults. Inadequate funding for services, lack of other resources, operating in the same service area, and having service responsibility for segments of the same population may lead to an interagency relationship to improve service delivery through joint efforts.

Commitment to a common issue or problem may come about in several ways. First, the agencies may voluntarily begin communication and subsequently work on a common interest because they see potential benefits from joint efforts. Second, the introduction of a new funding source that requires the organizations to work together in order to receive funding may also stimulate commitment. Third, a law or mandate or external organization may force them to enter into a relationship that addresses a common issue or problem. For example, in AAA/DSS relationships, agency representatives could see potential benefit from a joint staff training session, and representatives may voluntarily decide to conduct such a program. On the other hand, available Title III funds may become a potential resource for a DSS, and they must work with the AAA to receive a share of the funds. Also, the OAA mandate that AAAs work with other agencies in the community may help bring the DSS and AAA together as the AAA attempts to influence the actions of the DSS in serving the elderly populations.

After the agencies begin a joint effort involving a common interest, a commitment to the interagency relationship usually emerges through the development of an agreement. The agreement may be written or verbal as well as formal or informal in nature. In general, the interagency

agreement tends to reduce uncertainty about the roles and expectations of each agency in the interaction. Also, if the issue or problem that brought the agencies together is successfully resolved, the relationship is likely to continue if other concerns arise that the agencies can potentially deal with through joint efforts.

Awareness. Awareness of the existence, resource needs, services offered, and goals of another agency can influence the formation and maintenance of a relationship by providing a basis for communication and subsequent interaction between agency representatives. Interagency awareness is particularly important to AAAs in carrying out their coordination responsibilities.

Consensus. A fourth situational factor that can contribute to the formation and maintenance of relationships between agencies is interagency consensus. After the initial motivation for the relationship, resource needs and/or commitment to a common issue, brings agency representatives together, a degree of consensus or agreement is reached on common goals and how to achieve them. Through administrative communication and negotiation, the overall terms of the relationship are reached, and expectations and responsibilities are established. In general, the greater the consensus, the more likely the agencies are to remain in a relationship. Total consensus is unlikely to be reached on the means and ends of achieving goals because the agencies' missions, service orientations, and staff professional values may differ. However, consensus does not imply total agreement on all issues, but enough

acceptance of the situation develops for administrators and staffs to work together.

Domain similarity. To some extent, the agencies are likely to have overlap in their domains. The overlap may include such factors as a common funding source, the same client population, performance of the same or similar services, utilization of the same service providers, and services to the same geographic area. AAAs and DSSs are very likely to have overlap in client populations because they both serve segments of the elderly population, and their planning and service areas often involve parts of the same counties. Domain similarity can also include staff with similar professional skills.

Recognition of each agency's areas of jurisdiction as well as staff competence and expertise can help to clarify the domain boundaries between the agencies and therefore reduce problems with interagency consensus (Van de Ven, 1976). On the other hand, differences in and failure to recognize these factors can lead to consensus problems.

According to Van de Ven (1976), a moderate degree of domain similarity is most conducive to the formation and maintenance of a relationship. If the overlap in domain is extreme, there is likely to be too much competition between the agencies to allow them to work together well. If there is very little domain similarity, the agencies are not likely to see any common basis for the formation of a relationship and see little need for joint efforts.

Structural Dimensions

The structural dimensions of Van de Ven's (1976) model relate to the way in which agencies begin to act as a unit and continue to do so. According to Van De Ven, the behavior of agencies interacting as part of a social action system cannot be adequately explained by looking at the behavior of the individual organizations involved. To achieve goals as a unit, the social action system adopts a structure for organizing the activities of the members of the system. One structural element in the system refers to the administrative arrangements for conducting interagency business (i.e., formalization and centralization) that are established to define the roles of the agencies. Another structural element is relationship complexity, and it refers to the number of agencies and agency activities that must be integrated so that the organizations can act as a unit.

Formalization. Formalization is defined as the degree to which rules, policies, and procedures govern an interagency agreement as well as the contacts of representatives from the agencies. Formalization increases as the agreement is verbalized, written down, made contractual in nature, and/or mandated.

Another type of formalization is suggested by the degree to which individuals comprising a committee or board that governs the relationship follow procedures such as agendas and minutes. That is, formalization can be expressed by the standardization of procedures for interaction between agency representatives. According to Van de Ven, formalization is likely

to increase as the relationship progresses over time. As a result, formalization can lead to less ambiguity in the relationship by defining the roles and expectations of an agency and its representatives.

Centralization. A second structural dimension of the social action system is the concerted or binding decision making in the relationship. Concerted decisions are normally made by a board and/or committee comprised of individuals representing member agencies. In this context, centralization can be conceptualized as the perceived degree of influence by these individuals in making decisions that affect the actions of the member agencies' representatives. Representation of AAAs and DSSs on each other's advisory boards is a likely form of centralized decision making.

According to Van de Ven (1976), the authority of representatives and their concerted decision making is usually weak during the formation of a relationship. At this stage, each agency is more concerned with its own self-interest goals than those of the relationship. As the strength of the relationship grows, however, the decision making power of the representatives becomes more influential with regard to the agencies involved. Over time, decisions are likely to become more concerned with the goals and needs of all involved agencies, rather than the self-interest goals of the individual agencies.

Complexity. A final structural dimension of the social action system relates to the structural complexity of the relationship, or the number of elements that must be integrated so that the interorganizational

relationship acts as a unit. This complexity includes the number of agencies involved, as well as the number of issues, activities, projects, problems, or tasks the relationship is based upon. Van de Ven (1976) suggested that one potential result of increased complexity is an increased probability that problems will arise in coordinating interagency activities. The complexity of AAA/DSS interaction is likely to vary across the interagency relationships with some of them involving several activities and others based on one or two joint efforts.

Another indicator of the complexity of a relationship is the number of agencies involved. The simplest form of relationship is a dyad in which two agencies must define their roles and expectations for working together. As more agencies become involved in the relationship, problems and difficulties in coordinating activities may increase. For example, other community social service agencies such as health departments and United Way agencies, as well as the AAA/DSS state-level counterparts (i.e., state units on aging and state departments of social services) are likely to influence the local AAA/DSS relationship.

Process Dimensions

Process dimensions refer to the actual flow of resources, activities, and communication between agencies. According to Van de Ven (1976) the structural arrangement for coordinating activities may be present in some relationships, but nothing is accomplished unless actual transactions take place between the agencies. Therefore, AAAs and DSSs can be expected to exchange resources and establish channels of information exchange and

communication in order to maintain an active relationship.

Resource exchange. The "resource exchange" process dimension involves the frequency and actual means through which resources such as money, physical facilities, materials, client referrals, and technical staff services are exchanged. This exchange may be the result of an initial need for resources that resulted in subsequent resource dependence.

Information exchange. The other process dimension involves the exchange of information through various means of communication transmitted between the agencies. This exchange can be achieved through written reports and letters, telephone calls, face-to-face discussions, and committee/group meetings.

There are three reasons why resource and information flow between agencies are the basic elements in the maintenance of a relationship (Van de Ven, 1976). First, without transactions between agencies, a social action system would probably terminate because there is no activity to maintain relationship ties. Second, some on-going transaction of resources and information must occur or agency staffs will perceive that their coordination effort is not accomplishing anything. For example, exchange of resources without information flow between the agencies is likely to result in agency staffs losing track of why they are involved in the relationship. Van de Ven suggested that means and ends can become inverted and member agencies soon perceive the interorganizational relationship to be an aimless series of threatening and chaotic resource transactions. Finally, the intensity or frequency of communication coming

from or going to an agency can be an important indicator of the power or strategic position of an agency in a relationship. The exchange pattern can also be an indicator of the degree of equity in a relationship, particularly if one agency tends to play the role of sender or receiver of information to a greater extent than the other. Examining channels of communication and exchange of information are important elements in determining the nature of AAA/DSS interagency relationships.

Outcome Dimension

The outcome dimension of a relationship is the perceived effectiveness of the relationship by those individuals involved. More specifically, effectiveness is the degree to which the relationship is viewed as worthwhile, equitable, productive, and satisfying to individuals who participate in the relationship. Van de Ven suggested that without some positive evaluation of the relationship, it unlikely to continue unless forced by a mandate from an external source.

Expectations Regarding AAA/DSS Relationships

Based upon my interpretation of Van de Ven's (1976) model, the following scenario may be expected to occur in AAA/DSS relationships. Two likely reasons for formation of a relationship between AAAs and DSSs are (a) an external influence, most likely the OAA mandate that AAAs coordinate service agencies in the community, and (b) a common commitment to a target population, in this case, adults over the age of 60. The underlying foundation for the formation of a relationship is the overlap in client populations and, to some degree, overlap in geographic area.

Next, because the agencies are located in the same community, it is likely that their representatives are aware of each other's existence. The OAA mandate likely serves as the motivation for the agencies' awareness of each other's goals and responsibilities. Although a mandate such as the OAA may bring them together, the representatives of the local agencies must come to a level of consensus or agreement on what each will do in the relationship in order to work together successfully.

The AAA and DSS may, at some point, enter into a formal agreement to help clarify their roles and effectively conduct interagency activities. Membership on each other's advisory board may be a common form of centralization of decision making. Over time, the relationship may become more complex as the AAA and DSS become involved in more joint activities or service programs. The external influence that brought the agencies together (e.g., the OAA coordination mandate) is likely continue to influence the relationship over time. Other agencies in the community involved in social services to older adults may also work with and influence the AAA/DSS relationship. For example, joint use of the same service providers by an AAA and DSS and joint representation when the AAA serves on a DSS advisory board or vice versa are examples of involvement with other agencies.

The agencies are likely to begin an exchange of resources and/or establish communication processes to keep the interagency relationship active. The AAA and DSS may have worked on joint projects that agency representatives perceive as successful. Subsequent joint efforts may

occur if the past interaction is considered valuable in reaching the agencies' goals.

Research Hypotheses

Due to the complex nature of the theories about interagency coordination and the large volume of agency information available, an extensive set of hypotheses were developed from the Van de Ven model and used to make decisions regarding whether the model's dimensions appeared to be applicable to the relationships. Because Van de Ven addressed interorganizational relationships as they evolved over time, hypotheses are arranged according to the formation, maintenance, and current operation of the relationship.

The Formation of the Relationship

The following situational factors contribute to the formation of the relationship:

Hypothesis #1 (resource dependence). (a) the agencies had specific goals for serving older adults (age 60+), (b) the agencies needed resources to meet these goals, (c) agency representatives realized an opportunity to fulfill resource needs through an interagency relationship, and (d) agency representatives explored these opportunities for obtaining resources.

Hypothesis #2 (commitment). The agencies had a common commitment to and responsibility for serving the needs of older adults. This commitment contributed to bringing the agencies together so that at least one goal and/or responsibility could be accomplished through an interagency

relationship. The commitment or responsibility may or may not have involved resource needs.

Hypothesis #3 (commitment). If the agencies began a joint effort, a commitment or responsibility to an interagency relationship formed.

Hypothesis #4 (awareness). To some degree, each agency became aware of the existence and characteristics of the other agency, regardless of the stated reason(s) for the formation of the relationship. This interagency awareness facilitated the formation of the relationship because the agency representatives used this awareness to establish interagency contacts/connections.

Hypothesis #5 (consensus). Through their interaction, agency administrators, staff members, or other representatives of each agency reached a level of consensus on the service goals and means for meeting the goals for older adults through a joint effort.

Hypothesis #6 (domain similarity). A degree of similarity in the domains of the agencies (i.e., client populations, services offered, and geographic area served, etc.) gave the agencies a common interest. The common interest served as an underlying basis for the joint effort.

Maintenance of the Relationship

The following situational factors, process dimensions, structural dimensions, and outcome dimensions contribute to the maintenance of the relationship over time:

Hypothesis #7 (resource dependence and resource exchange). A need for and exchange of resources to meet service goals for older adults has

contributed to the maintenance of the relationship.

Hypothesis #8 (commitment). An apparent continuation of the commitment to or responsibility for serving older adults through a joint effort has supported the maintenance of the relationship by providing a common basis for the interaction.

Hypothesis #9 (commitment). A commitment or responsibility to the interagency effort has helped to maintain the relationship by providing motivation for continued interaction.

Hypothesis #10 (awareness and information exchange). Channels of communication have facilitated maintenance of the interaction by promoting interagency awareness and knowledge about activities of the agencies.

Hypothesis #11 (consensus). Consensus on the goals of the relationship and each agency's expectations in the relationship has supported the continuing ability of agency representatives to work together.

Hypothesis #12 (centralization). A centralized body with representatives from both agencies has established the expectations and rules of the interagency relationship over time. The body has some degree of binding, decision-making power and has exerted a degree of influence on what occurs in the interagency relationship.

Hypothesis #13 (domain similarity). An overlap in the domains of the agencies has contributed to the maintenance of the relationship by providing a common basis for the interaction.

Hypothesis #14 (perceived effectiveness). Each agency has carried out its relationship roles, expectations, and commitments in a manner that is

acceptable to the other agency. This perceived effectiveness has supported the maintenance of the relationship through positive staff/administrator evaluation of the interaction.

Hypothesis #15 (perceived effectiveness). Staff and/or administrators have perceived the relationship as relatively worthwhile, equitable, productive and/or satisfactory over time. The perceived benefits of the interaction have helped to maintain the relationship.

Current Relationship Processes and Structure

The following process dimensions (i.e., information exchange/interagency awareness, resource exchange), and structural dimensions (i.e., formalization, centralization, complexity) contribute to the nature of the current relationship:

Hypothesis #16 (information exchange and interagency awareness). There is a current exchange of information that facilitates agency awareness of what is happening in the other agency with regard to funding, client needs, types of clients served, resource needs, and/or other areas of common interest.

Hypothesis #17 (resource exchange). An exchange of resources helps to maintain interagency activity and also helps the agencies meet their service goals.

Hypothesis #18 (formalization). Formal mechanisms (i.e., rules, policies, and procedures) are used to conduct interagency business, make decisions, and to help insure that the expectations of the interagency relationship are met. The most common expected formal mechanism is a

formal interagency agreement.

Hypothesis #19 (formalization). Informal mechanisms for interaction, based on an "informal understanding" of what each agency is expected to do, exist and are used to conduct interagency activities, make decisions, and see that expectations are met. Personal acquaintance is one influential factor in informal interaction.

Hypothesis #20 (centralization). A centralized body (i.e., committee, council, board, or task force) exists and agency representatives make decisions that affect and influence the joint efforts of the agencies.

Hypothesis #21 (complexity). Joint activities and programs exist in the relationship and the number of activities/programs helps to suggest the level of interagency involvement and interdependence.

Hypothesis #22 (complexity). Other agencies or organizations exist in the environment that influence the current interagency relationship.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

Data for this investigation were gathered as part of a larger three-phase study designed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between social services provided to older adults through Title III of the Older Americans Act and the Social Services Block Grant Program at the state and local level. The project was supported, in part, by an Administration on Aging grant (No. 90-AR-0106) awarded to the American Public Welfare Association (APWA). In addition to APWA, the National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA) participated in the larger study. This phase of the project was conducted independently by the VPI & SU Center for Gerontology under sub-contract with APWA during the period July 1, 1987 to May 3, 1989. The purpose of the third phase of the project was to examine the Title III/SSBG interagency relationships at the local level by conducting in-depth case studies of five sites. The part of the project addressed by this investigation was based primarily on qualitative data gathered in Phase III, and the specific focus was on the formation, maintenance, and current operation of AAA and DSS interagency relationships.

Procedure

Phase I of the overall project involved a national survey of state aging and social service agencies to determine the types and extent of relationships between the state level agencies supporting services to older adults. APWA and NASUA mailed survey instruments to state social

service agencies and state units on aging. Issues examined during this phase included (a) the population served by each agency, (b) the characteristics of the older clients served by each agency, (c) differences in social services provided, and (d) the costs and expenditures for social services to older adults.

Phase II involved a survey by APWA and NASUA of AAAs and SSBG agencies in 21 selected localities. The site selection criteria included administrative structures of the agencies, federal region location, and rural/urban characteristics. The primary purpose was to gather information on local coordination of services for older adults.

As APWA and NASUA carried out Phases I and II, the VPI & SU research team developed a comprehensive interview guide to be used in Phase III. This guide was based on Van de Ven's (1976) model of interorganizational relations, and were pre-tested at an area agency on aging and department of social services in the VPI & SU area. The interview process and document review was carried out in a manner as close as possible to the procedures to be used in the field, including taping of the interviews. A total of three staff members were interviewed at the pre-test site.

The results of the pre-test as well as suggestions and comments of the pre-test site respondents were used to revise the original interview guide. Three guides were subsequently drafted. One addressed the overall interagency relationship, the second focused on the historical aspects of the relationship, and the third guide considered specific elements of service coordination or other joint activities (Appendix A). Using three

guides appeared to be a more efficient way to conduct the interview process because different staff members at an agency were likely to be more familiar with certain elements of the relationship than others. Rather than being structured interview forms, the guides were designed to give direction to the interviews and allow for flexibility in asking follow-up questions and probes. Topics of discussion could be checked off as they were addressed, and notes could be written relating to follow-up questions. This process proved to be an effective way of dealing with the many issues addressed during the interviews.

The Sample

The criteria for Phase III site selection included the same sampling criteria utilized in Phase II of the project. One additional consideration was the willingness of agencies to participate in the final phase of the study. This willingness was determined to some extent by the agencies' swiftness and completeness of responses to the Phase II survey. The Phase II survey instruments were copied by APWA and NASUA as they were received and sent to the Center for Gerontology for review.

Site selection was made in a joint meeting of staff members of APWA, NASUA, and the research team from VPI and SU. Although we chose five back-up sites, all first-choice agencies agreed to participate in the study. When the five sites were selected, the research team drafted letters of introduction to agency heads. In the letters, we explained our role in the project and why we felt it was important for their agency to participate (Appendix B). We described the types of documents

(Appendix C) we would request and the topics we would like to discuss in the interviews. We also noted that we would soon be following up the letters with a telephone call.

Within a week, follow-up telephone calls were placed to each agency head. A summary sheet was used to record the information known about a site, what we wanted to know, and possible schedule dates so that questions could be answered quickly (Appendix D). We used these initial telephone calls to clarify any aspects of the project that were unclear in the letter of introduction and to answer any other questions.¹ A status sheet was used to make notes about the results of each contact and the action needed in the next step for a particular site, including the tentative scheduling of site visits (Appendix E).

After each agency head agreed to participate in the study, a memorandum was mailed to each site. The memorandum listed the documents we would like to receive prior to our site visit and summarized the topics we would like to discuss with the individuals selected by the agency head. This memo was meant to assist the agency heads in planning our visits. We also asked each agency head to select the staff members they felt would be most knowledgeable about the type of information on each of the interview guides.

One member of the research team assumed responsibility for all initial and subsequent telephone contacts with the agency heads as well as planning the visits. This procedure allowed the research team to follow the status of the sites more easily and also established rapport with the

agency heads.

Some agencies sent the documents we requested beforehand, some provided documents on site, and some sent documents after the visit. In many cases, the agency provided additional documents during the visit, either voluntarily because they felt the documents would be useful to us, or because we requested them based on information we had gained during the visits.

Prior to the visits, each of the three interview guides was personalized by the researchers for each site by closely reviewing the Phase I and II instruments, information gathered in the various telephone contacts, and reviewing documents. We wanted to know as much as possible about the agency beforehand in order to make more efficient use of our time.

Data Collection

Important background information concerning the interagency relationships was collected from the Phases I and II survey data. Other information was obtained from reviews of agency documents; personal interviews with agency administrators, staff, and respondents external to the agency selected by agency heads; and observation of interagency coordination meetings. Information was gathered from as many sources as possible during the investigation for the purpose of verifying and cross-checking data.

We interviewed all persons chosen by the agency heads and often requested interviews with additional individuals. In many instances, the

agency head scheduled other interviews after we discussed the planned activities and information requirements in more detail. We interviewed agency administrators, supervisors, line staff, contractor agency staff, and, in some cases, state level or other local administrative staff. A total of 35 respondents and two groups participated in the interview process.² After obtaining permission from the individuals involved, all interviews were tape recorded. Unfortunately, we experienced recorder difficulty during the interviews, although we were able to reconstruct most of the interview information, a small portion of the data was lost.

In most cases, two interviewers were present at all interview sessions, and each had responsibility for a different part of the interview guide.³ We also asked follow-up questions and probes when appropriate.

Sometimes more than one interviewee was present during the interviews, but this did not seem to adversely affect the proceedings. In some instances, one individual discussed information from more than one interview guide.

We requested the opportunity to observe coordination meetings from all agencies. At two sites, we were able to observe interagency meetings. One meeting was a joint case staffing and the other was an interagency committee meeting. Members of the research team were introduced at the meetings, and we observed the interaction. However, we did not interrupt the proceedings in any way. At the end of each session we were given time to ask questions of the participants. We recorded the question and answer period after the meetings and used this information in the analysis. Part

of the service interview guide on how service coordination works was used in the case staffing. During the coordination committee meeting we followed up on information gathered in earlier individual interviews regarding the committee's activities. The meetings were valuable sources of information and they allowed us to see coordination in action.

Measurement

Limitations of the measurement. Information available about the formation of the relationship and changes over time depended upon several factors. These factors included the following: (a) the characteristics of a particular agency, (b) the manner of record keeping used by the agency, (c) the length of time the relationship had existed, and (d) the presence of knowledgeable staff about the history of the relationship. The opportunity for obtaining historical information from documents was very limited. In most cases, documentation on the history was either nonexistent or not made available for our review. In general, the information on formation and often the changes in the relationship over time were the most difficult to assess. Recent information on maintenance and current operation of the relationship was more readily available and easier to verify through interviews and document review.

For various reasons, some sites provided very little documentation, and sometimes the documents did not contain the types of information we needed. This development made it necessary to rely more heavily than originally anticipated on interviews as our primary source of data.

The Van de Ven (1976) model's dimensions, as they were used in this research, are defined and their related measures are listed under each dimension in the interview guide entitled "Information on the Overall Relationship Between Local Area Agencies on Aging and Social Services Block Grant Agencies" (Appendix A). Information from this guide was given priority in the analysis, but relevant information from the other instruments were included as well, when appropriate.

One limiting factor in the use of the interview guides was that sometimes it was necessary to ask questions in a different way or in a different sequence across the sites. For example, respondents occasionally provided information without our asking a question, sometimes they expanded on a question later on in the interview, and there were times when a specific issue was not relevant to a particular site. Therefore, this procedure made subsequent organization of interview material more difficult during the analysis.

Data Analysis

Word Perfect Version 5.0 (1988), a flexible computer software word processing program, was used to transcribe the interview audio tapes. All interview tapes were reviewed and compared to the transcripts. Particular attention was given to those parts of the tapes that the transcriber identified as difficult to hear. For easy identification by the researchers, these problem areas were marked by blank spaces in the computer file on the transcript disk. As the tapes were compared to the transcripts, appropriate corrections were made to the transcript files.

Revised copies were then printed and used for the analysis. All transcripts were identified according to interview tape number, tape side number, and line number on the transcript as well as interview date, site, and respondent name/respondent position. This complete identification process allowed us to find parts of tapes of interest and to listen to them again, if necessary, to clarify the data.

Approximately 600 pages of single spaced transcripts were produced. Qualitative analytical methods were used in the analysis of the case study data (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Yin, 1984). The analysis involved data reduction steps, while care was taken to ensure that information could be traced to the original transcript and tape. All documents from the sites were reviewed, and notes were made about information that applied to the dimensions of Van de Ven's (1976) model. The documents were numbered and page numbers were noted.

The analysis was accomplished in four primary analytical steps. I was careful to maintain an audit trail of the information during the analysis. A summary of the four-step analysis is provided below:

1. Transcripts and documents from each of the five sites were carefully reviewed, one at a time. Although this process was very time consuming, it ensured that all available evidence was considered in the analysis. Information from all respondents and documents were transferred to the section related to the appropriate research hypothesis on an outline of the hypotheses. The transfer of information was made possible by using the word processor's "block and move" feature. This step compiled

information from all sources at a particular site and provided an overview of the information available for each site.

2. At this point, I prepared a preliminary summary of the evidence available for each hypothesis at each site. A narrative of the individual site, using illustrative quotations and document information, was drafted and a reference was provided in the text to each research hypothesis addressed (e.g., [Hypothesis #1]). Careful review and editing of this narrative subsequently became the results of the individual site analysis found in Appendix F. Tables (F1-F5) were prepared indicating whether an hypothesis was supported or not supported at each site (Appendix F).

3. The primary purpose of the investigation was to determine the adequacy of the Van de Ven (1976) model in portraying the relationship between AAAs and DSSs. Therefore, the next step was the production of the cross-case analysis. The cross-case analysis addressed the support or lack of support for each hypothesis. The decisions were made by summarizing the evidence available regarding each hypothesis from the individual sites. I focused on available evidence regarding the overall relationships, individual service programs, and sometimes funding stream administration (i.e., an AAA received/was responsible for SSBG funds for services to older adults, or the DSS was responsible for Title III funds) to determine whether the hypothesis was supported in any of these areas. Because information regarding each hypothesis was identified by hypothesis number in the individual case analysis and recorded in a word processing program file, I used the program's word search function to compile information

regarding each hypothesis across the sites.

4. Next, the cross-case analysis summary was written and Table 1 was prepared regarding decisions on each hypothesis across the sites.

5. Finally, the adequacy of the model in portraying the relationships across sites was determined by addressing the following criteria:

- Overall, when sufficient evidence was available to make a decision, did the hypotheses generally receive support in the counties where a AAA/DSS interagency relationship existed? (primary criterion)
- Are there any outstanding factors in the relationships that are essential to their portrayal but are not addressed by the model?
- Do the relationships appear to operate as social action systems (i.e., exhibit the basic elements of any organized form of collective behavior)?
- Overall, does the model appear to cover the range of types of interagency relationships and their connections/degree of interdependence?

Steps were taken throughout the data gathering process and analysis to help ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The research was carefully planned using a theoretical model to generate hypotheses. The conceptual model and hypotheses were used to guide the research throughout the process from designing the instruments to drawing and verifying findings.

Two researchers were involved in all phases of the study. In this way, we provided feedback concerning all aspects of the study from site selection, instrument design, data reduction, and analyzing the data to writing and verifying the results. Data were gathered from as many

sources as possible. This included evidence from documents, interviews with respondents at the staff and administrative level as well as from outside the AAAs and DSSs when feasible. Informants were recontacted in many instances to verify information.

Information regarding the hypotheses were gathered from at least three different perspectives across the sites using the interview guides. Evidence was gathered on the overall relationship as well as from specific services and programs within the overall relationship. I concentrated on evidence from the agency heads or other respondents who provided information from the overall relationship interview guide. This guide was directly related to the model and the derived hypotheses regarding the current relationship. This information could be checked more directly against document information for cross validation purposes.

The hypotheses were tested for each site as I looked for patterns and outliers or instances that did not fit a pattern, and then findings were compared and contrasted across the five sites. I looked for alternate reasons for the patterns and differences I found. Data displays were particularly helpful in looking for cases that fit and did not fit the expected pattern derived from my hypotheses. Finally, I maintained an audit trail so that findings and conclusions can be traced back to their sources by other researchers interested in replicating the study.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The amount of evidence available for making decisions regarding the hypotheses varied among the interagency relationships as well as among different programs within a relationship. For example, information was available at some sites regarding the overall interagency relationship while other agencies had more information available about a specific joint program/service. In some cases, the available information concerned the way in which an AAA or DSS combined Title III and SSBG funds for services to older adults.

Sometimes there was not sufficient evidence to confirm or reject an hypothesis, particularly for the history of the relationships. Respondents generally identified a specific reference point in past interagency interaction to describe the history. For example, a project in which the agencies were jointly involved, a change in administrative structure, or the beginning of a relationship with a staff member from another agency were common points of reference. A complete history of the overall relationship with sufficient evidence to confirm all hypotheses was not provided by any respondent. Therefore, I found it necessary to examine each hypothesis related to the formation of the relationship and maintenance over time from the respondent's point of reference.

In some instances, although a respondent indicated that a model dimension was relevant to the relationship in some way, they provided information that was unrelated to the factor as I defined it and

subsequently derived the hypothesis. Also, it was evident in some interviews that the respondent was not knowledgeable about a particular factor, and I made the decision not to pursue that line of inquiry. In these ways there was sometimes not enough information provided, it was of poor quality, or the information offered was irrelevant to a particular hypothesis, even when I used probes to clarify the type of information I needed. In these instances I decided that there was insufficient evidence to make a decision about an hypothesis.

Because the purpose of the investigation was to determine the adequacy of Van de Ven's (1976) model in portraying the five interagency relationships, I emphasize the results of the cross-site analysis. More detailed information regarding individual sites is available in Appendix F. The appendix includes both a complete description of the sites and the individual site analyses. Appendix F also contains Tables F1-F5. These tables provide a summary of the whether hypotheses were supported, rejected, or there was insufficient information to make a decision about an hypothesis.

The following brief descriptions of the overall relationship, joint programs, and/or funding stream administration (i.e., how Title III and SSBG funds support services for older individuals) for each site will clarify the examples used in the cross-site results. The descriptions are not intended to be detailed overviews of the sites, but rather they summarize characteristics important to understanding the results. The county names used are fictional to preserve confidentiality of

information.

Site #1: North County

1. The DSS respondent's point of reference for the history of the interagency relationship is a period several years ago in which an AAA representative served on the DSS Adult Protective Services Subcommittee.
2. The AAA respondent's point of reference for the history of the relationship is a different time period several years ago when DSS Title XX funds were reduced. Until the DSS could make other arrangements for their clients, the AAA served DSS clients in their in-home assistance program.
3. The AAA, DSS, and the Community Action Program have operated an energy assistance program for several years. DSS provides funds to the AAA for additional staff, and the AAA coordinator perceives her agency to be very dependent on DSS for an important portion of her program funds.
4. In the overall AAA/DSS relationship, the agencies operate their other programs independently for the most part, with little recognized interdependence. The exception to the perceived lack of interdependence is the joint energy assistance program.

Site #2: South County

1. The overall relationship began approximately two years ago when the social service system was reorganized at the state level. The DSS Aging and Adult Services and the AAA were placed under the same administrative department at the state level. However, the DSS and AAA service programs remain separate at the local and regional level. The state explicitly

requires that the DSS and AAA work together and that they have formal agreements at the local level. The AAA and DSS share responsibility for case management and chore services. The AAA contracts for services, and the DSS determines financial eligibility in these joint programs.

Site #3: East County

1. Historically, the AAA began receiving SSBG funds to initiate a homemaker service program approximately four years ago. Afterwards, the DSS could no longer serve adults over the age of 60 in their homemaker program unless they were adult protective services clients. At the beginning of the changeover, the DSS and AAA were involved in "transitioning" or transferring former DSS clients to the new AAA homemaker program.

2. Since working together initially, there has been little need for direct contact between the DSS and the AAA. Currently, most communication at the local level is between DSS social workers and staff of the AAA contractors. The communication is generally informal and concerns cross referral of clients. The DSS and AAA administrators have never met or otherwise communicated.

Site #4: West County

1. Historically, when the AAA was initiated around 1977, an AAA staff member and a DSS staff member were already personally acquainted. They worked closely together as well as with other community service agencies to establish organizational responsibilities in the community for serving older adults.

2. A few years later, AAA representatives decided to grant Title III funds to the already established DSS home delivered meals program because Title III money alone could not provide an adequate program. The DSS accepted responsibility for home delivered meals to older adults in the county.

3. Currently, the AAA and DSS are involved in the grant for home delivered meals, and the AAA offers technical assistance and information to the DSS regarding older adults.

Site #5: Central County

1. This county is unique in several aspects. Historically, the AAA asked for and received permission from the state unit on aging to administer both Title III and state allocated portions of SSBG for services to disabled adults and adults over the age of 60. In addition to the state SSBG funds, an association of governments (AG) makes decisions regarding distribution of local SSBG funds. The AG plans for local SSBG funding for services for several target groups, including the elderly population. The AAA is represented on both the association of governments' coordination and planning committees.

The purpose of this investigation was to determine whether Van de Ven's model can adequately portray AAA/DSS interagency relationships. Several hypotheses regarding the appropriateness of the model's dimensions were generated. The following results of the cross-site analysis describe the hypotheses that received or did not receive support and those for which there was insufficient evidence to make a decision regarding its

appropriateness. I accepted an hypothesis if evidence supported it in either a joint program(s), joint funding stream administration (i.e., the same agency was responsible for both Title III and SSBG funds), or in the overall relationship. Examples from the sites are provided to illustrate each hypothesis when feasible. Table 1 provides a cross-site summary of my decisions regarding the hypotheses.

Cross-Site Results

Resource needs, dependence, exchange [Hypotheses #1, #7, and #17]. I hypothesized that resource needs, resource exchange, and resource dependence would contribute to the formation, maintenance and current functioning of the interagency relationships investigated in this study. Resources were in fact involved in the formation [Hypothesis #1] of all of the interagency relationships. For example, North County AAA's in-home assistance program became a resource for DSS clients when Title XX funds were reduced several years ago. According to an AAA respondent, they provided in-home services to DSS clients until other arrangements could be made for them.

We literally had a meeting with the Department of Social Services that was involved in Title XX. The [DSS] nurses and the [in-home assistance program] staff in this office...sat down and we looked at how we could [divide] up those people who were no longer going to get services and put them into our...program.

Resources were also involved in the formation of the AAA/DSS relationship in South County. A DSS respondent said that her agency was operating under limited resources at the time of the administrative reorganization of aging services approximately three years ago. When the

Table 1
Hypothesis Summary for All Counties

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported ^a						
	Site #						
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5		
<u>Formation</u>							
#1 Resource dependence	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
#2 Commitment to older adults	(4/5)	yes	?	yes	yes	yes	yes
#3 Commitment to relationship	(3/5)	?	yes	?	yes	yes	yes
#4 Awareness	(3/5)	yes	?	yes	yes	?	?
#5 Consensus	(3/5)	yes	yes	yes	?	?	
#6 Domain similarity	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<u>Maintenance</u>							
#7 Resource dependence/exchange	(4/5)	yes	?	yes	yes	yes	yes
#8 Commitment to older adults	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
#9 Commitment to relationship	(4/5)	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
#10 Awareness/information exchange	(4/5)	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes

Table 1 (Continued)

Hypothesis #/Variable		Hypothesis Supported				
		Site #				
		#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
#11 Consensus	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
#12 Centralization	(1/5)	no	no	no	no	yes
#13 Domain similarity	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
#14 Perceived effectiveness/expectations	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
#15 Perceived effectiveness/productive	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<u>Current Processes</u>						
#16 information exchange/interagency awareness	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
#17 resource exchange	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
#18 Formalization/formal	(2/5)	no	yes	no	no	yes
#19 Formalization/informal	(4/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
#20 Centralization	(1/5)	no	no	no	no	yes

Table 1 (Continued)

		<u>Hypothesis Supported</u>				
		Site #				
<u>Hypothesis #/Variable</u>		#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
#21 Complexity/joint activities	(1/5)	yes	no	no	no	no
#22 Complexity/other	(5/5)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

a

? = Insufficient information: Respondents did not provide enough information to make a decision regarding the hypothesis or the model dimension did not apply to the relationship or a specific program.

DSS aging services and the AAA were placed under the direction of the same state administrative department, it became very important for the DSS to work with the AAA.

When [this system was being designed], [DSS] said [we] need this much money [and] this much staff to [meet aging service goals]...[the state] said o.k. you [must] do it but you don't get this [extra] money and you don't get this [extra] staff...so I think we were functioning under limited resources and therefore it became probably more important for us to have [the AAA's] good will [as a resource].

In East County, SSBG funds became a very important resource for the AAA in 1986. The state unit on aging directed the AAA to initiate a homemaker service for older individuals in the county. The AAA began receiving SSBG funds, in addition to Title III, as resources for their new program in which they were required to serve former DSS clients. An AAA administrator noted that if the additional SSBG funds had not been forthcoming, she would have had a very difficult time starting the program.

Title III funds became available for home delivered meals in West County in 1980. The AAA recognized that their limited Title III resources were not enough to provide a complete home delivered meals program. Therefore, AAA representatives decided to grant Title III money to the DSS to expand their existing meals program. In this way, Title III became a resource for the DSS program, and DSS in turn provided an established program for older clients needing home delivered meals. A DSS respondent expressed a belief that the service delivery system would have been less efficient if an agency other than the DSS handled the Title III funds,

because their service and provider network was already well established.

Central County's AAA requested and received permission from the state unit on aging to administer all Title III and SSBG resources for services to older adults. An AAA respondent said that she helped convince state representatives that this combination of funds, supervised by one agency, would make administration and service delivery much more efficient. The expectation was that better use of available resources would result.

Here we [were] with all this money being wasted in duplicat[ed] administration and monitoring and then [we] [saw] how that money could be applied to purchasing direct services...We were really looking for more money in services and it sure has made more money available for the services.

There was also evidence to support the contribution of resources to the maintenance [Hypothesis #7] of four relationships. In the joint energy assistance program in North County, the AAA and DSS have shared staff and funding for several years. An AAA respondent noted the importance of DSS support for the continuation of services to her clients.

My budget is extremely limited. It's become more limited as each year progresses and the [program] funds are cut...we have worked closely enough with [the] DSS that they have been very supportive in this and have helped us in any way that they can so that we can maintain our services...I did not have enough money last year to pay for staff...and DSS...funded two staff members for me...I was allowed to hire them [and] do all the interviewing with the type of people that I wanted.

In another example of resource contribution to relationship maintenance, Title III funding for East County's AAA has remained at about the same level for the past 6 years, making the SSBG resources they have received essential to the continuation of most services. An AAA respondent said that SSBG, which is approximately 30% of her funding, is

used to partially finance all but two of her services, and that she would probably have to cut services if SSBG funds were eliminated.

In West County, two forms of resource exchange were mentioned by respondents in the maintenance of relationship. One DSS respondent said that the Title III funds her agency receives from the AAA for home delivered meals has been indispensable over the years to continue services. AAA representatives, in turn, consider the Title III grant to DSS an efficient way to use their resources. In addition to providing funds, AAA has remained an important resource of information and technical assistance to the DSS regarding the aging population.

The Central County AAA's ability to combine Title III and SSBG funds has continued to meet the agency's service goals over time. An AAA respondent expressed a belief that her agency has remained dependent upon both the state and local SSBG allocations it receives.

In South County, the same respondents chose to respond to the interview guides regarding the history and current operation of the overall relationship. Although it was clear that resources were important in the formation of the relationship and in the current interagency activities, I was unable to determine the influence of resource exchange/dependence specifically on the maintenance of the relationship over time.

Evidence also supported the contribution of resource exchange to the current operation [Hypothesis #17] of all relationships. The exchange of funds for staff and staff sharing in North County's energy assistance program, AAA services as valuable resources to DSS clients in North County

and West County, and staff expertise as a resource in the joint case staffing in South County are three examples of resource contributions to current relationships. In three relationships (i.e., East, West, and Central Counties), because agencies receive funds from both funding streams, it allows them to fulfill service goals more easily than if they received one funding source. This goal achievement suggests the importance of both resources in delivering services.

Commitment to older adults through joint efforts [Hypotheses #2 and #8]. The influence of commitment to older adults through joint efforts in the formation of relationships was supported in four counties [Hypothesis #2]. For example, North County AAA's concern that DSS clients continue to receive in-home assistance services when DSS funding was cut suggested a commitment to the older population. Similarly, East County AAA's concern that DSS clients were "transitioned" to their homemaker program with the "least possible trauma to the clients" also indicates a concerted effort in the best interest of older clients. In this instance, the older clients were apprehensive about continuation of services. A DSS respondent described the joint effort during the transition period to alleviate the clients' concerns.

It was a very, very smooth transition. Every referral I gave to them, [the provider] took up. We went with them, or they went with us, and introduced people...It was a real smooth transition. They picked up all of our adult homemaker cases that were not protective services [cases].

The DSS willingness in West County to accept responsibility for older adults in their home delivered meals program was another example of

commitment to clients. In Central County, the AAA's request that they receive both Title III and SSBG funds was, in part, an effort to help prevent placing clients on waiting lists for services. Although respondents in South County noted that there was a commitment to serving older adults as part of the reorganization of the service system, they did not indicate its role in the formation of the local AAA/DSS relationship from their point of reference. Many of the changes occurred at the state level, and they could not address this factor from a local perspective.

Because both AAAs and DSSs were currently involved in serving older clients and their area plans usually stated goals and objectives for the elderly population, a continued commitment to older adults was indicated in the maintenance of all relationships [Hypothesis #8]. AAAs are by definition committed to serving older adults. In addition, when DSS respondents were asked about their agency's commitment to older adults, they consistently said that they took their service responsibility to all clients very seriously and that they were very committed to meeting the needs of the elderly population in their area.

Commitment to interagency relationship [Hypotheses #3 and #9]. A specified commitment to working together during the formation of the interagency relationship [Hypothesis #3] was found in three relationships. In South County, the administrative reorganization that took place approximately two years ago required the agencies to work together closely. In this case, commitment to the relationship was due, in large part, to a state mandate that they cooperate and enter into formal written

agreements. A close working relationship was formed in the programs for which they shared responsibilities. In West County, a commitment to working with other community agencies to meet client needs through task division was instrumental in the formation of the AAA/DSS interagency relationship. One of the first tasks of the AAA's representatives when it was formed was to initiate discussion with significant people in the community who were involved in aging services. One of the significant individuals was a staff member of the local DSS. The DSS staff member worked with several public and private community groups to develop more coordinated planning for aging services. The commitment to a joint effort was evident in her promotion of the role of the new AAA to other agencies by convincing them that the AAA would not be duplicating what was already occurring. An AAA respondent said the following about the formation of the relationship:

Without the [DSS staff member's]...interest in convincing the community that...[what we wanted to do] would be useful for them ultimately, it would have been a much more difficult process to go through...The concept of the area agency was new. People thought that we were duplicating what other groups were already doing and they weren't sure if it would help.

Similarly, an historical commitment to working together among all community service agencies contributed to the formation of the association of governments/AAA interagency relationship in Central County. An AG respondent noted that concern for efficient use of resources by community agencies made it possible for the AAA, DSS, and others to come together and cooperatively allocate local SSBG funds to various target groups.

There's very little money out there [in the community] so we talked about all of us getting together and [for] all of the target groups,

kind of target the money in that direction...so there are no real fights going on with general recognition that the funding is woefully inadequate in all areas.

The DSS and AAA in North County worked together regarding the in-home assistance program when DSS Title XX funds were cut, and in East County they worked together when the new homemaker program was initiated. However, in both cases, these were examples of working together on specific problems. I was unable to determine the extent of relationship commitment at that time from the available evidence regarding these programs.

Evidence suggested that an effort to maintain interagency commitment occurred in four AAA/DSS relationships, thus supporting Hypothesis #9. The only exception I found was in East County. Although the AAA area plan and the DSS comprehensive service plan indicated a commitment to interagency relationships in this county, I found little evidence of commitment to an AAA/DSS relationship. The AAA contractors occasionally work with DSS social workers on cross referrals by telephone, but that is the extent of their interaction.

Interagency awareness, communication, and information exchange [Hypotheses #4, #10, and #16]. Information exchange seemed to be involved in the formation of three interagency relationships [Hypothesis #4]. First, when the East County AAA started its homemaker service program, the DSS terminated homemaker service to adults over the age of 60. At the time of transferring clients from the DSS program to the new AAA program, representatives from both agencies met and communicated by telephone

several times to work out the logistics of the changeover. Interagency awareness was essential to efficiently transferring clients between the agencies. North County was similar in that DSS and AAA representatives met to discuss how DSS clients could continue to receive services when Title XX funds were reduced.

When the AAA was established in West County, an AAA staff member and a DSS staff member built upon their personal relationship to promote interagency awareness between the AAA, DSS, and other community service agencies. At this same site, the decision of the AAA representatives to grant Title III funds to the DSS for home delivered meals was made possible, in part, because the AAA was aware of the existing involvement of DSS in such a program. The AAA representatives' knowledge about DSS services suggested that granting money to an established program would be an efficient way to use Title III funds.

Unfortunately, in South and Central Counties where the same respondents discussed both the historical and current relationship, the exact role of interagency awareness in maintaining the relationship could not be separated from the time of the formation to the current operation of the relationship. Therefore, there was not enough information to address Hypothesis #4 for these counties.

Interagency awareness and communication contributed to the maintenance of four relationships [Hypothesis #10]. For instance, in North County, changes in interagency awareness were important to the relationship over time. An AAA representative who served on the DSS protective services

subcommittee was a former DSS employee, and she provided a major link between the AAA and the DSS. When this individual no longer represented the AAA on the subcommittee, a DSS respondent said that interagency awareness was significantly reduced.

Another example of the importance of communication occurred in South County after the administrative reorganization of aging services. Initially, communication was with regard to structuring the relationship so that the AAA and DSS could work together effectively. Over time, communication became a clarification process for establishing each agency's responsibilities. Currently, communication is described as "at a maintenance level" for carrying out respective responsibilities regarding case management and chore services. During this process, interagency communication between the AAA and DSS became more formalized over time, resulting in a better understanding of each agency's roles and expectations in the relationship.

The contribution of interagency awareness and communication to relationship maintenance was diverse in the other relationships. In West County, the need for communication was described as varying over time, depending upon agency needs. The agencies have consistently communicated when a problem or issue required joint attention. Central County's AAA maintains regular communication with the state unit on aging regarding the combination of Title III and state allocated SSBG funds as well as with the association of governments regarding local SSBG funding. In East County, however, there appeared to be little communication between the AAA

and DSS over time. The agencies have shared no responsibilities requiring information exchange, and the social service structure has not required or encouraged the agencies to work together. Although the AAA contractors appeared to play an indirect role in helping the AAA and DSS maintain awareness, the information provided by the DSS and AAA contractor did not directly address this issue in a way that could help me determine the effect on AAA/DSS awareness over time.

Regarding current relationship functioning, communication continues between the AAA and DSS in all counties, thus supporting Hypothesis #16. Again, the influence varies across sites. A current example of communication/information exchange/interagency awareness is the daily interpersonal interaction in the joint energy assistance program in North County, and the expressed importance of interpersonal communication in the overall relationship.

A problem solving process in South County regarding joint service responsibility is accomplished with frequent communication at the staff and administrative level in combination with the use of their formal interagency agreement concerning their joint responsibilities. If a problem or concern cannot be worked out at the staff level, the administrators are in contact by telephone or meetings, and resolution often involves written communication until the problem is solved.

Although there is little or no communication at the administrative or staff level between DSS and AAA in East County, there is communication between the DSS and the AAA contractor regarding client cross referrals.

A DSS respondent viewed her agency's interchange with the AAA contractor in the following way: "There might be a lot this month and then it might be a couple of months before [there is] any more". It varies "month to month, and situation to situation". She described the communication and interaction as much more informal than formal because the workers know each other well. The AAA contractor and DSS communication represents a clear "indirect" means for interagency awareness between AAA and DSS in the current AAA/DSS relationship at the staff level.

The staff from both agencies in West county said that they are comfortable calling each other as the need arises, and they prefer to communicate informally. In this informal way they maintain current interagency awareness.

You don't need to get enmeshed in administrative, bureaucratic structures in order to communicate understanding. You relate on an interpersonal basis that avoids a lot of bureaucracy and allows things to happen successfully...there's a heavy emphasis on informality and I think really for the most part it's all informal.

The association of governments committee meetings in Central County provide a "forum" for the AAA and other community service agencies to share information regarding local SSBG funding allocations for the various target groups. The AAA shares all available information with the association of governments regarding service utilization as well as data regarding how much money will be allocated for various services. This sharing of information helps promote vital interagency awareness.

Interagency consensus [Hypotheses #5 and #11]. Reaching interagency consensus appeared to influence the history of three AAA/DSS relationships

[Hypothesis #5]. For example, AAA and DSS representatives in North County met to discuss alternatives regarding how DSS clients could continue to be served after a DSS funding cut. An AAA respondent suggested that discussion during this meeting led to agreement on a temporary solution to the problem. The AAA then provided in-home services until the DSS could make other arrangements for their clients.

Staff and administrator interpersonal relationships and personalities appeared to be initial barriers to interagency consensus when the social service system was reorganized in South County. For example, a DSS administrative respondent said that long-established working relationships were interrupted by the entrance of new personnel from outside the area into the local service system. Personality clashes were noted by a DSS administrative staff member between individuals who had worked in the system for several years and new staff members.

The [workers who had been there for some time] were used to interacting with the [individuals] that had been there with them, usually from the beginning, and were very comfortable with that relationship. Then we had [new individuals] coming into our agency and they had a different way of doing things, a different style...a different perspective...so initially that was...stressful and that brought about some confrontations between staff members...I think it would have been more difficult if [the supervisor of the AAA contractor or myself] were not open to new information or [to] looking at things from each other's perspectives...I think we would have had a more difficult time if we were different personalities and if we were more headstrong in certain areas...We have the ability to talk about our differences and admit that there are differences and that's o.k...because we won't come to agreement on 100% of the things that we're discussing and we feel alright with that.

When the AAA started its homemaker service program in East County there were turf protection issues that were resolved through face-to-face

meetings of AAA and DSS administrators and staff. One of the main problems was a DSS concern that the AAA would be duplicating what they were doing in homemaker services. An AAA respondent had worked closely with a DSS staff member to resolve this concern, and thus reached a level of interagency consensus on the issue.

We weren't [duplicating services] at all. We did have some problems, but we have kind of worked through that. I worked through [a DSS staff member]...At first that [duplication issue] was a point of [disagreement]...but we worked that out, and I think that it is working out really [well].

The AAA respondent said that the DSS social worker was able to convince her agency's administration that the AAA posed no threat to client service delivery. During our interviews, however, I noted that some DSS representatives still seemed to resent the AAA for receiving SSBG funds that perhaps they could be using for services.

In West and Central Counties, evidence suggested that agency representatives had worked together to form a relationship, but the degree of consensus could not be determined from the information provided. Therefore, I could not make a decision in these instances regarding the influence of interagency consensus in the beginning of the interaction.

Over time, consensus appears to have influenced all five relationships, therefore supporting Hypothesis #11. For example, in North and South Counties, respondents noted that cooperation was very important in the operation of programs with joint responsibilities. In addition, South County respondents expressed a belief that because their system requires them to work together they both "bend over backwards" to make the

relationship work. The AAA contractor, the AAA, and DSS representatives in East County agree on the informal means for making cross referrals without directly involving the AAA. In West County, a DSS respondent suggested that the DSS and AAA do not have "blanket consensus" but have been able to work together well in the past on several issues. In Central County, the AAA and various other agency representatives use the AG committee meetings to reach agreement on how to achieve goals for the benefit of the various target groups.

Domain similarity [Hypotheses #6 and 13]. Domain similarities seemed to have influenced the formation and maintenance of each relationship in that there has been overlap in client populations and geographic areas served. These overlaps served as a common basis for the relationships, therefore supporting Hypotheses #6 and #13. It appears that many agencies would have been less likely to work together without these commonalities. The OAA mandate that AAAs seek to work with other agencies involved in service delivery to older adults is based upon the existence of a common client population between community organizations. Similarly DSS adult protective laws provide a common basis for working with other agencies that serve adults. If abuse is reported by an agency, the DSS must respond and become involved in the situation. Adult protective services are the usual sources of cross-referrals.

In North and South Counties, joint responsibility for services was also an illustration of domain similarity. For example, in North County's energy assistance program, respondents stated that they had made an effort

to make energy assistance one program at the "planning, philosophical and operational level" to better serve a common client population. In South County, where the AAA and DSS programs are under one state administrative department, domain similarity has contributed to the formation and maintenance of the relationship because the same administrative agency oversees all aging services.

Centralization [Hypotheses # 12 and 20]. There was little support across the counties for centralization of decision making over time [Hypotheses #12 and 20]. There was only one instance of a centralized decision-making body operating in the relationships. The association of governments committee in Central County, which includes a representative of the AAA and the state DSS, makes concerted decisions regarding local SSBG allocations. Decision making in the other relationships was not accomplished through joint representation on boards, councils, or committees as I had hypothesized.

Formalization [Hypotheses # 18 and 19]. I found evidence of formal mechanisms of interagency activity [Hypothesis #18] in two relationships. A formal written agreement existed in South County, and it was used extensively in sharing responsibility for services. In contrast, a memorandum of understanding existed at the local level according to the North County DSS comprehensive service plan, but it had little effect on the local relationship. Agency representatives were unsure of the agreement's existence or its contents, and they said that it was not important to their relationship. We were given a copy of the state

agreement but not a local document.

Although there was no formal written agreement with the AG in Central County, the AAA administrator noted a personal preference for using formal channels for conducting interagency business with the association of government committees as well as with the state unit on aging.

I guess there's a lot of informal communication going on but most of it doesn't have to do with the operation of [the] area agency. I don't let that get informal. The informal communication has to do with common issues for the aging network...I do very scrupulously keep the informal communication away from the direct operation of the area agency.

In West County, there were no formal agreements or formalized interaction. Agency representatives had definite preferences for an informal "non-bureaucratic" relationship. Both the AAA and the DSS administrative respondents in East County indicated they could not enter into formal agreements at the local level. Agreements would have to be drafted and approved at the state level.

Informal mechanisms for conducting interagency activities were important to the interagency relationships in four counties, therefore supporting Hypothesis #19. For example, preferences were noted in North, South, East and West Counties for informal interaction. In South County, informal interaction was used along with formal mechanisms to voice concerns at the staff level. Personal acquaintance, personalities, feeling comfortable with calling staff at the other agency, long time relationships and established informal networks were noted as examples of informal interaction across the four sites. In Central County, the AAA administrative respondent expressed a belief that informal interaction was

not the best way to conduct interagency business. She said that formal mechanisms avoided many of the interpersonal problems that are likely to occur in informal business relationships.

Perceived effectiveness [Hypotheses #14 and 15]. Hypotheses #14 and #15, which addressed perceived effectiveness of the relationship, were supported in all five counties. Overall, agency representatives expressed satisfaction with the way in which the other agency carried out its roles and responsibilities in the interagency relationship [Hypothesis #14]. Even in East County, where the agencies have few expectations of each other, representatives expressed relative satisfaction with the way in which the AAA contractors and the DSS social workers handled cross referrals.

A DSS respondent in West County suggested a general recognition by staff members that when a problem came up, the agencies would "pitch in" to resolve it together as they have in the past. She noted that they "know something good" will come from the effort. Both AAA and DSS respondents expressed satisfaction with the operation of the relationship. In Central County, where the AAA and association of governments committees work together, the way in which the relationship meets the needs of all client target groups seemed to be acceptable to both AAA and AG representatives.

Regarding the productiveness of the relationships, overall, the respondents expressed a belief that working together is productive and is beneficial to their clients, thus supporting Hypothesis #15. For example,

an AAA respondent in North County noted that DSS funding of staff allowed the energy assistance program to operate more efficiently. A DSS respondent said that her agency would continue to support the AAA because the relationship helps them serve older clients more effectively. She noted that the AAA understood the needs of the elderly client, and they could give them special attention that perhaps the DSS was not be able to provide. Also in North County, a DSS respondent said that her agency's overall job would be "immeasurably" more difficult without the services the AAA offers to their clients.

Evidence from South County suggested major accomplishments of the relationship. In general, clients would be adversely affected if the agencies did not work together to fulfill their joint service responsibilities. For example, it would take clients longer to get services if the AAA and DSS did not work together, and they may not get services at all in some cases if there was no interagency collaboration. There was concern that the client may "fall through the cracks" in the service system.

For East, West, and Central Counties, receiving both funding streams helps representatives to continue services and meet demands. An East County AAA respondent noted the service difficulties she might face if her agency did not receive SSBG funds.

I think that if we weren't the recipient of the [SSBG] funds as well as the Title III funds...the coordination effort would probably be a lot different...I think the fact that we get the [SSBG] dollars...and we contract those dollars out to other service providers, we can control how [the funding streams] work together a little bit...if [SSBG] dollars came to the [local DSS], I think that we would really have [a more difficult] job as far as getting

those [SSBG] dollars...to be used to serve senior citizens.

She also said that if she did not receive SSBG funds, many of her services would be cut.

Complexity [Hypotheses #21 and 22]. The complexity of the interagency relationships varied considerably among the counties. One relationships involved several activities and connections [Hypothesis #21], while the others involved few connections. For example, the agencies in North County were relatively independent in carrying out service responsibilities, with the exception of the energy assistance program. However, they served together on joint community service committees, and they attended local conferences. They were involved in several activities such as joint training sessions and providing input in each other's planning process, particularly in public meetings where presentations concerning their plans were allowed. The agencies were also working on a proposal for sharing a common referral form. Other agencies had fewer connections that related to one service or activity such as cross referrals in East County and West County's home delivered meals program.

In East and West Counties as well as South County, interagency activities primarily occurred between the DSS and the AAA contractor, suggesting less direct involvement and relationship complexity between the AAA and DSS. For example, South County had joint client assessment for services, in which most coordination occurred between the DSS and the AAA contractor in case staffings. In East County, the AAA and DSS had no direct connection between the AAA and DSS. However, cross referrals were

often made between the DSS and the AAA contractor.

Although there was influence by external agencies to some degree in all counties, I found differences in complexity of the relationships regarding involvement of state and federal agencies and other community organizations [Hypothesis #22]. As previously discussed, the Administration on Aging, through the Older Americans Act and local AAAs, was the most influential federal agency upon the AAA/DSS relationship. The AOA mandate that AAAs become involved with other community agencies and state adult protective laws, in conjunction with domain similarities, appeared to be the underlying motivation for the formation and maintenance of the AAA/DSS interagency collaboration.

State-level agencies varied in their effect on the local relationship. For example, in East and Central Counties, the State Unit on Aging exerted considerable influence on how the funding streams were combined at the local level. In South County, the state-level department responsible for both the DSS and AAA systems exerted influence on the local interagency relationship through directives and required procedures. In addition, most social service planning for the county was carried out at the state level. In North and West Counties, respondents said that their state-level agencies had little, if any, effect on the local relationship because they have substantial autonomy to plan and make decisions about their local operation.

Overall, contracted service providers appeared to be the primary outside agencies involved in the DSS/AAA relationships. As previously

discussed, often these agencies were the main source of collaboration between the AAA and DSS. This indirect involvement was evident in North County where the AAA and DSS used some of the same service providers. In South County, a AAA provider was represented along with DSS staff members in the case staffing for a service involving joint responsibilities. AAA contracting agencies in East County were involved with the DSS regarding cross-referrals, although there was little direct DSS/AAA contact. Finally, in West County, a consortium of service providers for the DSS home delivered meals program were also focal point centers for AAA services. It seems that service contractors add a great deal to the complexity of AAA/DSS relations. Most coordination occurred at this level.

Other social service agencies appeared to influence the AAA/DSS relationship in two counties. In North County, joint responsibility for the energy assistance involved a third community service agency, the community action program. The association of governments in Central County included many agencies and organizations that influence decisions about the local SSBG funding of AAA programs.

Additional findings. Throughout the cross-site analysis, I noted the prominence and influence of interpersonal interaction between staff and administrators in the relationships as well as respondents' perceptions and attitudes regarding the interagency interaction. Van de Ven's (1976) model addressed these contributions to interorganizational relationships to some degree in the information exchange, commitment, consensus,

formalization, and perceived effectiveness dimensions. Although some of the following examples of the "human factor" in the relationships were used previously, the purpose of this section is to demonstrate the central importance of the human element in depicting the relationships.

Personal acquaintance of staff members was very important in the interaction of all the agencies. In the history of the relationship in North County, a DSS respondent noted that the AAA representative on her adult protective subcommittee had previously been employed by the DSS, and the fact that they knew each other was very important to maintaining interagency awareness. Across the sites, respondents emphasized that being acquainted with individuals in other agency made the relationship work better because they knew the exact contact persons for most types of problems they would encounter. In West County, a DSS respondent expressed the importance of acquaintance between staff members in that it helped them remain aware of agency activities while avoiding the complexities and confusion often present in more formal bureaucratic systems.

Preferences of agency representatives for types of interaction were also evident across the relationships (e.g., an inclination toward formal or informal means of interaction). In North County, the existence of a formal written agreement was suggested by documents and encouraged by an agreement between the state unit on aging and the state DSS. However, the local agency representatives expressed a preference for, and subsequently used, an informal understanding and informal means of interaction. In this instance, a formal structure was present but not used by agency

representatives. In South County, most respondents expressed a preference for the existence and utilization of formal agreements and means of interaction. In contrast, East and West County representatives noted a strong propensity toward informal understandings and means of interaction. Finally, in Central County, an AAA administrator emphasized her preference for formal means of interacting when conducting AAA business with other agencies.

Individual perceptions of the importance of the relationship were also apparent across the relationships and affected their nature, particularly with regard to interagency commitment at the administrative level. For example, in North County, respondents noted that the former AAA administrator did not place much emphasis on an AAA and DSS working relationship, while the new administrator suggested that she planned to encourage more interaction in the future. In this instance, the change in the administrative emphasis on the importance of the relationship was likely to affect its characteristics over time.

Respondents in North, South, and East Counties expressed beliefs that the interagency relationship was very important for meeting client service needs. Although East County's AAA administrator did not perceive the AAA/DSS relationship as important, she noted that the ability to use both funding streams in her programs was extremely important to service delivery. Similarly, West County DSS respondents noted the importance of the Title III funds they received for home delivered meals for their clients. Finally, the AAA administrator in Central County noted that

because the AAA received all SSBG and Title III funds, she could accomplish more efficient service delivery and administrative functions. In these examples, the perceived accomplishments of the relationship are essential to understanding the relationship.

Other general perceptions I found were beliefs that the staff of the other agency was competent and cared about their older clients. Being comfortable in calling staff members of the other agency and belief that they were willing to work cooperatively was a common expression. Simply knowing that the other agency was there as a resource if needed was mentioned often as well.

Summary

Overall, most hypotheses were supported across sites, with the exception of little centralized decision making regarding interagency relations, formalization of agency interaction, and relationship complexity in relation to interagency activity involvement as shown in Table 1. The model dimensions, therefore, are applicable to most of the counties and proved to be very useful in characterizing the relationships, either in a program area, joint funding stream administration (i.e., one agency received both types of funds for services), the overall relationship, or sometimes the AAA contractor/DSS relationship.

The most notable exception was in Central County where many model dimensions became intra-agency issues. Because much of the interaction in this county, other than that between the AAA and AG, does not fit the usual conception of an interagency AAA/DSS relationship, the Van model

would not be expected to apply. However, even in this instance, many dimensions were useful in describing the joint use of funding streams by a single agency.

Chapter V: Discussion And Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the interaction between Title III and SSBG agencies to determine the adequacy of a theoretical model in portraying the relationships. I also considered how the model might be changed, if appropriate, to capture the essence of the relationships.

Theoretical Relevance: Interagency Relationships as Social Action Systems

Van de Ven, et al. (1984) suggested that each interagency relationship has its own reason(s) for forming and continuing over time, as well as its own character. This investigation found variations as well as common elements in Title III and SSBG interagency relationships. Van de Ven (1976) suggested that interorganizational relationships (IRs) exhibit three elements of any form of social behavior. If relationships operate as social action systems the following characteristics should apply: (a) Behavior among members of the relationship is aimed at attaining the self-interest and collective goals of the members, (b) interdependent processes emerge involving the division of tasks and functions among members of the relationship, and (c) the relationship can operate as a unit with a unique identity separate from its individual members. Van de Ven's (1976) model is a general framework and should apply to most forms of interorganizational relationships. Because the nature of the association between agencies tends to differ in purpose and level of activity, the way in which elements of social action systems are relevant to IRs is likely to vary as well. The results of this investigation suggest that the

relationships between AAAs and DSSs can be reasonably portrayed as social action systems, with differences in goal-directed behavior, interdependent processes, and action as a unit.

I will address each of the elements of social action systems as they apply to the forms of interaction found in this investigation. First, an ultimate objective of organizations involved in an interorganizational relationship is the attainment of goals that are not achievable, or not as easily achieved independently. When interagency relationships existed among the AAAs and DSSs, the agencies had self-interest goals as well as collective goals which they met through the interagency relationship. Given the resources available and the administrative restrictions placed upon them, the agencies' primary goal in their use of the funding streams with regard to older adults and their joint efforts was effective service delivery. The degree to which the goal was met through collaboration varied according to the specific environment in which a relationship operated and the level of shared responsibility for services or programs. For instance, those agencies without encouragement or requirements from their state-level agency to interact or those without specified joint responsibilities tended to work toward their goals for serving older adults more independently.

According to Van de Ven (1976), the actions of members of interorganizational relationships are interdependent. Interdependence is indicated, in large part, by the reciprocal effect the agencies have on each other and how much they take each other's actions into account as

they carry out service delivery goals. Over time, in relationships operating as social action systems, agencies or their representatives take on specialized roles and develop behavioral expectations of each other regarding the rights and obligations of membership in the relationship.

Interdependent processes existed to some extent in all of the AAA/DSS relationships. Service delivery goals, responsibilities, and tasks were closely shared in some relationships, while in others they were carried out with relative independence. In this way the agencies varied in how much they took each other into account when carrying out their service delivery goals. Most agencies had expectations regarding their interaction and, as would be expected, both the degree of interdependence and the nature of interagency expectations varied across the sites. The variation depended, in part, upon on the frequency of interaction (i.e., process dimensions such as communication/resource exchange) and the number and type of activities in which the agencies were involved (i.e., relationship complexity, division of tasks). The greatest interdependence was indicated in those relationships where the agencies shared joint service responsibilities. In this case, the agencies interacted frequently regarding their roles and expectations.

The social structure of the interagency social action system allows the participants to act as a unit with a structure and process for organizing agency activities (Van de Ven, 1976). All of the relationships in this investigation exhibited a structure, and activities occurred between the agencies. However, their nature differed according to the needs of the

organizations and the preferences of individuals participating in the interaction. Some structures were formal, and others were primarily informal. One relationship was relatively complex and involved several activities and the influence of other agencies in the community, while another was simple, revolved around one service, and exhibited little external influence.

Overall, it appears that the AAA and DSS relationships in this investigation can be reasonably represented as social action systems. As would be expected, the nature of the system varied according to the history, needs, and characteristics of each relationship. The AAA/DSS relationships suggest that the three elements of organized social behavior are useful in describing the interaction.

Situational Factors and the Formation of the Relationships

Although the hypothesized influence of the Van de Ven (1976) model's situational factors is generally supported with regard to the formation and maintenance of the interagency relationships, there are questions concerning the exact nature of their contribution. Given the difficulty of obtaining a complete picture of the formation of the relationships, I cannot say with confidence that his situational factors (i.e., resource dependence, commitment, awareness, consensus, and domain similarity) were the primary factors involved. It does appear, however, that they are useful elements in depicting the history of interagency relationships.

In addition to the situational factors in Van de Ven's (1976) model, there were other important factors as well, depending upon the particular

agencies examined and the respondents providing the information. For example, the formation of the AAA/DSS relationships generally involved a mandate or directives to some degree (Raelin, 1980) from the federal and/or state level. Specifically, the influence of the AOA and the Older Americans Act at the federal level, or state unit on aging directives to AAAs and adult protective services law requirements for SSBG agencies was indicated. Although the type of effect varied, these external influences were very important in laying the groundwork and/or providing the motivation for the interagency interaction. For instance, the OAA mandate can motivate the AAA to seek out other community agencies to include in achieving their goal of a coordinated system of services. SSBG agencies are required by law to follow up on referrals made to adult protective services, and referrals of older adults often involve the AAA or its contracted service provider.

In summary, the evidence from the case studies generally supports the hypothesized contribution of the Van de Ven (1976) model's situational factors to the formation of the relationship. However, further investigation of the nature of their influence, and exploration of other elements in a relationship's history are areas that need further research.

Maintenance Over Time and Current Relationship

Over time, domain similarity influenced all of the relationships in that the agencies had overlap in both client populations and geographic service areas. Even East County, which currently lacks a AAA/DSS relationship at the local level, overlap in domains was involved at one

time when the AAA began serving former DSS homemaker clients in their newly established homemaker program. These similarities helped to provide a common interest on which the agencies could base a relationship.

Van de Ven (1976) emphasized the central importance of process dimensions (i.e., resource exchange and information exchange) in maintaining a relationship. Information exchange was important in maintaining activity between the AAAs and DSSs, although the characteristics of the exchange differed, depending upon the needs of each relationship. Van de Ven also noted the significance of personal acquaintance in maintaining interagency awareness. This investigation suggests the relevance of personal rapport as well as that of other interpersonal factors in characterizing interaction. These "human" elements will be discussed further when possible changes in the model are discussed in a later section.

The other resource exchange process dimension was more critical to the portrayal of the interorganizational relationship when an agency received funds from the other funding stream (i.e., an SSBG agency receiving Title III or an AAA receiving SSBG funds). Although the need for resources was important in this sense, other concrete (Aldrich, 1976) resource exchange between local agencies was found less frequently than would be expected from the work of Levine & White (1961) and Cook (1977). There was one notable exception found in the jointly operated energy assistance program in North County which involved both funding and staff exchange.

Other forms of resource exchange were identified by AAA/DSS respondents. For example, DSS respondents often mentioned that the AAA services available to their clients were important resources. Staff expertise made available for use by the other agency and having another agency's "good will" were mentioned as resources in other relationships. It seems, therefore, that the resources exchanged in AAA/DSS relationships cannot be narrowly defined as funding or staff exchange. Based upon a broader definition of "resource", this process dimension was an influential factor in AAA/DSS collaboration.

Addressing other dimensions in the model, there was a general commitment over time by both AAAs and DSSs to serving older clients, although the nature of the commitment differed between the agencies. For example, the AAA is responsible for all older adults, whereas the DSS tends to be responsible for those individuals with lower incomes or those with adult protective needs. In these instances, the DSS was very committed to its segment of the population, but its commitment involved a more restricted range of service provision.

The formalization, centralization, and complexity of relationships were important structural elements in Van De Ven's (1976) model, and I found that they are useful in characterizing the relationships in this investigation. A range in formality of interaction, centralized decision making, and relationship complexity was found. Informal interaction occurred more often than formal. Although there were few examples of centralized joint decision-making bodies, the lack of such bodies seems

to indicate the relative weakness of many of the relationships.

When examining objective indicators of the complexity of a relationship or the degree of interagency commitment to the joint effort based upon the number of joint programs or activities, these factors did not necessarily indicate the degree of interdependence in the relationship. For example, some agencies were involved in several activities but did not exhibit much observable or perceived interdependence between the agencies from respondents. The agencies often interacted, but they were not necessarily engaged in the types of activities that would create a perception of interdependence. In this case, interdependence is defined as how much the agencies depend upon each other and take each other into account when serving clients. The other element of complexity, the influence of state-level agencies and other community organizations, varied in that some state agencies encouraged local interaction more than others. In many instances, the actual coordination of services was handled by service providers. North County shared program responsibility for energy assistance, and Central County shared decision making with many agencies in the association of government interaction.

As an illustration of expressed interdependence, the North County agencies took part in several activities, but respondents perceived the agencies as operating quite independently. Other agencies, however, were engaged in only one or two activities and exhibited much more perceived interdependence in their interagency relationships. For example, the joint programs in South County in which the agencies shared

responsibilities suggested a greater degree of perceived interdependence and interagency commitment than the several activities in which North County's agencies were involved.

Addressing the degree of interagency consensus and perceived effectiveness of the relationships, most respondents expressed a belief that the relationship, regardless of expressed level of interdependence, was beneficial to clients. One limitation of addressing these subjective issues, however, is how to define perceived effectiveness and consensus. In this instance, my decision was to accept the statements of respondents regarding their perceptions at face value. For example, they seemed relatively satisfied with the roles each agency had and how they were carried out when they noted the positive consequences of the interaction.

In East County, where there was no AAA/DSS interagency relationship, respondents were basically satisfied with the status quo. Agency representatives in other counties seemed to have reached a place on the continuum of consensus or interagency agreement where they could work together in an acceptable manner. For example, in South County, even though there was evidence of personality clashes and interpersonal problems, the agencies had come to terms with their differences so that they could generally work together effectively to meet their joint responsibilities.

The previous examples of perceptions of the relationships and attitudes of agency representatives towards each other are very important in portraying AAA/DSS interagency relationships. The exact nature of their

influence on the outcome of the interaction was sometimes unclear, but the perceptions were important in the daily activities of the relationships, at both the staff and administrative level. The role of these perceptions will be addressed in my discussion of changes in the model.

In summary, the dimensions of Van de Ven's (1976) model influenced to some extent the maintenance and current functioning of the interagency relationships. Although the nature of their influence varied across the relationships, this might be expected, given the general nature of the model and differences in the closeness or strength of the relationships.

Summary of Model Relevance to Expected AAA/DSS Interaction

In Chapter II, I described a general scenario of how the model was expected to apply to AAA and DSS interaction. In fact, the external influence of the OAA coordination mandate did contribute to the motivation behind the DSS/AAA relationship. However, DSS adult protective services laws were also an external influence. A common interest in serving the community's elderly population also contributed to the interaction as well as the overlap in client populations and geographic service area. Although these were important motivational factors, the actions of the local agency representatives were important to continued interaction as they reached consensus on how to work together.

Some agencies entered into formal agreements, but informal understandings were much more prevalent. There was much less joint representation on each other's advisory boards than I expected, and few examples of other types of joint decision making were found. Although

state-level agencies exerted influence in some relationships, the service providers were much more influential at the local level.

Resources were exchanged, but they included staff expertise and availability of services to each others clients more often than the exchange of money, staff, and building facilities. Finally, there was a general positive attitude toward the accomplishments of the interaction. As the agencies continued to work together, on as needed basis in most instances, the representatives generally expected to continue the relationship because clients benefit from the effort.

Model Revision: Interpersonal/Perceptual Dimension

McLaughlin and Covert (1984) suggested the central importance of the "human factor" in interagency collaboration. Sources of conflict such as value differences (e.g., personal, professional, agency), role pressures, perceptual differences, divergent goals, status threat, and personality clashes between individuals involved in interagency relationships can strongly influence the joint effort. Individuals involved in interagency relationships do not simply "interact", they interpret the relationship and act accordingly. They also make choices concerning how they relate to people in the other agency, and their values and attitudes are influential factors. Therefore, addressing interagency relationships requires attention to these elements. Personal relationships, personal feelings and bias, individual meaning of a relationship, and interpretation of actions of staff in other agencies were influences on cooperation among the sites studied.

Van de Ven (1976) relied upon several fairly objective factors such as the environment and structure in which the relationships operate to characterize IRs, and he used the commitment, consensus, awareness, and perceived effectiveness variables to address more subjective elements. The interaction of individuals on a daily basis with their perceptions, feelings, and values are factors that keep the relationships dynamic and changing. Because these factors were so important in this investigation, the addition of a separate interpersonal/perceptual/attitudinal model component emphasizing their contribution to interagency relationships seems appropriate.

If we examine the actions and perceptions of some of the individuals in this research, social action theory is relevant to understanding some of the situations I found. Social action theory conceptualizes individuals involved in action as motivated goal-seeking actors who make choices in attaining their desired ends. Various other influences intervene as the actor strives for the goal. Situational factors can affect the means for obtaining a goal, including the intervention of obstacles that block the way. Normative standards also affect the attainment of goals. Behavior is continuously influenced by norms that arise in human interaction (Smelser & Warner, 1976).

In North County, formal agreements were encouraged by state agencies, but the individuals involved chose to interact on a more informal basis. As McLaughlin and Elder (1982) suggested "the interagency agreement is more than a piece of paper: it is a highly interactive procedure which

involves actions demanding effective interpersonal as well as technical skills across all components of the process" (p. 29). It seems that an informal agreement or "understanding" between staff members can sometimes take precedence over a formal written one.

However, as social action theory suggests, individuals can make choices but they are not completely free to do whatever they like in a given situation. For example, if the state level agencies had exerted more pressure for adoption of the formal agreements by the local agencies, the nature of the interaction and the freedom of those involved to make choices would likely have been constrained.

Another example of the interpersonal/perceptual/attitudinal factor was the importance of social relationships between staff members across the sites. In fact, these elements affected the nature of some interagency relationships a great deal. In this way social relationships became a situational intervention in meeting service goals. In South County, in particular, long-standing interpersonal relationships affected the nature of the interagency collaboration. Staff feelings regarding newly hired personnel in the other agency had considerable effect on the interaction.

Next, the staff and/or administrator's emphasis on or the importance given to coordination affected some relationships. Again, a choice was made to either value or not value coordination and establish an orientation toward the other agency (Skidmore, 1979), depending upon the actor and the circumstances. For instance, in North County the new AAA director expressed an interest in more interagency coordination in the

future. Her predecessor, however, had not placed much emphasis on joint efforts at all.

Another example of choices or orientations were the staff/administrator preferences in North and West Counties toward informal means of interaction. In contrast, Central County's AAA administrator preferred a much more formal basis for interaction in reaching her agency's goals.

Finally, a related perceptual element found in some instances was staff and administrator perceptions of interdependence between the agencies, and how it affected the nature of the relationship. If an agency administrator or staff member felt very dependent or not at all dependent upon another agency to meet agency or program needs, this factor tended to affect the interagency relationship. In social action theory this issue may be addressed by the motivation of actors. If something is valued by an actor because it provides some gratification, he or she will be more likely to "orient" toward the "object" (Skidmore, 1979). In this case, if coordination does something for those involved they are more likely to be involved in the relationship.

For example, in North County, the AAA energy assistance program respondent said she was very dependent on DSS for funds and staff. She noted that she was more willing to "go out on a limb" for the DSS because they help her a great deal. A DSS energy assistance program respondent expressed a belief that she was willing to give resources to the AAA because there was a cooperative attitude among staff members. In contrast, some North County administrators said that they generally

perceive the agencies as having little interdependence other than in the energy assistance program. There was wide diversity of perceived interdependence in a single relationship.

In summary, it appears that many of the tenets of social action theory can be applied to the interpersonal and attitude elements of the interagency relationship. The concept of actors, choices, goal-related behavior, and motivation are particularly useful.

Revised Model

Overall, Van de Ven's (1976) model is generally appropriate and adequate in portraying the interorganizational relationships between the AAAs and DSSs, given their diversity. My purpose in revising the model is not to suggest that the original model completely leaves out essential elements. However, based upon the results of this investigation, I propose a revised conceptual model that offers the advantage of being simpler, conceptually clearer, and easier to follow in portraying interorganizational relationships over time. Original elements of Van de Ven's (1976) model (Figure 1) are included in my model, although they may be labeled differently or placed in a different category. The major change in my conceptualization is the addition of an interpersonal/perceptual/attitudinal factor, which is also based upon social action theory (Figure 2).

As previously mentioned, Van de Ven addresses interpersonal issues in the following dimensions: (a) commitment of agency representatives to the interagency relationship, (b) reaching interagency consensus, (b) the role

SITUATIONAL FACTORS

1. Resource Dependence

- Agency's need for external resources
- Agency's need for other agencies in the environment

2. Commitment to Problem Issue or Opportunity

- Perceived commitment to resolve environmental needs or realize opportunities

3. Awareness

- Knowledge of environmental needs, problems, or opportunities
- Knowledge of services and goals of other agencies
- Personal acquaintance of agency representatives

4. Consensus

- Agreement among agencies on solutions to environmental needs or problems
- Agreement on services and goals among agencies
- Conflict on means and ends

5. Domain Similarity

- Sameness of goals, services, staff skills, and clients of agencies

PROCESS DIMENSIONS

1. Intensity of Resource Flows

- Amount of resource flows among agencies

2. Intensity of Information Flow

- Frequency of communications among agencies

STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS

1. Formalization of Interorganizational Relations (IR)

- Of inter-agency agreements
- Of inter-agency contacts

2. Centralization of IR

- Extent inter-agency committee decisions are binding upon members

3. Complexity of IR

- Number of agencies in IR
- Number of projects and task undertaken by IR

OUTCOME DIMENSION

1. Perceived Effectiveness

- Extent agencies carry out commitments and believe relationships are worthwhile, equitable, and productive

Figure 1. Van de Ven's Model of Interorganizational Relations

SITUATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERAGENCY INTERACTION*

1. Agency Domain Similarities/Differences

- Eligibility requirements
- Services provided
- Client populations
- Geographic service area
- Mission

2. Relationship Motivation/Goals

- Resource need/dependence
- Commitment to older adults (source)
- Commitment to relationship (source)
- Mission/goals of agencies/relationship

3. Structure of Relationship

- Formalization (interagency agreements/contacts)
- Centralization (locus of decision making)
- Complexity (number of programs/activities/other agencies involved)

4. Interagency Processes

- Information exchange/communication
- Resource exchange
- Division/performance of shared tasks/responsibilities

5. Interpersonal/Perceptual/Attitudinal Factors

- Personal acquaintance
- Staff/administrative consensus/agreement
- Perceived outcome/effectiveness of relationship
- Attitudes toward other agency/staff/administrators
- Interagency awareness
- Interagency expectations/carried out in satisfactory manner
- Perceived agency interdependence/importance of relationship

*All Factors Applicable to the Portrayal of the History and Current Operation of Relationship

FIGURE 2. Revised Model of Interagency Relationship Factors

of personal acquaintance in interagency awareness, and (c) the perceived effectiveness of the relationship. I propose that it is easier to exhibit and conceptualize the central importance of these elements if they are addressed as a separate model factor.

Five categories of dimensions are proposed in my revised model, and they are all viewed as "situational factors" that have the potential to affect the nature of the relationship over time. The five categories of factors (Figure 2) are: (a) agency similarities/differences, (b) relationship motivation, (c) structure of the relationship, (c) interagency processes, and (d) interpersonal/perceptual/attitudinal factors.

Agency similarities/differences. My "agency similarities/differences" category incorporates the domain similarity dimension found in the original model. Similarities (e.g., overlap) and/or differences in agency mission/goals, eligibility requirements, client populations, and geographic service areas are included here. The primary contribution of these factors to the portrayal of the relationship is the common basis upon which the relationship is built.

Relationship motivation. The motivational category addresses the reasons why the relationship formed and has continued over time. Van de Ven's (1976) model suggested the primary reasons that relationships form is the need for resources (e.g. money, staff, materials) and/or commitment to a common issue or problem (e.g., services for the elderly population). The internal need for resources to carry out agency goals may lead

agencies to form a relationship to acquire needed resources. The joint commitment to a common problem or issue can be internally generated as well, but it is often externally induced "by a resource granting agency or the redistribution of resource allocation channels" (Van de Ven, 1976, p. 32). The external influence is often a parent/higher level governmental agency through a mandate, directive, or law.

In the relationship motivation factors I would also include the source of commitment to serving the older population (i.e., the common problem or issue) in this instance. Next, the source of commitment to the relationship is incorporated. The expressed obligation or responsibility may be voluntarily established between agency representatives or it may result from an external force (e.g., the OAA mandate that AAAs work with other agencies in the community, or social service adult protective laws). The self-interest goals of the individual agencies and the goals of the relationship are also potential motivational factors under the conceptualization of AAAs and DSSs as social action systems.

Structure of the relationship. The structure of the relationship includes the same factors found in the original model (i.e., formalization of relations, centralization of decision making, and relationship complexity). First, formalization addresses both formal and informal characteristics of the interaction such as the existence and use of interagency agreements, policies, and procedures.

Next, the centralization factor refers to the "locus of decision making". Here I suggest not only decisions made by joint boards,

committees, and councils, but the source of decision making in individual programs and activities in which both agencies are involved. If decisions are made at the state level regarding local agency interaction, this would also be included.

Finally, the structure of the relationship includes relationship complexity. Here, the influence of other agencies in the environment that may affect the Title III/SSBG agencies is considered. An example is the community action program as a third participant in the energy assistance program in North County. Also, federal and state agencies and service providers that influence the interaction are included in this component.

Interagency processes. The activities that contribute to the dynamic nature of the relationship are included such as information exchange and resource exchange. I also suggest examination of the actual performance of shared tasks and responsibilities as an interagency activity. In this investigation, the division of tasks/responsibilities were very important to the portrayal of some relationships as social action systems.

Interpersonal/perceptual/attitudinal factors. As previously mentioned, although Van de Ven addresses these factors to a certain extent, I propose the addition of this category to the model because of its relative importance to the relationships in this investigation. The following elements of a relationship specifically address the "human factor" in collaborative efforts proposed by McLaughlin and Covert (1984). First, the way in which staff and administrators interact and form relationships (e.g., personal acquaintance) are important interpersonal influences.

Interagency representatives' level of consensus or agreement and awareness of what goes on in the other agency is part of this model component as well as attitudes toward the other agency and its staff. Finally, the perceived effectiveness or outcome of the relationship suggests how well expectations are carried out and the relative importance given to the relationship by those involved.

Research, Practice and Policy Implications

Future research needs. This investigation examined the interagency relationships between AAAs and DSSs in five specific counties. Because this study is the first application of the Van de Ven (1976) model to these particular types of relationships, it should be viewed as an exploratory investigation. Conclusions about the adequacy of the model are based upon the specific relationships examined in this study. Therefore, generalizations about its ability to portray other interagency relationships should be made with caution. Future research should examine other AAA/DSS interaction as well as other types of service agencies and how they relate to each other. The revisions I made in the conceptual model based on these five relationships seem appropriate, but they require further refinement as well.

I used semi-structured interview guides to gather information regarding the model dimensions. This allowed flexibility in the interviews, but it also meant that questions were not always uniformly asked of respondents. Although this approach allows respondents to make open-ended responses, the use of a structured interview schedule in future investigations might

determine the influence of the model dimensions from a different perspective. A more structured and/or uniform approach to asking questions could also make responses easier to compare across respondents and agencies. One advantage might be more specific operationalizing of the measures. In addition, the use of structured or semi-structured mail questionnaires based on the model would be another way to gather information about the model's usefulness in characterizing interagency relationships. A much larger sample could be obtained in this manner, rather than gathering in-depth information on a few cases.

Qualitative data analysis was most appropriate for determining the nature of the relationships in this investigation, but examining the quantitative aspects of relationships is another possibility for future research. For example, determining the frequency of different types of interaction, such as resource exchange and information exchange, under specific conditions might be one quantitative element. Use of likert scale questions could suggest the extent of subjective factors such as consensus, perceived effectiveness, and commitment in the interaction (e.g., total agreement/little agreement, very effective/not at all effective, very committed/somewhat committed).

The need for more effective methods for determining the important factors involved in the history of the relationships is evident in this research. Because there was a serious lack of information from the past available from the agencies, it is important for future research to determine whether there is a better method for gathering historical data

or the information simply does not exist.

On a theoretical level, social action theory was the basis for the original and revised models. Van de Ven (1976) suggested that the three bases of any organized form of collective behavior applies to the interaction of organizations. Further examination of interagency relationships using social action theory would provide more detail about the individual and collective goals of AAAs, DSSs, and other agencies for serving older adults and how they came about. How the agencies determine their respective interagency responsibilities, division of tasks, and expectations as well as how they determine and create the structure for the relationship also requires further investigation from a social action perspective. More research is needed on such issues as how formalization of relations come about, how interagency decisions are made, and how the types of activities in which the agencies become involved are determined or negotiated by agency representatives. More knowledge about all of these elements of social action theory as they apply to IRs involved in delivering services to older adults would provide valuable information about the portrayal of the interaction.

I found several examples of the human element in interaction. For instance, although a formal structure (e.g., formal written agreements) for determining how interaction takes place may exist, informal actions between agency representatives may take precedence. One administrator placed great value on cooperation while another did not. The close personal relationships and personality clashes between some agency

representatives seemed to be important determining factors in the nature of collaboration for some agencies. As generally accepted by those studying IRs, the contribution of interpersonal communication was also found to be important in the level of cooperation between the agencies.

Although the OAA mandate for AAAs to emphasize their coordination function, the influence of state adult protective laws, similarities in domain, need for resources, and commitment to serving older adults appear to be important motivational influences in the AAA/DSS relationships in this investigation, future research should focus on other possible reasons why interagency relationships form. A related issue is the need for a better description of what motivates the interaction to be continued, terminated, strengthened, weakened, and otherwise changed or maintained over time.

Implications for public policy and practice. The results of this study suggest several implications for public policy and practice. It appears that the relationships between Title III and SSBG agencies form out of the particular circumstances in which the agencies find themselves. The structure of the state and local governments, the actions of people who make policy decisions, the history of the service system in an area, and the needs of a particular area, are just some of the factors that affect how programs are designed and services are delivered to older adults in a community. Better description of these elements of the overall relationship as well as forms of interaction and how they take place in specific programs could result in more informed policy decisions. Better

policy decisions based on interagency interaction, in turn, may lead to the reduction of unnecessary duplication, overlap, fragmentation, and gaps in services. More efficient and effective use of resources may also result. It seems that as funding for federal and state government-financed services is reduced, these service issues become even more critical to address.

The dimensions proposed in the original and revised models are important to the portrayal of the context in which coordination takes place. In evaluation and planning studies with regard to interagency relationships, the model is one useful way to describe the agencies and how they operate. When used in conjunction with a standard evaluation model (e.g., McLaughlin & Covert, 1984), valuable information can be made available to applied researchers, practitioners, and policy makers for improvements in coordination efforts related to service delivery and planning.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine the adequacy of Van de Ven's (1976) model of interorganizational relationships in portraying Title III and SSBG agency relationships. Based upon this investigation, the model dimensions are useful in depicting AAA/DSS interaction. The framework can cover a range of closeness in interagency relationships as well as a continuum of interdependence between agencies.

Although I have proposed a revised version of his model that seems to be conceptually clearer, I accept the general adequacy of Van de Ven's

model. My model addresses all of the important relationship dimensions in the original while it places more emphasis on interpersonal and perceptual factors occurring in interagency interaction and addresses them in a separate category.

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FOOTNOTES

1 Agency heads were informed that we would list the names of participating agencies and respondents in our final report for Phase III, but specific information from interviews or documents they provided would not be identified with the agencies' or respondents' names. The respondents were also assured that agencies or respondents would not be identified by name in the completion of my dissertation.

2 To protect respondent confidentiality in the results section, respondents are identified as AAA or DSS respondents or contractor respondents. Also the female pronoun will be used to refer to respondents.

3 In one case, one researcher made a second visit to the site to talk with important persons who could not be scheduled during the initial visit.

APPENDIX A
Interview Guides

Agency Name _____

**PHASE III AAA/SSBG COORDINATION
INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**Information on the Overall Relationship Between
Local Area Agencies On Aging and
Social Services Block Grant Agencies**

(To be completed by agency head or person
designated by agency head)

Tape#(s) _____

Interviewee _____

Position & length of employment with the
agency _____

Interviewer(s) _____

Date of Interview _____

Time (Begin) _____ (End) _____

Notes _____

NOTE: Items with asterisk are definitions of areas of concern that we wish to learn about. The topics below them are the specific issues to be covered.

***The environment or context of the current relationship.**

(a) political characteristics/uniqueness of the environment; any recent changes in agency administration, policy, philosophy; the influence of these factors on the agency or the interagency relationship

(b) nature of the relationship between the local agency and related state-level agency; influence of state agencies relationship on the local agency and the AAA/SSBG interagency relationship

(c) other agencies or organizations in the area that affect or influence the interagency relationship

***Self-interest goals of the agency** are those goals each agency proposes to be important in its role of serving older adults.

***Agency commitment** refers to the perceived responsibility of each agency to meet the service needs of older adults.

(a) overall purpose of the agency (i.e., agency mission, particularly for the SSBG agency); description of the agency (i.e., direct service delivery to older adults, use of contractors)

(b) agency goals and responsibilities in serving older adults

(c) factors that determine goals and responsibility

***Interagency relationship goals** are those goals set by the agencies or by a mandate to be accomplished through an interagency relationship or joint effort.

***Interagency relationship commitment** refers to the perceived responsibility to and importance of the interagency relationship.

(a) the goals of the interagency relationship

(b) perceived responsibility to the interagency relationship

(c) perceived importance of the relationship

***Complexity** refers to the number of joint activities and programs in which the agencies are involved. It also includes the number of other agencies and organizations involved in the relationship that may influence the AAA and SSBG agency activities.

(a) Check below those activities with joint involvement

(b) Discuss activities and ask for specific recent examples

____engage in joint planning and policy development

____engage in joint programming

____engage in joint evaluation

____engage in joint needs assessment

____engage in joint or coordinated budgeting

____engage in joint or coordinated budgeting/funding

____engage in joint or coordinated purchase of services

____consolidation of personnel administration

____use of joint staffing strategies

____conduct joint record keeping

____conduct joint grants management

____coordinate at the level of service delivery including:

____outreach

____intake

____referral

____follow-up

____various forms of case management, case monitoring, or case consultation

____other coordinated services (available from Phase II instrument or documents):

____coordinate eligibility/targeting/determination of need

(a) how is eligibility, targeting, determination of need accomplished by the agency; coordinated with the other agency

(b) existence of waiting lists

____coordinate use of service providers/procurement/payment strategies

(a) how procurement of service providers and payments to providers is determined, carried out, and coordinated

____coordinate definition of services/have a standard definition of services

(a) describe efforts to establish standard service definitions; to coordinate service definitions

***Awareness** is the familiarity of an agency with the goals, resources, services, and procedures of the other agency regarding services to older adults.

(a) how the agency stays aware and keeps up with knowledge and information about the other agency (formally and informally)

(b) what role does personal acquaintance play in staying aware

***Information exchange** refers to degree information is actually transmitted between agencies through various means of communication.

(a) discuss communication patterns by requesting examples of the following:

--who is typically involved in the communication (e.g., staff position, administrative position)

--frequency & type of communication (e.g., formal and informal, personal, telephone, and correspondence)

--typical subjects of communication

--factors that facilitate communication

--factors that hinder communication (i.e., barriers, things that make communication more difficult)

--satisfaction with the current level of information exchange

--are there current efforts to improve or change the level of communication

***Resources** are anything available or needed for the purpose of carrying out the self-interest goals of the agency or the joint goals of the interagency relationship. It can be anything needed by the agencies to effectively meet the service needs of older adults as an individual agency

or through an interagency or joint effort.

***Resource needs of the agency or the interagency effort** includes materials and supplies, facilities, personnel, staff time, money and funding, equipment, service providers, information, client referrals, and anything else reported by an agency necessary to carry out its goals or the goals of the interagency relationship.

(a) the role resource needs played in bringing the agencies together and maintaining the relationship

(b) any substantial increase or decrease in resource needs over time that were met through the interagency relationship (e.g. during funding cuts)

(c) the role resource needs and meeting those needs play in the current relationship; perceived interdependence between the agencies for meeting resource needs

***Resource exchange** refers to resources actually transacted between the agencies (i.e., the materials and supplies, equipment, staff, technical assistance, time, funding, service providers, services, client referrals, and anything else exchanged for the purpose of carrying out the self-interest goals of each agency and the goals of the interagency relationship).

(a) request specific examples of the following:

--what is typically exchanged or provided jointly (indicate there is interest in all exchanges, not just money and staff)

--the frequency of exchange

--who is involved (administrative or line staff)

--how resources are exchanged or jointly provided

--satisfaction with the current level of exchange

--any recent efforts to improve or change the level of exchange

--any changes in exchange patterns from time to time (examples of how and why this occurred)

***Domain similarity** is the degree of overlap or sameness in the areas of:

____client populations served

____services offered

____funding sources

____use of service providers

____goals for service delivery

____means for delivering services

____geographic areas served

____staff with similar professional skills and training (they may or may not know about the other agency's staff)

(a) does overlap or similarities exist in these areas; other areas

(b) how do various similarities or lack of similarities between the agencies affect the current relationship (e.g., do they create uncertainty in jurisdiction or responsibilities, do they facilitate or hinder working together)

***Formalization** refers to the degree to which rules, policies and procedures are established to transact activities between the two agencies. Formalization also refers to the extent procedures are followed by a committee, board, or council that governs the interagency relationship.

Agreements:

(a) type(s) of agreement (written, verbal, formal or informal) and purposes of agreements that exist

(b) how the interagency agreements (written or verbal) came about (were they established locally, by a state level agency, as a result of legislation, etc.)

(c) degree of flexibility in carrying out agreement specifications

(d) how agreements are carried out (who has responsibility)

(e) how agreements affect the interagency relationship and service delivery

Joint board, council, committee contacts:

(a) formal and informal characteristics of joint committee, board, council contacts

Staff and administrative contacts:

(a) have informal relationships formed and if so, how; how the informal relationships affect service delivery; impact on how the agencies work together; if they haven't formed, why not

(b) in general, how the formal or informal nature of various interagency contacts facilitate or hinder the relationship

Legislation, laws, statutes (local and state); OAA or other federal directives:

(a) any laws, etc. that direct the procedures and decision making concerning the interagency relationship

***Centralization** refers to the extent that decisions made by representatives of member agencies serving together on committees, boards, or councils are binding upon member agencies and influence their actions.

(a) the types of bodies existing (e.g., planning council, planning commission, coordinating council or committee, etc.: specific names of the bodies and their functions, goals)

(b) how the groups affect the interagency relationship; how binding and influential are decisions made by joint boards, committees, or councils; their effectiveness in making decisions

***Consensus** is the level of perceived agreement (or level of acceptance) between the agencies on goals for meeting needs of older adults, the services offered, and how service needs should be met.

(a) perception of current level of consensus on goals, services, and how to achieve service goals (criteria for assessing the level of agreement or acceptance)

(b) how the level of consensus affects the current relationship (i.e., facilitates, creates difficulties)

***Relationship outcome** refers to the perceived effectiveness of the interagency relationship indicated by the extent the agencies carry out their commitments and the belief that the relationship is worthwhile, equitable, productive and satisfying.

(a) what the relationship accomplishes; possible results if the interagency relationship stopped (e.g., possible effects on the agency and services to older clients)

(b) extent the relationship is perceived to be worth the time and other resources invested; degree the investments are perceived as equitable and productive (criteria for determining this perception)

(c) factors that may facilitate and hinder the relationship

--perceptions about older adults

--professional values/orientation

--agency mission or goals, agency philosophy

(d) how problems, concerns, and difficulties in the relationship are resolved or handled; if there are no problems or concerns how were past problems or concerns handled; in general, how would problems be resolved if they did occur

(e) satisfaction with the current level of interagency involvement (e.g., if little coordination occurs is this viewed as a problem or concern; is coordination perceived as important or necessary; are they doing anything to improve the coordination; present and/or past examples)

(f) suggestions for improving interagency coordination; OAA and SSBG program coordination

(g) specific examples of suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the relationship

(h) perceived satisfaction with how the other agency carries out its commitments and responsibilities to the relationship

(i) general evaluation of the how the agencies work together

***Additional Information:** other information that would add to the understanding of the overall interagency relationship.

(a) relationships with other agencies (nature of key relationships, e.g. are they basically the same, similar or quite different from the agency we will visit in their county or planning area)

(b) perceptions concerning: OAA verses SSBG programs; the roles and importance of the roles these programs play in the agency; would they like to see more involvement and coordination of SSBG/ Title XX and OAA

Title III in their agency

(c) perceptions of different types of AAAs (i.e., direct service versus contracting out of services)

(d) how to characterize the relationship overall (how would they describe the relationship if they were on the research team)

(e) if the relationship could begin anew (from the beginning) how would they structure or describe the relationship

(f) how do they perceive the OAA mandate for AAAs to be central figures in promoting coordination in the community

(g) do they feel a need for further information on how to effectively coordinate (i.e., more formal instruction or guides for effective coordination)

(h) in general how do they perceive or define effective coordination (how can coordination be most effective); specific examples of how effective coordination would work

Agency Name _____

PHASE III AAA/SSBG COORDINATION

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Information on How Service Coordination
or Joint Activity Works:

(To be asked of the person designated by the agency head
as most knowledgeable about a service or activity)

Tape#(s) _____

Interviewee _____

Position & length of employment with the agency _____

Interviewer(s) _____

Date of Interview _____

Time (Begin) _____ (End) _____

List of services and or activities discussed

I. Service coordination, joint activities:

Name and brief description of the coordinated service/activity; the context or environment in which it occurs

When the coordination effort began (as specific as possible)

Why and how coordination effort began

Role of each agency in the coordination; agency with administrative responsibility

The current purpose of this coordination effort; has purpose changed over time

Frequency of the coordination function; how often does it occur

How the service/activity is coordinated (ask the respondent to go through a specific recent example, step by step):

--elements coordinated

--staff/administrator involved & what they do

--formal and informal aspects of the coordination

(e.g. if you receive a referral for a service how would this be handled?) (discuss referral, outreach, intake, follow-up)

Elements that facilitate, make the coordination of the service/activity work well or more easily

Elements that inhibit coordination or make it more difficult (are there adequate resources, staff); areas of concern about coordination of the service/activity

Resolution of concerns/problems/difficulties (if they indicate lack of problems or concerns ask how they handled problems in the past or would they handle the situation if a problem occurred in the future)

Perceived equity/balance in staff time, effort, resources contributed by the agencies

Value of coordination; is the coordination effort worth the time and resources involved

The specific accomplishments of this coordination effort (i.e. what does coordination accomplish that would not ordinarily be accomplished); possible effects if coordination of the service/activity stopped

Perceived level of success of the coordination effort & criteria for determining the level of the success

Level of satisfaction with the current amount of coordination

Current efforts to improve coordination (examples of current and past efforts)

How the coordination of the service/activity could be improved

Influence of other agencies/organizations in the area on the coordination of this service/activity; influence of the site agency's state-level agency

The overall evaluation and impact of the interagency relationship at the service delivery level

Perception concerning: OAA verses SSBG programs; the roles and importance of the roles these programs play in the agency; would they like to see more involvement and coordination of SSBG Title XX and OAA Title III in their agency

Perceptions of different types of AAAs (i.e., direct service, contracting); how to characterize the interagency relationship and coordination overall (how would they describe the relationship and coordination if they were on the research team)

If the relationship and coordination could begin anew (from the beginning) how would they structure or describe the relationship

How do they perceive the OAA mandate for AAAs to be central figures in promoting coordination in the community

Do they feel a need for further information on how to effectively coordinate (i.e., more formal instruction or guides for effective coordination)

In general, how do they perceive or define effective coordination (how can coordination be most effective); specific examples of how effective coordination would work

Are there other important factors they feel would add to our understanding of the coordination of the service/activity

[If coordination effort is no longer in process, the reason for termination]

II. Other information:

List of possible interpersonal/interagency concerns. Do the following factors affect coordination of the service/activity; how?

--similarities/differences in approaches to service delivery, agency philosophy

--similarities/differences in training, education, areas of expertise between staffs

--similarities/differences in professional values

--similarities/differences in personal values

--similarities/differences in staff perceptions of older adults

--similarities/differences about how services should be coordinated or delivered, eligibility criteria, targeting criteria

--similarities/differences in goals/purposes of interagency relationship

--perception of the Title III and SSBG programs

--cooperative/competitive elements of the relationship

--turf issues (uncertainty over jurisdiction, territory, areas of authority, obligations, responsibilities; the general presence or lack of turf issues)

III. Follow up as needed on information from documents and Phase II survey instrument:

1. Eligibility/targeting: the nature & extent of eligibility/targeting criteria used by the agency including:

-population served, # of clients served (magnitude of the program)

-degree of overlap in target populations

-existence of waiting lists for specific services, and number on waiting lists

-efforts to coordinate eligibility/targeting

2. Services/definitions: inventory of social services to older adults, including:

-service definitions

-degree to which efforts have been made to establish standard service definitions

- direct services and contracted services

- efforts to coordinate the above elements

3. Service Providers: assess the following:

- overlap in the use of providers

- procurement/payment strategies

- basis for determining unit cost of services

- degree to which utilization is coordinated

Agency Name _____

PHASE III AAA/SSBG COORDINATION

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Information on History of the Interagency Relationship
Formation & Maintenance of the Relationship:

(To be asked of the person the agency head views
as most knowledgeable about the history)

Tape#(s) _____

Interviewee _____

Position & length of employment with the agency _____

Interviewer(s) _____

Date of Interview _____

Time (Begin) _____ (End) _____

Historical information (concerning the formation and maintenance of the interagency relationship over time)

I. Formation: How and why the relationship formed

What roles (if any) did the following factors play in the formation of the relationship (if they appear to play a minor role or no role, what were the important factors; specific examples, if possible)?:

(a) the context or environment at the time, politically, economically, etc. (ask for a description of the environment even if the respondent indicates these factors had no effect on the formation of the relationship)

(b) the agency's goals and responsibilities for serving older adults

(c) the perceived consensus (agreement or acceptance) between the agencies on the service goals, service needs, and means of service delivery to older adults

(d) knowledge of the existence of the other agency and familiarity with the agency's staff, services, and resources

(e) need for agency resources

(f) similarities/overlap between the agencies in services, client population, geographic areas, etc.

(g) personal acquaintance of agency directors, staff

(h) OAA mandate to coordinate services and community resources

(i) legislation, local statute, other type of mandate

(j) other factors

II. Maintenance: What roles, if any, have the following factors played in maintaining the relationship over time (if they appear to play a minor role or no role what were the important factors; specific examples if possible)?:

(a) the context or environment in which the relationship existed or exists (has it changed in important ways that have affected the relationship over time)

(b) the agency's goals and responsibilities for serving older adults

(c) consensus (agreement on or acceptance of) the service goals, service needs, and means of delivering services to older adults

(d) knowledge of and familiarity with the staff, services, and resources of the other agency

(e) exchange of resources

(f) exchange of information (communication, formal and informal)

(g) sameness or similarities in the following:

___client populations served,

___services offered

___funding sources

___use of service providers

___goals for service delivery

___means for delivering services

___geographic areas served

___staff with similar professional skills and training (they may or may not know about the other agency's staff)

(h) joint board, council or committee membership by agency representatives

(i) personal acquaintance of agency directors, staff, or joint board, council, committee members representing the agencies

(j) establishment of interagency agreements

(k) number of activities/services on which the relationship is based; number and influence of other agencies or organizations in the area; effect of state-level agency

(l) effectiveness of working together in the past

(m) OAA mandate to coordinate

(n) legislation, local statute, other type of mandate

(o) other factors that help to maintain the relationship

***Additional Information:** other information that would add to the understanding of the overall interagency relationship

(a) relationships with other agencies (nature of key relationships, e.g. are they basically the same, similar or quite different from the agency we will visit in their county or planning area)

(b) perceptions concerning: OAA verses SSBG programs; the roles and importance of the roles these programs play in the agency; would they like to see more involvement of and coordination of SSBG Title XX and OAA Title III in their agency

(c) perceptions of different types of AAAs (i.e., direct service, contracting)

(d) how to characterize the relationship overall (how would they describe the relationship if they were us)

(e) if the relationship could begin anew (from the beginning) what would they like to see happen

(f) how do they perceive the OAA mandate for AAAs to be central figures in promoting coordination in the community

(g) do they feel a need for further information on how to effectively coordinate (i.e., more formal instruction or guides for effective coordination)

(h) in general how do they perceive or define effective coordination (how can coordination be most effective); specific examples of how effective coordination would work

APPENDIX B
Letter of Introduction

September 20, 1988

Mr. John Smith, Director
XYZ Area Agency on Aging
Blacksburg, VA 23601

Dear Mr. Smith:

As you know, your agency recently participated in a research project conducted for the Administration on Aging by the American Public Welfare Association (APWA) and the National Association of State Units on Aging (NAUSA). One of your staff members completed and returned a questionnaire concerning the relationship between the Social Services Block Grant agency and the Area Agency on Aging serving in your area. The aim of the project is to examine how agencies funded by the SSBG and Title III of the Older Americans Act work together to provide social services to older adults. Representatives of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Center for Gerontology are participating in the project by visiting five selected agency sites across the United States where we will conduct interviews with directors and staff members about the interagency relationships.

Your agency was carefully selected from a larger list of potential agencies for participation in these site visits. Based upon information from the APWA and NASUA surveys, your agency has some specific characteristics that we feel are important to understanding coordination of services between SSBG agencies and Area Agencies on Aging. Selection was based upon several factors including the types of services offered, the ways services are coordinated, the administrative structure of the agencies, the regional location, and the population characteristics of the service area. We would like to have the opportunity to examine your agency in more depth to learn exactly how each of these characteristics affect service coordination.

If you choose to participate in this final stage of the project, representatives of the VPI & SU Center for Gerontology will visit your agency and conduct interviews with you and selected members of your staff. The interviews will consist of informal discussions about your agency's overall relationship with the AAA, the history of the relationship, and the manner in which services are actually coordinated at the local level. We will ask you to select the person(s) who are most familiar with each of these elements.

Specific interview topics will include resource exchange and communication, elements that make coordination work well in your area, formal and informal characteristics of the relationship, and the perceived effectiveness of the relationship. Of primary importance are recent examples of service coordination and the exact elements involved in carrying out a coordination effort. We will also request the

opportunity to observe an example of a coordination activity, such as a case management meeting or another type of ongoing meeting with representatives of both agencies involved. We realize that this aspect of our study may not be feasible, but it will be very helpful to us if it can be arranged.

Copies of certain documents pertaining to services will be requested beforehand and we will pay for the copying and mailing expenses. Examples of these documents include budgets and annual reports, area plans, service definitions, service provider lists, and organizational charts. The information will help in preparation for our visit. Reviewing documents will also allow us to become more familiar with your agency prior to the visit. Please be assured that we will be seeking documentary and interview information that could not be adequately gathered through the APWA/NASUA mail surveys. We do not want to have you replicate work you have already done.

Of course, you solicit your part successful coordi important to the would be very dis Please note that agency's performa learn how it work do everything pos staff. The infor help other agenci and to find ways agency can make a by taking part in

We will contac be able to partic all please do not Safewright at the very happy to an for your conside

Receipt of book return:

Date returned

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Item

3460675

Signature of staff

Juan

When the book is returned, obtain a signature from a member of the Interlibrary Loan staff, who will then detach the bottom portion of the slip and return it to you as proof of the book's return to Interlibrary Loan.

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ne if you will y questions at or Marcia We will be ou in advance

Marcia P. Safewright
Research Assistant

APPENDIX C
List of Documents Reviewed

List of Documents Reviewed

The following are the types of documents we requested from agencies and reviewed, if they were made available to us.

Area Plans/Consolidated Service Plans/Executive Summaries

Interagency Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding/Interagency Contracts

Organizational Charts

Service Contracts

Assessment Forms

Legislation

Service Lists/Services Specifications/Standards

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Grant Proposals for Joint Projects

Budgets

Annual Reports

Policies and Procedural Manuals

Statistical Reports

Special Reports

APPENDIX D
Summary Sheet

Information Summary Sheet for XYZ AAA

Check for correct address and telephone number:

Contact person:

Mr. John Smith

Address:

XYZ Area Agency
Blacksburg, VA 24601
703-231-0000

County:

XYZ County

Examples of specifics we'd like to follow-up on from survey instrument:

Coordination Methods:

- uses same functional eligibility criteria
- uses same case management system or client entry point
- uses same service provider
- AAA serves on local SSBG advisory committee
- AAA specifically takes into account the SSBG services available to older persons in determining which services to provide with Older Americans Act funds
- outreach programs funded by the AAA specifically include outreach for SSBG services
- information and referral services funded by the AAA are staffed by persons knowledgeable about SSBG services for older persons available in the community and their eligibility requirements
- when OAA and SSBG jointly fund a provider for a service and there is an eligibility cut-off for SSBG, clients are billed against which ever program has funds available
- AAA very involved in SSBG planning and policy development at the local level

-AAA administers SSBG funds at the local level; AAA uses OAA funds and SSBG funds to jointly fund services; SSBG funds are allocated to AAA on the same basis as OAA funds; AAA uses SSBG funds to provide services as determined by the State SSBG agency; AAA is the SSBG Agency at the AAA level

-same target groups

-for joint case management system, entry point is case management service provider

-AAA policy development and planning: SSBG funds are allocated to specific services; plans are based partly on this allocation

-joint needs assessment conducted

-AAA SSBG daily management responsibilities: allocation of SSBG funds to providers; monitoring of program and fiscal functions

-what could the state do to improve coordination: allow AAAs to determine services to be funded by SSBG funds

-are there other coordinated services, activities, or programs with AAA we may not be aware of?

Identify the person(s) most knowledgeable about coordination of specific services at the local level.

Interview the director for the overall relationship (concentrate on administrative elements):

-agency goals

-interagency relationship goals

-number and types of joint activities involved in

-influence of other agencies or organizations in the area and influence of state level agency

-how the agencies keep up with knowledge about each others activities; how information is exchanged; communication patterns

-resources that are exchanged

-how sameness or overlap in client populations, services offered, use of providers affects the relationship

-formal and informal characteristics of the relationship

- joint decision making
- consensus or acceptance of roles and goals of the relationship
- outcome of the relationship: effectiveness; results if the relationship stops

Identify person(s) most knowledgeable about the history of the relationship:

- when it began and why
- important factors in how it has been maintained over time

Documents:

Need documents beforehand to help us prepare for the visit (we will pay costs of copying and mailing):

- area plan
- budget
- agency organizational chart
- interagency agreements
- eligibility and targeting (survey indicated they are starting a frail elderly program this fall)
- copy of the joint needs assessment (last one in 1985)
- service list and service definitions; operating procedures
- list of service providers and selection criteria; procurement/ payment strategies; determining unit cost of services
- service areas and client populations served
- goals or mission of the agency
- goals or mission of the interagency relationship
- any recent evaluations or reports concerning coordination between the agencies
- copies of any state or local laws; mandates relating to coordination

-any other documentation they identify as being useful to us

Is there some type of ongoing meeting such as a case management meeting or an informal meeting of staff concerning coordination that we maybe able to attend during the visit?.

Appointments: (possible times:)

Weeks of:

October 31

November 14

November 28

December 5

December 12

December 19

*Possible Second Choices:

October 10th

October 17

Time factor: Depending on the type of interview and number of joint activities and different people:

-the director on the overall relationship (primarily administrative elements) approximately 2 hours

-each area of service coordination from 30 minutes to an hour and a half depending on the complexity of service coordination and how many staff members are involved in discussing specific services

-we plan to spend a day and a half to two days at each agency (depending on closeness of agencies and ability to schedule interviews)

We will also visit the XYZ Department of Social Services

We plan to have 2 persons at each interview when possible.

Taping of interviews for accuracy (quiet place for interviews)

Confidentiality: we will refer to the agency in our report but not agency/staff names connected with specific information

Airport facilities; transportation available.

My office hours: 10:00 to 4:00 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday.

APPENDIX E
Status Sheet

Site # _____ Status Sheet

Agency: _____

Date of Contact/Contact Person _____

Result of Contact: _____

Next Step: _____

APPENDIX F
Individual Site Analysis

APPENDIX F
INDIVIDUAL SITE ANALYSIS

North County

Site Overview

This site is located in an urban county. The local DSS has considerable independence in administering its programs (i.e., little influence by the state DSS). The AAA and the local DSS are both county governmental agencies with joint supervision by a county level administrative office. Most SSBG-funded services are provided directly by the DSS, and most Title III-funded services are purchased from local contractors by the AAA. The AAA and DSS contract with some of the same providers for services. Title III and SSBG funded services are coordinated primarily at the service provider level.

There is no actual exchange of Title III and SSBG funds between the AAA and the DSS. With the exception of a joint energy assistance program, each agency's responsibility for services to the elderly population is relatively independent. The DSS and AAA have three service connections. In the discussion of this site, the three services will be referred to as an in-home assistance program, adult protective services (APS), and an energy assistance program.

Ideally, I wanted to interview the person from each agency who was most knowledgeable about the history of the interagency relationship from comparable programs and staff positions. At this site we discussed the historical aspects of the relationship with several respondents. This was a result, in part, of the presence of more than one program with relevant

Table F1
Hypothesis Summary for North County

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported
	^a Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
<u>Formation</u>	
#1 Resource dependence	Yes: In-home assistance ? : Overall relationship
#2 Commitment to older adults	? : Overall
#3 Commitment to relationship	? : Overall
#4 Awareness	? : Overall
#5 Consensus	Yes: In-home assistance ? : Overall
#6 Domain similarity	Yes: In-home assistance
<u>Maintenance</u>	
#7 Resource dependence/exchange	Yes: Energy assistance Yes: Overall
#8 Commitment to older adults	Yes: Energy assistance Yes: Overall
#9 Commitment to relationship	Yes: Energy assistance No : Overall

Table F1 (Continued)

Hypothesis #/Variable	<u>Hypothesis Supported</u>
	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
#10 Awareness/information exchange	Yes: Energy assistance Yes: Adult protective Yes: Overall
#11 Consensus	Yes: Energy assistance ? : Overall
#12 Centralization	No : Overall
#13 Domain similarity	Yes: Energy assistance Yes: Overall
#14 Perceived effectiveness/expectations	Yes: Energy assistance Yes: Overall
#15 Perceived effectiveness/productive	Yes: Energy assistance Yes: Overall
<u>Current</u>	
#16 Information exchange/interagency awareness	Yes: Energy assistance Yes: Overall
#17 Resource exchange	Yes: Energy assistance Yes: Overall

Table F1 (Continued)

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported
	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
#18 Formalization/formal	No : Energy assistance
	No : Overall
#19 Formalization/informal	Yes: Energy assistance
	Yes: Overall
#20 Centralization	No : Overall
#21 Complexity/joint activities	Yes: Overall
#22 Complexity/other agencies	Yes: Energy assistance
	Yes: Overall

a

? = Insufficient Information: Respondents did not provide enough information to make a decision regarding the hypothesis or the model dimension did not apply to the relationship or a specific program.

information. There was no single individual who could provide all information about the history of the overall interagency relationship. It should be noted that it was often difficult, and sometimes impossible, to distinguish between the formation, maintenance, and current functioning of the relationship over time.

Formation

In-home assistance program. According to Van de Ven (1976), resource needs can contribute significantly to the formation of interagency relationships. The following example illustrates the importance of resource needs in North County's interagency relationship and how goals were met through a joint effort. Evidence supports the expectation that resource dependence would influence the formation of the relationship [Hypothesis #1]. An AAA respondent said that the AAA in-home assistance program became a resource for DSS clients in the early 1980s when Title XX funding was cut. As expected there was a degree of domain similarity [Hypothesis #6] at this time in that both agencies offered somewhat similar in-home assistance programs to older adults, but each had responsibility for individuals who met somewhat different eligibility criteria. The DSS had difficulty serving some of its clients when Title XX funding was cut, and the AAA was able to assist the DSS during this time of resource need. An AAA respondent noted the following:

We literally had a meeting with Department of Social Services that was involved in Title XX. The [DSS] nurses and the [in-home assistance program] staff in this office...sat down and we looked at how we could [divide] up those people who were no longer going to get services and put them into our...program.

According to the AAA respondent, the AAA and DSS staff examined the needs of the community at that time, the resources available, and how they could use existing resources to fulfill service needs through an interagency relationship. She did not elaborate on how needs and resources were assessed.

The concern or commitment that clients would continue to be served is evident in the meeting of the two agencies to determine how they could continue client services. The existence of a common commitment to serving older adults was influential in bringing the agencies together [Hypothesis #2] to work on a mutual goal, continued service to clients. Also, consensus on how to meet client needs through the interagency effort was reached, in part, by the agency representatives meeting and discussing alternatives [Hypothesis #5].

Maintenance and Current Relationship

Primary evidence for maintenance of the relationship over time as well as the current relationship came from three sources. First, a DSS respondent serving on an adult protective services subcommittee, which has a representative from the AAA, noted the importance of interagency awareness in the maintenance of the relationship. Second, in the energy assistance program, AAA and DSS as well as Community Action Program representatives staff have voluntarily established a close relationship and coordinated effort involving joint program administration. Third, information on maintenance of the overall relationship is presented from the perspective of AAA and SSBG respondents.

Adult protective services. From a DSS respondent's perspective, the history of the interagency relationship began in 1983 when she became a member of the adult protective services staff. For her, the important aspect of the history was how she maintained her awareness of AAA activities through a personal relationship with an AAA staff member. This AAA staff member was the AAA representative serving of the APS subcommittee. The representative serving at that point had previously worked as a DSS staff member and was subsequently employed by the AAA. When that individual eventually left the AAA, the DSS respondent said that her awareness of what went on at the AAA significantly diminished.

She's not there anymore, which is probably part of [the reason] why...things are the way they are now...She took a very active role on the [APS] sub-committee...and I think part of it was because she came from here and she understood what we did...Also I think when there's some sort of personal relationship with somebody, I think you work with them differently...I think that we were more aware in talking to her what was going on at the AAA.

A new person was subsequently assigned to represent the AAA on the subcommittee approximately two years ago, and the new representative participated much more "sporadically." There was much less information exchange after that point. In this example of interagency awareness, personal acquaintance was very important in the process of maintaining awareness of the other agency's activities. The level of interagency awareness in this instance facilitated the maintenance of the relationship [Hypothesis #10] until the change in AAA staff occurred.

Energy assistance program. Availability of resources in meeting service goals has been very important for this program. Interview

information indicates that, over time, the program has involved joint use of staff and exchange of resources. From an AAA respondent's perspective, a need for resources and subsequent resource exchange has been a central influence in the maintenance of the relationship [Hypotheses #7 & #17]. She noted that her agency has remained quite dependent on the DSS in the past for funding and other resources to meet her program's needs.

My budget is extremely limited. It's become more limited as each year progresses and the [program] funds are cut...we have worked closely enough with [the] DSS that they have been very supportive in this and have helped us in any way that they can so that we can maintain our services...I did not have enough money last year to pay for staff...and DSS...funded two staff members for me...I was allowed to hire them [and] do all the interviewing with the type of people that I wanted.

For this program, the DSS respondent said that a common program goal (i.e., interagency consensus on goals) was established between the DSS and AAA approximately 4 or 5 years ago [Hypothesis #11]. The common goal was to use the program's available resources in a coordinated manner through the interagency relationship [Hypothesis #9] to best serve the elderly population [Hypothesis #8]. Therefore, the hypotheses that consensus on goals, a commitment to serving older adults, and a commitment to an interagency effort influenced the maintenance of the interaction over time are supported. According to a DSS respondent, the joint goal/commitment has not essentially changed over the years.

I think that [the AAA staff] look to the...[energy assistance] program as an opportunity to provide a specialized service for the [older] population they're most interested in and I think that we look at [the AAA] the same way...We look upon them as the best agent to deliver services to that segment of the population. So I think the goal is pretty much the same.

Cooperation has also been very important in the meeting the goals of the energy assistance program as well as the maintenance of interagency consensus. According to a DSS respondent, a sense of cooperation to meet clients needs has existed historically in the relationship. Important factors in the cooperative effort have included getting to know personalities and having people that are cooperative by nature, rather than the kind of people who want to protect their "turf". The agencies have made a strong effort to stay aware of each other's activities. This continuing awareness is important because the agencies share responsibility for the program. AAA and DSS respondents expressed a belief that they have maintained good channels of communication which have contributed to the level of interagency awareness and information exchange [Hypothesis #10] between the agencies and relationship maintenance. Without this knowledge, there would probably be less efficiency in the carrying out the joint responsibilities between the AAA and DSS.

Overlap in such areas as client populations, services, and geographic areas (i.e., domains) were expected to contribute to the maintenance and current functioning of the relationship [Hypothesis #13]. Both agencies are county government agencies under the county administrator's supervision, and there is overlap in geographic areas and service populations. These commonalities are part of the reason why the relationship exists, thus supporting the influence of domain similarity in the maintenance of the relationship.

I expected that the agency representatives would perceive the relationship as a relatively positive one in which expectations are being carried out in an acceptable manner [Hypothesis #14] and that the relationship would produce accomplishments [Hypothesis #15]. The following evidence supports these assumptions. A DSS respondent discussed "peripheral benefits" of the interagency relationship:

I think that we've gotten a lot of...peripheral benefits from working closely together...Once you get to know an operation, you tend to be more attuned to their particular needs in a variety of other areas. So if you have other kinds of things that you need to work [on] cooperatively...well, the AAA and DSS both can point to the [energy assistance] program and say we did a super job over here, we could probably work something out over [t]here.

An AAA respondent noted that she was much more dependent on the relationship than the DSS. According to this respondent, the primary accomplishment of the interagency relationship is that it helps her to continue energy assistance services. A high degree of satisfaction was expressed by all respondents with the way in which the relationship had progressed, and a DSS respondent noted that her agency would likely continue to support the AAA in any way possible because of AAA contribution to meeting program goals. Therefore, the expected influence of the perceived effectiveness of the relationship on maintenance of agency interaction was supported [Hypotheses #14 and #15].

The following evidence supports the hypothesized influence of information exchange [Hypothesis #16] and informal interaction in the relationship [Hypothesis #19]. At the staff level, energy assistance program respondents noted that there is frequent interagency contact.

Often there are periods when there is daily interaction. Personal acquaintance and personalities play a significant role in interagency contact. The informal ways of communicating include the following: (a) being able to call staff up anytime there is a need, (b) seeing each other at meetings and conferences, and in one case, (c) getting together for lunch. These examples support the expected contribution of information exchange as well as informal interaction to the current relationship. According to a DSS respondent, "I think there's [informal] interaction at all the levels, both administrative and supervisory and on the actual operational line too. I think everybody's kind of free to call anybody whenever they want to.

Informal interaction [Hypothesis #19] appears to be much more important than formal procedures in the operation of the relationship [Hypothesis #18]. Ordinarily, there is little formal record keeping between DSS and the AAA regarding the energy assistance program. When asked about the existence of a formal written agreement with the AAA, a DSS respondent said "No, it's just purely...whatever we agree to- we agree to and that's the way it is."

The area's Community Action Program is a third participant in the energy assistance program coordination effort. This agency adds to the complexity of the AAA/DSS relationship, thus supporting Hypothesis #22.

The overall relationship. The discussion of the overall interagency relationship suggests a much different perspective on the interagency interaction than that of energy assistance program. A DSS and AAA

respondent noted that there has been a commitment over time to serving older adults through their respective agency's missions, and when there was an opportunity, the agencies had worked together to meet elderly clients' needs [Hypothesis #8]. However, there was a clear difference in agency missions that limited such opportunities. The AAA's responsibility is to serve all older adults over the age of 60, while targeting those in greatest social and economic need. On the other hand, the DSS respondent said that DSS services have maintained a much broader responsibility that covers all adults, while concentrating on a more physically infirm, at-risk, impaired, and isolated population. There is, however, an overlap in client populations as well as geographic service area [Hypothesis #13].

The agency differences in commitment or responsibility is also evident from documentation that outlines the agencies' service populations and their goals for the populations. For the AAA, the commitment is stated throughout their area plan, primarily in their mission, goals, targeting emphasis, and assurances based on the Older Americans Act. The DSS commitment is mandated by state law, especially in the realm of adult protective services. The DSS consolidated plan states:

The goal of [adult protective services] is to maintain individuals in the community at their highest level of functioning as long as possible. Services are organized to eliminate or reduce neglect, exploitation or deterioration in individual functioning...[We] expect to be dealing with a larger caseload of more aged individuals. The majority will be women and will be white, although the number of minorities will be increasing...The great majority of [adult] clients are found to be living alone.

A commitment to an interagency relationship was hypothesized [Hypothesis #9], and evidence of a general commitment to interagency

relationships and coordination appears in the DSS plan. One of the potential agencies to coordinate with is the AAA, although the AAA is not referred to directly in the plan:

Making use of limited resources to provide the best possible service has been a major theme of the planning process...In this regard a priority of the plan is strengthening linkages and coordination efforts...[with] other agencies and intensifying advocacy activities on behalf of [our adult] clients.

The AAA Plan states a commitment to working with other agencies as well:

The mission of the [AAA] is to enhance the quality of life for [the county's] older citizens. To fulfill this mission, the [AAA] leads the human services community in advocacy, coordination and coalition-building for the implementation, promotion and expansion of services to the elderly.

Although there were indications of strong commitment to serving older clients, as well as an emphasis on interagency coordination in the agencies' plans, interviews with AAA and DSS respondents suggested no strong overriding commitment or responsibility to their own interagency relationship as expected in Hypothesis #9. For example, DSS and AAA respondents described the relationship as relatively weak. An AAA respondent said the following about the relationship:

I would say that there's a friendly relationship, that is...an informal relationship...There's a sense that we're on the same team...that we're working in the same direction and yet very frankly, I would say that we're each probably out doing our own thing. I don't mean doing our own thing in competition with each other, or doing our own thing not mindful of what the other is doing...but I would say that there is not a strong day to day or formalized coordination between the two [agencies]...there is a mutual respect that we work together.

Therefore, the expected continued commitment to the interagency relationship [Hypothesis #9] was not supported.

I hypothesized that there would be perceived effectiveness of the relationship by agency representatives involved in the interaction. Perceived satisfaction with and perceived equity in the relationship, as well as evidence of accomplishments resulting from the agency interaction [Hypotheses #14 and #15] were expected. Both DSS and AAA respondents expressed relative satisfaction with the relationship, although a recently hired AAA administrator said that she would probably concentrate on improving the relationship when she had taken care of some more pressing concerns. A DSS respondent said that the time, effort, and resources expended on the interagency relationship were well worth the cost. She also expressed a belief that the relationship is equitable.

[As] I'm thinking of the nature of the relationship, it's pretty much a relationship with equals, they don't approach us as a regulatory agency or as a superior agency...just as equals. We do the same, and we cooperate when we do work together.

The same DSS respondent said that it would make her agency's job immeasurably more difficult if the AAA's services were not available to her client. The added strain on resources would be difficult to overcome. Therefore, the perceived effectiveness of the relationship has supported the continuation of the interaction.

There was no evidence at this site of a local centralized body with strong decision-making power that involved representatives from both agencies. No committee, advisory board, or council with joint AAA/DSS representation existed. Therefore, the expected existence and influence

of a centralized decision making body on the relationship [Hypothesis #12] was not supported.

Hypothesis #16 suggests that communication and information exchange would facilitate interagency awareness and influence the current operation of the relationship, and evidence appears to support this expectation. For example, communication varies according to staff level and program. Administrators see each other occasionally at meetings, or they telephone or meet each other when a problem or issue arises that requires their attention. A DSS respondent said that she has the opportunity to interact with AAA administrative staff approximately once a month, primarily at a local social service meeting. Two administrative staff members had recently met on a formal basis for the first time. AAA and DSS administrative staff have telephone contact on the average of once a week. In general, there are several opportunities for interagency communication, particularly informal ones, that help the staff and administrators to stay informed about each other's activities.

More formal communication in the future was expected by an AAA administrator as her staff concentrates on strengthening the relationship with the DSS. Joint involvement on a new administrative level interagency committee examining special problems of the frail elderly population is also expected. This committee will provide an opportunity for several community social service agencies to become aware of other agencies and exchange information.

I hypothesized [Hypothesis #17] that an exchange of resources would help maintain activity in the current relationship. There is little actual exchange of resources such as funding, materials, and staff other than in the energy assistance program. A DSS respondent noted, however, that there is another type of resource exchange taking place. In this example, she suggested that the AAA services and programs available to her agency's clients are valuable resources.

The programs [the AAA] fund are valuable to our clients, so it's important for them to fund [the services] and it's important for us to know about it ...nutrition centers sponsor a money management program for the elderly, or the ombudsmen program or the counseling program,...meals on wheels.

She also said that a senior guide produced by the AAA is a valuable resource to the DSS. Although the expected exchange of funds and other concrete resources was not supported, other forms of exchange, particularly information exchange [Hypotheses #10 and #16] did facilitate interagency awareness in the maintenance of the relationship.

Use of formal mechanisms of interacting in the current relationship to conduct interagency business, make decisions, and help to insure that interagency expectations are met was addressed by Hypothesis #18. The DSS consolidated service plan referred to the existence of a formal memorandum of agreement between the DSS and AAA. However, the agreement appeared to have little effect on the relationship. In fact, both agencies had difficulty in verifying its existence and locating a copy of the document. Respondents provided the research team with a copy of a five year old agreement between the state DSS and the state unit on aging that

encouraged the drafting of a similar agreement between the local agencies. They noted, however, that the agreement had little effect on local agency operations or the interagency relationship. Therefore, although there was a potential formal mechanism regarding interaction (i.e., a formal interagency agreement), it was not utilized by the agencies. Although the state encouraged a formal agreement, the agency representative chose to interact using an "informal understanding" concerning their roles and expectations in the relationship [Hypothesis #19]. Respondents noted that they preferred to operate under an informal understanding, in part, because it helped avoid some of the complexities and problems usually inherent in the use of "bureaucratic" formalities.

A second example of a formal mechanism that could be used to conduct interagency business was membership of the AAA on the DSS advisory board. Although an AAA staff member was a representative on the DSS advisory board at one time, no one from the AAA currently serves in that capacity. Several respondents at the AAA and DSS reported that they were unsure whether someone currently represented the AAA. Verification that the AAA no longer participated on the board was obtained from a source outside the AAA and DSS. Again, it would be expected that serving on another agency's advisory council might occur in the relationship but in fact did not exist.

A DSS respondent provided an example of informal activity [Hypothesis #19] in the form of informal input and advice given by the AAA in the DSS planning process. An AAA respondent reported the same informal input was

received for consideration in their planning process. Support is therefore given to the influence of informal mechanisms in information exchange and decision making between the agencies.

Currently, there is no centralized local body with strong decision-making power that has representatives from both agencies. The county administrative office with overall responsibility for social services in the county appears to be the closest example of a centralized decision-making entity. It appears that this office will be more active in encouraging social service coordination in the future, but the office did not appear to fit the definition of a centralized body at the time of the interview. Therefore, centralized decision making [Hypothesis #20] is not supported.

Although the DSS and AAA are relatively independent agencies and do not exchange significant amounts of resources other than in the energy assistance program, they are involved in several service programs and activities [Hypothesis #21]. A recent example of joint involvement includes a joint training program. The DSS and AAA also attend each other's public hearings and make comments in the planning process. Currently, the DSS and AAA are involved to some degree in a study with regard to the use of a common referral form. They are also working on a reimbursement issue in the in-home assistance program.

DSS and AAA respondents reported that the agencies use some of the same service providers. However, employment of the same providers is not directly coordinated by the agencies. The joint contracting agencies do

provide a certain level of coordination in the services for which they are responsible, suggesting the influence of other agencies on the AAA/DSS relationship. The DSS energy assistance staff has chosen to administer the program cooperatively between the DSS, the AAA, and the local community action agency. In this case, a third agency has significant involvement in AAA and DSS activities and requires further coordination efforts. This involvement of other organizations supports the hypothesized influence of other agencies [Hypothesis #22]. In addition, the plan for the new local administration to have more influence in the future was described in the following way:

[They plan] to put on a staff person who would be essentially an evaluator with the idea that so many different departments within the [area] contract with the same agencies in the community.

The county administrative agency may influence the AAA and DSS in their use of the same providers.

South County

Site Overview

This site is located in a mixed urban and rural county. The state DSS has considerable control in administering SSBG programs through a regional office of the DSS, and actual services are provided through local DSS branches. The AAA is a local government agency. In general, Title III-funded services are provided by local AAA contractors.

SSBG funds for case management for adults over the age of 60 are granted to the area agency on aging. The agency holding the contract for

Table F2
Hypothesis Summary for South County

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported ^a
	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
<u>Formation</u>	
#1 Resource dependence	Yes: Overall
#2 Commitment to older adults	? : Overall
#3 Commitment to relationship	Yes: Overall
#4 Awareness	? : Overall
#5 Consensus	Yes: Overall
#6 Domain similarity	Yes: Overall
<u>Maintenance</u>	
#7 Resource dependence/exchange	? : Overall
#8 Commitment to older adults	Yes: Overall
#9 Commitment to relationship	Yes: Overall
#10 Awareness/information exchange	Yes: Overall
#11 Consensus	Yes: Overall
#12 Centralization	No : Overall

Table F2 (Continued)

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported
	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
#13 Domain similarity	Yes: Overall
#14 Perceived effectiveness/ expectations	Yes: Overall
#15 Perceived effectiveness/ productive	Yes: Overall
<u>Current</u>	
#16 Information exchange/ interagency awareness	Yes: Overall
#17 Resource exchange	Yes: Overall
#18 Formalization/formal	Yes: Overall
#19 Formalization/informal	Yes: Overall
#20 Centralization	No : Overall
#21 Complexity/joint activities	Yes: Overall
#22 Complexity/other agencies	Yes: Overall

a

? = Insufficient Information: Respondents did not provide enough information to make a decision regarding the hypothesis or the model dimension did not apply to the relationship or a specific program.

delivery of SSBG-funded case management also contracts with the AAA to provide other services. The AAA solicits bids, selects the contractor, and oversees provision of social services for clients who are financially assessed and authorized by the local branch of the DSS. This joint responsibility for clients is very important in the interagency relationship. Coordination of the funding streams is primarily accomplished through the AAA contracted service provider.

Formation, Maintenance, and Current

Overall interagency relationship. Within the past few years, a reorganization of the state DSS structure has taken place. This reorganization is the point of reference for the history of the interagency relationship for both DSS and AAA respondents. Historical information was provided at two levels, administrative and staff.

I hypothesized that resource needs would help bring the agencies together in the formation of the relationship [Hypothesis #1]. When asked about the role of resources in the formation of the relationship between the DSS and the AAA, a DSS respondent noted the following:

When [this system was being designed], [our] department said [we] needed this much money [and] this much staff to [deliver services]...[the state] said...you don't get this [extra] money and you don't get this [extra] staff...so I think we were functioning under limited resources and therefore it became probably more important for us to have [the AAA's] good will [as a resource].

Therefore, resource needs did influence formation of the relationship. The state social service system appears to be the primary factor in placing the agencies in a position of meeting resource needs through a joint effort because they mandate the relationship. The AAA became an

important resource for DSS to meet service goals through joint responsibility.

A commitment to the interagency relationship was expected to form if the AAA and DSS began working together [Hypothesis #3]. According to a DSS respondent, at the state and regional level, a common commitment to an interagency relationship with the local AAA was formed at the time of the reorganization. She said that the reorganization placed the DSS aging related services and the AAA service system under the same administrative department at the state level. This change provided an opportunity for closer coordination between the DSS and the AAA:

..so that's when our relationship, the specific relationship with the AAA, increased because we then had the opportunities for the [DSS] programs that were directly related to aging...and the programs that were being funded out of the [state unit on] aging at that time...[to be placed]...under the same administration...They hoped it would make the coordination better between the AAAs and [the DSS]...so really it's been going on for [a few] years [now]...that kind of specific coordination.

One primary reason for the formation of a commitment to the interagency relationship appears to be a mandate at the state level requiring the local DSS and AAA to establish and maintain interagency agreements. This external influence appears to be an important contributing factor to the formation of the relationship, in conjunction with resource needs and commitment.

I expected the attainment of interagency consensus or acceptance of interagency goals in serving older adults to occur in the formation of the relationship [Hypothesis #5]. In fact, reaching interagency consensus was central to the formation of the relationship, particularly with regard to

interpersonal relations between agency staffs. For example, a DSS respondent discussed the importance of personalities in reaching interagency consensus when she started working at the DSS. She expressed a belief that initially, personality issues made it somewhat stressful to work with the AAA contractor because there were some individuals there who had worked in the local AAA network for several years. The new personnel brought in during the administrative transition resulted in interpersonal conflict.

The [workers who had been there for some time] were used to interacting with the [individuals] that had been there with them, usually from the beginning, and were very comfortable with that relationship. Then we had [new individuals] coming into our agency and they had a different way of doing things, a different style...a different perspective...so initially that was ...stressful and that brought about some confrontations between staff members...I think it would have been more difficult if [the supervisor of the AAA contractor or myself] were not open to new information or [to] looking at things from each other's perspectives...I think we would have had a more difficult time if we were different personalities...if we were more headstrong in certain areas...We have the ability to talk about our differences and admit that there are differences and that's o.k...because we won't come to agreement on 100% of the things that we're discussing and we feel alright with that.

Another DSS respondent also said that forming the interagency relationship had been very difficult since the reorganization because there were long-established relationships and ways of doing things. She reported that the establishment of formal written agreements as well as formal policies and procedures between the DSS and AAA had helped the agencies to reach a level of consensus about their respective responsibilities in the relationship. The agreements, policies, and procedures also enabled those involved in the relationship to know what

was expected of them. An AAA respondent also noted that the establishment of formal interagency agreements was very important to the formation of a good working relationship because it clarified roles in the interaction.

The influence of domain similarity in the formation of the relationship (i.e., the reorganization) was supported [Hypothesis #6] in that (a) the AAA and DSS served the same geographic area, (b) overlap existed in client populations, (c) the DSS and AAA were under same state department, and (d) they shared service responsibility for chore and case management services. These similarities provided a common basis for the formation of the relationship.

There appear to be two important elements in maintaining the relationship. How agency supervisory staff and line staff have made attempts to reach a level of consensus [Hypothesis #11] at which they can work together, and the formation of a commitment [Hypotheses #8 and #9] to serving older adults and to the interagency relationship are very influential maintenance factors. A DSS respondent expressed a belief that DSS staff commitment [Hypothesis #8] to older clients is sometimes questioned by individuals in the AAA system (i.e., determining financial eligibility is the focus of DSS efforts, rather than the client's well-being). However, she noted that the client and service to the client are the reasons for the DSS's existence, and the staff takes this responsibility very seriously.

Despite this concern, a DSS respondent also provided an example of the agencies' commitment to working together for the good of the client

[Hypothesis #9] and acceptance of each other's role [Hypothesis #11]:

All in all I think that the system is working quite well. I think it's working quite well because we have bent over backwards and I presume they have bent over backwards, or feel that they have, as well...I think that's what has allowed the system to be able to function, in my estimation, better than it's ever functioned before...I think we're being able to serve the clients a lot better and I think if we continue to work on that same kind of framework, regardless of... personal bias about who should do what...I think that we are doing the things that are necessary to make the system work, because the decision has been made that that's the way the system's going to [be]. So there's no sense in fighting that personal bias battle forever...and we fight it every now and then just because we think this is the way it would work better...but the political realities are a large part of this. Political realities are that they are going to do their part and we are going to do ours...so we have to bend over backwards to see that we work out those things so the system can work well.

Although there is a degree of interpersonal conflict, the agencies seem to realize that they must work together for the good of the client. In this relationship, consensus appears to mean acceptance of roles, not necessarily total agreement. Other problems relating to consensus also exist in the relationship. Personality conflicts at both the staff and administrative levels appear to be a continuing theme in this relationship. Perceived differences in the level of "professionalization" and agency missions were also mentioned as barriers to consensus.

The agencies have dealt with consensus problems in two primary ways. The agency representatives recognize that a commitment to serve clients is a shared goal, even if they don't always like each other. Also, the provision for conflict resolution was integrated into the interagency agreements, policies, and procedures manual for two services for which they have joint responsibility. The conflict resolution measures outlined

in the agreement, and policies and procedures are used to conduct activities between the agencies [Hypothesis #18].

It is evident from the previous discussion that consensus on working together and commitment to serving older adults as well as commitment to the relationship are central elements in the relationship. Therefore, the influence of these elements in the relationship is supported [Hypotheses #8, #9, & #11].

Channels of communication contributed to the maintenance of awareness and knowledge about the activities of the agencies over time [Hypothesis #10]. An AAA respondent noted that formalization of communication had taken place over the last few years. The establishment of interagency agreements, outlining each agency's responsibilities, was very important in these communication patterns:

At first most of what [the AAA and DSS] were talking about was how shall we structure the way we are going to work together. Arriving at the interagency agreement probably took about the first year of meetings...To work these things out was a very good clarification process. Then the next year was mostly trying to bring the whole new regime on to really understand what it was the agreement said and then to try to ratify that...Now it is at kind of...a maintenance level. In terms of the relationship the meetings...are starting to replace some of the tensions that were being expressed [and that is] a good thing.

A local centralized decision-making body has never existed in this county. There are no boards, councils, or committees with joint representation in this relationship. Therefore, Hypothesis #12 was not supported.

Regarding the domain similarity variable, there has been continued overlap [Hypothesis #13] in client populations served, services offered,

and geographic service areas. The agencies' joint responsibility for services is the most important area of overlap. This overlap affects the relationship a great deal in that it requires the agencies to work closely together regarding the joint activity. Each agency has specific tasks for which it is responsible. Therefore, domain similarity does contribute to the maintenance of the relationship by providing a common basis for interaction.

Hypotheses #14 and #15 (i.e., perceived effectiveness of the relationship), suggest that it is relatively satisfying and accomplishes things that could not be accomplished without the interagency relationship. Despite the problem areas regarding interagency consensus, each agency was relatively satisfied with how responsibilities have been carried out over time. Two DSS respondents noted that if the DSS and AAA maintained the shared responsibilities they now have at the local level and the relationship stopped, it would have a negative impact on their clients.

I think it would be more chaotic for the client because you would have individuals coming into the situation sort of doing their own thing and not communicating with the other side...so you'd have somebody maybe doing this part of it and somebody else doing this part of it or doing something totally different...you would cause a certain level of confusion I think for the client and ultimately the client doesn't benefit...And I think that's more harmful...particularly with...situations where there is perhaps a certain level of confusion to begin with.

Another result of stopping the relationship, according to one DSS respondent, was that it would take longer for clients to get services. They may not get services at all because the system requires the DSS and

the AAA to work together for maximum effectiveness. She said "then the community would really be [upset] because they would see that [clients weren't being served]...clients would be out there and families would be out there...[asking] why isn't this person getting services." An AAA respondent noted the following about the potential effect of stopping:

[Case management] would be available to fewer people...[and] I think the quality could not be so well regulated...the DSS is not...staffed and they're not prepared to do the monitoring we do...We get monthly service reports...and I have a staff person who requires written justification for any clients who are dropped and also looks at the level of service delivered...so we're able to stay on top of what's going on with that service and spot problems...We couldn't do that with what the state [has available]...so I think you get a better managed, closer to the ground, more responsive and definitely more accessible service because it's tied into our network...whose mandate is to be sure that people get access.

On the other hand, a DSS respondent expressed a belief that if the responsibilities changed, and if they had sole responsibility for clients and services, and sufficient resources, the DSS could do just as good a job on their own without coordinating with AAA. With regard to equity in the relationship, one DSS respondent said:

Well, sometimes I get the feeling that we contribute [more] and I'm sure that's the feeling they get...that they think they contribute more...but I think that sometimes we go out of our way to be more flexible or whatever and like I said, they probably have the same perception.

Overall, the relationship was perceived as satisfying and equitable, and meets goals and responsibilities for serving older adults.

Communication channels and patterns facilitate interagency awareness in this relationship [Hypothesis #16]. Two DSS respondents said that their direct contact with the AAA is usually when a problem comes up that

requires communication. Most communication occurs between the local DSS staff and the AAA contractor. On an administrative level, agency heads normally become involved only when a problem cannot be solved at the local staff/supervisor level.

One important issue with regard to interagency communication is confidentiality of client information and the ability of agencies to share information. In a case management program involving a team staffing of DSS workers and AAA contractor's staff, the resolution of the confidentiality issue is specified in their formal agreement. There is free flow of client information in this program. In the chore service program, however, there is difficulty in exchanging client information. For example, one difficult situation expressed by a DSS respondent is when the AAA contractor would like access to DSS information about clients, but the individual does not want any additional help or to have information about themselves shared with other agencies. The DSS has a legal obligation not to divulge this information, even though the AAA contractor feels this information is necessary for meeting the needs of a particular client.

A DSS respondent noted that the existence of interpersonal elements from the past can create communication problems as well.

....a friendship kind of a thing...there was [less] process, [less] procedure...[less] policy or [other] ways of dealing with things...I think what we've done is try to come in here and institute a lot of those formal things and I think it's caused some problems ...now we have procedures and processes that people have to go through and that has required us to communicate more formally with the organizations and individuals...we have to meet with them more regularly, we have to respond to correspondence if they write to us about this and that...I think that has to do with the fact that we

have instituted so many procedures so that things flow more smoothly...It requires more formal communication...It requires us to talk back and forth.

An AAA respondent noted that a number of channels are currently used to maintain interagency awareness at all levels. Examples of these channels include service related staff meetings on a regular basis with local DSS staff, quarterly case management program meetings, a monthly providers breakfast, and a quarterly networking meeting involving DSS representatives. The networking meeting functions as an important open forum. Participants can bring up issues they want to discuss, and they also bring their newest literature. An AAA respondent described the meeting as a good way to "stay on top of everything." Every month they reprint the roster so that people can put faces and names together as well as have the agency address and appropriate telephone number for contacting someone.

With regard to informal mechanisms, an AAA respondent said the following:

The informal interchange is mostly telephone, and it's case based, and I think in many cases if it were more formal [the DSS and AAA contractor] could troubleshoot their two systems enough where they could really see a pattern of the problem and be able to deal with it...so...the informal interchanges sometimes can be the [less positive side] of it all...I just think if it were a little bit more formal and well regulated, things like that [would make the relationship work better].

One implication of the informal relationships, according to the AAA respondent, is that it is often difficult to separate the real problem from the personalities and attitudes involved.

The agencies are using more formal channels, as previously discussed,

to improve the communication. An AAA respondent expressed satisfaction with the amount of communication but she said "I would like it to be a little more self-aware sometimes."

Resource exchange was expected to help the agencies reach their goals [Hypothesis #17]. However, there is little exchange of concrete resources such as money and materials in the relationship. When asked about resource exchange an AAA respondent said:

One of the most important things that we provide for [DSS] is a place to send clients to actually get case management and to get assistance...well beyond what they're able to do...People who may seem borderline for them or people who are holding in an application process...there is someplace that they can send them...there's something that can be done for them...Every new service that we develop in this community is a resource for good adult service case management.

During the observation of a case staffing, one DSS respondent expressed a belief that the joint meeting process works best when participants view each other as resources. The respondent said that at times it is hard to be objective when a worker visits a client in the home. The worker can come back to the case staffing and see things from the perspectives introduced by the various workers involved. Another respondent also mentioned continued "good will" as a resource between the agencies. Therefore, it appears that although there is little exchange of concrete resources, other forms of resource exchange do maintain activity in the relationship.

As previously discussed, formalization is very important in this interagency relationship in that formal mechanisms are central to conducting interagency business and problem solving [Hypothesis #18].

With regard to the formal agreements that have been developed, a DSS respondent said that the agreements are detailed, but they are also flexible:

[The agreements] are not...cast in concrete...because we'd all be in serious trouble [if they were]...you never know how things are going to change or how the system is going to change.

Overall, on an administrative level, respondents are pleased that more formal mechanisms are being used. However, the staff have a more difficult time accepting the change to a more formalized system. This is the result, in part, of the history of informal interaction. Personalities and interpersonal relations continue to influence interaction, although not of the previous magnitude. Informal communication is important [Hypothesis #19] as a way for staff members to voice concerns and come to terms with some of the changes that have taken place since the reorganization.

The existence of a centralized body involved in making current decisions about the relationship was not supported [Hypothesis #20]. Much of the decision making occurs at the state level, rather than the local level.

The interagency relationship is relatively complex in that agencies have several interagency connections [Hypothesis #21]. As discussed previously, the agencies are jointly involved in services where assessment is made by the AAA contractor and the final financial eligibility is determined by the DSS. A DSS respondent expressed a belief that this process presents a problem with so many levels of administration and interagency involvement.

In the way that we end up dealing with so many other administrations, things get blurred in the passing. [For example], we have [the AAA contractor]...which is a separate organization [from] the AAA. The AAA contracts with them to deal with some things so that way we've got three different administrations we have to deal with to run a program, when in reality it'd be probably a lot better if there was just two...It would probably even better if there was just one...but two would be better.

As previously discussed, the agencies also participate in several types of meetings. There were plans for a DSS administrative staff member to assist in the evaluation of the AAA contract for case management in the near future.

Overall, most of the interagency coordination occurs between the DSS and the AAA contractor, rather than between the larger agencies. This finding supports the hypothesis that other agencies in the environment affect the relationship between the AAA and DSS [Hypothesis #22]. An AAA respondent said the following regarding coordination:

...that's [the AAA contractor's] job, for the client's service coordination...if they're doing the job right, that's exactly what gets done...they have access to all the services and what we attempt to do is coordination of institutions, community plans, procedures...their attitudes, and their systems. But in terms of what really gets done for the client..it should be done through...[our contractor]...so that is where we expect that coordination, mostly to take place.

The influence of the state agencies over the local agencies are potential contributors to the complexity of a relationship, and this expectation was supported in South County [Hypothesis #22]. The primary effect of the state level agency is that the same cabinet level administrative agency oversees both the AAA system and the DSS aging related services. According to an AAA respondent, most planning that

affects both agencies does not occur at the local level. Much of the planning is accomplished at the state level during monthly meetings with the department head responsible for all aging social services.

East County

Site Overview

This site is located in a rural county. SSBG funds are allocated to the state unit on aging by a special state-level department. They in turn give the SSBG funds to local AAAs across the state. Each AAA is responsible for administering both Title III and SSBG funds for several services to older adults at the local level. The local DSS provides adult protective services to vulnerable adults over the age of 60, and they can temporarily provide homemaker services until the AAA is able to serve a client. Within the last few years, the AAA developed a homemaker program for elderly clients. The establishment of this program is the reference point for the history of this interagency relationship.

There are actually two relationships operating at this site: (a) the relationship between the funding streams, and (b) the relationship between the staffs of the AAA, the local DSS, and the AAA provider agencies. There is a much closer relationship between the funding streams than between the local agencies. Evidence for both relationships are presented when possible. Agency interaction at the local level differs somewhat according to staff or administrative position. Therefore, examples of both perspectives are presented.

Table F3
Hypothesis Summary for East County

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported
	^a Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
<u>Formation</u>	
#1 Resource dependence	Yes: Funding streams
#2 Commitment to older adults	Yes: Overall
#3 Commitment to relationship	? : Overall Funding streams
#4 Awareness	Yes: Overall
#5 Consensus	Yes: Overall
#6 Domain similarity	Yes: Funding streams
<u>Maintenance</u>	
#7 Resource dependence/exchange	Yes: Funding streams No : Overall
#8 Commitment to older adults	No : Overall
#9 Commitment to relationship	No : Overall
#10 Awareness/information exchange	No : Overall
#11 Consensus	Yes: Overall

Table F3 (Continued)

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported
	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
#12 Centralization	No : Overall
#13 Domain similarity	No : Overall Yes: DSS & AAA contractor
#14 Perceived effectiveness/expectations	Yes: Funding streams
#15 Perceived effectiveness/productive	No: Overall
<u>Current</u>	
#16 Information exchange/interagency awareness	No: Overall Yes: DSS & AAA contractor
#17 Resource exchange	Yes: Funding streams No : Overall
#18 Formalization/formal	No : Overall No : DSS & AAA contractor
#19 Formalization/informal	No : Overall Yes: DSS & AAA contractor

Table F3 (Continued)

Hypothesis #/Variable	<u>Hypothesis Supported</u>
	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
#20 Centralization	No : Overall
	Yes: Funding streams
#21 Complexity/joint activities	No : Overall
	No : DSS & AAA contractor
#22 Complexity/other agencies	Yes: Funding streams
	No : Overall

a

? = Insufficient Information: Respondents did not provide enough information to make a decision regarding the hypothesis or the model dimension did not apply to the relationship or a specific program.

Formation, Maintenance and Current

Funding streams. When asked about the history of the funding streams and how they are combined, an AAA respondent said that Social Services Block Grant funds originally came directly to the state DSS. If other agencies wanted to receive SSBG funds they submitted proposals to the state DSS. The DSS subsequently made the SSBG grants to the agencies. Several years ago, the governor established a special state level department, and it now receives the SSBG funds. State unit on aging representatives request SSBG funds for services to individuals over the age of 60 from this office. They meet with departmental representatives, along with individuals associated with other agencies, and negotiate for a share of the funds. The local area agency then receives the allocated SSBG funds on an annual formula basis. Title III dollars from the Older Americans Act are allocated to the AAAs on the same formula basis. The AAAs then contract with local service providers to deliver social services to older adults.

Prior to the SSBG administrative changes, the local DSS provided homemaker services to senior citizens and other age groups. A few years ago, the AAA at this site began receiving SSBG funds for their own homemaker program. The AAA was directed by the state unit on aging to provide homemaker services to all senior citizens, including those individuals that the DSS served at that time. According to an AAA respondent, she met with a local DSS representative at that time and "transitioned" the older clients to the newly developed AAA program. The

AAA respondent provided the following description of the transfer period:

We got additional [SSBG] dollars to develop a homemaker service program, and as a result the [DSS] thought that we had gotten their money, but we [had not]. As a matter of fact, we didn't get a whole lot more money than we had gotten in years past, but the state office had decided that we were going to get into the homemaker program. So the [DSS] was cut back on some [SSBG] dollars.

This example supports the hypothesis that resource needs and resource dependence helped the AAA meet service goals [Hypothesis #1] in the formation of the relationship between the funding streams.

As expected, a need for resources was an important element for the AAA over time [Hypothesis #7]. An AAA respondent said that her agency has been funded at about the same level for the last five or six years. One result was the establishment of waiting lists for services. She expressed a belief that the AAA could provide more services and perhaps develop other programs if it received additional funds. However, she has attempted to maintain about the same level of services that existed in the past several years. She did not expect that Title III or SSBG funding would significantly increase. She attempts to use resources to maintain as many services as possible.

Domain similarity has influenced the formation and maintenance [Hypotheses #6 and #13] of the funding stream relationship. In this case, the overlap in the resources that finance services through the AAA involves some record keeping to separate the sources for reporting purposes. An AAA respondent described the relationship of the funding streams as operating two different kinds of money, two different programs, and then mixing those dollars in several services.

I expected to find perceived effectiveness of the relationship over time [Hypotheses #14 & #15]. In this case, an AAA respondent said that she was satisfied with the funding stream arrangement and that she would not like to see it change. She expressed a belief that older adults were being well served by the current SSBG funding arrangement for homemaker services:

I think that if we weren't the recipient of the [SSBG] funds as well as the Title III funds...the coordination effort would probably be a lot different...I think the fact that we get the [SSBG] dollars...and we contract those dollars out to other service providers, we can control how [the funding streams] work together a little bit...if [SSBG] dollars came to the [local DSS], I think that we would really have [a more difficult] job as far as getting those [SSBG] dollars...to be used to serve senior citizens.

She also said that if she did not receive SSBG funds, many of her services would be cut, supporting the effectiveness of receiving both funding streams [Hypothesis #14].

At the present time, approximately 30% of the AAA funding for services is SSBG and 70% is Title III. Although the proportion of funding by SSBG is much smaller than Title III resources, SSBG remains very important to service delivery to older adults. The contribution of SSBG resources is very important to meeting agency service goals [Hypotheses #7 and #17]. There was no evidence of other types of resource exchange between the local DSS and the AAA.

No local centralized decision-making body exists at the current time [Hypothesis #20]. Much of the decision making regarding the funding of services at the local level takes place at the state level. Although the AAA administrative staff has some latitude in how the funding streams are

mixed at the local level, an AAA respondent described the influence of her state level office in the following way:

We have [some] input into the services we think should have priority as far as [SSBG] and Title III goes, but still the state...says these are the services that are going to be provided and these are the services that the [special state level department making decisions about SSBG allocations] say that you will provide.

Therefore, evidence supports the influence of the state level agency on the Title III/SSBG funding stream relationship [Hypothesis #22].

Formation, Maintenance, and Current

Overall Interagency relationship. According to an AAA respondent, the precipitating factors for the formation of an AAA/DSS interagency relationship were directives from the state unit on aging to the AAA requiring the agency to begin serving homemaker clients. The state DSS also sent a directive to the local DSS requiring their compliance with the changeover to the new AAA program.

Interagency awareness was expected to occur in and facilitate the formation of the relationship [Hypothesis #4]. A DSS respondent described the level of communication and contact occurring between the DSS and AAA before and after the change in the homemaker program.

We have never had a lot of contact with [the AAA]. I mean there just wasn't a need...we usually dealt with the [provider]. If you needed a homemaker for your client why call [the AAA]? Call [the provider]. It was just kind of an intimate network [with the provider] and if I had any kind of an emergency, I just called and said I've got an emergency, we really need [a homemaker] now. I felt like it was a real cooperative endeavor. Everybody was trying to meet the needs of the clients, and we just all did to the best of our ability.

From the DSS respondent's description of the relationship, it was evident that more interagency awareness existed between the local DSS and the AAA providers, rather than the AAA.

In this relationship, a potential for conflict or problems in reaching interagency consensus existed during the homemaker transition period. A DSS respondent said that DSS social workers from her agency met with the AAA to see how they were going to "transition" clients with the least trauma possible [Hypothesis #2]. This concern supports an hypothesized commitment to meeting the needs of older clients. In this case, the older clients were apprehensive about continuation of services. The DSS respondent said the following about the changeover:

It was a very, very smooth transition. Every referral I gave to them, [the provider] took up. We went with them, or they went with us, and introduced people...It was a real smooth transition, they picked up all of our adult homemaker cases that were not protective service [cases]. We were allowed to keep adult protective services.

An AAA respondent, on the other hand, suggested a few turf problems, supporting the influence of overlap in domains [Hypothesis #6] and reaching interagency consensus [Hypotheses #5] in the transition. At the DSS administrative level there was concern that the AAA would be duplicating what the DSS would be doing, but this problem was resolved, according to the AAA respondent.

We weren't [duplicating services] at all. We did have some problems, but we have kind of worked through that. I worked through [a DSS staff member]...At first that [duplication issue] was a point of [disagreement]...but we worked that out, and I think that it is working out really [well].

Communication between staff members of AAA and DSS addressed and helped resolve issues regarding turf problems and duplication.

The hypothesis suggesting the existence of an overlap in client populations, services, and service areas and that the overlap served as one basis for working together was supported in the formation of the relationship. After the homemaker service transition, the DSS could only provide homemaker services to individuals over 60 until the AAA could "pick them up". There was subsequently little, if any, unnecessary overlap, duplication, or gaps in homemaker services.

I expected a continuing commitment or responsibility to serving older adults through a joint effort to contribute to the maintenance of the relationship [Hypothesis #8]. However, goals were described as quite different, and they were not met through a concerted joint effort. According to an AAA respondent, the AAA's primary goal is:

...to maintain [older] people in their own homes, maintain their independence...if we can deliver community services to them at home to help them maintain their independence...and keep them out of a nursing home, those are the kind of things that we are trying to do.

In contrast, according to a DSS respondent, the DSS responsibility to all adults is to provide services to those individuals who are vulnerable and are in immediate danger or in a life threatening situation. If the person is not capable of determining the seriousness of their situation, the DSS can petition the court to have this person removed from a dangerous situation.

Commitment to an interagency relationship [Hypothesis #9] did not exist between the DSS and the AAA. The AAA mission outlined in the area plan

states a commitment to interagency relationships in their area.

The Area Agency on Aging is the leader relative to all aging issues on behalf of all older persons in the planning and service area. The Area Agency proactively carries out, under the leadership of the State agency, a wide range of functions related to advocacy, planning, coordination, interagency linkages, information sharing, brokering, monitoring and evaluation, designed to lead to the development or enhancement of comprehensive and coordinated community based systems in, or serving each community in the planning and service area. These systems are designed to assist older persons in leading independent, meaningful and dignified lives in their own homes and communities as long as possible.

One potential agency to include in fulfilling this coordination function was the DSS. However, our investigation found little evidence of a direct commitment to an AAA/DSS relationship. There was no basic connection between the AAA and DSS, with the exception of cross referrals between the DSS and the AAA contractor agencies. There was also little evidence of immediate concern about the weakness of the interagency connection.

When a DSS respondent was asked about her perception of the coordination between the AAA and DSS she said that any coordination that takes place is at the level of the social service staff and the AAA contractor. She provided the following description of the local relationship:

As far as going over, sitting down and talking to [AAA staff], my office wouldn't have done that...The [AAA] has contracted to provide homemaker services and I don't know if talking to them if we have a problem, would be who we really needed to talk to.

An AAA respondent also noted that there was no apparent reason why she should have been in personal contact with the DSS. She said that most communication occurs between the AAA contractor and the DSS line staff,

and the issue is usually a referral or follow-up on a referral. An AAA respondent stated that she was not totally satisfied with the interagency communication patterns, and expressed a belief that there were actions that could improve communication. She said, however, that she has not been keeping that line of communication open or seriously "keeping up" the interagency relationship for the past several years. This evidence suggests little commitment to a joint effort.

The agencies appear to accept the relationship as it exists now, thus supporting the hypothesis that a level of consensus has been reached [Hypotheses #11]. They are also relatively satisfied with the general lack of a relationship [Hypothesis #14]. However, the AAA may become more involved with the DSS through a new AAA employee. The employee's job will be to make the connections stronger between the AAA and other agencies in the area. She was employed just prior to the interview, and whether the DSS will be a primary focus is uncertain.

When an AAA respondent was asked how she would characterize the interagency relationship with the local DSS in a sentence, she replied "Well, I would have to say...we know very little about each other actually...I don't have that contact that I had when a former staff member was there." Therefore, information exchange and communication that maintains activity and helps the agencies reach their goals was not supported at the administrative level [Hypothesis #16].

On a staff level, however, a form of information exchange does take place between the DSS and the AAA contractor rather than the AAA. A DSS

respondent viewed her agency's interchange with the AAA contractor in the following way: "There might be a lot this month and then it might be a couple of months before [there is] any more. It varies month to month, and situation to situation." She described the interaction and communication as much more informal than formal, supporting the existence and use of informal mechanisms for interacting [Hypothesis #19].

[We know] the [homemakers at the AAA contractor]...we know...the social workers and the office [staff]...and they feel comfortable contacting us. It's not any kind of intimidation...Its personable, really friendly.

Formalization of ties [Hypothesis #18] did not exist at either the staff or administrative level. Regarding formal connections, respondents representing the DSS and an AAA contractor noted that there were no formal procedures following up on a referral, and the informal system had not created any problems. There are no formal agreements between the AAA contractors and the local DSS.

Although there was no indication of formal procedures for interaction between the local agencies at the present time on either a staff or administrative level, an AAA respondent suggested that there was some interest in establishing formal agreements with DSS at the local level at one time.

There was a big efforts some years ago [to get]... agreements...signed...but they didn't have any teeth in them...[Even] if I wanted to sign a memorandum of agreement...[DSS] can't do [that] at the [local] level...the state can do certain things and you can do certain things [at the local level].

Although there are no centralized decision-making bodies [Hypothesis #20] at the present time, an AAA respondent noted that one improvement

she would like to make in the interagency relationship involved changes in membership of the AAA advisory committee. She suggested that a representative from the DSS might be helpful.

What we are trying to do is to get service providers...on our advisory committee...maybe have a staff member from the [DSS]...we do need those kind of people on our council so that we can get information from them...but formally we aren't doing that kind of thing [now].

In describing the overall complexity [Hypothesis #21] of the interagency relationship, there are few direct connections between the AAA and the local DSS. As previously discussed, cross referrals are the strongest local connection, and they are handled primarily by the AAA contractors. Major directives and decisions have come primarily from the state level agencies down to their local counterparts, but there is no effect of the state level agencies on the local AAA/DSS relationships [Hypothesis #22]. Additionally, respondents said that there is no a strong connection between the state DSS and state unit on aging.

West County

Site Overview

This site is located in an urban county. SSBG social services are provided at the local level by the DSS under the supervision of the state DSS. The county DSS has considerable autonomy in how they administer their programs.

Locally, Title III funds are administered by the area agency on aging, which is part of a governmental council. Title III funds for home

Table F4
Hypothesis Summary for West County

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported
	^a Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
<u>Formation</u>	
#1 Resource dependence	Yes: Home delivered meals
#2 Commitment to older adults	Yes: Home delivered meals
#3 Commitment to relationship	Yes: Overall Yes: Home delivered meals
#4 Awareness	Yes: Overall Yes: Home delivered meals
#5 Consensus	? : Overall
#6 Domain similarity	Yes: Overall
<u>Maintenance</u>	
#7 Resource dependence/exchange	Yes: Home delivered meals Yes: Overall
#8 Commitment to older adults	Yes: Overall
#9 Commitment to relationship	Yes: Overall
#10 Awareness/information exchange	Yes: Overall

Table F4 (Continued)

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported
	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
#11 Consensus	Yes: Overall
#12 Centralization	No : Overall No : Home delivered meals
#13 Domain similarity	Yes: Overall
#14 Perceived effectiveness/ expectations	Yes: Overall
#15 Perceived effectiveness/ productive	Yes: Home delivered meals
<u>Current</u>	
#16 Information exchange/ interagency awareness	Yes: Overall
#17 Resource exchange	Yes: Home delivered meals
#18 Formalization/formal	No : Overall No : Home delivered meals
#19 Formalization/informal	Yes: Overall
#20 Centralization	No : Overall No : Home delivered meals

Table F4 (Continued)

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported
	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
#21 Complexity/joint activities	No : Overall
#22 Complexity/other agencies	No : Overall
	No : Home delivered meals

a

? = Insufficient Information: Respondents did not provide enough information to make a decision regarding the hypothesis or the model dimension did not apply to the relationship or a specific program.

delivered meals to persons over the age of 60 are granted to the local DSS agency to expand their service. All funds for home delivered meals are coordinated by a DSS staff member. The DSS contracts with a group of service providers for delivery of home delivered meals. Many of these providers are affiliated with other area agency services.

Information about the formation of the relationship relates to two events: (a) the establishment of a good working relationship between AAA and DSS staffs when the AAA was initiated in the early 1970s, and (b) the beginning of the AAA Title III grant for home delivered meals. Respondents from the area agency and from the DSS were interviewed.

A short description of the formation of the overall relationship and the home delivered meals program are presented in the following sections. Due to the nature of the historical information provided, it seemed appropriate to separate the overall AAA/DSS relationship and home delivered meals program because the events were several years apart. The limited available home delivered meals program information will be combined with information on the overall relationship in the maintenance and current relationship discussion. Evidence regarding several elements in the Van de Ven model was not provided by respondents.

Formation

Although little historical information was provided, the following limited discussion of the overall relationship provides support for the influence of (a) domain similarity in the form of duplication [Hypothesis #6], (b) commitment to an interagency relationship [Hypothesis #3], and

(c) communication and personal acquaintance [Hypothesis #4].

The available information on the history of home delivered meals appears to support the influence of the following factors: (a) resource exchange [Hypothesis #1], (b) commitment to older adults [Hypothesis #2], (c) commitment to the interagency funding relationship [Hypothesis #3], and (d) interagency awareness [Hypothesis #4].

Overall relationship. An AAA respondent identified the establishment of the AAA as the beginning of the overall AAA/DSS relationship. One of the first tasks of the new AAA's representatives was initiating discussion with significant people in the community who were involved in aging services. One of the significant individuals was a staff member of the local DSS. The DSS representative worked with several public and private community groups to develop more coordinated planning for aging services. She promoted the role of the new AAA to other agencies by helping convince them that the new agency would not be duplicating what was already occurring. An AAA respondent said the following about the formation of the relationship:

[Without the DSS staff's]...interest,...convincing the community that...[what we wanted to do] would be useful for them ultimately, it would have been a much more difficult process to go through...the concept of the area agency was new. People thought that we were duplicating what other groups were already doing and they weren't sure if it would help.

Therefore, domain similarity in the relationship [Hypothesis #6] was an influence in the formation of the overall relationship.

One AAA respondent had known a staff member of the DSS [Hypothesis #4] before she became employed by the newly formed AAA. She noted that they were on the phone constantly and were at many of the same meetings. They talked about service concerns for the elderly population and tried to develop interagency solutions [Hypothesis #3] to the service issues. She said that this interpersonal interaction helped to establish the social service system for older adults and helped to decide who should be responsible for certain tasks in the system. Since some of the early DSS staff members left the agency, communication and interagency awareness [Hypothesis #4] with the AAA has not been as close because a different "vision" developed.

Home delivered meals. According to a DSS respondent, Title III became available for this service in the early 1980s when the AAA decided to grant Title III funds to the DSS [Hypothesis #1]. The AAA recognized that their limited Title III funds were not enough to provide a complete home delivered meals program. In turn, the DSS accepted responsibility for older adults and coordinating the meals program [Hypotheses #2 and #3]. According to a DSS respondent, the AAA wanted to "get the most services they could out of their funding". As a result of interagency awareness on the part of the AAA, granting the funds to the DSS appeared to be best way to accomplish this goal [Hypotheses #2 and #4] because the DSS was already funding other public and private agencies to provide meals services. A DSS respondent suggested that the system would have been less efficient if an agency other than the DSS handled the funds. She

expressed a belief that DSS would probably continue to be the Title III grantee for home delivered meals "forever", unless major changes were made in the system.

Maintenance and Current

Overall relationship and home delivered meals. Resource exchange was an important factor in the maintenance of the interagency relationship [Hypothesis #7]. The strongest area of resource exchange was evidenced in the home delivered meals program in which the DSS received Title III funds. It was interesting that information exchange was also mentioned by a DSS respondent as a resource, lending support to the existence of and influence of channels of communication in maintaining the relationship [Hypothesis #10]. According to a DSS respondent, the wide range of AAA information available for DSS's use has been an important resource. She said that they have not been disappointed when they've taken the initiative to access the available information. An AAA respondent said the following about the AAA as a resource to the DSS:

I would like them to perceive the area agency as a resource to be called in when needed. I would like to have [DSS] perceive us as someone who could provide the best data...to help them find out what other people are doing...for them to think of us as an appropriate and free consult[ant] to help them.

Overlap in client population and geographic service area were illustrations of domain similarity [Hypothesis #13] in the relationship. Although the similarities existed, with regard to overall interdependence, DSS and AAA respondents perceived their agencies as being reasonably independent of each other. For example, an AAA respondent said "I don't

think of [the relationship] as interdependent. I feel [we are] actually relatively neutral parties, each with a respectful understanding of what everybody else does."

With regard to goals, responsibilities, and commitment to serving older adults [Hypothesis #8], a DSS respondent expressed a belief that the AAA's mission covers a portion of the same population that they have responsibility for, and historically they have worked well together on those areas where they have "touched base." She also noted that DSS goals and responsibilities for serving older adults are limited because they care for only a small portion of the aging population. "There's recognition that [the DSS] can't be a full service bank to all of the aging population...in terms of particular expenditure of dollars...we're talking about a very limited audience...its the poor, the low income, the frail."

Four goals of the DSS with regard to older adults were specified in a system plan for aging services: (a) provide protective services for vulnerable adults, (b) prevent premature, inappropriate institutionalization, (c) maximize independent functioning in the community, and (d) provide quality services. These goals support the existence of commitment to older adults. The DSS mission contained a list of 21 related objectives with similar goals for clients of all ages, suggesting responsibility for a much wider client population.

The AAA's 1988 plan amendments contained two specific goals and commitments of the area agency with regard to service system coordination

and the older adult population: (a) to develop a comprehensive, coordinated system of services for the elderly in the area, and (b) to ensure that older persons receive the services and resources to which they are entitled and that their rights are reflected and preserved. Therefore, AAA documentation supported the hypothesized commitment to older adults [Hypothesis #8].

In addition, the AAA policies and procedure manual stated the following about their commitment to interagency relationships:

The Aging Program has developed linkages with the major public and private planning, funding, and service-providing organizations in the...area in order to enlist their assistance in developing a comprehensive, coordinated system of services for the elderly.

One of these established linkages in the community mentioned in the plan is with the DSS. Although the AAA documentation supported a commitment to a coordinated system of services involving several other community service agencies, it did not specify how the DSS was involved.

A DSS respondent provided an excellent example of the interrelationship between four elements of Van de Ven's (1976) model in the interagency relationship: (a) commitment [Hypothesis #9] (b) consensus [Hypothesis #11], (c) domain similarity [Hypothesis #13] and, (d) perceived effectiveness [Hypothesis #14]:

It's my sense of things...that...anything that has been successful from a service delivery stand point in [this county] has been accomplished because there hasn't been a lot of protectionism or turf protection [Hypotheses #11 and #13] from a variety of community service agencies...there's been...a real degree of cooperation...the premise is that we're not that much concerned about who gets the glory or who gets the prestige...there's a recognition that [when] a problem does come...probably we'll all pitch in and work towards resolution together [Hypotheses #9, #11 and #14]. The major thing is that something good is going to happen from this [Hypothesis #14]

and it's not necessarily a question as to who's going to get credit...that has been a prevailing attitude for many years in [the area].

Therefore, from this statement it appears that several factors influence the relationship. There is a commitment to reaching goals together when feasible, and the agency representatives have reached consensus on how to work together on an as needed basis. Also, there are no problems related to domain similarity or overlap. Finally, agency respondents appear to be relatively satisfied with the relationship and its accomplishments.

From a DSS respondent's perspective, there is no blanket consensus, in that consensus should take place on individual problems as they came up [Hypothesis #11].

Consensus would have to come about in terms of mutually understanding what the problem was and a mutual desire towards identifying what steps would need to be taken towards a resolution...just working in some cooperative way.

Channels of communication were expected to exist and facilitate the maintenance of the relationship over time [Hypothesis #10]. An AAA respondent discussed communication patterns over time. In the very beginning of the overall relationship, the AAA and DSS representatives worked together almost daily when they were developing a place for the AAA in the community social service system. She noted that for the last two or three years communication has been on a more sporadic basis. It tends to go in cycles and some respondents stated that they are not in contact for months at a time. However, when issues arise, the agencies are in contact as often as necessary to address the specific issue. There were

few examples of daily contact or regular scheduled meetings, and most interagency contact is by telephone.

A DSS respondent discussed the importance of personal acquaintance in communication patterns. She expressed a belief that the smallness of the area provides an environment for interpersonal relationships to occur easily. She went on to describe the interpersonal factor in the following way:

You don't need to get enmeshed in administrative, bureaucratic structures in order to communicate understanding. You relate on an interpersonal basis that avoids a lot of bureaucracy and allows things to happen successfully...there's a heavy emphasis on informality and I think really for the most part it's all informal.

The respondent expressed a belief that situations have not warranted making the relationship more structured.

An exchange of information and communication occurs in the relationship and helps to maintain interagency awareness [Hypothesis #16]. Most respondents from both agencies stated that they were comfortable talking to anyone on whatever the topic of interest is, and, overall, the respondents were satisfied with the level of communication.

There was no centralized decision-making body for either the overall relationship or the home delivered meals program [Hypothesis #12]. The AAA simply grants Title III funds to the DSS for home delivered meals and the DSS manages the program.

Domain similarity existed as overlap in client populations and geographic area served and contributes to continuation of the interagency relationship [Hypothesis #13]. These similarities provide a common basis

for the relationship, but there are no problems created by the overlap such as duplication and turf issues.

The relationship was generally perceived as effective respondents at both agencies [Hypothesis #15]. An interesting example of the relationship accomplishments and Title III resources came from a DSS home delivered meals program respondent:

[The relationship] has been successful in meeting the need, because of those two sources of funding [Title III and SSBG] being monitored by the same agency. We have been able to keep up with demand. It is not the total amount of funding that the programs need to do the most. But it has been...enough for everybody to keep up with...[We] have been able to generate resources to keep up with the demand. So it has been real effective. I guess that to me is always the bottom line...[ability] to meet needs.

Currently, resource exchange takes place in the form of Title III funds granted from AAA to the DSS. The Title III funds are combined by the DSS with SSBG and other funding sources for home delivered meals [Hypothesis #17]. The DSS then provides home delivered meals to elderly clients, and AAA furnishes information/data to the DSS regarding the elderly population.

Formal mechanisms for interacting are rarely used [Hypothesis #18]. There are no formal agreements between the agencies in the overall relationship or the home delivered meals program. With regard to formalization of the relationship, a DSS respondent noted the following:

I'm not sure that my position would be to advocate for that type of formalized arrangement...it would be contrary from an historical stand point to things that have happened informally and on an interpersonal basis where there's been a lot of flexibility...I would only advocate for that [formal] kind of position if I really felt from our stand point we specifically had some expectations from them...and they were not being responsive to those [expectations], and tightening up of the structure...was seemingly the best way in

order to insure that they were doing what we wanted them to do. That would not be the case at the present time.

Therefore, the use of informal mechanisms is supported in the overall relationship [Hypothesis #19], while formal mechanisms were not used [Hypothesis #18].

Currently, there is no centralization of decision making regarding the overall relationship or home delivered meals program as I hypothesized [Hypothesis #20]. According to a DSS respondent, the suggestion has been made from time to time that the DSS advocate for representation on the AAA advisory committee, and they have given some thought to taking this initiative. However, no action has been taken. The agencies are planning to establish quarterly meetings to discuss various interagency planning issues regarding the older populations they serve.

Overall, the agencies are not involved in many joint activities, but respondents expressed considerable interdependence in the home delivered meals program with regard to Title III funds. The number of activities in this case does appear to indicate the amount of perceived interdependence [Hypothesis #21]. They have recently collaborated on a training seminar as well as the production of a service related brochure. A DSS respondent noted that she has used some of the AAAs suggested service definitions. Otherwise, the AAA's primary relationship with the DSS is based on the Title III home delivered meals grant and provision of technical assistance/information to DSS as needed. Most service coordination occurs at the service provider level, not at the DSS and AAA level.

It was hypothesized that the state agencies would play a part in the complexity of the makeup of the relationship [Hypothesis #22]. The state DSS, however, gives no directives regarding the operation of the local DSS with respect to the AAA or suggestions on how to use funds.

Central County

Site Overview

This county is a mixture of rural and urban areas. The AAA is a private, nonprofit organization. The state unit on aging is a branch of a larger state-level department that receives all state SSBG allocations. SSBG allocations for adults are given to this branch and they in turn allocate both SSBG and Title III funds to the AAA. AAA documentation states the following regarding the funding streams:

The Area Agency administers Older Americans Act funds, Title XX Social Services Block Grant funds and state appropriated funds earmarked for [services] for elderly and disabled adults in [the] county. Administration by one agency of funds from multiple sources eliminates duplication of administrative cost and simplifies service delivery for providers.

This county has some unique characteristics regarding the administration of SSBG funds. In addition to state-planned SSBG funds, an association of governments makes allocation decisions for a local portion of SSBG funding. The association of governments is a voluntary association of cities, towns, and government in the county. The AG has the primary functions of coordinating planning activities and determining the allocation of local SSBG funds for services to four target groups, including the county's elderly population. Two committees are involved

Table F5
Hypothesis Summary for Central County

Hypothesis #/Variable	Hypothesis Supported
	^a Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
<u>Formation</u>	
#1 Resource dependence	Yes: Funding streams
#2 Commitment to older adults	Yes: Funding streams
#3 Commitment to relationship	Yes: Funding streams
#4 Awareness	? : Funding Streams
#5 Consensus	? : Funding streams
#6 Domain similarity	Yes: Funding streams
<u>Maintenance</u>	
#7 Resource dependence/exchange	Yes: AAA/AG
#8 Commitment to older adults	Yes: AAA/AG
#9 Commitment to relationship	Yes: AAA/AG
#10 Awareness/information exchange	Yes: Funding streams Yes: AAA/AG
#11 Consensus	Yes: AAA/AG

Table F5 (Continued)

<u>Hypothesis Supported</u>	
Hypothesis #/Variable	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
#12 Centralization	Yes: Funding streams
#13 Domain similarity	Yes: Funding streams Yes: AAA/AG
#14 Perceived effectiveness/ expectations	Yes: Funding streams Yes: AAA/AG
#15 Perceived effectiveness/ productive	Yes: Funding streams Yes: AAA/AG
<u>Current</u>	
#16 Information exchange/ interagency awareness	Yes: Funding streams Yes: AAA/AG
#17 Resource exchange	Yes: Funding streams Yes: AAA/AG
#18 Formalization/formal	Yes: Funding streams Yes: AAA/AG
#19 Formalization/informal	No : Funding streams No : AAA/AG

Table F5 (Continued)

Hypothesis #/Variable	<u>Hypothesis Supported</u>
	Yes/No/? : Joint Activity
#20 Centralization	Yes: Funding streams
	Yes: AAA/AG
#21 Complexity/joint activities	No : Funding streams
#22 Complexity/other agencies	Yes : Funding streams

a

? = Insufficient Information: Respondents did not provide enough information to make a decision regarding the hypothesis or the model dimension did not apply to the relationship or a specific program.

in this planning process. The interagency committee consists of staff from various service agencies in the area. The other committee is a policy level body composed of elected officials, members of boards of directors of the United Way, community councils, and the area agency on aging.

This unique system must be taken into account when discussing "interagency" relationships. There are two relationships operating at this site: (a) the coordination of the state-allocated funding streams, and (b) the area agency's relationship with the association of governments' committees that are responsible for local allocation of SSBG funds. Evidence related to both elements are presented.

Formation, Maintenance, and Current

Funding streams. When asked about the role of resources in the formation of the relationship between the funding streams, an AAA respondent said that there was resource waste in duplicate administration of the two funding streams before they were combined.

Here we [were] with all this money being wasted in duplicat[ed] administration and monitoring and then [we] [saw] how that money could be applied to purchasing direct services...We were really looking for more money in services and it sure has made more money available for the services.

She noted that when the system was examined several years ago, changes in the Title XX social services laws coincided with the threat of terminating community action money. The model cities grants, which were time limited, were also ending. She said "We needed this money...this Title XX money for services for the elderly...we really did."

Therefore, resource needs were an influence in the formation of the relationship between funding streams [Hypothesis #1]. The lack of resources and subsequent Title XX utilization to meet resource needs for serving older adults were contributing factors to the formation of the relationship.

This particular AAA was the first in the state to try joint administration of Title III and SSBG funding streams. The AAA director wanted to administer Title XX for all adults, including the elderly and disabled adults, suggesting that a commitment to serving the older population helped bring the funding streams together [Hypothesis #2]. She wanted to reduce duplicated administrative costs and make more funds available for services. An AAA respondent expressed a belief that no one was going to accept her proposal unless she could show them advantages. "I don't think you go out in a vacuum to say let's combine funding sources. I think the documentation of need has got to drive it." She also noted that a prerequisite was the existence and commitment of a state agency that wanted to get the most out of its money. The respondent said that there had to be trust and credibility. "If we hadn't had credibility in this agency they never would have let us try it out."

An AAA respondent expressed a belief that commitment to an interagency relationship between all human service agencies in the county has been strong, and there has always been "an interagency commitment to a system that will get the most service for the most people." She suggested that the commitment existed because they had worked hard to develop it

themselves.

I think that the leadership has come from the community, from local governments and local private non-profits...it's broad based...and right now, we continue to work in that way...in this broad based context.

In this example, the influence of commitment to an interagency effort was supported [Hypothesis #3].

When Title III and SSBG funds were combined, it was noted that the community agencies were aware of each other's existence, but no further information was provided regarding the development of interagency awareness [Hypothesis #4] and consensus [Hypothesis #5]. Therefore, the hypotheses could not be evaluated.

Before the funding streams were combined, domain similarity existed in the form of overlap and duplication in several areas [Hypothesis #6]. Duplication in administration existed, many clients were on waiting lists for more than one service, and several AAA providers had separate contracts with the AAA and the state SSBG agency. A state unit on aging respondent noted advantages in combining the funding streams [Hypothesis #13].

By integrating them at this level and allocating them out to the Area Agencies, the real success of the program...is at the client level...there's no big deal about determining eligibility for this fund source or that fund source or this other one over here. A client receives services and then we worry about what fund source pays for it, which is really nice. And, of course, again,...Social Service Block Grant, the fact that it became a block appropriation made all the difference in the world, with regard to that. Otherwise, in some cases we'd have some opposing regulations and...eligibility standards, etc... all the way down the line.

The relationship between the funding streams is perceived as effective in meeting state and AAA expectations for service delivery, and it produces positive results in improved administration and service delivery. Perceived effectiveness [Hypotheses #14 and #15] is supported.

There is close communication between the area agency and the state unit on aging regarding the mixing of the funding streams, but this is more an intra-organizational means of communication rather than interagency. Several area agency directors and the director of the state unit on aging have a conference call every week. The AAAs also have quarterly meetings with a representative of the state level department responsible for all SSBG allocations. In this manner, the channels of communication do exist and are used with regard to funding stream administration [Hypothesis #10].

A form of centralization of decision-making regarding funding streams exists in that the state unit on aging provides direction to the AAA regarding the SSBG and Title III funding and related services. The centralization of decision making by joint representatives is supported [Hypothesis #12] in this way.

According to an AAA respondent, the state decided that the new system was an effective one, thus supporting the perceived effectiveness of the relationship between the funding streams [Hypothesis #14]. She expressed a belief that the AAA had demonstrated for two years that her agency's approach was a good system, and subsequently it was tried in other areas of the state. Overall, the state's way of administering the money was

changed and one result was stream-lining things for providers.

The AAA respondent noted that combining the funding streams also eliminates duplication of administration for provider contracts, thus supporting the perceived effectiveness of the relationship [Hypothesis #15]. Other positive results included not generating turf problems and having less federal agency supervision. She expressed a belief that working within the parameters of the system as it is established has allowed her to do many beneficial things for clients.

An AAA respondent expressed said that her agency is very dependent upon the SSBG funds it receives, supporting the existence of resource exchange or, in this case, combining the funding streams [Hypothesis #17]. Every service that the AAA provides is funded by both streams, with two exceptions that are only SSBG funded. These two services are exclusively SSBG because there are not enough Title III funds to adequately fund them. The importance of resource dependence on SSBG is supported.

The AAA has a contract with the state unit on aging [Hypothesis #18]. Therefore a formal mechanism for conducting inter-funding stream activity is supported, but again it becomes an intra-organizational issue. Informal mechanisms are not commonly used to conduct business regarding the two funding streams as I expected [Hypothesis #19]. Although there is both formal and informal communication with the state unit on aging and the state DSS director [Hypothesis #16], most business is conducted through formal channels, thus supporting Hypothesis #18. An AAA respondent noted the following:

I guess there's a lot of informal communication going on but most of it doesn't have to do with the operation of [the] area agency. I don't let that get informal. The informal communication has to do with common issues for the whole aging network...I do very scrupulously keep the informal communication away from the direct operation of the area agency. [I] really stick to things that are network issues and legislative issues.

She expressed a belief that this formal way of operating helps to prevent interpersonal and jurisdictional problems.

The centralization of decision-making regarding the funding streams is primarily affected locally by the state unit on aging and the association of governments' committee activities. There is a form of centralized decision-making as hypothesized [Hypothesis #20], in that the state unit on aging influences the state SSBG allocations and the association of governments influences the local SSBG funding. The relationship of the funding streams is not complex in that primary requirement is that the AAA must be able to separate funds spent on services for reporting purposes [Hypothesis #22].

Maintenance and Current Functioning

Association of governments. Sufficient information was not available to construct a complete history of the AAA/AG relationship. Therefore, the relationship is described primarily as it operated at the maintenance level, up until the time of the site visits.

According to an AAA respondent, the association of government's interagency committee has served as a forum for many agency representatives to meet, discuss, and plan for the allocation of local SSBG dollars for various target groups, thus supporting the influence of

information exchange in the relationship [Hypothesis #16]. According to the AG's human services plan, the target groups are adult/families/children, the elderly, and the handicapped and developmentally disabled, thus supporting the existence of commitment to the older population [Hypothesis #8]. The AAA has representation on this committee as well as the related policy level coordination committee.

The association of governments most recent plan states the representatives' philosophy toward the elderly target group as follows:

Programs should address the broad range of needs of people 60 years of age or older. Emphasizing the quality of life, the maintenance of dignity, individual choice and self awareness...Services will be directed to those in greatest economic and social need.

This evidence supports the influence of continuing commitment to older adults as well.

Consensus on responsibilities, needs, and directions related to locally allocated SSBG funds is reached through meetings of both AG committees and various subcommittees of the interagency committee [Hypothesis # 11]. Although there are different target groups, a member of the interagency committee stated that there is no competition as it is usually conceptualized between the advocates of various target groups because "all of us have a community interest."

One interagency committee member addressed the need for resources and how consensus came about in the planning process:

There's very little money out there [in the community] so we talked about all of us getting together and [for] all of the target groups, kind of target the money in that direction...so there are no real fights going on with general recognition that the funding is woefully inadequate in all areas.

Therefore, the need for resources and reaching consensus on how to resolve the needs are supported [Hypotheses #17 and #11].

In addition to decision making about local SSBG planned dollars, the interagency committee is also knowledgeable about the AAA's Title III funding, because they participate in public hearings on the development of the AAA area plan. This provides some support for centralization of decision-making in the relationship [Hypotheses #12 and #20]. The development of the AAA area plan is also coordinated with the association of governments regional planning process. The AAA shares all available information with the association of governments regarding service utilization and data regarding how much money will be spent on various services. Interagency awareness and information exchange [Hypotheses #10 & #16] are important in the current relationship.

As mentioned in the previous section regarding coordination of the funding streams, an AAA respondent expressed a belief that there has always been an interagency commitment in the community to a system that will provide the most service for the most people, thus supporting a commitment to the interagency effort [Hypothesis #9]. The committees make an important contribution to the overall service system. She also stated that the AAA has worked hard to build the reputation of being a reliable custodian of public funds. This commitment makes it easier to bring all the agencies together into a cooperative human service agency relationship and has helped maintain the system.

An AAA respondent expressed a belief that the association of governments' primary accomplishment is that everybody makes a contribution, supporting the existence of perceived effectiveness [Hypothesis #15]. For example, one person does not do more than the other. She also expressed a belief that the results are well worth the time and effort. She attributes the system's success to the agencies' ability to work together for a common goal.

The fact that the [committees are] still in existence says a lot and again, I think that this local planning process has been directly responsible for the investment of local municipalities in local kinds of human services...and when people become really informed about the importance [of human services] they have a greater commitment, and I think that's what's happened with elected officials.

Therefore, perceived effectiveness of the relationship was again supported by this evidence.

Formal meetings and communication are much more prevalent in this relationship than informal communication. The committee meetings are formal, follow procedures, and have a planned agenda, supporting the formalization of relations [Hypothesis #18]. Informal means of interacting are used much less in the relationship [Hypothesis #19].

Finally, the interagency relationship between the AAA and the association of governments is relatively complex [Hypothesis #22]. There are many agencies and organizations representative on both AG committees, and the AAA representative must interact with these various individuals who might advocate for a different target group receiving local SSBG funds.

VITA

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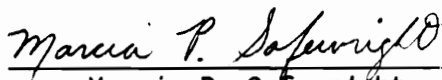
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