

Voluntary Policy Coordination in a Fragmented Jurisdictional Setting

The Board of Governors for Law Enforcement Officials of Greater St. Louis

The need for interlocal coordination of efforts to improve the quality of police services, especially in America's politically fragmented suburban areas, is widely acknowledged among public administrative analysts and practitioners. The existence of multiple jurisdictions that divide the authority to produce services and, at the same time, divide the authority to allocate scarce resources are frequently viewed as a central problem for those who seek ways of managing the production of urban police services in a more efficient and effective manner.

A frequently stated hypothesis is that if a single jurisdiction's interests are threatened by a decision reached by a group of voluntarily cooperating jurisdictions, it will tend to withdraw its contribution(s) from the cooperative effort(s), thus diminishing the capacity of the collectivity to attain its objectives. This "unit veto" situation is hypothesized as a major obstacle to the introduction of new strategies to increase police effectiveness.

Introduction

A key question that emerges then, is how effective is voluntary cooperation in meeting the needs for change and joint efforts to solve urban law enforcement problems? Are the presumed disadvantages of trying to cooperate in a multiple jurisdictional setting borne out by experience?

This discussion is intended to begin the task of answering these questions. The approach taken will be to describe the origins and development of a voluntary

association of law enforcement agencies in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area whose stated objective has been the coordination of policy for law enforcement agencies in the area.¹ The Board of Governors for Law Enforcement Officials of Greater St. Louis (hereinafter called the Board of Governors or the Board) stands as evidence that voluntary coordination of law enforcement policy (an area where stiff resistance might be expected) can be a viable way of improving the effectiveness of urban law enforcement efforts.

Development of Board

The Board of Governors grew out of an effort to coordinate the policy-making activities of two other extant associations of law enforcement agencies in St. Louis County: the St. Louis County Law Enforcement Officials' Association, founded in the 1930s, and the North St. Louis County Law Officers' Association. During 1958, police chiefs who were members of the two associations formed the Board of Criminal Justice Administration of St. Louis County, which tended initially to be a forum for the articulation of broad policy positions of the various criminal justice officials. This association met infrequently over the next several years. As an association that provided a basis for policy coordination efforts among law enforcement agencies, the Board of Criminal Justice Administration played a limited role.

Over the first five years of the 60s, however, this association was transformed. More police chiefs joined. The orientation

shifted towards a commitment to activities that would demonstrably improve the quality of law enforcement in the St. Louis area. Ties with the St. Louis County Law Enforcement Officials' Association and the North St. Louis County Law Officers' Association were strengthened. The Board became an executive committee of the two associations. The title of the association was changed to the Board of Governors of Law Enforcement Officials of St. Louis County to reflect its more explicit commitment to law enforcement matters.

In 1963, Board members participated in the passage of the first state level minimum training statute, requiring a minimum of two weeks of training to qualify as a police officer in all counties of the first class having a charter form of government. At that time, St. Louis County was the only such county in Missouri. In 1965, members of the Board, including Chairman Peter Maniscalco, a judge in St. Louis County, were primarily responsible for the initiation of interest in an areawide cooperative arrangement to investigate serious crimes.

The nationwide concern stemming from the riots in the Watts area of Los Angeles during the summer of 1964 was reflected in the Board's creation of County Code 1000 in 1965, which is a civil disaster and riot control association. The Board has continued to maintain a close relationship with that organization—establishing a County Code 1000 Committee on the Board to facilitate the coordination necessary to maintain the association.

A second areawide problem discussed during Board meetings in 1968 and 1969 led to the formation of another organization that continues to operate in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The Greater St. Louis Narcotics Task Force (henceforth referred to as the Narcotics Task Force) was voted into existence by members of the Board on July 24, 1969. It, too, continues to maintain a close relationship with the Board through a Narcotics Task Force Committee that was created from Board members during 1969.

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The creation of these three associations over a four-year period might indicate that the Board had established an important role for itself by 1969. Nevertheless, by that year, the Board was confronted with a growing number of challenges to its "authority" as a policy-making body for law enforcement agencies in the St. Louis area. Chief Mickey Borsler, then chairman of the Board of Governors, acted with the approval of the Board to obtain a certificate of incorporation, so that from May 27, 1969, the Board has been a non-profit corporation. The name of the organization was changed to the Board of Governors for Law Enforcement Officials of Greater St. Louis. A constitution and bylaws were drawn up. At the same time as the Board was incorporated, the sheriffs of Franklin County, Jefferson County, and St. Charles County were invited to become members of the Board.

The incorporation of the Board has served to increase its authority over the last five years. It now is recognized as a key spokesman for law enforcement agencies in the county. In addition, the inclusion of Jefferson, Franklin, and St. Charles County representatives on the Board made the Board's geographic domain coextensive with the designated area of the Missouri Law Enforcement Assistance Council, Region Five, a fact which suggests an awareness of the conditions under which that LEAA-sponsored funding agency would recognize the Board's authority as a regional policy-making body. From 1969 on, a regular working relationship with Region Five planners developed to the extent that project funds have flowed from MLEAC to various law enforcement agencies after having been requested by the Board in its capacity as the policy-coordination body for police agencies in Region Five.

To facilitate this working relationship, the Board established a permanent committee for liaison with MLEAC, Region Five. In addition to this committee and the two created in conjunction with the formation of the Narcotics Task Force and County Code 1000, there are three other standing committees. Each of these reflects additional interests that the Board has developed over the years: (1) Closed Circuit Television Committee—created in 1969 to facilitate the development of a network of television linkages among police departments in the St. Louis City-St. Louis County area for the purposes of facilitating information exchange and promoting training and educational programs; (2) Training Committee—a product of the Board's efforts to upgrade the level of training required of police officers in St. Louis County; and (3) Legislative Committee—responsible for the Board's efforts to implement and/or affect legislation

passed in Jefferson City (state capitol) that would either affect law enforcement in St. Louis County or law enforcement in the state as a whole.

Policy-Making Authority in Action

The development and passage of the minimum training standards law affecting all jurisdictions in St. Louis County in 1971 illustrates how the Board exercised its policy-making authority in this fragmented jurisdictional setting.

As early as 1963, members of the Board, although not responsible for the initiation of the legislation, participated in the passage of a minimum training standards bill that affected St. Louis County. The bill established as a minimum training requirement the completion of a law enforcement officer training course conducted by the county police department, the State Highway Patrol, or any accredited college course for police officers. This standard applied to all municipal officers hired in St. Louis County.

From 1963 onwards, the Board's interest in the training issue developed so that by 1966, references to sponsoring a comprehensive training bill are found in minutes of Board meetings.

"Chief Durbin (Kirkwood P.D.) suggested we sponsor a bill along the lines of an extant New Jersey law for mandatory police training on a State-wide basis. A motion was made by Chief Damos (University City P.D.) and seconded by Chief Hannebrink (Moline Acres P.D.) that the organization sponsor this bill. The motion was passed unanimously and will be recommended by the Board of Governors

to the Law Enforcement Officials of St. Louis County at their next meeting."

The Board's efforts to sponsor a state-wide training bill in 1966 resulted in the consideration of such a bill by the legislature during 1967. The bill, if passed, would have meant that the governor of the state was charged with the task of appointing a nine-man commission that would in turn have specified statewide minimum training standards. The bill did not pass, and the Board turned to the development of an alternate approach to the solution of the perceived training problem.

By 1968, a new approach to this policy issue had crystallized. Rather than asking for a state statute to ensure minimum training standards, members of the Board involved themselves in the task of reorganizing extant training facilities in the St. Louis City-St. Louis County area. The intention was to consolidate the two existing training academies: the St. Louis City Police Department academy and the St. Louis County Police Department academy, into one training facility. Because the existing city academy offered a sixteen-week course (required for all officers hired in the St. Louis City Police Department), the consolidated academy would have to offer at least this minimum. To accomplish this, the overall training requirement for the Greater St. Louis area would need to be upgraded to sixteen weeks.

A Greater St. Louis Police Training Academy Committee was created, including representatives from both of the major police departments in the St. Louis area, together with representatives from the Board of Governors. On May 22, 1969,

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Chief Eston Randolph (Ferguson Police), in his capacity as a member of the Board's Training Committee, reported that the St. Louis County Police Board and the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners had exchanged and signed a letter of agreement for the operation of the Greater St. Louis Police Training Academy.³

As plans to consolidate training facilities were being made, the Board of Governors had to confront opposition as the implications of consolidation became clear. The agencies most affected by the policy, which amounted to a sixteen-week training requirement, were those that had neither the manpower nor the resources necessary to: (1) give up a recruit for sixteen weeks to the Greater St. Louis Police Academy, incurring at minimum the salary costs for that period, or (2) finance a new recruit's basic training as well as his additional expenses if he was sent elsewhere.

Neither alternative was attractive for small police departments or for the municipalities that were financing such agencies. However, after a series of discussions, the issue was resolved in favor of the larger jurisdictions in the county and the training policy was adopted. The Greater St. Louis Police Training Academy was created in 1969 and has been operating on a sixteen-week training cycle ever since.

The creation of a consolidated academy did not end the controversy. In the minutes for September 10, 1970, the following comments are recorded:

"Chief Farquharson (Normandy P.D.) observed that many of those smaller agencies feel that it is a real hardship to lose a man to the Training Academy for sixteen weeks. Mr. Gearty (then Chairman of the Board's Training Committee) stated that perhaps a State law mandating training would be possible with the State paying the salary of those attending and he hoped that legislation would be enacted next session."

It is important to note that the burden being placed on the smaller agencies in the county is not denied, but rather, a solution to the problem is offered. The solution is not to soften the requirement for smaller jurisdictions, but to make the requirement a state law, codifying it firmly. The *quid pro quo* offered is the possibility that the state would share the training costs with smaller jurisdictions.

This solution became a proposal for legislation; and the decision to support another try for state legislation went to a hand vote, with the majority favoring the formalization of a minimum training requirement with a state statute.

The Legislature Committee, headed by Chief James P. Damos, assumed responsibility for interactions between the Board and appropriate legislators in Jefferson City. The bill passed the House during the spring legislative session. By May 13, 1971, members of the Legislature Committee were able to report that House Bill 371 on training standards was in the Senate.⁴

The final statute, passed as a revision of the extant 1963 Statute 66.250, pertained to counties of the first class having a charter form of government, of which St. Louis County was the only one in Missouri at that time. Its main provision was a requirement that any new recruit hired by any law enforcement agency in St. Louis County had to meet the 640 hour training minimum within six months of being hired. A 1972 amendment did weaken the overall training requirement in that it allowed any officer who has had eight continuous years of service as a full-time police officer, no matter when this experience was acquired, to be exempted from further training.

The passage of the 1971 revision was viewed by Board members as an important step in a continuing effort to upgrade training standards for police officers in the state of Missouri. Thus, as of December 9, 1971, Chief James P. Damos, as head of the Legislature Committee, stated as a priority item the passage of statewide mandatory training for police officers, with 240 hours being the desired statewide minimum.⁵ To date, such legislation has not been passed, though the Board remains committed to the pursuit of this objective.

Policy Coordination Role

It is clear from the Board's involvement in the training issue, the creation of the Major Case Squad, County Code 1000, and the Narcotics Task Force that it has developed an important role in the policy-making process among law enforcement agencies in St. Louis County. Several reasons for this importance suggest themselves.

Member agencies are acknowledged as being among the best police departments

in St. Louis County. In a survey of over 700 police officers employed in 29 jurisdictions in the St. Louis area conducted during 1972, respondents were asked which three departments were the top three in the city-county area.⁶ The chiefs of eleven of the top fourteen departments are also members of the Board of Governors, a fact which adds prestige to the Board and probable weight to its policy recommendations.

A second source of the Board's influence can be attributed to its relationship with Region Five of the Missouri Law Enforcement Assistance Council. As a result of the Board's incorporation and the extension of the geographical area for which it plays a policy-coordination role, it assumed a position as a formally constituted representative for law enforcement agencies throughout Region Five. In this role, the Board has acted as an administrator for a series of grants that have focused on a variety of regionally oriented law enforcement activities in the St. Louis area. In effect, its ability to attract Law Enforcement Assistance Administration funds created a source of influence for the Board with respect to other law enforcement agencies in Region Five.

The active role of the Board and the apparent willingness to share the burden of law enforcement problems that are beyond the management capabilities of any single department, do not support assertions that emphasize the generalized resistance to change and the inability of agencies to coordinate their efforts in multiple jurisdictional settings.

There is a definite need to learn more about metropolitan areas where voluntary coordination has developed into an effective problem-solving method. Given the need for institutional arrangements that can manage the formidable law enforcement problems in our urban areas and the fact that urban jurisdictions are not likely to give up their autonomy, it seems quite reasonable to expend effort in learning how voluntary coordination develops. It may be possible to "transplant" this mode of coordination once it is examined carefully where it is operational. Indeed, the Major Case Squad that was formed in the St. Louis area in 1965 was modeled on the Kansas City Metro Squad. Since 1965, the Major Case Squad idea has been transplanted successfully in Topeka, Kansas, and Des Moines, Iowa.⁷ ★

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²Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting, October 18, 1968.

³Board Minutes, May 22, 1969.

⁴Board Minutes, May 13, 1971.

⁵Board Minutes, December 9, 1971.

⁶For a description of the study, see: Elinor Ostrom, Roger B. Parks, and Dennis C. Smith "A Multi-Strata, Similar Systems Design for Measuring Police Performance," a paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, May 2-5, 1973.

⁷The existence of other multi-jurisdictional investigative asso-

ciations has been documented in research conducted jointly by the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University and the Center for Regional and Urban Studies at the University of North Carolina. Their police services study, focusing on 200 metropolitan areas, has discovered several other major case squads, in addition to the ones in St. Louis and Kansas City. Descriptions of these investigative organizations are in: Workshop Reports, Bulletins 3 and 4, Bloomington, Ind.: Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, August, 1975 and May, 1976.