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# Revolutionary Change in Local Governance:

Revisiting the Rosenbaum and Kammerer Theory of Successful City-County Consolidation

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*This paper reevaluates Rosenbaum and Kammerer's framework of consolidation as revolutionary change. We examine their model as applied to nine consolidation attempts in the U.S. and Canada, with special emphasis on the 1973 and 1992 consolidation efforts in Tallahassee, Florida. Our examination of the nine consolidation attempts by referendum confirm Rosenbaum and Kammerer's thesis, but also suggests the importance of professional campaigns for and against consolidation and the role of elites as "consolidation entrepreneurs."*

Any major overhauling of local government structure in a particular metropolitan area is likely to involve damage to some existing interests.... Those adversely affected can often enlist support from others who merely fear the uncertainty of change, or who instinctively prefer known evils to unknown possible problems.... [A]ny particular reorganization plan must compete for favor with not only the *status quo* but also with possible alternative kinds of change. (National Commission on Urban Problems 1968, 335).

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Consolidation of city and county governments is a radical, even revolutionary change in local governance (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974). A successful consolidation outcome is also a rare event with only nineteen consolidation successes since World War II (Feiock and Carr 1999). Vincent Marando (1979, 411) noted that between 1959 and 1976 only 11 of the 68 consolidation referenda attempts were successful, a success rate of only 25%. Walter Rosenbaum and Gladys Kammerer (1974) concluded the probability of success in consolidation through a local referendum was so small that success was "against long odds." Their model of successful consolidation is essentially a theory of the conditions necessary for revolutionary change.

This article reevaluates Rosenbaum and Kammerer's framework and finds considerable merit in the original theory of consolidation as revolutionary change. In the following sections, we present an overview of government reorganization and a review of the Rosenbaum and Kammerer model. We then critically evaluate an application of the Rosenbaum and Kammerer model to nine consolidation attempts in the U.S. and Canada and discuss the implications of the Rosenbaum and Kammerer model for consolidation efforts in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1973 and 1992. Our examinations of nine consolidation attempts by referenda, including the two in Tallahassee, confirm Rosenbaum and Kammerer's thesis, but also suggest the importance of professional campaigns for and against consolidation and the role of elites as "consolidation entrepreneurs." In conclusion, we discuss the implications of our analysis for the practice and study of government reorganization.

### DEMAND FOR CHANGE IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

In 1963, Roscoe Martin noted that the concept of the "city" was changing and pronounced the dawning of a new age of the "metropolis." Not only had metropolitan areas increased in size, but the number and complexity of urban problems had increased.

One means local governments use to adapt to the changing needs of the citizens is through change in governance structures. The desire of local citizens for change extends from "critical problems arising from the frustrations of city life and the failure of city governments to cope with many of the elementary problems of everyday living" (Bish and Ostrom 1973, 3). These problems affect all the citizens of the local area: garbage removal, crime, education, transportation, adequate water and sewage, and police and fire protection. Bish and Ostrom contend that demands for institutional change can be manifestations of citizens' perceptions that they are paying too much for the services they are receiving.

City-county consolidation is the structural device advocated by the National Commission on Urban Problems as a means to decrease the problem of small, overlapping, and duplicating local governments (NCUP 1968). According to the NCUP, fragmentation has negative consequences for local government because (1) small governmental units cannot provide effective or economical solutions to community problems; (2) overlapping governmental layers create waste and confusion for citizens; (3) popular control of local government is ineffective because of complex ballots and multiple layers of governance; (4) leadership in policy making is ineffective or absent; (5) administrative

agencies are archaic and inadequate to the "functional demands placed upon them"; and (6) local governments are not able to attract or retain professional, highly qualified personnel (NCUP 1968, 326).

Reformers may seek the radical change that reorganization of local governance will bring, but citizens may be hesitant to embrace radical reorganization because they identify with the local area through the existing public institutions and their associated symbols (Rosenbaum and Kammerer, 1974). On the other hand, Marando (1979) argues that though few consolidation attempts have been successful, the process of attempted reform can have positive side effects:

Consolidation of city and county by referendum is a form of reorganization which potentially can affect a wide range of governance and service delivery issues. In one grand gesture a great deal can be accomplished: charter reform, modernization, reduction of elected positions to simplify the ballot, the weakening of localized special interests through the dissolution of their local governments or special districts, county home rule, citizen civic education, a more orderly administrative structure, a mobilized civic association, and direct assessment of citizens' will through referendum (Marando 1979, 410).

### THE ROSENBAUM AND KAMMERER MODEL

Rosenbaum and Kammerer (1974) focus on radical "comprehensive consolidation" of city and county governments through a local referendum. They postulate that radical change occurs through revolution following the pattern described by scholars of political revolution, particularly Chalmers Johnson's 1966 book *Revolutionary Change*.

Rosenbaum and Kammerer explore the configuration of attributes present in the local community that lead to a successful consolidation campaign. They conclude that "...successful consolidation is imbedded in a number of important social, economic, and political transformations in a community and this chain of events is essential to the campaign's success" (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 21). Their framework proceeds in a "complex set of events" or stages with the outcome as a consolidation referendum. Stage I is classified as "Crisis Climate," Stage II as "Power Deflation," and Stage III as "The Accelerator Event."

**Stage I: Crisis Climate.** Stage I begins the process with a crisis climate, an onset of one or more civic problems (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 21). Rosenbaum and Kammerer describe the crisis climate as proceeding in three phases: (1) environmental changing events, (2) demands from citizens for governmental response, and (3) an inappropriate response by the government (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 21-24). Environmental changing events can include changes in population, racial and economic composition, services, appearance, or resources of core cities compared with fringe areas. The important point is that citizens are aware that there are problems the local government must address.

These changes can trigger demand for response from the government that becomes phase two. For example, in response to population changes the demand could be for annexation, better transportation, or increased taxing of fringe areas. In the case of shifts in racial composition, the demand could be for reapportionment of voting districts. The third phase, a crisis climate, occurs when government does not respond to citizens' demands or citizens deem the governmental response inadequate. Rosen-

baum and Kammerer (1974) note three reasons for the inappropriate governmental response:

1. *Intransigence*: governmental failure to act with a positive response or failure to recognize citizen demands as legitimate;
2. *Conservatism*: governmental response is viewed as too little, too late by the citizens;
3. *Impotence*: governmental response may be handicapped by actions that are beyond its control, such as defeat in a vote for action that could alleviate the problem, i.e., defeat of a bond issue (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 24).

The important factor in Stage One is that governmental responses are chronically and publicly not appropriate to the citizens' increasing demands (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 24). During phase one, the government can respond with action to ameliorate the public demands. Action such as an innovative policy or conservative reform could defuse the crisis climate. However, if the governmental response is deemed by the citizenry as not appropriate to the situation, then the crisis continues and culminates in a complete Stage I Crisis Climate.

**Stage II: Power Deflation.** Power deflation is an increasing loss of confidence in the legitimacy of local governmental structure by the community. The loss of confidence is more than just the perception that there is a deficiency in services, it is a belief that there is a severe, deep-seated problem in the governing structure: the "...philosophical and structural foundations of local government, the fundamentals of the system itself..." (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 25). Rosenbaum and Kammerer stress the importance of two broad groups of actors at

the power deflation stage, civic elites and the mass media. These groups work through public disclosure of government failure and promote consolidation as the design that will make the government more responsive. The *civic elites* are an important institutional force for change in the local community. In some cases, Rosenbaum and Kammerer (1974, 27) see the civic elites' use of local government restructuring as a means to diminish the power of other *influentials* in the community, increase their activity in the community, or become the "new guard" that ousts the "old guard."

Community political leaders are an important part of the community elite leadership. Sharon Krefetz and Alan Sharaf (1977) suggest that the role of the political elites in consolidation is critical to the outcome. Business elites may see economic gain attached to administrative and political reform (Knott and Miller, 1987). Feiock and Carr (1999) have linked the presence of academic elites to entrepreneurship for city/county consolidation. They argue entrepreneurial activities of public administration scholars can provide the impetus for moving governmental reform or reorganization to the forefront of the public agenda (Feiock and Carr, 1999).

The mass media is also important to the power deflation stage since the media can shape citizens' perceptions of local government issues. Local radio, television, and newspapers not only inform the public but also can shape public opinion:

...the greatest potential weight of media influence can obviously be generated when the media adopt a deliberate editorial policy toward existing governmental structures or proposals for their modification...a power deflation might well be participated, or powerfully accelerated, if important community-media commit themselves to governmental reform (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 27).



Power deflation is manifested in several forms, including the advent of *ad hoc* reform groups, elite demands for investigations of local officials and agencies, media criticism of the local government, citizen or community group lawsuits against local government personnel or agencies, or formation of local government reorganization study commissions.

**Stage III: The Accelerator Event.** Rosenbaum and Kammerer set the third and final stage for radical change with an acceleration event. The accelerator event is a means by which public support for consolidation is aggregated at the polls. An event or events must throw the community into a "critical situation." The event could begin during the campaign for consolidation. They suggest four types of events that could act as accelerators, events that may or may not be directly associated with the consolidation effort:

1. a significant scandal involving a public official or agency;
2. an emergency in the community that accentuates the failure of the present form of government;
3. an important criticism of the government from a distinguished outside source;
4. the sudden loss of an influential leader who is closely associated with the present form of government (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 29).

### THE MESSINGER MODEL

Boyd Messinger (1989) was the first to operationalize Rosenbaum and Kammerer's framework for consolidation. Based on case studies, he identified configurations of the presence or absence of each stage in consolidation using a template

array. Eight cities and nine consolidation attempts were analyzed: Jacksonville/Duval County, Florida; Tampa/Hillsborough County, Florida; Nashville/Davidson County, Tennessee (two attempts); Miami/Dade County, Florida; Metropolitan Toronto, Canada; Indianapolis/Marion County, Indiana; and Virginia Beach/Princess Anne County, Virginia. Messinger began with an in-depth historical account of the area and the events that led to each attempt. He placed each site in the template if it exhibited at least one criterion posited by Rosenbaum and Kammerer. Messinger's analysis of these consolidation attempts is discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Jacksonville and Tampa.** Rosenbaum and Kammerer provide case studies of the Jacksonville and Tampa consolidation attempts. Both areas experienced all of the environmental/physical and demographic changes postulated to create a crisis climate. The difference between the two cities was the response of the government and the ensuing call for change in the community. Jacksonville's government showed an incompetence (or refusal) to handle the problems of race, schools, property assessments, infrastructure, water, and drainage plus the inability to annex fringe areas. Tampa, on the other hand, was able to annex the fringe areas, appeared to have a more flexible government, was able to raise the revenue for education and infrastructure through raising the property assessments, and had a more competitive and representative political system. The consolidation initiatives in Jacksonville and Tampa also differed. Community leaders and the Chamber of Commerce were the initiators of reform proposals when the school system lost its accreditation (a power deflator), while in Tampa the legislative delegation took the initiative to form a study commission without formal prompting from community leaders (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 47-48).

Power deflation was an important factor in the perceptions of government failure. In Jacksonville, the consolidation fed on perceptions of deflated government power that were not sustained in Tampa. While Rosenbaum and Kammerer contend that Tampa exhibited one characteristic of power deflation, the creation of a consolidation study commission, Messinger disagrees and interprets the formation of the study commission as lacking the element of power deflation because the commission was not created in response to a crisis climate.

**Nashville/Davidson County.** Nashville/Davidson County's first consolidation attempt was not successful. The crisis climate of inadequate services, social/economic inequities, lack of political representation, and unstructured growth was compounded by the unresponsiveness of the local government (Messinger 1989). A study commission was created, but there was no accelerator event. Messinger also notes the lack of a professionally run pro-consolidation campaign. However, a strong anti-merger campaign produced a failed consolidation effort. The second consolidation attempt saw an increase in the crisis problem and the needed accelerators. A professionally run pro-consolidation campaign proved enough to turn the tide.

**Miami/Dade County.** The Miami/Dade merger resulted in a federation instead of a complete consolidation. Long-standing suspicions of corruption in the police force, inadequate service, corporate criticism, and a political scandal at the county level provided accelerators (Messinger 1989, 155-160). Civic organizations such as the League of Women Voters and business interests like the Chamber of Commerce united in support for merger.

**Virginia Beach/Princess Anne County.** Messinger also considered the consolidation of Virginia Beach/Princess Anne County. The Virginia consolidation is unique because there was no crisis climate caused by the performance of the city (Mess-

inger 1989). Instead, an outside force produced the crisis. The State of Virginia allowed cities to annex territory through court proceedings rather than a referendum by citizens. The City of Norfolk began annexing several square miles in Princess Anne County and the City of Virginia Beach felt it needed to protect this area and provide a means for its own future growth. The response of the local government was impotence (Messinger 1989). It was unable to stop the City of Norfolk. According to Messinger, the Virginia Beach case provides another expansion of the Rosenbaum and Kammerer model: crisis may be external rather than internal.

#### **Indianapolis/Marion County and Toronto, Canada.**

Messinger attempted to apply the Rosenbaum and Kammerer theory to explain consolidations imposed or mandated from the state, rather than the referendum-based consolidation for which the Rosenbaum and Kammerer model was intended. While Messinger includes in his study the Indianapolis/Marion County and the Toronto consolidations, they are omitted from our analysis because they were not referendum mergers, but legislative events.

Messinger's final template is reproduced in Table 1. Messinger found three patterns of consolidation that fit the cases he examined: (1) Reform without Referendum, (2) Failed Reform Attempts with Referendum, and (3) Successful Reform with Referendum. Messinger's case analysis suggested the need to add a Professional Consolidation Campaign Stage (Stage IV) to the basic Rosenbaum and Kammerer model. He found that successful referendum attempts had included a professional campaign waged for consolidation. Campaign veterans and/or public relations people staffed these campaigns. They also relied on voter attitude surveys, recruited commitments from civic/community elites or organizations, and they were well en-

TABLE 1  
Messinger's Model

| Location                                 | Crisis Climate Stage I |   |   | Power Deflator Stage II | Accelerator Stage III | Merge? | Theory Predict Outcome? |
|--|------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------|-------------------------|
|  | 1                      | 2 | 3 |                         |                       |        |                         |
| <i>Reform Without Referendum</i>         |                        |   |   |                         |                       |        |                         |
| Indianapolis                             | X                      | X | X | X                       | —                     | YES    | NO                      |
| Toronto                                  | X                      | X | X | X                       | —                     | YES    | NO                      |
| <i>Failed Reform with Referendum</i>     |                        |   |   |                         |                       |        |                         |
| Tampa                                    | X                      | — | — | *                       | —                     | NO     | YES                     |
| Nashville (1 <sup>st</sup> )             | X                      | X | X | X                       | —                     | NO     | YES                     |
| <i>Successful Reform with Referendum</i> |                        |   |   |                         |                       |        |                         |
| Nashville (2 <sup>nd</sup> )             | X                      | X | X | X                       | X                     | YES    | YES                     |
| Jacksonville                             | X                      | X | X | X                       | X                     | YES    | YES                     |
| Miami                                    | X                      | X | X | X                       | *                     | YES    | YES                     |
| Lexington                                | X                      | X | X | X                       | X                     | YES    | YES                     |
| Virginia Beach                           | X                      | X | X | X                       | X                     | YES    | YES                     |

Notes: X = presence of the event or stage.

\* = Even or stage present only if theory modified.

— = event or stage absent.

dowed with resources or they were targeted to popular support or "grass-roots" members of the community (Messinger 1989).

Messinger suggested that "alienation," should be added to phase 3: an *inappropriate response of government*. He found that, sometimes, not only were the governmental responses not present, too conservative, or weakened by other governmental action, as Rosenbaum and Kammerer postulated, in some cases

the responses alienated the citizens from the government (Messinger 1989, 35).

While Messinger provides a useful descriptive account of the patterns identified by Rosenbaum and Kammerer, his work does not provide a formal analysis of their model of a successful consolidation through referendum. Messinger modified the Rosenbaum and Kammerer's theory to incorporate less revolutionary, legislatively imposed change. We address this limitation with in-depth case analyses of consolidation efforts in Tallahassee, Florida, and a comparative analysis of referenda-based consolidation efforts. Our comparative analysis systematically evaluates nine referenda-based consolidation attempts in relation to the Rosenbaum and Kammerer model.

### TALLAHASSEE CONSOLIDATION ATTEMPTS

Tallahassee and Leon County, Florida have attempted consolidation at least six times (Mastron 1986). The most recent consolidation referendum was in 1992. In 1997, the issue was addressed again, but deemed "too hot to handle" (Dickens 1997, 1A). Although the main issue in 1997 was whether to consolidate law enforcement departments, the subject of the city and county consolidation was also discussed. In this debate, Dickens (1997) noted that consolidation referenda in the county were defeated four times in the preceding 26 years.

**Tallahassee 1953.** Most authors cite Tallahassee's consolidation attempts beginning in 1971. However, Tallahassee considered consolidation long before 1971. In September 1953, the Governor of Florida appointed a Consolidation Study Commission (CSC) after an act of the Florida Legislature authorized the appointment (Jackson, Flannery, and Bair 1955, 6). Future consolidation attempts are built on this first experience in what

Douglass North (1990) would describe as a path dependent process.

Population growth and land available for the city have been constant problems for the City of Tallahassee. The CSC noted that 21% of the population of Leon County (12,202 people) lived in "the urban fringe" (Jackson, Flannery, and Bair 1955, 6). Service problems included sewage, street lighting, unpaved streets, storm water drainage, land use planning, fire protection, traffic, and safety (Jackson, Flannery, and Bair 1955, 8-10). Possible solutions to these service problems included annexation, a tactic that Tallahassee exercised frequently in its history. Nevertheless, annexation was not a viable answer in 1953 since most properties were covered by homestead exemption and they had low assessed value. Consequently, incorporation or metropolitan tax districts were not acceptable solutions (Jackson, Flannery, and Bair 1955, 9-10). The county lacked funds to provide needed services to fringe areas. Contracting for the services was not considered because of expressed fears that, unlike water and sewage, setting prices for police and fire protection would be difficult or impossible (Jackson, Flannery, and Bair 1955, 10).

The chapter of the CSC report on the reorganization of the law enforcement functions of the city and county provides a foreshadowing of future city and county law enforcement consolidation problems. The last sentence, set apart as its own paragraph reads: "Neither the present chief of Tallahassee police nor the sheriff of Leon County see the need for or favor any form of consolidation" (Jackson, Flannery, and Bair 1955, 100).

The final report recommendation of the CSC to the Governor was not to consolidate several governmental departments at that time. Those departments were Law Enforcement, Road Construction, and Tax Assessment and Collection (Jackson, Flannery, and Bair 1955, 123). The commission did suggest that

the county court house and the city hall be in the same building or in adjacent buildings. These recommendations were never acted upon.

**Tallahassee 1973.** Tallahassee held a consolidation referendum on November 2, 1971. The consolidation attempt failed with an unofficial tally of the vote, reported the next day, of 14,740 against and 10,381 for consolidation (Sherer 1971). The pro-consolidation group argued that the vote was a rejection of the proposed charter and not a rejection of consolidated government (Sherer 1971, 8). The 1973 attempt began early in 1972 when the new mayor, James Ford, announced that the city commission would open discussions of consolidation (Boyles 1972). Since the 1971 and 1973 efforts were separated by only five months, our analysis concentrates on the 1973 consolidation attempt.

Many of the advantages for consolidation were tied to the efficiency and economy of the consolidated government. Paul Craig, an economist at Florida State University, noted that the consolidation of police, fire protection, water and sewer, sanitation, and recreation could provide "economy of scale" benefits (Harbolt 1973). The difficult decision of how to select the chief law enforcement officer was decided through a straw poll of Leon County voters; the outcome favored an elected official (*Tallahassee Democrat* 1972).

Anti-consolidation forces were at work early in this consolidation effort, beginning with criticism of the way the consolidation charter was drafted. The anti-consolidation group requested the state attorney to investigate possible abuse of the Florida Sunshine Laws by the Charter Commission in drafting the charter (Jolley 1973b). The group also claimed that the media was engaged in a conspiracy to assure that the consolidation passed (Jolley 1973a).



The public hearing on the consolidation charter, held on February 1, 1973, provides some insights into the heated battle and the issues underlying the consolidation debate. For three hours the debate continued. Fears raised in the session ranged from concern that the nonpartisan elections would signal the death of the Republican party in Leon County to questions as to whether consolidation, in general, was opposed or supported or whether the charter, in particular, was at issue (Spillan 1973).

The advantages and disadvantages of consolidated government were debated by two local attorneys: Elliott Messer, chairman of *Consolidation '73* and William Daniel, spokesman for *Tallahassee-Leon County Action Committee Opposing Consolidation* (*Tallahassee Democrat* 1973). The case for consolidation was presented by Messer as an answer to governance and accountability problems created by fragmentation of local government: inadequate streets, inadequate mass transit, and storm water drainage problems. Daniels said that the current system of government was working and consolidation would create "big government" (*Tallahassee Democrat* 1973).

Storm water drainage is cited often in the 1973 consolidation debates along with concerns about how to choose the law enforcement chief. Consolidation was also linked to better law enforcement through the elimination of jurisdictional fragmentation, and by promoting the status and independence of the department (Carson 1973).

The campaign for consolidation was heated. The pro-consolidation side provided the city/county employees with fliers detailing the ways consolidation would save money through eliminating duplication and waste. *The Consolidation News*, a publication of the pro-consolidation group, noted the savings in tax dollars and the benefits of planning to relieve traffic jams, save Lake Jackson, and eliminate storm water run off. The *News* also strongly supported the idea that the consolidation would

The formation of the consolidation study commission demonstrates that the Stage II power deflator was present in Tallahassee. An accelerator event did not seem present. Civic elite demands for investigation of local officials and agencies and lawsuits, possible accelerators, did occur; however, the investigation and lawsuit were threatened against the study commission, and not against the city government.

A professional campaign was waged on both sides and, in the end, the anti-consolidation campaign may have had more clout. Two characteristics of Messinger's Professional Campaign Stage IV were apparent in the anti-consolidation campaign, but did not seem present in the pro-merger campaign. First, the anti-consolidation group exploited the disadvantages of consolidation and, second, the anti-consolidation advocates targeted their campaign to popular support or "grass-roots" members of the community (Messinger 1989). In this case, Rosenbaum and Kammerer's theory correctly predicted the outcome.

**Tallahassee 1992.** Jack Schluckebier studied Tallahassee and Leon County's 1992 consolidation attempt for his dissertation in 1995. Schluckebier contends that Tallahassee, like Augusta and Athens, Georgia, did not have the presence of a Stage I Crisis Climate and therefore the Rosenbaum-Kammerer Theory does not work for Tallahassee. We believe Schluckebier's rejection of the Rosenbaum and Kammerer framework was unwarranted. We show the applicability of the Rosenbaum and Kammerer theory through our analysis of the consolidation attempt drawn from local newspaper accounts.

The public process of consolidation began late in January 1990 when the state representative supported by local business executives, builders, and neighborhood associations introduced legislation in the Florida House of Representatives for the Tallahassee/Leon merger. The consolidation effort would require two votes from the public (Bruns 1990). The business

make government more responsive to the people and reduce tax inequities in the county (Consolidation '73 Committee 1973). At the polls on November 6, 1973, the voters defeated the consolidation attempt by a vote of 12,665 against and 10,907 in favor. The defeat was blamed on low voter turnout (Harbolt 1973).

**Application of the Rosenbaum-Kammerer Model to Tallahassee 1973.** Our application of the Rosenbaum-Kammerer model to the 1973 Tallahassee case will first proceed following Messinger's template. As Table 2 records, each phase of the crisis climate was present. Drainage, street repairs, traffic jams, police protection were visible ongoing problems. Demand for government response to these problems was present and had been for a long time. The response from the government was conservative. The city government tried to provide the services, but the effort was viewed as "too little too late."

**TABLE 2**  
**Template Array for Tallahassee 1973 and 1992**

| Location                             | Crisis Climate Stage I |   |   | Power Deflator Stage II | Accelerator Stage III | Merge? | Theory Predict Outcome? |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------|-------------------------|
|                                      | 1                      | 2 | 3 |                         |                       |        |                         |
| <i>Failed Reform With Referendum</i> |                        |   |   |                         |                       |        |                         |
| Tallahassee '73                      | X                      | X | X | X                       | —                     | NO     | YES                     |
| Tallahassee '92                      | X                      | X | X | X                       | —                     | NO     | YES                     |

Notes: X = presence of the event or stage.  
 \* = Even or stage present only if theory modified.  
 — = event or stage absent.

community, developers, and neighborhood associations represented interests that supported consolidation. They acted as consolidation entrepreneurs. Their first step was to introduce a bill to form a consolidation committee by a popular vote; if the vote was successful, then the committee would draw up a charter to be presented to the Legislature and the citizens would vote on the charter (Fineout 1990b). The proposal for the formation of a charter committee passed by a margin of 57% to 43%.

The choice of partisan versus nonpartisan elections was a contentious issue early in the process of forming the charter (Fineout 1991d). Partisan or nonpartisan elections were a source of contention in the consolidation debate from the early 1970s. Margaret Leonard (1991b) noted that many aspects of the charter required compromises. The list of opposing points of the charter includes the following: an elected sheriff versus appointed sheriff, strong mayor versus weak mayor, an elected tax collector versus an appointed tax collector, one government versus saving jobs, utility revenue for the county versus Talquin Electric Cop, centralization versus decentralization of administrative services. Leonard notes that for each point in the charter and each decision made by the commission, a new opposition group was mobilized (Leonard 1991b).

The North Florida Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration recommended consolidation. The Chapter's endorsement was based on five characteristics of the local area: homogenous demographics, the "blurring" of infrastructure responsibility due to increased growth and development, a decrease in the distinction between city and county service provision, adverse fiscal conditions for service provision in the county government, and increased problems of county service provision in fragmented unincorporated county areas as future annexation occurred by the city (NFC of ASPA 1991, 1).

To satisfy the demands of neighborhoods, minority, and rural citizens, the commission chose a system of district representation in which two of eight districts encompassed predominately black neighborhoods and one district encompassed primarily rural areas (Leonard 1991a). One small, rural, unincorporated community south of Tallahassee, Woodville, opposed a single rural district and an appointed sheriff (Fineout 1991c), a sentiment also expressed by citizens in Miccosukee, a small unincorporated community close to the Jefferson county line (Fineout 1991a). Miccosukee residents viewed their area as "a stepchild of Leon County" and believed that consolidation would cost more and provide fewer services (Fineout 1991a). However, a poll taken for the consolidation committee by the Oppenheim Research Group in October 1991 showed a 2 to 1 margin of support for consolidation in the county (Fineout 1991b). The survey of 861 Tallahassee citizens found that 48.1% favored consolidation, 26.4% opposed consolidation, and 25.6% were not sure (Oppenheim Research 1991, 19).

In November 1991, a second element of a Stage II Power Deflation occurred. A grand jury was convened to investigate the departments of Law Enforcement in Tallahassee/Leon County and the consequences of consolidation (Peck 1991b). The grand jury investigation was an extension of an earlier investigation (Peck 1991c). The jury's findings were that jurisdictional competition, incompatible communication systems, and significant duplication of services between the Leon County Sheriff's Department and the Tallahassee Police Department cost taxpayers an extra \$1.2 million annually (*Tallahassee Democrat* 1991). The grand jury report stated that these deficiencies could be corrected through merger (*Tallahassee Democrat* 1991; Peck 1991a).

Schluckebier (1995, 142-143) did not categorize the grand jury report as either a failure of government or an accel-

erator event since the grand jury took no action. Schluckebier states that convening the grand jury was simply one tactic employed by the pro-consolidation advocates in their campaign for the adoption of the charter. We agree with Schluckebier that the grand jury report was not an accelerator event, since the grand jury found waste and inefficiencies from competition, but not from fraud or illegal activities. Nevertheless, this finding clearly is a Stage II power deflation challenging the legitimacy of the exiting governance structure and empowering the pro-consolidation efforts.

With the campaign in full swing for both the pro- and anti-consolidation groups, two days before the referendum the "Opinion" section of the *Tallahassee Democrat* provided opposing viewpoints on consolidation (*Tallahassee Democrat* 1992). A supporter of consolidation, Bernie Sliger, president of Florida State University, listed the advantages of consolidation as lower taxes and efficiency, a single law enforcement agency, accountability, new jobs due to a friendly business environment, higher ethical standards in government, stronger growth management and environmental protection, better human services, and home rule. Opposition to consolidation cited the expense of big government and centralized control, lack of political accountability resulting from fewer elected offices, politicized law enforcement, and greater inefficiencies (*Tallahassee Democrat* 1992).

The anti-consolidation efforts may have benefited from a paid political advertisement by Leon County Sheriff Eddie Boone that appeared in the *Tallahassee Democrat* two days before the referendum. Based on a 1991 manpower study, Boone claimed that 54 extra city police officers would be required to answer calls in the city that were currently answered by the county sheriff's department. The additional officers would cost

the city more than \$4 million the first year and almost \$3 million each additional year. The advertisement ended with a statement that the sheriff's department saved the taxpayers \$1.7 million annually (*Tallahassee Democrat* 1992).

On November 3, 1992, the voters of Leon County voted to reject the charter for consolidation by a margin of 3 to 2 (Leonard 1992). Voters outside the city resoundingly rejected consolidation. In addition, despite the effort to draw minority districts, the African-American community opposed consolidation fearing it would lose its voice in the governing process (Leonard 1992).

**Application of Rosenbaum-Kammerer Model to Tallahassee 1992.** In Tallahassee and Leon County, a crisis climate had existed for some time. The climate included rapid population growth and perceptions of lowered quality of services. Service problems were evident in discussions of the quality of services to rural areas and of monies needed by the county to provide those services. The law enforcement problem presented a political turf battle, but translated into a service problem in some areas. Population in Tallahassee continued to grow rapidly and presented ongoing environmental and service problems. The 1990 reinstatement of the consolidation commission signaled a continuous question of whether the government was providing the services demanded by citizens and the presence of a power deflation stage.

Civic and elite demand for investigations of local officials and agencies and the formation of local government study commissions or committees to explore government restructure were both present in the consolidation attempt. It is important to note here that Rosenbaum and Kammerer suggest that elites could be the "...critical element in raising public disaffection with local government to the place where the public is receptive to consolidation" (Rosenbaum and Kammerer 1974, 26). The

grand jury and the consolidation study commission are each characteristic of power deflation. The power deflation process described by Rosenbaum and Kammerer was clearly in place in Tallahassee.

On the other hand, the accelerator was not present. There was no unifying emergency, scandal, or event. In fact, there appears to have been no unifying elements in the attempt at all. Two well-defined sides competed for diametrically opposed outcomes with each side entrenched in the struggle. When positioned in Messinger's Template in Table 2, the 1992 attempt appears to be like the 1973 effort. The actors and elements change, but the pattern is still the same.

#### COMPARISON OF PATTERNS IN CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION REFERENDA

The two Tallahassee consolidation attempts can be used to extend Messinger's research. The Template based on Messinger is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 includes seven of Messinger's sites. Unlike Messinger, we categorize Tampa as having the presence of a power deflator. Our categorization is based on our interpretation of Rosenbaum and Kammerer's theory that the presence of a consolidation committee signaled a power deflator. The other difference between our model and Messinger's model is the interpretation of an accelerating event in Miami. Messinger did not think the acceleration stage was present in Miami. We interpret the corporate criticism of the government structure and services, and the scandal involving the county level government as a focusing and unifying stage for consolidation. Thus, the presence of an accelerator for Miami was added to our basic model.



A systematic application of the Rosenbaum and Kammerer theory proceeds by pattern matching the nine referenda attempts (the seven used by Messinger and the two Tallahassee attempts). We rely on the full Rosenbaum and Kammerer framework with the addition of Messinger's professional campaign stage. Table 3 reveals a distinctive pattern match for city-county consolidation attempts with a local referendum. The most

**TABLE 3**  
**Consolidation Attempts Through Referenda With Presence or Absence of Professional Campaign (Stage IV)**

| Location                     | Crisis Climate Stage I |   |   | Power Deflator Stage II | Accelerator-Stage III | Professional Campaign-Stage IV |      | Merge? | Theory Predict Outcome? |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------|--------|-------------------------|
|                              | 1                      | 2 | 3 |                         |                       | Pro                            | Anti |        |                         |
| Tallahassee '73              | X                      | X | X | X                       | —                     | X                              | X    | NO     | YES                     |
| Tallahassee '92              | X                      | X | X | X                       | —                     | X                              | X    | NO     | YES                     |
| Tampa                        | X                      | X | — | X                       | —                     | —                              | X    | NO     | YES                     |
| Nashville (1 <sup>st</sup> ) | X                      | X | X | X                       | —                     | —                              | X    | NO     | YES                     |
| Nashville (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) | X                      | X | X | X                       | X                     | X                              | X    | YES    | YES                     |
| Jacksonville                 | X                      | X | X | X                       | X                     | X                              | —    | YES    | YES                     |
| Miami                        | X                      | X | X | X                       | X                     | X                              | —    | YES    | YES                     |
| Lexington                    | X                      | X | X | X                       | X                     | X                              | —    | YES    | YES                     |
| Virginia Beach               | X                      | X | X | X                       | X                     | X                              | —    | YES    | YES                     |

Notes: X = presence of the event or stage.  
 \* = Even or stage present only if theory modified.  
 — = event or stage absent.

obvious pattern in Tallahassee attempts in 1973 and 1992 is the lack of an accelerator in the reform process. Tallahassee did not appear to have any of the critical events or situations suggested by Rosenbaum and Kammerer that could throw the entire community into support of reform government.

In each Tallahassee consolidation attempt, both the pro-consolidation and the anti-consolidation groups ran professional campaigns. Nashville, in its second attempt, had campaigns that were both for and against consolidation. The outcome of the campaign reveals that a professional campaign is not as important to success as a clear and definite accelerator. The result confirms Rosenbaum and Kammerer's interpretation of Chalmers Johnson's theory of revolutionary change. It also provides evidence that although the extension of the Rosenbaum and Kammerer framework to include a professionally run campaign may illuminate the reasons for a consolidation attempt, the original model is robust in predicting radical change in local governance through referendum.

Rosenbaum and Kammerer's framework, thus, gives us not only those elements that are necessary for a successful attempt at a consolidation, but also those elements that lead to failure. For consolidation entrepreneurs who view consolidation as a means to change the structure of the government or to dislodge the "old guard," this may come as a warning. Consolidation is a radical change in the way government is structured and functions (Marando 1979). If there is no overarching perception of true dissatisfaction with the present government, the local citizens may opt for the *status quo*, believing perhaps that something other than complete restructuring of the government may solve the problem.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Our study provides new insights into the application of Rosenbaum and Kammerer's theory and revolutionary change in local governance. The extension of the case studies to include two of Tallahassee's attempts at consolidation provides additional evidence supporting the original Rosenbaum and Kammerer model.

Since city-county consolidation is a radical change in governance structures, community attachment and the modes of citizen problem solving can be critical. William Lyons and David Lowery (1986, 1989) identified four different responses that citizens have when faced with governmental problems: the exit response, leave and sever the relationship; the voice response, actively participate to change the conditions; the loyalty response, wait for conditions to improve; and the neglect response, withdrawal, alienation, and further distrust in the government. The response of citizens to a crises climate and power deflation are central to the reorganization process. Can citizens be mobilized to support or oppose the consolidation effort? In Tallahassee, the voter survey reported three equally divided segments of the population: a pro-consolidation segment, an anti-consolidation segment, and a segment that preferred to "wait and see." If the opposition can launch a strong campaign and the pro-consolidation camp cannot mobilize grass roots support, even the support of the elites cannot guarantee success. For revolutionary change to occur, an accelerator must be present focusing attention on governance problems and mobilizing support for change.

Our work suggests several ways that Rosenbaum and Kammerer's theory could be expanded. Elements of internal threats and external threats to local areas need to be identified. One avenue for expansion of the model is consideration of the

role of consolidation entrepreneurs in city/county consolidation efforts. Under what conditions is the support of civic and other elites important? Does it matter which elites enter, initiate, and support the process?

Consolidation entrepreneurs from different arenas can be important in the consolidation effort. Political, civic, and academic leadership can provide the stimulus to introduce the consolidation as an alternative in the reform effort in the power deflation. Their support can also provide a sustaining catalyst through the acceleration and the driving force in a campaign. We need to identify community elites that act as consolidation entrepreneurs and the interactions between these elite individuals and groups. Chalmers Johnson's theory of revolutionary change and Rosenbaum and Kammerer's extension of his approach to local government reform both stress the importance of the accelerating event. It is unclear whether these consolidation entrepreneurs on their own can create an accelerator.

Another important question that could prove difficult to address was raised in a public hearing in Tallahassee in 1973: do voters support or oppose consolidation as a concept or is support or opposition based only on the proposed consolidation charter? If we take the approach of Steven Maser (1985, 1998) that the municipal charter is a constitutional contract by the government with the citizens of the municipality, then we could explore the change of structure as an institutional change in the constitution. While this question has not been addressed, its answer may prove critical to our understanding of revolutionary change in metropolitan government.

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