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Police Quarterly 2011 14: 407 originally published online 4 October 2011

DOI: 10.1177/1098611111423744

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Police Quarterly
14(4) 407-430
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DOI: 10.1177/1098611111423744
<http://pqx.sagepub.com>



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Abstract

Collaboration between law enforcement agencies, at all levels of government, has been identified as a salient component of post-September 11 policing. This study surveys a representative sample of Texas police chiefs concerning their perceptions of the level of collaboration that is occurring between their respective departments and federal agencies. Results suggest that the majority of chiefs hold generally low perceptions of federal-local collaboration. Furthermore, regression analyses show that preparedness and departmental strategy perceptions are predictive of federal-local collaboration. Regarding structural factors, chiefs of large departments as well as university departments are more likely to report higher levels of collaboration with federal agencies. Policy implications and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords

collaboration, homeland security, police chiefs, policing, federal law enforcement

It has been argued that the most critical component in preparing against terrorist threats is collaboration (Pelfrey, 2005). Similarly, members of Congress, numerous policy analysts, and the 9/11 Commission have all noted the failure of relevant agencies to act jointly and “connect the dots” as major factors in the breakdown of America’s security system on September 11, 2001 (Kean & Hamilton, 2004; Kettl, 2007). Though federal law enforcement is considered to have the primary role in fighting

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terrorism (Stuntz, 2002), local police have been hailed as the first line of defense in the war on terror (Bratton, Kelling, & Eddy, 2007). Furthermore, it has been recognized that all terrorism begins as a local event (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2005). For any successful national homeland security strategy, then, the importance of including local police cannot be overstated.

The necessity of local police in homeland security efforts is not limited to terrorism. Consequence management, which can be defined as the actions taken by governmental agencies to deal with the aftermath of major emergencies (Goodman, 1999; Taylor, Rowe, & Lewis, 1999)—or what Birkland (1997) refers to as focusing events¹—also entails natural disasters and other nonterrorism catastrophes. Although local law enforcement might simply be the backstop in countering such problems, several proposed homeland security strategies have recognized that preparing for these instances can be just as challenging to the protection of the American people as another September 11 attack (Department of Homeland Security, 2007, 2008; Office of Domestic Preparedness, 2003; Office of Homeland Security, 2002; Oliver, 2007). And like terrorism, natural catastrophes are not bound by jurisdictional lines; organizational boundaries concerning roles and responsibilities become blurred. Successful responses, then, require the relevant agencies from multiple regions with various specialties to work together, that is, collaborate.² This is especially true for agencies operating at the local and federal levels of government.

The perceived benefits of federal-local affiliation were recognized long before the September 11 attacks, however. Almost exclusively related to the traditional crime control function of policing, the touted incentives have included: the coordination of multistate investigations (Abrams, 1983; Conly, 1989); avoiding bureaucratic collisions (Geller & Morris, 1992); federal assistance in investigating syndicate crime, high-tech offenses, and street violence (Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime, 1981; Geller & Morris, 1992; Morris, 1989); additional manpower to federal law enforcement as well as federal access to local intelligence (Bocklet, 1991; Russell-Einhorn, Ward, & Seeherman, 2000); an increase in public reputation for local agencies (Geller & Morris, 1992); the use of federal remedies in cases initially accepted by local authorities (Bocklet, 1991; Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1990); and, perhaps most important, the numerous fiscal opportunities available to local agencies when collaborating with the federal government, particularly in the form of forfeited assets and grants (Geller & Morris, 1992; Richman, 2006; Worrall, 2001).

Thus, because of the aforementioned purported incentives, and chiefly due to the recent calls heralding agencies responsible for dealing with terrorism threats to increase collaboration, it is important to assess the effectiveness of extant federal-local partnerships. Although using traditional measures such as the number of arrests, prosecutions, or convictions produced through collaborative efforts might be the more common method of assessment in an evidence-based age of policy evaluation, the opinions of criminal justice officials involved in collaborative processes are equally important. As noted by Vaughn (1993), who examined the opinions of correctional administrators regarding prison overcrowding, criminal justice policy is frequently formulated

without the insight of criminal justice officials. Since they are the ones who are tasked with turning policy into action, their opinions should be deemed instructive when policies are being devised. Furthermore, traditional measures lack the ability to provide as rich an understanding of the collaborative process and its *perceived* utility as compared to a metric that focuses more on emotive responses. Even if different agencies are actively involved in joint endeavors, with formal agreements existing between them, that alone is not evidence that meaningful information sharing and cooperation is occurring. Improper implementation has consistently compromised the effectiveness of crime and criminal justice policies (see Walker, 2006).

The goal of the current research is to add to the knowledge base associated with federal-local partnerships by surveying 208 Texas police chiefs as to their perceptions of the level of collaboration that exists between their departments and federal agencies.³ This exploratory study will inform the relevant participants in the policy-making process as to the attitudes of police chiefs concerning collaborative efforts with federal law enforcement agencies as well as to the factors related to such attitudes. Although important to all federal-local collaborative schemes, collaboration is especially vital to homeland security, wherein no single agency is solely responsible, and the results here can serve as a foundation for devising strategies to improve interagency collaboration.

Federalism and Fragmentation

The level of fragmentation that exists in the American criminal justice system, principally within its law enforcement component, is unparalleled—setting it apart from all other justice systems in the Western world. Though there are a few mechanisms that create some degree of commonality, such as the U.S. Constitution as well as federal laws and grants, there is no centralized authority responsible for coordinating the cornucopia of law enforcement agencies existing at every level of government. As of 2004, 12,766 local police departments, 3,067 sheriff's offices, 49 general service state law enforcement agencies, 1,481 special jurisdiction agencies (e.g., transit police, harbor police park rangers, and campus security forces, to name a few), and 513 other agencies (primarily Texas constables) were operating in the United States (Reaves, 2007).

At the federal level, there is no clear consensus as to how many agencies employ *law enforcement* officers. The debate surrounds the specific roles and responsibilities that have been allocated to federal personnel. Using different criteria, the precise number of federal law enforcement agencies has been estimated to be 110 (Revell, 1990, as cited in Geller & Morris, 1992), 141 (Abell, 1988), and even as high as 200 (Abrahams, 1986). When examining only those agencies that employ full-time personnel authorized to make arrests and carry firearms, however, the number shrinks to 65, which includes offices of inspector general but excludes military branches (Reaves, 2006).

Evident from the disparity between the number of agencies extant at each level of government, crime control largely falls under the domain of local police. Although it is sometimes identified as a responsibility equally shared by state and local authorities, it is the local police that are tasked with serving as the chief providers of protective services (Richman, 2006; Stuntz, 2002) and, thus, the vast majority of law enforcement expenditures derive from local governments (Perry, 2010). This dominant role of local government in crime control derives from the political doctrine of federalism, which is expressed in the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and concerns the relationships and the division of power between national and state governments, delineating the sovereignty of each (Hills, 2005; Marion & Oliver, 2006).⁴ Specifically, the Tenth Amendment reserves powers not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution to the states—administration of criminal justice, primarily policing, being one of those reserved powers. Although federalism allows for local input on policy making and checks and balances to be placed on governmental authority, it can also serve as a source of tremendous inefficiency, resulting in the duplication of services, inconsistent standards, and, most relevant to the current discussion, uncoordinated crime control efforts—that is, many of the problems that collaboration is theorized to remedy. In fact, it can be argued that if it were not for the extreme fragmentation resulting from American federalism, there would be less of a need for collaboration.

In an era of homeland security for policing (see Oliver, 2007; Stewart & Morris, 2009), the continued disconnect between the various law enforcement agencies has become more problematic. For instance, in July, 2001, September 11 hijacker Mohamed Atta was stopped by Florida police for speeding. The officer, unaware that Atta had an outstanding bench warrant for his arrest in another jurisdiction, merely admonished Atta and sent him on his way (Hickman & Reaves, 2003). Stories in the popular press suggest that relations within the federal law enforcement family are just as strained, particularly between two of the largest agencies: the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (see Emery, 2009; Markon, 2008). What is most troubling perhaps is that such feuding exists even after the passage of sweeping national legislation and the creation of the largest bureaucracy within the past 50 years, whose primary purposes were to streamline information sharing and facilitate “connecting the dots.” Although the focus of this article concerns federal-local relations, it is important to note the aforementioned communication problems and infighting within particular levels of government since they can undoubtedly adversely affect how an organization communicates with those outside of its particular governmental domain.

A Brief History of Federal-Local Relations

The recent emphasis on federal-local law enforcement collaboration primarily concerns dealing with homeland security-related issues, but one of the first collaborative schemes occurred in 1930 and involved local police providing their crime data to the FBI for its Uniform Crime Reports program. Many cooperative endeavors

soon followed, including the founding of the FBI's National Police Academy in 1935 that offered training to local police officers as well as the convening of several national, blue-ribbon commissions that provided the reform agenda for modern police departments. One of the most significant commissions was the 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, which spurred the creation of the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, providing significant financial assistance to state and local law enforcement (Feeley & Sarat, 1980; Marion & Oliver, 2006).

In the 1980s, in addition to its continuing economic support to lower levels of government, federal authorities began to take on more of a direct operational role in combating violent crime.⁵ As recommended by the 1981 report of the Task Force on Violent Crime, federal law enforcement began to devote more resources to prosecuting narcotics, urban youth gangs, and firearms violations in attempt to target violent offenders. Although many of the laws necessary to do so were already on the books, more were soon passed that increased existing sentences (e.g., the Comprehensive Crime Control Acts of 1984 and 1990, the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, and the Safe Streets and Neighborhoods Act of 2000). And backed by the authority of these statutes, a cornucopia of collaborative federal-local law enforcement efforts ensued: the creation of High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) programs in 1988, Project Triggerlock in 1991, Operation Cease Fire in 1996, Project Exile in 1997, and Project Safe Neighborhoods in 2000, to name a few—all of which targeted criminal activity involving firearms, gangs, and/or narcotics, with the ultimate aim of curbing violent crime.

This increased involvement of the federal government in the area of crime control has brought about what has been referred to as the “federalization of crime” (Kappeler & Miller-Potter, 2004; Meese, & DeHart, 1996; Richman, 2000, 2006; Task Force on the Federalization of Criminal Law, 1998). Although some disagree with this assessment (see Stacy & Dayton, 1997), more than 40% of federal criminal legislation enacted since the Civil War has passed since 1970, and approximately 95% of all federal criminal cases in 1997 could have been tried in state courts (Task Force on the Federalization of Criminal Law, 1998). Furthermore, the federal government's share of justice spending rose from 11.5% (US\$1.2 billion) in 1971 to 16.2% (US\$41.2 billion) in 2007—a 3,333% dollar amount increase (Perry, 2010; U.S. Department of Justice, 1984). This increase of federal expenditures is primarily due to the growth of payments to state and local governments under criminal justice grant programs. Although not earmarked for any specific federal-local law enforcement collaborative program, these grants allow the federal government to strategically influence criminal justice policy at the state and local levels. Some of the more prominent policing-oriented federal grant programs of the past 40 years have included the Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP), the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), the Universal Hiring Program under the Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS),⁶ and the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP).

The aforementioned expansion of federal spending as well as collaboration have undoubtedly affected the division of powers between national and local governments, redrawing the lines of responsibility over criminal matters that were previously deemed indelible. And though the history of challenges to federalism has often been told as one of the federal government encroaching upon traditional state powers, the opposite has recently been witnessed, specifically in the area of immigration (Ludden, 2008; Tillman, 2007). The same could be stated regarding the area of homeland security, an issue that has traditionally fallen under the exclusive domain of the federal government; however, unlike immigration enforcement, federal authorities have been more active in requesting, and more receptive to receiving, assistance from state and local agencies when it comes to preventing terrorism and disaster preparedness (Myers, 2009; Thatcher, 2005; Thomas, 2010).

Homeland Security–Related Collaboration

From 2003 to 2005, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), through support from the COPS office, conducted a national survey of law enforcement executives; the participants were also involved in a series of roundtable discussions, which focused on a variety of homeland security–related topics. The finished product was a five-part white paper, *Protecting Your Community From Terrorism: Strategies for Local Law Enforcement*. In the report that focused on local-federal collaboration, local law enforcement executives maintained that there was mostly unilateral information sharing occurring between their agencies and the federal government; that is, local agencies were channeling information to the federal government but very little was being provided to them in return (Murphy & Plotkin, 2003).

Although participation in a multiagency task force such as a JTTF is believed to facilitate collaboration by breaking down communication barriers between the participating law enforcement agencies (Goodman, 2008; Phillips, 1999), the typical JTTF model was a major source of criticism for the aforementioned PERF study participants. The JTTFs are made up of FBI agents, state and local law enforcement officials, and professionals from other government agencies whose primary objective is to identify and target for prosecuting terrorists and terrorist organizations (Mueller, 2003). Other responsibilities include gathering evidence, making arrests, collecting and sharing intelligence, and providing security for special events (FBI, 2004). Local executives, however, claimed that their agencies were not being furnished with substantive feedback as to how the information they supplied to the feds was being used and what, if any, results it produced. Other complaints were that the typical JTTF model limited the involvement of local agencies to only a few officers, restricting the communication process—and that the few officers assigned to the JTTFs, due to security clearance restrictions, were not always able to pass relevant information on to their superiors. And participating FBI officials agreed: Local-federal partnerships were believed to be lacking in collaboration, and the JTTFs failed to fully tap into the resources that local

law enforcement could provide in mitigating terrorism (Murphy & Plotkin, 2003). In short, many of the problems that seemed to stymie collaboration between the two levels of government could be characterized as relating to mutual trust.

In the years that have passed since the comprehensive PERF project, it might be contended that improvements have been made in federal-local collaborative efforts, particularly concerning the JTTFs. For instance, on September 11, 2001, there were only 36 FBI-led JTTFs (Office of Inspector General, 2003). Since that time the number has grown to 102 (Goodman, 2008). Riley, Treverton, Wilson, and Davis (2002), in a national survey, found that, since September 11, approximately one third of local agencies have collaborated with JTTFs, with larger agencies collaborating at a greater rate than smaller agencies. Although not exclusively pertaining to JTTFs, Foster and Corder (2005), in their national survey of local and state law enforcement agencies, discovered that 87% of large local agencies stated they were interacting more with federal agencies since September 11, compared to only 28% of small and medium-sized agencies. Seventy five percent of state agencies reported that their assignment of personnel to federal task forces, some of which included JTTFs, increased or significantly increased since September 11. Furthermore, it has been claimed that the cross-functionalism inherent within JTTFs has resulted in several successes, such as apprehensions related to terrorist plots in Buffalo, New York (Hancock, 2002), Rockford, Illinois (Fitzgerald, 2006), and Fort Dix, New Jersey (Russakoff & Eggen, 2007), and though not all directly deriving from JTF investigations, the Heritage Foundation notes 19 major terrorist plots that have been disrupted by federal agencies since September 11 (Carafano, 2007). Despite these thwarted attacks, the utility and purpose of JTTFs continue to be questioned; specifically, concerns have been raised about the actual threat posed by some of their targets as well as the legality of their operations (see Lawson, 2008). Here, police chiefs were surveyed as to whether their departments had any sworn officers assigned to JTTFs.

As chronicled in the preceding pages, though joint efforts between local and federal law enforcement are nothing new, calls for increased collaboration have grown louder since the terrorist attacks of September 11. The current study seeks to gain a clearer understanding of federal-local collaboration by examining the perceptions of a sample of Texas police chiefs. Rather than simply measuring the presence of initiatives that are collaborative in nature, it asks the chiefs to rate the quality of cooperation, communication, information sharing, and trust that is occurring between their respective departments and federal agencies.

Methods

Data and Instrument

The data used in this exploratory study were obtained from self-administered surveys of 208 chiefs of municipal (75.5%), school district (15.4%), and university (9.1%)

police departments in Texas. The participants were undergoing the Texas Police Chief Leadership Series (TPCLS) and the New Chief Development Program (NCDP). Both the TPCLS and the NCDPS are operated by the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT)—a legislatively created institution whose primary purpose is to develop the management and organizational skills of current and future Texas police chiefs. During the time of data collection (over a 5-month period in 2007), 271 chiefs went through the two training programs with 242 agreeing to participate (a response rate of 89%) and 208 completing usable surveys. The survey instrument entailed 47 questions, along with the several subitems, measuring homeland security–related initiatives extant in departments and the perceptions of executives. Space was also provided on the survey for any comments that respondents might have had concerning the research study.

Because the TPCLS and NCDPS are mandated programs (every 2 years all Texas police chiefs are required to participate in the TPCLS and all newly appointed chiefs must enroll in the NCDPS), the findings here can be deemed representative of the targeted population—Texas police chiefs and their respective departments. In fact, the current sample represents nearly 20% of the state's 1,052 chiefs of municipal, school district, and university police departments (as cited in Webb, 2007); however, because chiefs are allowed to choose the particular times when they will participate in the programs, and because this is a state-level case study, caution should be taken when making inferences to nonparticipating chiefs and agencies within and outside the state.

Measures

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable used in the current work is a 4-item index that measures attitudes concerning the nature of collaboration that is occurring between participants' agencies and federal agencies. Specifically, the chiefs were asked how they would rate the level of "cooperation," "communication," "information sharing," and "trust" between their departments and federal agencies. The responses available for each item were "very good," "good," "fair," and "poor" and were coded so that higher values indicate higher rating levels. Because the items were categorical, not continuous, polychoric principle components analysis (PCA) was conducted to examine the extent of variance explained by the items and to produce factor scores (or component scores) to be used in the subsequent regression model (see Kolenikov & Angeles, 2004). To establish the reliability of the PCA results, the recommended methods of examining bivariate correlations among all of the items (each exceeded .30), assessing Eigenvalues (components with values greater than 2 were retained), and ensuring component loadings exceeded .40 were employed (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; see Appendix: Part A). The same methods were conducted for all composite measures used here.

Independent Variables

A number of independent variables were included in the model to determine which are predictive of chiefs' attitudes concerning the level of collaboration that exists between their departments and federal agencies. The first two variables of interest concern the type and size of each respondent's agency. Type of agency was dummy coded, with subjects being grouped as chiefs of "municipal departments," "independent school districts," or "university/college campuses"—the latter serving as the reference category. Agency size was recorded as a categorical/ordinal variable via a sworn officer population classification scheme used by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Education (TCLEOSE; 1 to 5 officers = very small, 6 to 25 officers = small, 26 to 50 officers = medium, and more than 50 officers = large). The attributes were also dummy coded, with "large" serving as the reference category.

Respondents were asked about the extent of homeland security-related initiatives present within their agencies. Homeland security initiatives, even if not exclusively pertaining to federal-local affiliation, could potentially affect relationships with federal agencies. As mentioned at the outset of this article, though, the mere presence of collaborative schemes does not ensure meaningful collaboration. From a list of 10 initiatives, the chiefs were asked to identify which ones their departments had adopted since September 11, 2001. For regression analysis, this composite measure was included in the model as a factor score.

Much has been written regarding the role of policing in homeland security (Lee, 2010; Oliver, 2007; Pelfrey, 2007; Stewart & Morris, 2009; Thatcher, 2005). A chief believing that homeland security has become a core function of policing, or perhaps the most dominant, might have taken affirmative steps in improving the quality of interaction between their respective departments and federal agencies. As such, two variables measuring police chiefs' perceptions about homeland security as the dominant strategy of policing were included in the model.⁷ Specifically, chiefs were posed a series of questions, making up composite measures, which asked whether they felt homeland security was their departments' dominant strategy (D-HS) and whether they felt the police institution, in general, had adopted homeland security as the dominant strategy (PI-HS). Like the outcome measure, factor scores were used to represent these two variables.

Variables regarding threat levels and preparedness perceptions were also examined for their effects on the outcome measure. Respondents were surveyed as to the perceived likelihood of terrorist incidents taking place within their jurisdictions or regions within the next 5 years (threat levels) as well as to the extent they felt their agencies were prepared to handle major emergencies. These variables, too, were composite measures and represented by factors scores within the model. Similar to the possible relationship between homeland security strategy and collaboration perceptions mentioned above, it could be expected that chiefs who perceive their jurisdictions or regions as potential terrorist targets hold more favorable attitudes about collaboration

with federal agencies than those who do not—the logic being that higher threat levels are more likely to compel police executives to work more aggressively and cooperatively with federal agencies. No particular result was projected concerning the impact of preparedness perceptions on the outcome variable, however.

Previous research has noted the influence of external funding on the creation of specialized units and policy formation (Katz, Maguire, & Roncek, 2002; Pelfrey, 2007). It could be expected, then, that the presence of federal funding would lead to more favorable attitudes about federal-local collaboration. Consequently, respondents were asked whether their departments received any homeland security–related grants since September 11. This variable was dummy coded (i.e., received funding = 1, no funding = 0). Lastly, based on the notion that if channels of communication and information sharing are inhibited by legal constraints, negative perceptions of collaboration will result, respondents were asked whether they held security clearances (security clearance = 1, no security clearance = 0).

Analysis

The goal of the research is to examine the attitudes of law enforcement executives concerning homeland security–related issues and to determine which factors are related to perceptions concerning federal-local collaboration. First, descriptive statistics on all variables will be presented to better understand the sample of chiefs included in the current research. And second, an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model will be computed to individually assess the impact of the predictor variables on perceptions of federal-local collaboration. This statistical technique was deemed appropriate considering the continuous nature of the outcome variable. Prior to computation, variance inflation factors as well as tolerance statistics were examined to ensure that multicollinearity was not a problem for the model. Furthermore, evaluations of each individual variable and bivariate relationship were conducted to determine multivariate normality. To avoid problems related to missing data and extreme scores, only complete cases without outliers were included in the model. Finally, to ensure a good model fit, residual analysis was performed.

Findings

In Table 1, the mean rating of the dependent variable is displayed along with the mean ratings of the predictors recorded as composite measures and categorical variables. Although factor scores are used in the regression model for the composite measures, mean ratings are displayed here for descriptive purposes. The overall mean for the outcome measure (1.39) suggests that chiefs hold slightly negative views concerning the level of collaboration that exists between their departments and federal agencies. This finding was also communicated qualitatively in the “comments” section of the survey. One respondent held that “There is actually no communication between fed [sic] and small agencies.” The same respondent, referring to critical infrastructure in

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics: Dependent and Independent Variables

Dependent variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Type of agency	<i>N</i>	%
Federal collaboration	1.39	0.86	Municipal	157	75.5
Independent variable			ISD	32	15.4
Homeland security initiatives	3.90	2.00	University/college	19	9.1
D-HS	1.11	0.54	Sworn officer population		
PI-HS	2.11	0.55	Very small	91	43.5
Preparedness	1.04	0.53	Small	81	38.9
Likelihood of attack	1.21	0.71	Medium	17	8.2
			Large	19	9.1
			Received homeland security grant	71	34.1
			Has security clearance	28	13.5

Note: *N* = 208.

his jurisdiction, noted that “There has been NO contact with [my department] and fed [sic] regarding these issues.” Another chief reported that there was “almost no federal assistance to small communities. They control your food chain and [they need] training on protection.” For the sake of brevity, not all the items in the survey pertaining to federal-local collaboration were included in the current analysis. The response count to one of those unused items, however, warrants a brief mention since it illustrates the general sentiment of federal-local collaboration: Approximately 63.3% of the chiefs disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “The FBI is effectively using local law enforcement in homeland security.” The mean rating of the dependent variable was undoubtedly affected by structural arrangements. The vast majority of the responding chiefs oversaw municipal departments ($n = 157$, 75.5%) and departments with small ($n = 81$, 38.9%) or very small officer ($n = 91$, 43.5%) populations.

Concerning homeland security initiatives and strategy perceptions, chiefs implemented only 3.9 of the initiatives, on average, from the list provided, and there was a generally low level of agreement that homeland security was the dominant strategy for their respective departments (1.11). There was a higher level of agreement, however, with the notion that homeland security was the dominant strategy for the entire police institution (2.11). And though preparedness perceptions were low (1.04), respondents felt that the likelihood of a terrorist attack on their jurisdictions or regions was unlikely (1.21). Lastly, both grant recipients ($n = 71$, 34.1%) and chiefs with security clearances ($n = 28$, 13.5%) were in the minority.

Significant differences were found in several of the variables across sworn officer population categories (see Table 2). Post hoc tests revealed that chiefs of very small agencies had significantly lower federal collaboration perceptions than chiefs of all

Table 2. Means and Percentages of Select Variables Across Sworn Officer Population

	Very small M (SD)	Small M (SD)	Medium M (SD)	Larger M (SD)	ANOVA
Federal collaboration	1.11 (0.77)	1.47 (0.85)	1.75 (0.85)	1.93 (0.80)	7.76***
Homeland security initiatives	3.27 (2.1)	3.97 (2.2)	5.17 (2.1)	5.80 (1.8)	9.64***
D-HS	1.15 (0.58)	1.05 (0.48)	1.05 (0.64)	1.21 (0.51)	0.68
PI-HS	2.08 (0.55)	2.09 (0.53)	2.27 (0.47)	2.11 (0.58)	0.58
Preparedness	0.92 (0.53)	1.00 (0.45)	1.30 (0.52)	1.51 (0.50)	9.15***
Likelihood of attack	1.21 (0.69)	1.15 (0.71)	1.16 (0.78)	1.45 (0.72)	0.96
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
Received homeland security grant	19 (20.8)	24 (29.6)	11 (64.7)	17 (89.4)	37.6***
Has security clearance ^a	7 (7.69)	9 (11.1)	4 (23.5)	8 (42.1)	

Note: $N = 208$. ANOVA = analysis of variance.

a. Two cells had expected counts of less than 5.

*** $p < .001$.

other-sized agencies. Furthermore, large and medium-sized agencies had implemented significantly more homeland security initiatives than very small agencies, and only large agencies had significantly more initiatives than small agencies. Concerning preparedness perceptions, chiefs of very small and small agencies reported that they were less prepared to handle the aftermaths of major emergencies in relation to chiefs of large agencies. A similar relationship was found between chiefs of very small and medium-sized agencies. Lastly, differences in sworn officer populations were related to the rewarding of homeland security grants, with large and medium-sized agencies more likely to receive grants than expected compared to the two smaller agency categories.

The next stage of analysis sought to identify variables that predict variation in the chiefs' attitudes concerning federal-local collaboration. As shown in Table 2, approximately 23% of the variance in the outcome measure was explained by the independent variables ultimately retained in the OLS regression model. Using the backward stepwise method for selection, the variables concerning the extent of homeland security initiatives and received funding were excluded. Cutoff criteria for inclusion in the model were based on p (removal) $\geq .2$ significance levels. Of the predictor variables preserved in the model, four were related to a statistically significant change in chiefs' attitudes concerning federal-local collaboration. The most robust predictors were related to organizational structure. Chiefs of large agencies in relation to chiefs of very small agencies maintained more favorable attitudes about the level of collaboration that was occurring between their departments and federal authorities ($p < .01$). And chiefs of university police departments were more likely than those of ISD and municipal departments to hold favorable attitudes about their collaborative relationships

Table 3. OLS Regression Model

	Federal collaboration	
	β	Robust SE
D-HS	0.26**	0.086
PI-HS	0.16	0.097
Preparedness perceptions	0.21*	0.088
Threat level	-0.09	0.052
Agency type		
University	0.58*	0.294
Agency size		
Small	-0.51	0.344
Very small	-1.13*	0.332
R^2	0.227	

Note: Note: $N = 208$. Reference category for agency size is "large."

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

with federal agencies ($p < .05$).⁸ Chiefs with a higher level of agreement on his or her department's dominant strategy being homeland security also had a significant ($p < .05$) and positive impact on perceptions concerning federal-local collaboration. Lastly, preparation perceptions significantly contributed to the model ($p < .05$); that is, chiefs believing that their departments were better prepared for responding to emergencies were more likely to score higher on the outcome measure.⁹

Discussion

Although the benefits of increased collaboration between local and federal law enforcement agencies have long been recognized, the events of September 11 highlighted the dire consequences associated with fragmentation and have renewed efforts to improve information sharing, communication, and cooperation within the American law enforcement industry. Most of the research that has addressed collaboration has been descriptive, focusing exclusively on the presence of collaborative schemes or examining the effectiveness of specific joint operations using a variety of outcome measures. Although these approaches are undoubtedly appropriate and produce meaningful findings, they fail to illustrate the perceived "value" of federal-local collaboration. Recognizing that the presence of formal cooperation-inducing policies alone is not indicative of meaningful collaboration, this study set out to examine the perceptions of local police chiefs concerning their departments' relationships with federal law enforcement and to identify any significant predictors of those perceptions. Being in a post-September 11 era of policing, the current research also sought to collect information on an array of homeland security-related attitudes and policies.

Concerning those variables directly related to federal-local collaboration, descriptive analyses suggest that most of the Texas police chiefs included in the sample maintained generally low perceptions of the level of collaboration that is occurring between their agencies and federal law enforcement. This finding follows the opinions of many of the roundtable participants in the PERF project (see Murphy & Plotkin, 2003), suggesting that, almost a decade later, there is still room for considerable improvement regarding collaborative relations between local and federal authorities. Descriptive analyses also show that most of the respondents did not have security clearances. Unlike the participants in the PERF project, however, the chiefs here did not appear to view security clearances, or the lack thereof, as major impediments to effective communication with federal agencies.¹⁰ These relatively uncritical views of security clearances could be attributed to improvements made in the way the FBI disseminates sensitive information or the national increase in the number of state and local law enforcement officers holding security clearances (Hedgpeth, 2010)—moves that could have thawed relations between the two levels of government concerning this issue.

On average, chiefs implemented only 3.9 of the homeland security–related initiatives from the list provided. Within the initiatives index, one item addressed whether chiefs had assigned officers to a FBI-led JTTF. Results show that only approximately 6% of the respondents ($n = 13$) belonged to departments that allocated officers to such joint operations. Although the incidence of collaboration with JTTFs reported here is much lower than what was discovered in the national survey conducted by Riley et al. (2002), it should be noted the present data represent officers officially assigned to JTTFs; the measures employed by Riley et al., on the other hand, included collaborations in any form—such as assistance in investigations, training, and information sharing, not simply the formal assignment of local officers. Future research would benefit by including a more comprehensive measure of collaboration with JTTFs. Another limitation of the current study and one that can be addressed in future research concerns particularizing interactions between local law enforcement and the 65 different federal agencies whose employees are authorized to make arrests and carry firearms. Here, chiefs were asked about relations with “federal agencies.” It is reasonable to conclude that all relations with the various federal agencies are not equal.¹¹

Multivariate analysis reveals that the best predictor of chiefs’ attitudes concerning federal-local collaboration is agency size. That is, chiefs of large agencies in relation to very small agencies were significantly more likely to score higher on the Federal-Local Collaboration Index. This finding was not surprising considering the influence of the external environment on policing (Crank & Langworthy, 1992), and large agencies typically police the most complex environments (Goldstein, 1977)—complexities that challenge traditional closed-system behaviors and require increased interaction with external organizations (Katz & Kahn, 1978). In addition, cultural differences might influence rural police to be less accepting of, and less likely to share their information with, outsiders (Payne, Berg, & Sun, 2005; Weisheit, Well, & Falcone, 1995). Although “small” is not always tantamount to “rural” (Schafer, Burruss, & Giblin, 2009), the vast majority of chiefs in the current research were not employed in departments within

metropolitan statistical areas. Alternatively, the attitudes of chiefs of very small agencies could be attributed to the federal government's shift in focus from supporting community policing, a strategy applicable to all jurisdictions, to terrorism prevention, a responsibility perceived to fall under the exclusive purview of large agencies (Ludwig & Donahue, 2007; Oliver & Stewart, 2004). This explanation is consistent with authorities in smaller jurisdictions who have voiced their concern over not being able to compete with larger agencies when it comes to obtaining external homeland security funding (Kettl, 2003).¹² The insignificant impact of homeland security grants on federal-local collaboration perceptions, however, illustrates that homeland security funding is not the only form of federal support available to local police. Future research should include a wider array of collaborative measures. In addition to partitioning out the quality of relationships between the various federal agencies as mentioned above, subjects could be surveyed as to their participation in Law Enforcement Coordinating Committees, the Homeland Defense Equipment Reuse Program, the Hazardous Materials Assistance Program, or federally led task forces other than those headed by the FBI.

Moreover, OLS results reveal that chiefs of university police departments in relation to chiefs of ISD and municipal departments hold more favorable views regarding federal-local collaboration. In understanding these findings, most would point to the divergent policing environments between the types of agencies, particularly those of ISD departments, which are exclusively responsible for providing protective services to elementary and secondary students and staff within particular school districts, not fighting violent crime or terrorism. At first glance, the resulting differences between university and municipal chiefs might appear to be more perplexing. Municipal chiefs are largely independent, however, and are free to make decisions without much interference, as long as their departments are meeting the minimal expectations of those that provide them legitimacy (Crank & Langworthy, 1992). University chiefs, on the other hand, are more heavily influenced by, and are extremely beholden to, the university administration; hence, they have to be more open to federal collaboration, particularly via grants—since many universities thrive upon them. Moreover, it could be argued that universities and federal agencies lack the history concerning traditional bureaucratic boundaries and competition that has characterized most federal-local relationships (see Geller & Morris, 1992; Richman, 2006), thus making university police chiefs more accepting of federal involvement.

Chiefs with higher preparedness perceptions as well as those more likely to believe homeland security to be their respective department's dominant strategy reported higher levels of federal-local collaboration attitudes. Due to the nature of these data, causal relationships could not be determined; however, it could be surmised that positive, collaborative relationships with federal agencies strengthen the confidence of chiefs to successfully respond to major emergencies.¹³ That is, stronger beliefs that the federal government will provide assistance if needed assures chiefs that their departments will be able to effectively handle any significant contingency within their working environment. Concerning the positive impact of homeland security strategy perceptions on federal-local collaboration, Stewart and Morris (2009), using the same

data set, found similar results wherein higher scores on the Federal-Local Collaboration Index predicted higher scores on The Departmental Strategy Index.

Conclusion

In a post–September 11 age of policing, collaboration has become more critical than ever. This is true for all law enforcement agencies but especially for those operating at the local and federal levels of government (see Bratton et al., 2007; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2005; Stuntz, 2002). The results here indicate that federal-local relationships are strained with most chiefs characterizing their associations as “poor” or “fair” and that the tensions are more pronounced among smaller jurisdictions. In their shift away from supporting community policing and combating violent crime toward preventing future terrorist attacks and domestic intelligence gathering, the federal bureaucracy, then, needs to be wary about alienating small jurisdictions. Small towns and rural areas, though not having the populations to produce significant casualties as those of major metropolitan areas, do house critical infrastructures, such as nuclear power plants, dams, energy systems, water supplies, and a significant portion of this nation’s agriculture and food sector, which are attractive targets for potential terrorists (see Knickerbocker, 2002). As noted by Richman (2006), though the political doctrine of federalism has produced a fragmented and decentralized American police structure, preventing the establishment of a national police force, it does not bar the creation of a national police system. Such a system cannot take shape, however, until efforts are made to improve the level of cooperation, communication, information sharing, and trust between federal and local law enforcement agencies. The results here can be used to make such improvements.

Appendix

Part A

Federal Collaboration Index^a

1. How would you rate the level of cooperation between your department and federal agencies?
 2. How would you rate the level of communication between your department and federal agencies?
 3. How would you rate the level of information sharing between your department and federal agencies?
 4. How would you rate the level of trust between your department and federal agencies?
-

a. Eigenvalue = 3.46; α = .92; possible responses on each item ranged from “very good” to “poor.”

Part B

Homeland Security Initiatives Index^a

1. Adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
 2. Changed its mission statement to reflect homeland security responsibilities
 3. Broadened the role of an existing intelligence unit to include counterterrorism
 4. Signed/updated formal mutual aid agreements with other jurisdictions (since 9/11)
 5. Initiated, expanded, and/or participated in disaster response exercises
 6. Ensured interoperable radio emergency communications with other agencies in others jurisdictions
 7. Ensured interoperable radio emergency communications with other agencies *within* your jurisdiction
 8. Linked your offense report system to TDEX^b
 9. Conducted a local risk assessment
 10. Personnel assigned to one of the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Forces
-

a. Eigenvalue = 4.63, $\alpha = .75$. Respondents were asked about other homeland security initiatives implemented within their departments since September 11, such as whether they changed deadly force policies to deal with suicide bombers, formed a counterterrorism investigative unit other than criminal intelligence, reassigned personnel on a full-time basis to functions related to counterterrorism or homeland security, and formed an intelligence unit focused on counterterrorism; however, less than 5% of the sample responded in the affirmative to these initiatives.

b. TDEX, the Texas Data Exchange Program, is an information-sharing system available to Texas agencies. It is operated by the Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Records Service (CRS) and amasses "law enforcement incident records and non-intelligence criminal justice information" (Texas Department of Public Safety, n.d., para 1)—such as arrest reports, bookings, citations, incident reports, persons of interest, probation/parole records, and warrants—into a central database for the purpose of information sharing across jurisdictional boundaries (Texas Department of Public Safety, n.d.; "TDEX Works;" 2007).

Part C

Departmental Shift Index (D-HS)^a

1. Homeland security is the overriding strategy of my department.
 2. Countering terrorism is a top priority for my department.
 3. Investigating terrorist activity is a top priority of my department.
-

Police Institution Shift Index (PI-HS)^b

1. September 11, 2001, was a turning point for American law enforcement.
 2. Policing has entered into an era of homeland security.
 3. Homeland security is a very important strategy for policing.
-

a. Eigenvalue = 2.47; $\alpha = .83$.

b. Eigenvalue = 2.41; $\alpha = .79$.

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

Preparedness Perceptions Index^a

1. My department is well prepared to respond to a major natural disaster.
2. My department is well prepared to respond to a terrorist attack involving WMDs.
3. The officers in my department have received sufficient homeland security training.
4. My department has the equipment necessary for homeland security.
5. In the event of a major emergency, my department can mount an effective response.

Threat Index^b

1. Nuclear
2. Chemical
3. Biological
4. Radiological
5. Cyberterrorism
6. Conventional explosives
7. Military-grade weapons
8. Agroterrorism (food contaminants)
9. Agroterrorism (animal disease)

a. Eigenvalue = 3.39; $\alpha = .83$; possible responses on each item ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

b. Eigenvalue = 6.06; $\alpha = .92$; respondents were asked to indicate the likelihood of the following major terrorist incidents occurring within their jurisdiction or region within the next 5 years; possible responses ranged from “very likely” to “very unlikely; this scale was adapted from Davis et al. (2004).

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. A focusing event is one “that is sudden, relatively rare, can be reasonably defined as harmful or revealing the possibility of potentially greater future harms, inflicts harms or suggests potential harms that are or could be concentrated on a definable geographical area or community of interest, and that is known to policy makers and the public virtually simultaneously” (Birkland, 1997, p. 22).
2. The Government Accounting Office (2005) holds that “collaboration can be broadly defined as any joint activity that is intended to produce more public value than could be produced

when organizations act alone” (p. 4). Although this article focuses exclusively on collaboration between public organizations, it should be noted that collaboration between the public and private sector is crucial as well, particularly since 85% of the nation’s critical infrastructure is in the hands of private security agencies (Kean & Hamilton, 2004).

3. The term “chiefs” will be used interchangeably with “executives.”
4. In turn, state governments, through their own constitutions and bodies of legal rules, delegate most criminal justice matters to local authorities.
5. Although some level of collaboration at the operational and tactical level existed between federal and local authorities prior to the 1980s, particularly in investigations of criminal organizations operating across state lines, meaningful interaction remained relatively low (see Eisenstein, 1978; Russell-Einhorn, Ward, & Seeherman, 2000).
6. From 1995 to 1999, this program allowed for the distribution of US\$1 billion in grants each year to state and local departments for the purpose of hiring new officers to assist in the implementation of community policing (Ludwig & Donahue, 2007). To take advantage of the profusion of federal funding, many departments began to espouse the tenets of community policing, leading to what Oliver (2000) describes as the institutionalization generation of community policing—the period wherein it became the most emphasized strategy.
7. According to Oliver (2007), a homeland security strategy/model of policing is one wherein the focus or most emphasized function concerns security, antiterrorism, counterterrorism, and law and order.
8. A second OLS model was computed using “municipal departments” as the reference category. The results did not change.
9. As shown in Appendix B, one of the items of the Homeland Security Initiatives Index concerns whether the chiefs’ agencies had any officers assigned to a FBI-led JTTF. Although not depicted here, another model was computed partitioning out that item and including it as a separate predictor to ensure that its impact on the outcome measure was not being minimized by the other items in the Homeland Security Initiatives Index. Using the backward stepwise method of selection, the variable was retained in the model, but it did not have a statistically significant impact on federal-local collaboration.
10. Only 38% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “The FBI hides behind security clearances as the reason for not sharing information that could be properly given to my department if packaged correctly.” Moreover, there was only a general level of agreement among half of the sample regarding the statement, “Security clearances for local law enforcement are unnecessary if the FBI packages the information correctly.”
11. In a personal communication with a veteran police officer from a large municipal department, it was relayed to the author that relations with the ATF and DEA were markedly better than relations with the FBI and DHS.
12. It has been argued that the community policing and homeland security are not necessarily mutually exclusive and are indeed compatible on several levels (Brown, 2007; Chappell & Gibson, 2009; Lee, 2010; Lyons, 2002). In fact, after September 11, the COPS office, Regional Community Policing Institutes (RCPIs), and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) assembled conferences addressing the issue of how homeland security could be achieved through community policing initiatives (Oliver, 2004).

13. When regressed on preparation attitudes, federal collaboration was a significant predictor ($p < .01$).

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Bio

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