

Policing Integration: The inter- and intra-organizational coordination of police work

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Abstract

The thesis examines the coordination of public police organizations in an intra-national setting through interviews and observations with police officers and managers in multiple organizations in the Lower Mainland, BC, Canada, alongside documentary analysis of local, national and provincial law, policy and protocols relating to coordination. It produces a qualitative and inductive analysis of how police coordinate both within and between agencies, examining ‘interstices’ between police units and using recent ‘integration’ initiatives between public police organizations in the Lower Mainland as a focal point. It develops a recent local history of police activity and organizational change in the region; a novel typology of police organizational boundaries grounded in open-systems organizational theory; and an account of the dynamics of inter-unit coordination based on empirical findings. The thesis then sets out a governance problem for police coordination, developing the argument that coordination work is unique work and needs to be treated as such for purposes of accountability, transparency and equity of police practice in a democratic society. This governance problem is applied to broader developments in police work in Anglo-American societies, and an intellectual framework for assessing police governance under coordination is advanced.

Dedication

For Rachel and Jacob

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Table of Abbreviations

ATTF – Auto Theft Task Force

BC – British Columbia

BCAATI – British Columbia Association of Auto Theft Investigators

BET – Beat Enforcement Team

CBSA – Canada Border Services Agency

CET – Citywide Enforcement Team

CEW – Conducted Energy Weapon (e.g. Taser gun)

CFSEU – Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit

CLEU – Combined Law Enforcement Unit

CPC – Canadian Police College

CPIC – Canadian Police Information Centre

CSIS – Canadian Security Intelligence Service

Depot – RCMP training facility

DTES – Downtown Eastside (Vancouver)

DPD – Delta Police Department

FVRD – Fraser Valley Regional District

GVRD – Greater Vancouver Regional District

ICARS – Integrated Collision Analyst and Reconstruction Service

IGTF – Integrated Gang Task Force

IHIT – Integrated Homicide Investigation Team

IMPACT – Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team

ISU – Integrated Security Unit (Olympics 2010)

JFO – Joint Forces Operation

JI – Justice Institute (or JIBC, Justice Institute of British Columbia)

LMD – Lower Mainland District

MCM – Major Case Management

MDT – Mobile Data Terminal (in-car computer)

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

MPSSG – Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

NCO – Non-Commissioned Officer

NPM – New Public Management

NWPD – New Westminster Police Department

OCA – Organized Crime Agency

PRIME – Police Records Information Management Environment

RCMP – Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RDO – Regional Duty Officer

SCBCTAPS – South Coast British Columbia Transit Authority Police Service

ViCLAS – Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System

VPD – Vancouver Police Department

WVPD – West Vancouver Police Department

YVR – Vancouver Airport code

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British Columbia	<i>Police Act, RSBC 1996, Chapter 367</i>
	<i>BC Code of Professional Conduct Regulation, B.C. Reg. 205/98</i>
Ontario	<i>Interprovincial Policing Act (S.O.2009 c. 30)</i>
Canada	<i>Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. R-10</i>
	<i>Criminal Code, R.S.C., 1985, c. C-45</i>
	<i>Constitution Act, 1982, c. 11 (UK), Schedule B, Part I – Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>
United Kingdom	<i>Police Act 1996 (c 16)</i>

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Chapter 1 – Investigating Police Coordination

Introduction

Public police work creates boundaries and divisions as well as connections and networks. In their actions in and on a society, police are in one sense ‘people processing’ (Hasenfeld 1972), dividing the law-abiding from those in need of state control; filtering those in need of control between various punitive, restorative or ameliorative avenues of justice and redress; and creating citizens, denizens, and criminals through their enforcement decisions, deployment patterns, and investigation tactics (Ericson 1981; Ericson 1982; Huey 2007; Skolnick 1994). Within the sphere of police organization, police activity is separated, if also interconnected, between national and sub-national jurisdictions and locally between sub-local districts or precincts. Within districts and precincts, police share work between units of various name, specialization, and sophistication, and within units, they divide work tasks between ranks and positions. It is this latter, organizational dimension of boundary creation that motivates this thesis, especially insofar as the internal organization of police work influences the external tasks of dividing up groups and opportunities in a society.

The confluence of factors impacting on public police work, which have variously been described as late modernity (Garland 2001), post-modernity (Reiner 1992), risk society (Ericson and Haggerty 1997), and the security era (Murphy 2007), are among other things characterized by a preoccupation with coordinating the actors involved or potentially involved in policing. Policing – long since revealed in the sociological literature as a process involving much more than the activities of the public police – is now a shared responsibility between state institutions, organized private security, less-organized community groups, and atomized individuals in this era (Bayley and Shearing 1996; Brodeur 2010; Ericson 2006; Loader and Walker 2007; McLaughlin 2007; Rigakos 2005). A great deal

of ground-breaking scholarship in the past three decades of police studies have commensurately examined these new and emerging relationships between non-traditional partners in law enforcement and order maintenance (Ayling, Grabosky and Shearing 2009; Ericson and Haggerty 1997; Huey, Ericson and Haggerty 2005; Marx 1987; Sampson et al. 1988; Skinns 2005).

However, surprisingly little work has been done to understand how the often multiple and sometimes profuse public police agencies in a given society are addressing the challenges of working with one another as physical, legal and virtual distances shrink between police jurisdictions. This lack of sociological attention is understandable if all police are fundamentally doing the same job in the same way. Seen through such a lens, the networking of public police forces represents little more than a managerial effort to work around bureaucratic constraints and increase efficiency and effectiveness while maintaining the essential police mandate. Certainly, police practitioner-oriented literature on the matter supports this view (HMIC 2012; LeBeuf 2005; Plecas et al. 2011). However, such an approach misses the mark on a number of fronts.

Police work is a localized activity that, while possibly not politicized in the traditional sense (e.g. Reiner 2010), is nonetheless political in its application and outcomes (Manning 2010; Wood 2007). Police forces vary between jurisdictions not only in their size, structure, and technical sophistication, but also and importantly in their guiding philosophies, organizational histories and institutional cultures. These latter factors are particularly consequential in the ways in which police act for or against specified groups of citizens. In turn, two police forces, even those similarly organized or geographically proximal, cannot necessarily be harmonized or networked with one another without some significant push-and-pull over whose conception of police work will remain dominant in operational decision-making.

Further, even on a sub-jurisdictional level, police teams and units differ in their approach to the problems of crime and disorder. At the most obvious level, different units will have differing priorities, such that a gang unit may be preoccupied with confrontational gang enforcement, while a community policing section may prefer preventive interventions and maintaining the social health of a neighbourhood. Yet, even these disparate – if both necessary – aspects of police work are under pressure to work together as jurisdictional police organizations and national policing agencies alike seek greater control over local information (Deukmedjian and de Lint 2007; Murphy 2007). Among other things, the drive for what is commonly called ‘intelligence-led’ policing has obfuscated an otherwise healthy tension in public police work. In an ideal police organization, not all units at all times should be seeking the same goal.

If this last point seems controversial or even absurd, it is worth considering that the police as an organization should in some ways reflect the extant tensions about what constitutes good policing. This is a point that will be drawn out in subsequent chapters, and it will be reiterated regularly that a strictly managerial, unidirectional, efficacy-centred or goal-oriented view of public police work is inadequate for understanding police activity in a democratic society. The remainder of the thesis in turn cannot be understood properly outside the context of this central claim.

While remaining cognizant of the value of internal tension between police sections, the work of the public police is nonetheless in need of coordination to deal with emerging challenges. But the process of this coordination is also in need of in-depth examination. The ways in which police activity creates boundaries, coordinates priorities, and re-organizes actors to meet the dictates of this new era of policing and security will re-shape the mandate of police work and the rules and norms guiding police organizations. While the networked aspects of policing today involve many non-police actors, public police still represent a central node in this picture. Comprehending the

coordination between them must therefore be a foundational building block for a future police sociology.

Understanding Police Coordination Work – Organization of the Thesis

This thesis examines police coordination work. ‘Coordination work’ is a term that will feature significantly in the following chapters, and so requires some brief elaboration here. Coordination work refers to the work done by actors in police organizations to coordinate police activity between separate areas of police responsibility. The substance of that coordination – whether it involves tracking down a sexual predator in a nation-wide search, harmonizing case-files on a burglar who has been operating between a number of neighbourhoods, or determining reporting protocols between multiple units – is of less analytic importance than the process by which the work is coordinated. Coordination work is about the determination of responsibilities, protocols, jurisdiction, and mandate between separate organizational components. Coordination work, in a sense, ultimately serves the goal of *coordinated work*. It is the foundation on which partnerships in policing are built and maintained, or by which those partnerships disintegrate or fail to emerge.

The thesis progresses from three connected assertions regarding public police work in the 21st century. First, many public police organizations have recently adopted organizational initiatives specifically promoting inter-jurisdictional coordination and joint work between police. Yet, little is known about how and in what ways increased inter-organizational coordination represents change to police work and organization. Second, police officers work regularly with police officers from separate areas within their own organizations as well as with police from other organizations, yet there is only a limited sociological account of how this interactive work occurs. Finally, and arising out of these first two points, the coordination of police activities is relatively uncharted territory for

police governance and accountability, yet the kinds of police activities that require complex coordination are often also the least visible and most threatening to liberal democratic values. Each of these assertions creates a concurrent research problem, which are addressed in stepwise fashion through the thesis chapters.

Police Coordination and Organizational Change

Much has been made of organizational change in public policing in recent decades. There are many competing claims regarding both what has (and has not) changed – and what is (and is not) change – in public policing that will be examined in detail in Chapter 2. Owing to a longstanding if unofficial separation between organizational sociology and much police sociology, many of the extant claims in the police literature regarding what has changed in policing are not easily comparable. Chapter 2 thus introduces concepts that will make the subsequent findings comprehensible to both scholars of organization and of public police work. Chapter 2 will also outline the context and scope of efforts by police to coordinate with one another inter- and intra-nationally, and examine the basis for governance in these re-arranged jurisdictions.

In Chapter 3, we will look at specific initiatives to coordinate police work in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia, Canada. These initiatives will be examined in local historical and political contexts. The Lower Mainland provides the case study of police coordination work for this thesis. It was selected as an ideal site in which to study police coordination processes because it is a largely contiguous metropolitan population policed by at least 21 police agencies at any given time. Police at all levels within their organizations engage in intra- and inter-agency coordination on a daily basis in the Lower Mainland, providing multiple opportunities to witness and investigate coordination work for research. Police coordination is also currently a political hot-button issue in BC, and a

longstanding operational problem for police in the Lower Mainland in particular, which provided an informed and interested participant base.

Recent initiatives to improve coordination – often characterized as ‘integration’ initiatives – have come about as a result of multiple external pressures, technological advances, failures in police work, and entrepreneurial police leaders. In Chapter 4, we will examine the narratives provided by senior participants in the study regarding why these integration initiatives have occurred, and how the organization’s activities have recently changed both in response to pressures to integrate as well as broader aspects of changes in public police work. While this chapter will not be able to provide a definitive story that can satisfy the on-going debates about what is changing in policing, it will provide insight into the views of organizational participants experiencing change. In turn, it will examine how these views can subsequently shape the possibilities for future change.

A Sociology of Police Coordination Work

The shape of organizational change surrounding coordination work arises from the line-level processes of coordination work. The degree to which police work is actually integrated or coordinated – in the Lower Mainland or elsewhere – is a matter for empirical inquiry. Certainly, the capacity for police to coordinate with one another has increased in recent years owing to technological advances and political incentives. However, the actual practice of police coordination is shaped by its acceptance and implementation on the front lines of police work.

In Chapter 5, the thesis creates a typology of police organizational boundaries that emerged from the empirical findings in the Lower Mainland. It outlines a three-part typology of scarcity, proximity, and technical/systemic boundaries, and further draws a distinction between physical and virtual boundaries. The typology provides a tool for understanding and describing police boundary work for

future analysis, and also provides a vocabulary for the remainder of the thesis. The chapter examines the police work unit as its object of analysis, and conceives of boundaries as sites of negotiation between units that occur when *interstitial areas* of police work arise. The central consequence of this view is that police officers at all levels within an organization may be thought of as boundary actors with both external and internal partners. As such, boundary negotiation among police organized into units relies much more on horizontal personal connections and informal activities than coherent hierarchical systems and clear responsibilities.

In Chapter 6, the thesis moves to a more detailed examination of the dynamics of inter-unit negotiations, further unveiling a world of police activity that is often driven by asymmetric relations between internal units and between separate organizations. The scope of potential police activity is exceptionally wide even in democratic societies. The choice to organize this activity into units along these lines is among the primary factors that gives public police work the ability to be transparent, accountable and coherent, insofar as organization through units limits discretion to specified areas of activities and identifies organizational priorities. This form of organization does not, however, guarantee transparency in operations nor accountability in distribution of resources. Not all police have the same power when negotiating with one another for resources, personnel, or information. Certain units must acquiesce while others may make demands in working to resolve police work files. The dynamics that guide police coordination are centrally important to understanding how increasing coordination of police work will affect the balance of future police activities.

A Governance Framework for Coordination

Integrated policing in Canada presents challenges for ‘developing effective forms of internal, public and political governance for this new type of distributed and de-centred policing operation’ (Murphy

and McKenna 2007: 32), and this problem attends police coordination work in other jurisdictions (ACPO 2010; Sheptycki 2002a). Police governance mechanisms are normally maintained at levels that accord with other jurisdictional governance mechanisms such as local or national (or provincial, or state) governments, yet integrated police work is neither local nor national in nature. Chapter 7 thus examines the problems integrated policing poses for governance, accountability and transparency as police work becomes increasingly networked at all levels, beginning with the intra-national and trans-local. Many aspects of inter-unit work – its particular invisibility within and between organizations, its asymmetric nature, and its lack of meaningful legal and policy framework – present problems of governance over and control of police actors.

While control of police has never been uncomplicated or easy, the increasing trans-locality of police work can only serve to exacerbate issues of accountability, transparency, and legality in inter-unit and multijurisdictional police work. Chapter 7 develops an intellectual framework to which questions of governance can be posed. It is argued that while coordination work presents novel ethical problems for police under novel jurisdictional and administrative spaces, it also presents opportunities for positive developments in a contested field of activity. The thesis concludes with an outline for a research agenda examining inter-unit interactions within and between public police forces locally, nationally and internationally.

This thesis will not provide guidelines for re-arranging police work to make it somehow better. It is not a thesis about how to manage police coordination or minimize transaction costs between units in the name of efficiency alone. It will certainly imply some dos and don'ts along the way, but it will not provide a framework for solving police coordination problems where they arise. The arrangement of police resources is ultimately a political question, and police organizations with imperfect coordination processes may be perfectly appropriate in a democratic system. The thesis

will provide a framework for understanding coordination problems sociologically, which is to say, as things arising out of complex social interaction. It will thus provide some tools on which one may map and chart these interactions, and an analysis regarding the normative and practical issues that can arise out of various arrangements of police actors.

Researching Coordination

In many ways an examination of police coordination is a simple problem to identify in the literature, and has been implicitly or explicitly noted as a research gap by recent significant works (e.g. Bowling and Sheptycki 2012; Brodeur 2010). However, it is rather hard to research empirically. While some police agencies are fundamentally inter-jurisdictional in nature and so would have represented continuous opportunities to investigate coordination work, it seemed more important as a foundational matter to develop an account of coordination work inside traditional public police organizations before looking at practices within, for example, federal police teams or INTERPOL. The research therefore targeted organizations that at minimum included uniform patrol and criminal investigation functions over a set sub-national geographic area.

While contemporary police sociology accepts that public police organizations are among a group of actors in a network of other public and private sector competitors and collaborators, most public police work remains fundamentally local in nature. However global the resource and information base of modern police work, public police activities remain largely – though not entirely – focused on individual geographic jurisdictions. Inter-jurisdictional coordination in policing, while likely on the increase on a global scale, is still relatively rare in the day-to-day activities of public police officers. The project thus required identifying a research site that would provide practical opportunities to observe regular coordination work, and where most research participants would have engaged in

coordination with other police with enough regularity to offer thoughtful commentary on this kind of work.

It is a fundamental consideration of this thesis that police work is generally done by officers organized into units. These cohere around a combination of specialized work tasks, geography and jurisdiction, and crime-type concentrations. Some policing is done with the intention of serving and protecting a small patch of physical territory, while other police work may examine criminal activity that is multi-jurisdictional or even non-territorial. Whatever the unit focus, both intra- and inter-jurisdictional coordination of policing activity was presumed to be done primarily between police units, for theoretical reasons outlined in Chapter 2. It would therefore have been acceptable to examine multi-unit coordination within a single organization to address many of the questions of this study. However, it was thought that it would be best if both inter- and intra-organizational coordination could be examined within the same study, in part to understand what if any differences exist between these two forms of coordination work.

Fortunately, and owing to a particularly serendipitous set of circumstances and unexpected levels of organizational support from some Canadian police agencies, the project was able to find a home in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia. As will be explored in detail in Chapter 3, the Lower Mainland is the metropolitan region surrounding and including Vancouver, and has 21 jurisdictional police forces working in close proximity to one another, among other provincial, federal and international policing actors. These jurisdictional forces regularly partner officially and unofficially with one another through a multitude of initiatives and processes. Some of the forces – Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and certain Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) detachments also exhibited enough internal specialization to support investigation into intra-organizational coordination issues as well. Among other things, securing access with these organizations meant

that a multi-sited ethnographic project including multiple police agencies could be done with relative logistical ease.

Questions and Methods

Following initial commitments from relevant agencies, the research project was designed to answer a broad set of questions regarding recent policy initiatives and resulting changes in practice in Anglo-American policing. It examined a number of initiatives intended to connect police with one another in its multi-jurisdictional field site. These initiatives all in one way or another implement systematized collaboration, or 'integration' in the Lower Mainland lexicon, between internal police units or between separate police organizations. Given the inductive design, available participants, and early findings, the project narrowed its focus after initial fieldwork to inter-unit and inter-organizational interactions among police actors as a vehicle for discussing broader issues of police organizational change and the social processes of police coordination. The data collected by the research thus provides insight on the following questions:

- How do public police components interact with one another inter- and intra-organizationally?
 - What kinds of issues arise when components interact, and are the barriers within police organizations different from those between organizations?
 - What sorts of formal and informal mechanisms are used to coordinate the activities of these various components?
 - How do these mechanisms differ between different components?

- Does the interaction suggest different policing mandates between different components, particularly between patrol and specialist policing?
- What do integration initiatives reveal about the changing nature of public policing?
 - Do 'integrated' police units behave differently from 'traditional' police, and if so, in what ways?
 - To what degree is integration also change?
 - To what degree can the findings be generalized to other police organizations?

To answer these questions, the research combined high-level interviews with key administrators in the Lower Mainland, observations with jurisdictional and inter-jurisdictional teams in the region, and interviews with line-level officers and their managers, alongside a documentary analysis of the policy and procedure governing integration, information-sharing between agencies, and similar initiatives. The research design was modelled primarily after previous multi-sited police studies with ethnographic components (Ericson and Haggerty 1997; Huey 2007; Loftus 2009). This meant working from an inductive research design, maintaining scepticism toward and seeking to problematize official accounts regarding integration found in public documents or statements provided by senior administrators, and regularly reviewing the research design in light of findings as the project progressed.

Observational inquiries were centred on line-level practice, seeking as broad an account as possible of the practices associated with integration and coordination. Participants were selected from theoretically relevant sites of activity, which meant finding officers working in both jurisdictional and inter-jurisdictional settings where coordination work was potentially visible. Observations were

undertaken with the assistance of thematic guide sheets, samples of which can be found in Appendices 1.1 and 1.2. These were especially useful during the early stages of the research, to help maintain the general research focus and to stay alert for certain types of evidence. Field notes were collected in shorthand during breaks while on shift, and normally transcribed into detailed Microsoft Word files immediately or within two days after completion of any field shift.

The project used largely unstructured interview schedules, and different interview frameworks were employed for different units and ranks. Alongside questions specifically directed at integration initiatives (and a number of demographic and 'softball' or warm-up questions), each interview included a set of questions regarding what has changed in the work of the participant's police organization in recent decades, and subsequently, why those changes had occurred. A set of sample interview schedules are included in Appendices 1.3 and 1.4. It should be recognized that these represent guidelines for interviews, and interviews often progressed in non-linear and unexpected ways. Question phrasings regularly shifted in response to previously-offered comments or observations on shift with the interviewee. As well, in some cases interviews were conducted in segments, for example in patrol cars between calls for service. Nonetheless, the appended interview schedules are indicative of the general topics covered by the interviews.

The interviews were intended to pursue a breadth of interpretations regarding the changes that have occurred in the region, as well as examine instances where change was resisted. In particular, this was done to ensure that integration and coordination problems were not overemphasized by the research design, and the project provided space for integration and coordination to emerge as relative non-issues in participants' daily work. Fortunately, coordination issues were experienced by most participants working both in the largely intra-jurisdictional and explicitly inter-jurisdictional unit settings.

The project also drew insight from institutional ethnographic methods, which stress the examination of internal texts – such as forms that require completion, as well as business rules and internal protocols – in organizing work routines and delimiting potential perspectives and activities within an organization (e.g. Smith 2005). As such, particular attention during observations was given to the bureaucratic rules and paperwork that guided daily routines, accountability and reward structures based on reporting of activities, and references to formal processes during execution of work tasks.

Initial planning and meetings for the research was undertaken in the Lower Mainland in April 2010. Following all essential clearances and permissions, the fieldwork was undertaken in that location from September 2010 through February 2011. Most fieldwork and interviews were done with the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Surrey detachment, and with various integrated units – units either made up of secondments from multiple forces, or otherwise funded by multiple partner police agencies – operating in the Lower Mainland region.

All research activity was known to and approved by the organizations involved, and approved in advance by the Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) and Inter-Departmental Research Ethics Committee (IDREC) processes. Selection of sites and participants was mediated by each participating police organization or unit through assignment of a key contact person and their subsequent identification of appropriate and available teams and individuals. This organizational role in participant selection was expected to reduce the possibility of serious ethical dilemmas in the field, as police organizations are normally likely to provide research access to areas and individuals that will show the organization in a positive light (Rowe 2007). This is an inescapable selection bias in most police research, and it limits the researcher's ability to assess the extent and character of rule-bending or rule-breaking behaviour within the field of inquiry. However, as will be

shown later in the thesis, rule-bending behaviour is very much the norm in coordination work, and so it is not suspected that this selection bias is particularly problematic in this instance.

While early offers for research co-production activities (such as the provision of an internal report on findings, or undertaking secondary research tasks on behalf of the police) were made to participating police organizations, these offers were not accepted. As such, no police organization exercised any control over the research design, collection of data (except through selective provision of research access as outlined above), or the interpretation of results in this thesis or elsewhere. All participants were given a participant information form and provided verbal informed consent prior to observations or interviews, and at all times the researcher's status as observer was communicated to police and the citizens with whom they engaged during their work. A copy of the information form is at Appendix 1.5.

The fieldwork netted over 220 hours of field observation through 30 observation sessions. These were done with general patrol, patrol supervisors, and integrated unit operations, as well as where possible in various coordinating group meetings. The project also gathered 60 recorded interviews and 2 unrecorded interviews, totalling over 63 hours of interview time. Transcription of interview recordings was done by the author with the assistance of Express Scribe software. Interview participants were around one-third ($n=21$) commissioned officers (inspector rank and above, senior managers), one-third ($n=23$) non-commissioned officers (sergeants and staff sergeants, unit managers), with the remainder ($n=8$ each) made up of constables/corporals (front-line officers) and analysts/support personnel (civilian employees). One-quarter ($n=15$) of those interviewed also provided an opportunity for observation, and a further approximately 20 personnel of various ranks and positions provided observation time as well, but did not provide an interview. The fieldwork also collected a number of internal documents, including business cases and business rules,

memoranda of understanding between various police forces, and procedure and process documents. The data collected by the project were subjected to inductive thematic analysis on an on-going basis both during and after completion of the fieldwork, with sporadic assistance from NVivo 9, Microsoft Excel and OneNote as organizing tools for various components of the data.

All information in this study has been collected anonymously. Where they are useful, quotes and passages will be presented from interviews and field notes. In each case, interviews and field notes will be represented by a random numerical value (of the form 'Interview #xx', 'Shift #yy'), and the rank(s) and organizational affiliation(s) of the officers involved will also be included. All other identifying information will be removed. In some cases, especially where police tactics are involved, accounts from field notes may also be altered to avoid divulging confidential information or to preserve participant anonymity while otherwise accurately reporting findings.

The research focused on a particular area of British Columbia, Canada, and so the findings will be most readily generalizable to the Canadian experience of inter- and intra-organizational police coordination. The claims in this thesis emerge from an inductive analysis of qualitative data, and the findings from the Lower Mainland should be illustrative of the range and behaviour of coordination between similarly-organized police units elsewhere in the world. The Lower Mainland was selected because it was an ideal location to observe boundary activity on a daily basis. The region has multiple police organizations in close geographic proximity that require constant coordination, where in other locations it may have taken much longer to observe an equal volume of inter-agency interaction. Of course, multiple overlapping jurisdictions as such are not unique to British Columbia, and are the norm in North American policing (Bayley 1992).

Internationally, there are obvious comparisons with police work in the UK, where police collaboration is emerging in similar ways to integration in the Lower Mainland (HMIC 2012). The findings are also relevant for EU police forces, which face the issue of contiguous populations and unchecked borders between states, overlapping inter- and intra-national police jurisdictions, and the constant need to negotiate inter-organizational protocols (Alain 2001; Brodeur 2010; Gerspacher and Dupont 2007). Intra-local policing in certain EU districts is also subject to intense coordination work of the sort examined in this thesis. For example, the police in Brussels are actually managed by 19 municipalities rather than one central administration (Alain 2001: 123).

Alongside those regions that have multiple police forces working in close geographic proximity to one another, one may also expect individual urban police forces organized under a precinct or district model, or those with a significant number of internal specialized units, to exhibit similar problems of coordination as those outlined in the following chapters. While some cases – particularly small urban or rural police organizations separated by sparsely populated spaces – may operate under different principles than those outlined here, this thesis should nonetheless speak to issues facing a large section of public police work.

Chapter 2 – The Organization and Integration of Anglo-American Policing¹

Introduction

A great deal of current police sociology builds on classic qualitative and ethnographic works on public police (Manning 2005), yet these works (e.g. Bittner 1967; Bittner 1970; Ericson 1982; Grimshaw and Jefferson 1987; Klockars 1985; Manning 1977; Skolnick 1994; van Maanen 1972) and subsequent studies have left almost entirely unexamined the ways in which separate public police components interact, save perhaps some limited comment on the intersections between generalist officers and specialists (Ericson 1981; Marx 1987; Reiner 2010). Moreover, while much attention has been paid in recent years to the policing milieu outside of police forces – and for good reason – there is still foundational sociological work to be done to understand coordination between police before, or at least at the same time as, we seek to understand coordination within the larger policing ‘web’ (Brodeur 2010).

To understand the coordination of police work, we must set some terms outlining the conception of police to be employed in the thesis. Exploring and defining key concepts regarding police, organization, boundaries and governance will thus be the focus of this chapter. It has already been established that the thesis will examine public police forces organized under the general Anglo-American model found in countries such as Canada, the USA, UK, Australia, and so on. Its discussion will provide insight into these kinds of police, and tangentially into other police forces in democratic countries with alternate forms of police organizations, such as those in continental Europe which divide their police activities in different ways but with very similar ends, means and technologies to

¹ A component of this chapter has been previously published as: Giacomantonio, Chris. 2010. ‘Theorizing change in Anglo-American police organizations: On making meaningful change-claims in police scholarship.’ *Papers from the British Society of Criminology Conference* 10:55-69.

their Anglo-American counterparts (Manning 2010). The thesis is not directly concerned with the broader array of policing agencies, public or private, that contribute to social ordering through activities such as economic sanction, border maintenance, or investigation and information brokering, nor the everyday actors who may interact with and contribute to policing such as private third parties who enforce laws and regulations or assist with their enforcement (Mazerolle and Ransley 2006).

All police organizations under examination here can be said to have been brought about by similar social conditions and with similar ends in mind. The public police in Anglo-American countries arose within a context of the ascendance of the modern state. The conditions that coincide with the arrival of organized police forces include increasing social and economic stratification, urbanization and the expansion of a middle class, and extension more broadly of state capacity to regulate and circumscribe a growing sphere of citizen activity. Public police also exist – in their Anglo-American iteration at least – in a context of general (though not always specific) consent from citizens to be policed, and normally operate within established peace rather than seek to pacify citizens in active organized conflict with one another (although many states of exception to this have existed and persist today).

Public police provide a service of law enforcement and order maintenance, established with a license to use coercive force up to and including deadly force against a civilian population in a set geographic jurisdiction. They do not hold a monopoly on any of their activities, but retain primacy in many capacities and competencies, especially vis-à-vis state intervention, criminal sanction, and the minimal application of force (see e.g. Brodeur 2010). Their ends of law enforcement and order maintenance are often in conflict with one another, as are the means that may secure either or both of these outcomes in a given situation (Grimshaw and Jefferson 1987). Their work is both potentially

supportive of social inclusion, democratic expression and community building as well as conversely class repression, political suppression and deepening social divisions (Reiner 2010). However, whether they are acting justly or unjustly, positively or negatively, mending or destroying social fabric, public police activity is increasingly coordinated between discrete public police organizations. Yet, the processes and protocols of coordination work should not be seen as neutral territory in the development of just policing, though aspects of coordination are about managing effectiveness in ways that may escape normative scrutiny. The ways in which coordination is handled has consequences for governance, accountability, and visibility in both jurisdictional and inter-jurisdictional police work.

The first part of this chapter will outline the vocabulary to be used throughout the thesis. While terms such as organization and institution may have common-sense meanings, they are contested in the literature and so require early elaboration here. After outlining these general terms, the public police will be examined as an institutionalized organization from an open-systems perspective, with the implications of this perspective on understanding organizational change and organizational boundaries elaborated. After looking at these concepts, the chapter will review literature on governance of public institutions, including police institutions, across organizational and territorial boundaries. It will draw on the works of Saskia Sassen, James Sheptycki, Mariana Valverde and others in identifying a general problematic facing the deconstruction and reconstruction of public organizations, particularly law enforcement organizations, and the de-coupling of them from territorial-administrative boundaries. It will close with some notes on the particular problems of accountability and transparency that emanate from this rearrangement.

Public Police as Organization

A common theme in this thesis will be an emphasis on organizational sociology concepts in examining the public police as a formal institutionalized organization, in an effort to appropriately discuss the changes and potential changes police organizations face when they attempt to coordinate, integrate, and otherwise connect their work between one another. While the thesis will not provide a definitive account of what has, and what has not, changed in policing in recent decades, where it does imply or explicitly state the presence of changes in public policing, it will do so using organizational sociology terminology rather than terms from a sociology centred on police and policing.

Police organizations are often treated as unique organizations in sociological literature, and almost exclusively as such in policing scholarship. This is in some cases with good reason, given the relatively monopolistic character of their traditional role of order maintenance through the threat or use of coercion (Klockars 1985), and the emergency role of police as the people in society who handle situations that fit the description, ‘Something-ought-not-to-be-happening-about-which-something-ought-to-be-done-NOW!’ (Bittner 1970; Newburn and Reiner 2007).

Yet police sociology generally stands isolated from other organizational sociology often unnecessarily (with notable exceptions in the American tradition, including Maguire et al. 2003; Manning 2010; Willis and Mastrofski 2011). For example, Ker Muir’s (1977) matrix of officer types, while compelling, is not necessarily unique to police, and other organizations – and not just (para)military ones – could exhibit members who can be similarly divided along analogous lines to passion and perspective. Regarding social roles, the police have both a medical first-responder capability and an established social work role (Bittner 1967; Manning 1977; Wilson 1968). Yet it

would be rare to find police organizations being studied as paramedical or social work organizations. Looking at organizational type, police work has been said to be a 'semi-profession' (Etzioni 1969; Lee and Punch 2004), and therefore may be found to be organized similarly to other semi-professions like teaching and nursing. Alternately, the police may be characterized by the forms of 'compliance' inherent to their organization (Etzioni 1961), and may be studied as other organizations with similar compliance/reward bases are studied. Overall, as we know from Garland (2001), the police are far from the only organization involved in social control, and thus may parallel numerous social units.

However, it has historically been more likely that police organizations will be studied as police organizations. Implicit in this approach is the assumption that police organizations (and, equally importantly, the research done on them) cannot be readily incorporated into traditional models and strategies of organizational analysis. Yet, police in many ways have more similarities with certain other major organizations than they have differences, and may therefore be governed by similar processes. Concurrently, we can get a head start in understanding police organizations by looking at the research that has been done on other similar organizations, although we certainly expect to find unique aspects to police organizations that are not found elsewhere.

When police are looked at in more general sociological terms, the potential to apply, in a comprehensible way, past organizational research to current police sociology expand. As Vaughn reminds us, in the realm of analytic sociology, 'Lovers break up as con men cool out marks as bosses fire employees as children terminate monopoly games.' (2007: 14) In other words, social processes are often similar across social units; in turn, there may be purchase in employing organizational

sociology concepts in understanding police organizations². By approaching police primarily as organizations, and secondarily as unique ones, we can ground this discussion in a broader sociology of organizations, as well as properly facilitate comparison and generalization in police research.

Public police forces, as other aspects of criminal justice and modern states more generally, are relatively recent and curious inventions. While we often take their functions and forms for granted, the public police as we conceive of them today have few historical parallels and arose from specific historical conditions (Garland 2001; Newburn and Reiner 2007). Once this happened, however, the public police in the Anglo-American context became the *de facto* embodiment of domestic order maintenance. In the past half-century, they have become so important an institution in facilitating citizen interaction that they have in many cases entirely taken over spheres previously thought of as private dispute (a trend that police organizations are trying to counter through ‘responsibilization’ initiatives (Garland 2001)). How we arrived at this position *vis a vis* the police organization is unimportant for the purposes of this thesis. What is important is that the public police, at some critical juncture, arose as the primary organizational type, and technological approach, for solving order-maintenance and law-enforcement problems in democratic societies.

Organizations, Institutionalization, and Change

The public police are, among other things, a set of discrete formal organizations. Organizations have historically been conceived of as social groups that cohere around some activity, identity or purpose. Formal organizations can be defined with greater specificity than other social groupings, insofar as their membership may be more easily identifiable and the shared goals and purposes of their

² This is not to say that these concepts will hold in all situations across similar organizational types, and must be tested through research. Nonetheless, the experiences of other similar organizations can be used to generate hypotheses and assumptions about police organizations.

members may be reasonably discerned through official documentation on the organization's activities. Following Blau (1957: 58), we can say that:

The term 'formal organization' is used here to refer to social organizations that are formally established for explicit purposes but to include the informal as well as the formalized aspects of such organizations.

Considering public police organizations as discrete organizations is counterpoised to an alternate conception, which represents police forces as interconnected and homologous arms of a central and coherent state apparatus. While there is no denying that public police are organized by and answerable to the state on some level, and that they are each designed to promote similar goals through similar forms, they are also different from one another in important ways on a local level. There are extensive commonalities, of course, and none of the following discussion is intended to deny the existence of police cultures that cross organizational boundaries, police mandates that supersede jurisdictional affiliation, and social norms and mores regarding 'the public police' that generally disregard the existence of difference between police. In these terms, when someone says they are 'calling the police', they mean and think just that – they are calling the general body of state officers meant to intervene in emergent situations. When faced with the need for immediate help, someone calls 9-1-1 and doesn't think for one moment which set of jurisdictional representatives, unique union rules, internal protocols, or idiosyncratic organizational structures sit at the other end of that request.

Yet, while it may not be eminently perceptible to the average citizen that police organizations are meaningfully separate from one another, which police are called has consequences for how an incident is handled. Different police forces have different priorities, mandates, and capacities, a point that will be elaborated extensively in later chapters. Moreover, the simple fact that coordination between jurisdictional police is required – and is complex – should be enough to

demonstrate that these are organizations with enough internal differentiation to consider them fundamentally separate from one another. This claim is tied to the level of the sociological gaze cast on the police, since from an adequate distance – perhaps what is called the macro level – these organizations all do seem to blend together and behave as a system.

Approaching police organizations primarily as organizations creates tension in developing generalizations and universal principles, especially in a study intended to develop claims about social processes in ‘the police’. The thesis will discuss the police forces under examination in reference to a much larger body of police actors, though based on examples from a small subset of police organizations. This emanates from the presumption that the commonalities between these organizations are fundamentally important, and that these commonalities would lead coordination processes to be structured and interpreted in similar ways across contexts.

Admitting that police organizations are similar is not the same, however, as saying that the group of organizations should be studied as a coherent system, with each organization a sub-system of a larger whole. Rather, seeing them as individually discrete, and replete with complex internal sub-systems, allows the problem of coordination to emerge as something between actors with only limited affinities between one another, and also allows us to look where appropriate at differences between internal and external coordination processes. The distinction is an artificial one, just as a biologist may draw boundaries around a particular ecosystem or an urban ethnographer may seek to differentiate communities from one another. In this sense, the thesis takes an external (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003) and open-systems (Scott 2004) perspective on formal organizations, recognizing that this is one perspective of many, and a choice that has consequences to understanding change (Van de Ven and Hargrave 2004) and coordination (Van de Ven, Delbecq and Koenig 1976).

An external perspective sits at the meso-level of analysis and asserts that the conditions outside the organization – the organization's 'ecology' (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003) or 'task environment' (Thompson 1967) – are the primary determinants of the actions of the organization. An open-systems perspective emphasizes the fact that these external influences may interact with organizations at the level of the organization – the system – as a whole, as well as directly with organizational sub-systems which may engage their environment independently of the larger organization. One consequence of this approach is that internal organizational factors such as culture – seen as extremely important in general managerial and recent police sociological literature (e.g. Chan 1997; Loftus 2009) – are treated as arising from, and thus largely reactive to, external conditions. Organizational culture, under this view, is much more symptomatic than causal of the actions of the organization and those within it.³ Another consequence is that organizations as open systems exhibit internal conflict between sub-systems – units and sections – over goals, mandates, and resources.

From this perspective, the conditions that impact on organizational change (and, equally, stability) are those that determine resource distribution. The broadest goal orientation of any formal organization is survival through obtaining resources; this may seem like an inelegant approach, but it remains the most sociologically viable from an external perspective. All other actions and goals are subservient to the goal of survival. This is in many ways a reflexive statement, since if an organizational goal conflicts with its survival, the subservient goal, and not survival, will by necessity

³ The thesis returns to the concept of organizational culture in later chapters, but deliberately only briefly. While police sociologists reading this may find the lack of attention to culture unsettling, what is commonly referred to as 'culture' in most instances is of little analytic value here. The presumption of the thesis's theoretical approach is that tangible variables – structural, historical, and political/environmental – will have more purchase in explaining organizational phenomena than the broad and amorphous concept of culture. The shared behaviours and beliefs of police officers arising from the intersections of those organizational variables may be interpreted as police culture or a set of police sub-cultures, but the author remains circumspect about the term and so will avoid it where possible.

perish or change. Moreover, this dynamic exists at the unit level as well as the organizational level, since units – teams of people organized for particular work tasks within organizations – regularly try to ensure their continuation, seek increased resources from central administration, and build their prestige and perceived legitimacy through internal marketing.

Survival, in most cases, is determined by the effectiveness of the organization, though not necessarily in achieving its subservient goals. Rather, an organization needs firstly to appear to be the best available social unit for achieving goals that are important to those stakeholders in the task environment that control available resources. This notion of effectiveness must be contrasted with ideas like ‘efficiency’ or measurements of material outcomes, since an organization can be effective in securing resources without necessarily producing some result (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003). Organizations in most cases will try to prove both efficiency and effectiveness even with minimal evidence to support their case (Thompson 1967).

Organizations struggle variably with this central goal of survival. Their continued survival is aided when other organizations in their field begin to exhibit similarities in structure and practice – a process of ‘homogenization’ where organizational adaptation becomes ‘isomorphic’ across the field (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Where an isomorphic organizational field emerges, and through some ‘critical juncture’ (Thelen 1999) – a point or period where task environment conditions promote a particular form over others – certain organizational forms become ‘institutionalized’ (Meyer and Rowan 1977). In these cases, both the form of organization and the ways in which the organization works to achieve its goals become a social institution, a set of implicit and explicit rules about how organizations in that field should work. Organizations that violate these rules will do so at their peril. This is not a teleological or evolutionary claim; institutionalized rules may be suboptimal or inefficient, but once institutionalized become hard to change (Thelen 1999; Van de Ven and

Hargrave 2004). This process is therefore not necessarily a promotion of the optimal forms or norms guiding organization:

[T]he argument... holds that certain technologies, for idiosyncratic and unpredictable reasons, can achieve an initial advantage over alternative technologies and prevail even if in the long run the alternatives would have been more efficient. (Thelen 1999: 384-5)

Under institutionalized conditions, the organization is not only reactive to, but also its form becomes an essential component of, its ecology or task environment. The organization's success reiterates its predominant position, entrenching its legitimacy against other potential organization forms. This creates a sort of 'myth' (Meyer and Rowan 1977) that shapes and drastically constrains future options for practice as well as measures of effectiveness, which in turn provides a secure resource base. As Meyer and Rowan state:

[O]rganizations are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society. Organizations that do so increase their legitimacy and their survival prospects, independent of the immediate efficacy of the acquired practices and procedures. (Meyer and Rowan 1977: 340)

However, we do not want to build a conceptual foundation on which it is 'hard to see any forks in the road at all.' (Thelen 1999: 386) Once past the point of institutionalization, the securing of resources ceases to be a survival issue, and becomes largely an issue of growth from or defence of the organization's current resource position or 'domain' (Thompson 1967). At all times, an organization maintains a domain which it seeks to expand or defend, depending on task environment conditions. This generally means that institutionalized organizations change at the fringe of organizational activity rather than the core (Ashworth, Boyne and Delbridge 2009). As will be argued below, this is not equivalent to claiming that institutionalized organizations only change in minor ways. In organizations as expansive as the public police – in terms of potential activities as well as geographic and virtual reach of operations – the fringe may in many ways be a much larger and more consequential aspect of the organization than the core.

Institutional Change and Public Police

Treating the public police as an institutionalized organization, from an external perspective, does not presume that all domain aspects of each police organization are immutable. While certain rules, practices, and structures become institutionalized and are likely to be found in all organizations called public police, other organizational aspects remain open to change based on local task environment conditions. If we consider police organizations under these terms, then we should be highly circumspect regarding claims about, and the possibilities for, fundamental change to the institutionalized aspects of the public police. We may say, following Loader and Walker (2007), that at its essence:

[T]he mandate of modern policing... can without undue strain be gathered under the holistic umbrella of the generation and maintenance of those conditions of general order under which the citizenry are most likely both to be and to feel secure. (Loader and Walker 2007: 96-7)

Further, following Manning (2010: 44), we can also say that they are 'authoritatively coordinated, legitimate organizations' that work through 'tracking, surveillance, and arrest' and remain 'ready to apply force up to and including fatal force' in service of this essential organizational goal. These are the institutionalized aspects of their domain, and also the grounds on which they are a unique social institution (Bittner 1970).

Since the 1829 advent of Anglo-American public policing, it may be said that police organizations have been concerned with maintaining legitimacy, improving methods of tracking, surveillance and arrest, and limiting but maintaining the use of force and fatal force, in maintenance of 'politically-defined order' (Manning 2010). It cannot be said that the public police field ever gave up for any amount of time these practices or goals. It is now hard to imagine a public police force being organized – and considered legitimate – without at minimum a uniformed patrol division and

reactive investigation services that deal with local crime and order problems. These are components of their domain that police organizations do not need to actively defend, and they are not aspects that police organizations have much power to alter.

Under this view, the last major or ‘transformational’ (Tolbert and Hall 2009) institutional change to Anglo-American policing should reasonably be seen as beginning in 1829 in the UK, and then somewhat later in North America (Manning 2010). The introduction of plainclothes investigators – detectives – in the 1840s is perhaps another watershed of this sort (ibid; Reiner 2010). At best, we can perhaps consider the ‘professionalization’ movements of the early 20th century as a more recent significant change to the core work of the police, as these reforms ushered in a modicum of clarity, transparency and accountability to the job (Sklansky 2007).

While some authors propose a ‘third type’ (Rigakos 2005: 265) of post- or late-modern policing, these authors are either not, or not compellingly, arguing that the core practices or goals have been superseded by some new formulation of policing. Recent shifts – such as the supposed entrenchment of the community-policing ethos in some form in most major police departments (Maguire 1997; Manning 2010; Reiner 2010; Sklansky 2007), the uptake of information technology, including the widespread presence of on-board computers in patrol cars and an increasing use of statistical accountability methods (Manning 2008; Willis, Mastrofski and Weisburd 2003), or even the shift to information processing and management as a core police task (Ericson and Haggerty 1997) – are not institutional changes in this sense.

Most police organizations are in something of a constant state of reform (Manning 2010), and have been for some time. This is in line with most public institutional reform under New Public Management (NPM) norms (Christensen et al. 2007). Institutionalized organizations retrench or

grow, acquire new technologies, connect with new partners, cycle through priorities, remove old leaders and get new ones, re-design organizational charts and hierarchies, outsource or disregard certain tasks while expanding into novel spheres of activity, and so on. These changes do not modify the core competencies of what police are required to do, the situations in which they are required to act, the symbolic and deterrent position they represent in a society, or the organizational rules and legal structures from which their power to act fundamentally emerges.

These considerations must foreground the subsequent discussion of new police initiatives in the remainder of the thesis. Understanding recent shifts in police practice and organization – including but not limited to the increasing integration, coordination and networking among public police actors – remains important precisely because they are not yet institutionalized. The areas of policing that are mutable and contested are in many instances being claimed and captured by problematic ideals and ideas about the job of the police. These are the fringes of police activity that can come and go between budget cycles, administrative fads, and political disruptions.

Integration and coordination work are decidedly fringe activities, even where they involve core tasks. The unit integrations, information coordination, resource sharing, and multi-jurisdictional management efforts in the Lower Mainland are indeed novel in a real sense, important for the relationship between police organizations and the societies they serve, and reflective of a global trend in police organization. However, none of the following should be construed as a claim that increased coordination work in policing has brought about, or will bring about, a new era of policing that supersedes the public police work of what is commonly called the modern era. It is not important to prove that these changes are institutional or fundamental to assert that they are consequential.

Organizations, Units and Boundaries

The public police are both an institutionalized organizational form, and a collection of organizations and subsystems. Describing police as an organization creates some fuzzy areas around which actors should be included in the social group called public police, given the existence of other public organizations with policing functions, private police and security, police volunteers, and citizen responsabilization efforts that share goals and practices with ‘formal common-law vocational’ (Manning 2010: 25) public police organization members. While it is not within the scope of this chapter to draw firm boundaries around public policing, it nonetheless assumes that public police organizations have distinguishing boundaries which can be drawn around them.

Going one step further, police organizations can be defined by geographic boundaries as well as formal relationships around activities and goals, such that a jurisdiction – a designated geographical area for which police have defined capacities, objects of interest, and modes of achieving objectives (Valverde 2008) – can exist with some specificity and be used to identify one public police organization from another, along jurisdictional lines. This is an important if mundane point, since we have to keep in mind that the study of any one policing district may not necessarily have much to do with the study of another policing district (Manning 1977).

In the following, we will conceive of organization as a set of relations creating a group, and boundary as a set of relations that defines one group from another. In other words, organization and boundary are concepts dependent on one another, such that without identifiable boundaries, organizations cease to exist for analytic purposes (Yan and Louis 1999). While organizations are defined in part by their boundaries, this does not mean that most organizational work is boundary work. Thus, while much of the thesis will focus on interactions between units and across

organizational boundaries, it is worthwhile for the reader to keep in mind that most actors in police organizations are involved in bounded or 'closed-system' work most of the time.⁴

The thesis proceeds from the presumption that work units are the appropriate level at which to examine coordination work. A unit in policing is an organizational sub-section of officers and support personnel who work together both spatially and temporally. Work units "need to scout one context, coordinate with a second, and be diplomatic toward a third" (Denison, Hart, & Kahn, 1996 quoted in Yan and Louis 1999: 26). They have boundaries with 'both the intra-organizational and extra-organizational sectors' (ibid: 31) and can therefore shed light on the multiple levels at which coordination work occurs.

Unit structure will differ within and between forces, and units can often be locally unique, but there is a general operational unit structure observable across most Anglo-American forces (Bayley 1992). This is normally a group of between five and fifteen constable-rank officers organized under one or more sergeants. This definition is in line with Grimshaw and Jefferson's (1987: 41-6), with the caveat that as functional differentiation between units has increased in the intervening 25 years since their work, normal unit size may be somewhat smaller today than when police personnel were predominantly working in generalist capacities organized around patrol shifts. While it is recognized that intra-unit transactions (i.e. between members of the same unit) admit of unique modes of coordination (Van de Ven, Delbecq and Koenig 1976) and in policing, units have their own, complex internal dynamics (see e.g. Grimshaw and Jefferson 1987 for an extended discussion), an examination of these will not be possible here. Larger sub-system groupings (e.g. all of those

⁴ With respect to Bowling and Sheptycki's (2012) assertion that all policing is now global, it still seems that the individual police actors at the jurisdictional level rarely experience the system as such.

personnel under an inspector's supervision) may refer to themselves as units, but they would not be considered 'units' under this chapter's definition.

Organizational boundaries are not always coterminous with formal markers of differentiation represented in organizational charts, bureaucratic rules, or territorial divisions. Boundaries are also not always parsimonious. They regularly overlap with one another, and they also may leave certain spaces of action unaccounted for. Boundaries are here defined as those areas of responsibility that are unclaimed or contested between units, where normally separate organizations or subsystem components will find a need to interact. These interactions serve to define group membership and mandates for purposes of coordination. The negotiations between units in these 'interstitial areas' (Marx 1987)⁵ form the central concern of this thesis.

Boundaries in the Study of Police Work

Police scholarship has long examined the boundaries between police and other formal and informal organizations. In early police sociology, it was argued that police work is at its essence boundary work and that police organizations are 'people processing' organizations (Hasenfeld 1972; Reiss and Bordua 1967) whose core activity is connecting (certain) people to other organizations, most notably criminal justice and social service organizations. More recently, Huey's (2007) central thesis was that police 'negotiate demands' from various community stakeholders in fulfilling their mandate. Countless scholars have looked at the relationships between police and private security actors (Bayley and Shearing 1996; Ericson 2006; Loader and Walker 2007; Maguire and King 2004; Marx 1987; Rigakos 2005). While the strength of this relationship in shaping police organization decisions can be questioned (Brodeur 2010; Manning 2010), recent developments in the privatization of police

⁵ Marx was, in this instance, discussing the areas of contest between public and private police, though this conceptualization of interstice seems equally relevant in the context of this paper.

services in the UK suggest that the importance of this boundary is growing rapidly. There has also been a focus in the literature on other external partnerships. Ericson and Haggerty (1997) famously articulated a persistent and problematic boundary between police and the insurance industry, and others have looked at police interactions with community and social service partners (Huey 2007; Sampson et al. 1988; Skinns 2005), broader market players (Ayling, Grabosky and Shearing 2009), and the media (Ericson 1989).

However, little focused analysis has been placed on the intra-organizational connections and divides inherent in public police organization in contemporary scholarship, though this was discussed at some length in classic Anglo-American police sociology (Ericson 1981; Ericson 1982; Grimshaw and Jefferson 1987; Manning 1977). With the exception of transnational policing studies (Alain 2001; Gerspacher and Dupont 2007; Sheptycki 2004), the ways in which police organizations connect inter-organizationally are also rarely examined as a separate object of inquiry. Further, few contemporary studies relate their findings back to an organizational sociology of policing (Giacomantonio 2010; Manning 2010). Yet, while organization theory has begun to emphasize boundary activity as “central, not peripheral” to understanding organizational behaviour (Hernes 2004: 10), and organizational sociologists have closely examined intra-organizational multi-unit coordination processes (Tsai 2002; Van de Ven, Delbecq and Koenig 1976), police sociology has only scratched the surface in these areas. This is surprising given the volume of recent work on policing that demonstrates the importance of policing networks, policing webs, and so on.

Expanding and strengthening networks through inter- and intra-organizational integration is something happening to organizations public and private as technological advances shrink the distance between organizations and units, and as interaction becomes more possible and efficient (Yan and Louis 1999). However, while systems managers work to streamline information and

resource sharing processes, other aspects of public police work serve to inhibit this process. Different areas of police organizations may be set up in ways that make the goals or practices of one section work against the goals or practices of another. For the study at hand it is a basic assumption that relationships between units within police organizations are characterized as much or more by conflict between unit interests – such as the securing of finite resources and prestige, or the promotion of a particular technology over another – as they are by shared interests in higher-order goals or outcomes. In the sociology of informal organizations, these have been called ‘conjunctive’ (Bates and Bacon 1972) relationships, and in the private sphere they are sometimes dubbed ‘coopetition’ (Tsai 2002).

Christensen et al (Christensen et al. 2007: 463) argue that public organizations are ‘multifunctional’:

Public organizations differ from many private-sector organizations in that they are *multifunctional*. This means they cope with partly conflicting considerations... The challenges multifunctional organizations face may be perceived either as pathological or as inherent features of the system... In the second perception, unclear and partly conflicting goals are seen as inherent to multifunctional organizations, and one of the core distinctions between public and private organizations. (Christensen et al. 2007: 463-480, emphasis theirs).

Further to this, neither all constituent elements of the organization or stakeholders in their task environment can be satisfied at any given time (Christensen et al. 2007; Thompson 1967). Different areas of police organizations may be set up in ways that make the goals or practices of one section work against the goals or practices of another. It cannot be said that all units within a single large police organization are executing the same mandate, and it is even possible that this would not be desirable in any case. Ayling, Grabosky and Shearing (2009, esp. ch. 2) have recently made this point regarding the various principles used to dictate funding and oversight arrangements in public police organizations, and this aspect of police organizations is characteristic of public-sector organizations more generally.

Perhaps this is what has led some to note the ‘war within the police’ (Brodeur 2010: 11), and it certainly contributes to the ‘impossible mandate’ discussed by Manning (Manning 1977). This is probably why organizations like the RCMP have implemented relatively meaningless mission statements such as ‘safe homes, safe communities’, which simultaneously justify virtually any action by the organization (even contradictory ones) while giving direction to no one. However, it would be a mistake to presume that all internal conflict in police organizations is bad. As noted earlier, there are many tasks that fall to the police, and while they may all be necessary on some level, they are not always in harmony.

Hard and soft policing approaches, epitomized in the tensions between community crackdowns and community policing, are a well-examined clash in policing strategies, but are not the only antipodal relationships in police work. The push from central governments for information harmonization across police forces into central repositories are another contested area of activity. Commentators have written about the risks of, for example, gang and DNA databases (Leyton 2003; Neyroud and Disley 2008), but there is also contestation within police organizations. Line-level officers have long been said to jealously guard their rights to maintain and withhold local-level information as part of good police craft (Reiner 2010), and pressure to give it up is compounded by the problems of comprehension and translation between entries in complex records systems.

Perhaps above all, the setting of police priorities in a world of finite resources means that certain areas of police activity will be relatively impoverished. Financial crime investigations and traffic control are arguably the two most profitable avenues of police interventions. In the first case, white-collar crime – especially those multi-billion-dollar crimes that have the capacity to disrupt local, national and global finances – are almost certainly more costly to society in economic terms than street crime; and in the second, traffic fatalities far outstrip virtually all other fatal private and

public violence in most democratic societies (Christoff and Kolet 2012; ICBC 2008; MPSSG 2012).⁶

Yet, these kinds of units often remain heavily under-resourced relative to drug, gang, and other serious crime units. Not all police believe that street crime is the only job of public policing, and those who work in the ghettoized areas of police activity are often at odds with those who regularly receive more than their share of high-tech gadgets, positive public press, and cultural prestige.

Boundaries in police work do not only arise out of conflict. As we will see in later chapters, police work processes – what Manning (2010) refers to as the police *metier* – condition the ways that police activity is divided up. Police actors are concerned with the disposition of identifiable work tasks, in large part due to the ways in which their performance is evaluated and rewards such as promotion and prestige are subsequently doled out. Simple issues of who is responsible for which bits of work can lead to entrenched divides intra- and inter-organizationally. Two sections of policing who have every reason to work together may be unable to consistently partner with one another for reasons of organizational idiosyncrasy rather than ideological divide or competition for resources.

Whether boundaries arise due to conflict or circumstance – and these are not mutually exclusive categories – the management of boundaries in policing is a matter that is normally dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis by police organizations who realize they have a problem, often long after the problem has occurred and even become part of the institutional fabric. Institutional theories of organization suggest that ‘the primary objective of organization change is not better substantive performance but greater legitimacy. In other words, organizations adapt their internal characteristics in order to

⁶ For example, ICBC reported 372 traffic fatalities in 2007, the most recent year for published traffic statistics on its website (ICBC 2008). This compares with 88 homicides in the same year in British Columbia (MPSSG 2012). This trend is narrowing in the US, however, with gun deaths slated to outpace traffic fatalities within the decade (Christoff and Kolet 2012).

conform to the expectations of key stakeholders in their environment.’ (Ashworth, Boyne and Delbridge 2009: 165) In recent years, an overwhelming expectation for police to cooperate with one another – accelerated but not begun by 9/11 – has led to a proliferation of intra-national police coordination frameworks of variable character and scope.

Integration and Governance Across Boundaries

The more difficult question has to do with the governance of the policing in the transnational era. It is difficult because the basic parameters of the policing field are very often left undefined, while the complexity of the legal-constitutional framework that underpins it and the political regime that provides its rationalities are elided by the appeal to the functional need to secure the social order. (Sheptycki 2002a: 323)

In this section, we will examine aspects of the trend toward police integration and coordination, as well as the conceptual and ideological problems that come along with this often radical re-conceptualization of both jurisdiction and the public police mandate. While astute government reports have recently noted the potential for governance problems in intra-national inter-jurisdictional police coordination (ACPO 2010, Murphy and McKenna 2007), most of the best theoretical thinking on inter-jurisdictional governance has been focused on international and transnational institutional shifts, whether in policing or elsewhere. As such, this section will adapt insights from literature not necessarily intended, but nonetheless relevant, for an examination of intra-national state coordination activity.

Interoperability between various sections of government intra-nationally has been and continues to be a catchword in at least the English speaking world for well over a decade, often under the auspices of NPM-style reforms. While both maligned and championed by commentators, this approach to public administration presumes that there is no substantive conflict in the organization of public goods, save perhaps the desire among various components for more resources than is

sustainable. The components of the state, as it were, share common or at least non-contradictory goals. Efficiency and effectiveness are the lodestars of NPM reforms, where these terms both presume unidirectional and utilitarian outcomes – the greatest good for the lowest cost. Under this view, it is easy to understand why police agencies should synchronize their information and intelligence systems with one another, and find ways to seamlessly share resources including personnel. They ought to harmonize working rules and priorities to ensure that redundancies are reduced while being able to tackle core tasks with greater success. Through appropriate re-organizations, they can do more with less. The pressure of NPM is often captured under ‘rationalization’ measures, whereby organizations must make a reasoned case for the efficiency and effectiveness of the status quo or otherwise undergo change processes.

Rationalization is unquestionably an issue facing police organizations. It has led in the Canadian and British cases to amalgamation of police forces and the creation of inter-jurisdictional teams under the auspices of cost-savings⁷ (HMIC 2012; Murphy 1991; Murphy 2004; Reiner 2010; Wood 2007), although this trend has been resisted successfully in the American context (Bayley 1992; Mastrofski and Willis 2011), and ultimately proceeds with limited empirical support that amalgamations and integrations save money or improve performance. There are some indicators that they actually detract on both fronts (Mastrofski and Willis 2011; McDavid 2002). Rationalization has also led to measures to reduce costs within individual departments, although the degree to which this is happening is variable between national as well as sub-national districts. While the UK has currently mandated its police forces to cut real costs by up to 20% on a force-wide level, Canadian police costs

⁷ In the British context, formal arrangements for services-sharing between police organizations are normally referred to as ‘collaboration’ authorized under s. 23 of the *Police Act 1996* (HMIC 2012). Collaborations, like integrations in BC, are negotiated between forces with limited central oversight, and thus the push for inter-jurisdictional coordination in both countries has led to high levels of variability in the nature and scope of arrangements from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

continue to rise despite various salvos to controlling spending in this area (Murphy 2009). Nonetheless, the rationalized myth of coordination and integration of resources as a means of cutting spending and increasing value for money remains a belief held by managers and policy makers alike and continues to provide impetus for increasing integration between jurisdictional police organizations.

Perhaps more important than the myth of efficiency is the myth of effectiveness. In the wake of 9/11, more than a few commentators and political figures suggested that the information to stop the hijackings and subsequent disasters was available in the American intelligence systems, but inadequate coordination meant that it was not pieced together in time (Shenon 2004). Alongside the threat of global terrorism, organized crime and migration control have also served as impetus for increased international communication and resource-sharing in policing and security operations. The high-stakes language of security and risk discourses thus further promote the notion that all components of state institutions should be oriented toward either the same, or at least non-conflicting, goals.

Moreover, as public police organizations are being increasingly seen as tools to combat security threats – existential risks not yet realized (Murphy 2007) – rather than simply react to localized issues and incidents that have already taken place or will imminently occur, police organizations are increasingly being called on to ‘see like a state’ rather than ‘see like a city’ (Valverde 2008). This creates tension with the traditional local police mandate:

[B]oth authorities governing security processes and scholarly analysts tend to take up a certain scale without reflecting on the way in which the choice of scale affects governance...The regulatory and preventive work done under the banner of police power and police regulations embodies (and constitutes) a gaze that, in sharp contrast to the top-down, expert-driven gaze that James Scott famously baptized as ‘seeing like a state’... governs differently in part because its scale is paradigmatically local. (Valverde 2008: 4).

By removing components of public police work from local jurisdictional structures and making them fundamentally inter-jurisdictional, a number of governance problems immediately arise even absent empirical evidence that any issues have yet been realized in practice. Sassen (2008) discusses the potential threats inherent in the re-arrangement of 'bits of territory' and various public institutional capacities into inter-national and sub-national regimes that do not adhere to traditional administrative units such as local or national governments. This is not necessarily a problem, except that the prior pre-dominance of nation-states and their geographically-delineated sub-units is at least potentially understood by lawmakers, courts, and other oversight bodies where institutional governance is concerned.

The appropriate and substantive forms of governance for these new inter-jurisdictional and trans-jurisdictional arrangements is often barely understood, even by those practicing within them (see also Canada 2009; Sheptycki 2002a). These 'new jurisdictional geographies' (Sassen 2008a: 64) of public sector coordination are driven within nation-states by the same security logics of their international counterparts, alongside the above-noted pressures for more efficient management which also drive the security mind-set.

Moreover, these re-arrangements represent a first step in creating the possibility of a global network, both by serving as experimental grounds for de-centred (or re-centred) modes of public sector coordination, and for providing infrastructure which can be readily linked to similar structures in other countries as well as with international and transnational organizations. In police work, the development of harmonized records, the transnational sharing of personnel, consultancy and best-practices, and the creation of international information clearinghouses such as INTERPOL all hasten this process.

Sassen's account is primarily concerned with the globalization and concurrent de-nationalization of components of national institutions. She sees these as threats to, among other things, citizenship, which is bound up with individual rights-bearing within a territory; and authority, which allows the polity to act as a whole. Yet, this analysis is also applicable to processes inherent in intra-national reorganizations of jurisdiction, especially in federal states or where government is suitably de-centred from national oversight, and where the local is suitably distant from the provincial, regional, or otherwise sub-national state apparatus. As Sassen (2010: 3) states:

[T]here is a... set of processes that does not necessarily scale at the global level as such, yet... is part of globalization. These processes take place deep inside territories and institutional domains that have largely been constructed in national terms in much of the world. What makes these processes part of globalization even though they are localized in national, indeed subnational, settings is that they are oriented towards global agendas and systems.

We need to briefly differentiate this thesis's analysis from Sassen's. In writing here she envisages networks of people, markets, and non-state organizations who engage with global issues or systems on a local level. While the public police are unquestionably a state institution and, at least in part, normally deriving much of their authority from the national,⁸ they are not global in Sassen's sense of 'explicitly global institutions' (ibid), but rather endlessly connecting to a global system and agenda through localized activity (see also Bowling and Sheptycki 2012). In this sense, it seems only reasonable to apply Sassen's concerns regarding citizenship to de-localized police organized and acting in the interstices and 'third spaces' (Sassen 2008b). Through this lens we can examine questions regarding actual and intended authority of pre-existing governance structures over these re-arranged police actors. Where these rearrangements occur – whether sub-nationally or inter-

⁸ Even where the local police power is almost entirely under local control (such as in the USA, where local and state police have exclusive jurisdiction over certain areas of criminal activity), their practices are still shaped significantly by federal court decisions.

nationally – they raise problems for structures of accountability, transparency, and ultimately control of state actors.

Accountability and Transparency

In public police work, accountability can take various meanings. In many cases, it is equivalent to ‘accountancy’ (Reiner 2010), a paperwork-based activity that does little to orient officer performance, discourage organizational misbehavior, or ensure service standards. There are also, potentially more rigorous, forms of accountability that we may group under the concept of democratic accountability. These include formal legal accountability and accountability through courts, as well as police complaints commissions which are increasingly citizen-led. Formal accountability processes are often designed with reference to internal policies such as codes of conduct and ethics. These kinds of policies rarely amount to rules of the sort meant by the phrase ‘rule of law’ (Sklansky 2007) since these codes are normally vague enough to justify all but the most egregious kinds of conduct.

For lower-level officer deviance⁹, formal control is, by volume, primarily exercised through internal discipline, sometimes spurred on by complaint commission procedures, that seeks to resolve individual cases of misconduct and provides a deterrent for officers who might otherwise be abusive of their position. In theory, this can include dismissal from the police force, but in practice this is severely rare as an outcome, and even where misconduct is found it normally results in short suspensions, warnings, or transfers of position (Manning 2010). More importantly for this thesis, it is the fact that these procedures are normally local and under the prerogative of chief officers and

⁹ Lower-level here denotes those activities that are solely subject to internal disciplinary procedures, rather than tort or criminal procedure in a public court. It is not intended to be a commentary on the seriousness of officer deviance, which at this lower level can still include rather significant instances of violence or abuse against citizens and suspects.

their designates for activity occurring within their jurisdiction and within their responsibilities to provide local police services.

By removing jurisdictionally-bounded accountability structures from at least some public police work, a door is opened for increasingly problematic activity by inter-jurisdictional police teams – whose work is often largely invisible even to the partner organizations that create them, much less the publics who they police – as well as by jurisdictional police, who can engage these teams to bring their resources to bear on jurisdictional problems. Sheptycki (2002a: 323) argues that:

[C]onventional accountability frameworks for policing that depend on civilian review, parliamentary oversight and other manifestations of the purview of sovereign states fall short of an adequate conception of governance for postmodern policing.

While this statement is focused on transnational policing, most police accountability is fundamentally local, since very few instances of police misconduct ever reach provincial or federal/national courts, or even police complaint commissions. It therefore seems possible that removing police from the local even if only to the regional or inter-jurisdictional will create a distance from normal modes of accountability.

Moreover, without attempting to suggest that police forces are currently adequately connected to their communities, local policing relies at least in part on community support. It cannot help but suffer when negative community interaction occurs, and conversely improve when community relations are positive. Perhaps this contributes to the fact that local, visible policing is where ‘much (if not all) of the energy of those concerned with police accountability has been focused’ (Sheptycki 2002a: 332). In inter-jurisdictional settings, we may expect a potential loss of local citizen feedback mechanisms. These could help determine the acceptability of inter-jurisdictional policing practices in a consent-based system. This is, however, a more empirical than theoretical assertion that needs to be examined in light of data.

Transparency, like accountability, can be interpreted in multiple ways. Accountability processes that maintain organizational records – including but not limited to accountancy – provide one means of making police practice visible. To this end, the ability of citizens to make Freedom of Information requests to a system of police records is an important transparency measure, as is the ability of courts and defense attorneys to access these records to challenge individual or organizational police activity where arrest and charge have taken place. However, given the amount of discretion afforded to police officers, and years of empirical evidence across the Anglo-American policing spectrum problematizing these sorts of transparency efforts of even well-intentioned police organizations, we know that police records rarely reflect an accurate account of police activity, and not all police activity is recorded or accessible by the public.

The problem of inter-jurisdictional transparency may in these terms be exacerbated by practice. Inter-jurisdictional police work is not necessarily different from jurisdictional work in some ways. The protocols, practices, and goals of multi-organizational teams often remain the same as equivalent jurisdictional units. The execution of a murder investigation by an inter-jurisdictional team is fundamentally the same as a murder investigation by a jurisdictional force, insofar as common investigative techniques will be employed. Further, these units normally have similar goals – the apprehension and prosecution of guilty parties.

But, not all inter-jurisdictional teams are doing or contributing to discrete reactive investigations. In many if not most cases, inter-jurisdictional police teams are set up to address the ‘big-picture’ criminal activities rather than traditional jurisdictional crime problems. A transparency issue thus arises from the invisibility of much inter-jurisdictional and indeed multi-unit intra-jurisdictional practice. Collaborative work between police, especially on serious or organized crime, is often risk-

oriented and geared more towards disruption rather than detection and apprehension (Innes and Sheptycki 2004).

As such, among the key mechanisms for bringing to light problematic police practice in a democratic system is the courts, which are generally invoked following arrests and rarely otherwise. But, since many police actions emanating from multi-unit or inter-jurisdictional initiatives are not intended to result in court prosecution, these practices remain non-reviewable for all intents and purposes. Much if not most inter-jurisdictional practice, like much police investigative work, is surreptitious in nature. Yet, these activities can be consequential, both through the damage to the general and specific social fabrics that result from warrantless stops and searches and other disruptive activities, to the manipulation of the electronic identities of already marginal persons held on police databases (Neyroud and Disley 2008), and the concurrent risks of false-positive identification of individuals as criminal or criminal associates.

As well, transparency also requires making day-to-day practice visible, and so organizational charts, internal policies and handbooks outlining expected procedures in given situations, and police codes of practice and ethics can be seen as further efforts towards transparency. Unfortunately, police organizations are inherently dynamic, and actors at the lower levels are constantly informally teaming up and being re-arranged by middle managers in a way that is invisible to either publics or those higher up the administrative chain. Any researcher who has ever asked for an up-to-date organizational (or even divisional) chart in a police organization will recognize that few possess this resource, and those who do often recognize their newest version is probably out of date. This creates a genuine administrative problem that, while managerial in its origins, also reflects on the distribution of – and ability to actually distribute – police resources within a society.

Perhaps equally problematically, the existence of local accountability structures potentially unsuited to the task of inter-jurisdictional coordination coupled with out-of-date organizational information creates something of a 'grey hole' (Dyzenhaus 2006) that gives the illusion of adequate legal protection without the necessary substance. Such has been the case with international policing treaties (Gerspacher and Dupont 2007), where the pragmatic 'functional need to secure the social order' (Sheptycki 2002a, quoted above) and the dynamic organization of police within and between organizations obfuscates an already opaque set of institutional relationships.

There is no reason at present to believe that police working in inter-unit or inter-organizational coordination, integration or collaboration initiatives are in fact less rights-respecting than other similar police working in traditional jurisdictional settings. However, the capacity for them to avoid accountability for poor practice – where this can equally mean mistreatment of citizens or poor performance in policing tasks such as investigation or communication of important information to other police – is greatly enhanced by the unique and novel administrative space in which their activity occurs.

Conclusion

Seeing public police through an open-systems organizational sociology lens provides a necessary starting point for developing a sociological account of police coordination work. It is a meso-level approach that treats police organizations and organizational sub-systems as potentially separate components, though it does not disregard the fact that from a distance multiple police organizations may be seen to act as part of a connected whole state or even global policing apparatus. The environmental perspective provides a focus for the analytic gaze at a level that may offer the best access to boundaries as both socially produced and structurally conditioned aspects of

organizational activity. By focusing on work units as sites of boundary negotiation within an open system, we can see how multiple actors at all points within the police hierarchy may be involved in coordination formally or informally, where boundaries are thought of as unclaimed or overlapping areas of activity rather than firm divisions between rationally organized sections of activity.

The perceived benefits of coordination between public police actors have driven police reform initiatives across various policing landscapes, in each case with similar goals of efficient management and effective practice. These reforms have arisen alongside similar activities throughout public institutions that have re-oriented parts of local governance and national governance into simultaneously sub-national and global assemblages. These new groupings, while potentially appropriate to their tasks, are not well-understood as objects of governance. In later chapters, we will address the issues of governance head-on, in an effort to suggest that these rearrangements can be made democratically accessible once they are understood. Before we can engage in this task, we need to examine empirical evidence of police practice in these novel spaces if we are to ground our claims in more than cautionary salvos or managerial rhetoric.

Chapter 3 – The Contested District: Lower Mainland Police Work in Context

Introduction

The structure of public policing in any district is normally subject to and a result of local social conditions, histories, institutional arrangements, political influence, and to one degree or another, happenstance and luck or misfortune as the case may have it (Bayley 1992; Willis and Mastrofski 2011). The organization of most Anglo-American public police forces can also be located in a national or international context of common practice or ‘best practices’ (ibid; see also Manning 2005; Wood 2007). The public police in the Lower Mainland have certainly been subject to conditioning pressures at the local level, but the policing arrangements found therein cannot easily be located within the standard picture of Canadian police practice, nor within some internationally dominant institutional form of police force structure.

Lower Mainland policing has been described as ‘patchwork policing’ (Westad 2010) and ‘unusually fragmented’ (Wood 2007), in reference to the fact that (at least) 21 police agencies¹⁰ can be found operating on any given day within what is, essentially, one metropolis. This is in contrast to the arrangement of most Canadian metropolitan policing where, even when multiple municipalities are concerned (such as in Greater Toronto, Peel Regional, or Montreal), an amalgamated and centrally-commanded police organization is the norm (ibid). It is also unique internationally; while comparisons of certain aspects of the Lower Mainland arrangement can be made with various districts around the world, taken as a whole it is one of a kind.

This thesis examines a series of initiatives that are both constitutive of, and meant to reconstitute, the unique police arrangements in the Lower Mainland, and in particular, how various components

¹⁰ See Appendix 1 for a list of agencies.

of Lower Mainland policing coordinate with one another. These arrangements are somewhat hard to understand without first examining the conditions that brought them into being, and the conditions that maintain them to the present day. While many police ethnographies either provide a quick gloss of their field site's essential characteristics (e.g. Manning 2008), or create pseudonyms to make their sites anonymous (e.g. Loftus 2009), neither of these strategies will be adequate for this particular location. While all policing arrangements are in some way unique, the Lower Mainland is exceptionally so, and so anonymization would be an absurd exercise. Further, given the multiplicity of police agencies within its borders, a quick overview would be equally unproductive. It is thus necessary to assign an entire chapter to the task of understanding the Lower Mainland, and the reader will also note that further particulars about the field site will crop up in later chapters.

This chapter will draw on government documents, media reports and previous scholarship on the region's police arrangements, as well as on the project's findings where appropriate. It will illustrate the relevant aspects of and recent changes to the organization of Lower Mainland public police work, although recognizing that the arrangement of police services in BC is in constant flux. It will then go on to outline the political problematic of Lower Mainland policing, which may be seen as a combination of: the issues surrounding the unique Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) presence in the region; the persistent socioeconomic divides in policing provision in the Lower Mainland; and the collective action problem of multijurisdictional work and resource sharing. The chapter will then describe the various initiatives by players at all levels to overcome this cumulative problematic, including integration, amalgamation, and rationalization of police services at various levels and to various ends.

The Arrangement of Policing in the Lower Mainland



This is a photo of the corner of Boundary Road and Hastings Street in Vancouver. Boundary Road divides Vancouver from Burnaby and Vancouver Police from the RCMP's Burnaby detachment.

(Photo credit: Bora 480 Photos)

For the purposes of this chapter we will interpret the Lower Mainland as coterminous with the RCMP's Lower Mainland District¹¹ (LMD), and we will use the LMD acronym interchangeably with the phrase Lower Mainland to refer to the region. The reader should keep in mind the subtle distinction between the LMD geographical district and the LMD Command; the former refers to all of the municipalities in the region, while the latter refers to an administrative unit overseeing all RCMP activity in the LMD.

The LMD includes the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), which makes up by far the bulk of the population in the region, and also includes the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) and a number of other smaller communities. The GVRD is made up of 15 municipalities with a total

¹¹ The RCMP LMD includes everything from Pemberton in the northwest, south along the coast to the US Border, to Hope in the southeast, and Boston Bar in the northeast (see map at <http://bc.rcmp.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=1054&languageId=1&contentId=-1>). This may be a larger definition of the territory than many are used to; for example, Wikipedia defines it as the GVRD and FVRD only. During the research, it was noted by some participants that it should be called the Lower Mainland Region (rather than District), as this is the official provincial terminology. For various reasons it will assist clarity in the dissertation to continue to use LMD rather than LMR, despite this semantic conflict.

population of about 2.3 million, with almost half (about 1.1 million) of these being in the cities of Vancouver proper and Surrey as of 2009. The remainder of the LMD is about one-tenth of the GVRD's size in population, but is much larger geographically and is therefore much more suburban and in some cases rural (MPSSG 2011c; MPSSG 2011d). In many cases throughout the dissertation, we will move between discussing the Lower Mainland and discussing only the GVRD, since much previous research on the area deals only with the GVRD, and with the exception of Abbotsford (which is not part of the GVRD, but is in the LMD), all of the urban and most of the specialist policing in the LMD is centred in the GVRD.

In the scope of Canada's history, Vancouver is a relatively new city, and its emergence among Canada's most significant metropolises is even newer. In many ways, its police arrangement has not caught up to its mega-city status. The region was founded in the mid-19th century as a collection of city and town centres haphazardly arranged around various industries such as farming, lumber and fur (Davis 1997). In recent years these centres have become increasingly indistinguishable. In the past four decades the cities have grown into one another, as illustrated in Appendix 3.2 of this thesis. While Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, Coquitlam, and Surrey – the region's five largest municipalities – along with New Westminster have been essentially one continuous metropolis for some time, it is worth taking note of the expansion of White Rock, Langley, and Maple Ridge into the metropolis, as well as the spikes in density in the core cities.

Resultantly, administration of government services, of which police are but one, has become a rather complicated matter. A number of services in the region have been amalgamated between some or all of the municipalities, but policing remains largely – though not entirely – resistant to this trend. There are, as noted above, at present 21 police agencies that have jurisdiction within the

Lower Mainland; these include 13 RCMP 'detachments', six¹² municipal forces, the transit police (who were recently made full-status provincial police officers), and a Canadian Forces military police department. There are other police and quasi-police agencies whose jurisdiction crosses into the LMD permanently or from time to time, including the RCMP federal and provincial police; the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), since the LMD borders on the US state of Washington and has an international airport; and the Canadian National Railway police, among other policing actors both public and private. Add to this milieu a number of 'integrated'¹³ multijurisdictional units, joint forces operations, and multi-organizational partnerships between various police, quasi-police and non-police agencies, and it should come as no surprise that operational responsibilities are not always easily understood or clearly doled out between organizations. As we will see throughout the dissertation, this arrangement produces a number of systemic grey areas that require constant negotiation of mandate and jurisdiction by various actors at all levels of policing.

In Media Res

Perhaps more than any other Canadian policing district, police work in the Lower Mainland is constantly in a state of reform.¹⁴ While Manning (2010) has noted that this is a common aspect of all Anglo-American police forces, the will to improve or to be seen to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of police work is particularly palpable in the Lower Mainland. This aspect of policing in the region will be evident throughout the dissertation, if by nothing other than the sheer number of

¹² The RCMP LMD website claims that there are 9 municipal forces in the LMD, but this seems to be erroneous when compared with the MPSSG's (2009) police resources document.

¹³ See pp. 93-100 for clarification of the functions of integrated units.

¹⁴ Indeed, shortly after the completion of this dissertation it is highly likely that the arrangement of policing in the LMD will already have shifted in ways that make some of this discussion historical rather than current. Further, while all efforts have been taken to fact-check and verify claims about things like partnership structures in various initiatives, organizational priorities, and so forth, it is exceedingly hard to get a clear picture on certain matters since, amongst other things, senior management have in some cases provided conflicting accounts of the present LMD police arrangement.

‘new’ initiatives examined herein. Many of the new initiatives in the Lower Mainland surround the particular topic of this project, namely, integration (or cooperation, coordination, interoperability, or some other similar process intending to get diverse components of policing to work together). The most important, in scope and impact, of these integration initiatives is the institution of a common records system, the Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME), across all police forces regardless of stripe. The PRIME project took significant political will and funding over the better part of a decade, and its implementation is still on-going and being shaped through negotiations at multiple levels.

Many aspects that are said to make integration ‘work’ – particularly the intangible aspects such as informal communication networks and personal friendships – have been recently bolstered by the 2010 Winter Olympics. Police of all stripes from across Canada and primarily the Lower Mainland worked with the Olympics’ Integrated Security Unit (ISU) from 2003 to 2010 to plan security for Vancouver’s Olympic venues, and virtually all of the participants in the study were in some way involved with Olympics policing in some form. The ISU was led by the RCMP, but many VPD and other municipal officers achieved significant ranks within the ISU. The environment in which this study took place was thus recently conditioned from a reasonably positive multijurisdictional experience, and local police were probably experiencing some integration afterglow. It is hard to say whether this will fade in the long term, or provide a foundation for future integration.

The police – particularly the RCMP¹⁵ and VPD – in the Lower Mainland have also had very active reform and reorganization agendas not specific to integration, in recent years. They have

¹⁵ There is also a multiplicity of on-going RCMP change initiatives unrelated (at least in a direct sense) to LMD policing, but nonetheless bearing on the current and future shape of police work in the region. These include the national organizational changes to the RCMP at all levels as a result of the Reform Implementation Task

implemented many of the internationally popular policing initiatives of the past decade, including Compstat-type analysis and hot-spots policing, prolific offender focused policing, neighbourhood and school liaisons, complex civilian analyst programmes, and so on (Griffiths et al. 2006; Prox 2010; RCMP 2009; RCMP 2010b). Alongside broader reforms, all police agencies in the region produce regular strategic plan documents in some form or another. The future of policing in the region is also conditioned by larger BC criminal justice system reforms and policing directives organized by the provincial Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG), which oversees policing in the province. These include new guidelines on the use of Conducted Energy Weapons (CEWs); community safety and crime prevention initiatives; and gang, road safety, youth offending, and human trafficking priority initiatives, among other things (MPSSG 2011a).

These reform efforts are both to maintain legitimacy in the aftermath of scandals and failures in the district, and also to remain competitive in a policing district with multiple potential providers. The presence of public-sector competition for policing services is perhaps the strangest aspect of the Lower Mainland in relation to the rest of the Anglo-American policing world, and appears to be a major driver of organizational reforms, initiatives, and innovations. As will be examined below, cities and towns in BC have the option of creating their own independent force or contracting with the RCMP for police services, and from time to time municipalities have switched providers. This arrangement contrasts with the traditional monopolistic nature of public police organizations with regard to their jurisdictional police mandate (Bittner 1970). Though extant literature has recognized the competition from private sector police encroaching on the public sector (Bayley and Shearing 1996; Rigakos 2005), this issue has probably been somewhat overestimated by academics in many cases (Ayling, Grabosky and Shearing 2009; Manning 2010). Moreover, to whatever degree they

Force, whose final (2010) report is tellingly titled *From Reform to Continuous Change*, a somewhat unsettling prospect.

compete with the private sector, public police are not used to competing with public police. In the LMD, however, police organizations are aware that falling too far behind the state of the art could mean becoming marginalized in regional initiatives or, in the worst case, forced by the provincial government to amalgamate services with a more sophisticated organization. There is thus a tangible aspect of status maintenance and struggle for organizational survival in the perpetual reform of LMD police organizations, a factor which will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

Degrees of Reform

There is of course plenty of reason to be sceptical of the actual implementation of many supposed ‘reforms’ and reorganizations in the public sector (Christensen et al. 2007) and in policing specifically (de Lint, Virta and Deukmedjian 2007; Maguire et al. 2003; Manning 2003). During fieldwork, it was often noted that organizational reform was often just ‘improving acronyms’. The classic case of acronym reform in BC was the reorganization of multijurisdictional organized crime specialists from CLEU (Combined Law Enforcement Unit) into OCA (Organized Crime Agency), and then within the last decade, to CFSEU (Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit). Few participants could identify significant differences between each re-organization:

First it was CLEU, Combined Law Enforcement Unit, then it was OCA, Organized Crime Agency, now it’s CFSEU, Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, but in essence it is an organized crime agency which started in the early 70s.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, interview #31

Other examples of this superficial kind of organizational improvement include the VPD’s re-naming of their foot patrol units from the Citywide Enforcement Team (CET) to the Beat Enforcement Team (BET), and the changing of the provincial Auto Theft Task Force (ATTF) into the Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team (IMPACT).

It is probably an uncontroversial statement that not all government initiatives receive government action. Regarding the MPSSG's priorities noted above, there has been a clear investment in some of these initiatives, especially gang crime. It is less clear that other initiatives have received the actual attention that the province suggests. Indeed, numerous participants claimed that while the province had authorized new road safety units, they had not funded these units and many of them were running at half strength. Others suggested that this deception was widespread:

When I see the province under-funding 200-plus provincial police positions that we have to keep vacant to pay the bills, and yet somehow in our relationship we just try to keep the doors open on all the provincial units as opposed to really coming clean with the public and saying, well we're 250 positions short so we're going to stop doing, you know we'll shut down this unit, this unit and this unit until they're funded ... because the way we're doing it now is horrible. We've got so many provincial units that are running with skeleton crews, and yet we have a province you know beating their chests saying they're doing a great job in funding policing, and we're party to a fraud in that sense, by trying to give the, you know the population the impression that we're fully staffed and doing all the things we should be doing when we're not.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, Interview #33

You know, we don't have quite simply the way we're conducting business right now, in my opinion we don't have enough staff to do the job that we're selling to the public. Like we're telling them that we're doing this job but in reality I don't think we've got the staff to keep up with what we're telling the public we're actually doing.

VPD NCO, Interview #19

Even where genuine reforms do take place, their implementation may be inconsistent with or even go against the goals of the reformers (see also Willis and Mastrofski 2011). For example, in 2008 the RCMP reorganized their crash reconstruction personnel from local detachments to a district-wide team (the Integrated Collision Analyst and Reconstruction Service, or ICARS), intending to provide better coverage by centralizing personnel and technology. This actually resulted in a significant loss of personnel, who did not want to take part in a centralized unit. As a result, crash reconstruction has been undermanned ever since (see also RCMP 2010a: 14). An RCMP NCO explained:

Because of [the creation of] ICARS we suffered a very extreme manpower shortage when we first formed up that we really were very specific about files we would go to. [We only went to] the more serious ones ... with life threatening implications, just because we didn't have the manpower to go to everything that we wanted to go to. Traditionally in a detachment we would go, every time they gave us a call we basically went. We can't do that anymore.

RCMP NCO, interview #54

While there is always a basis for suspicion when a police organization claims that it is changing, there is also plenty of evidence that they do change in certain circumstances. Not all reform is only 'simulation' (de Lint, Virta and Deukmedjian 2007), so reform initiatives may be considered change subject to empirical inquiry (Giacomantonio 2010; Manning 2010; Willis and Mastrofski 2011). The following sections will identify a number of initiatives taken by various agencies to improve and integrate policing in the LMD. While providing a detailed account of their actual implementation will generally be outside of the scope of the Chapter, there are grounds to conclude that these initiatives have reorganized policing in meaningful ways in the region.

Privately Funded Public Policing in the LMD

It is worth outlining the public policing funded privately in the region. This is an increasingly normal aspect of public police arrangements (Ayling, Grabosky and Shearing 2009), and so ought to be accounted for as part of the context of the study. There are three major public police units privately funded in the region: the airport RCMP security detail, SCBCTAPS, and IMPACT. The Vancouver International Airport's security team is made up of RCMP officers subcontracted by the Vancouver Airport Authority (VAA) through the RCMP Richmond detachment. This is done on a full cost-recovery basis (i.e., the VAA pays 100% of costs), which in 2009 was worth about \$3M CDN (MPSSG 2011b: 13).

South Coast British Columbia Transit Authority Police Services (SCBCTAPS) was started as a security company in 2004 and then became a 'designated police unit' in 2005 with full police powers. SCBCTAPS is also fully funded by a private company, Translink, and in 2009 cost Translink over \$26M for 169 positions. They police the LMD's transit services, primarily the SkyTrain, which covers most of the large municipalities in the region. This unit was seen by participants as particularly problematic in practice. The SkyTrain is essentially a public space (or, perhaps more accurately, 'mass private property' (Shearing and Stenning 1983)), and participants in the study suggested that SCBCTAPS spent most of their time enforcing against fare jumpers and unruly customers, at the behest of Translink. They were seen to be doing this rather than policing serious criminal issues on transit or otherwise doing 'real' police work or supporting other police.¹⁶ This led to at least one joke during observations (shift #26) aimed at a SCBCTAPS colleague that he actually worked for Paragon Security, a local private security contractor, rather than a police force.

The Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team (IMPACT) is the other major fully privately funded unit in the region. It is a seconded unit of members from jurisdictions across the province, and their salaries and operating costs are paid entirely by a flow-through grant (via the BC government) from the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC). Their mandate is to investigate auto theft and theft from autos, and their existence is justified entirely on the basis that they save ICBC money through reducing car theft. Their members, unlike members from most units, cannot be loaned out or seconded to work on non-auto theft files, due to the terms set by ICBC.

¹⁶ This is a reference to comments made during observation shifts #18 and #11, both of which surrounded violent incidents on transit where the local police, rather than SCBCTAPS, were called to handle the file. It also relates to comments in interview #19 that transit police members would regularly drive by other police without greeting or offering assistance, which are common markers of police fraternity. It must be recognized that this study only peripherally engaged with SCBCTAPS personnel, and not at all with their managers, so cannot provide a counterpoint to these allegations.

Police in the LMD, like police throughout the Anglo-American world, also work extra-duty shifts for private events such as concerts, sports, festivals, and so on. Event promoters normally organize through a dedicated branch of the police department (for example, the Emergency and Operations Planning Section in the VPD) and pay for some or all of the cost of bringing in extra police to make an event safe, often as a requirement of event insurance and licensing.

In most cases, the 'private' funding agency is actually intertwined with government and the administration of public or semi-public space, and few would argue that securing an airport, transit space, festival, or reducing auto crime are unworthy ends for police. Further, since the airports, transit system, and so on, have the means to do so, there is an inherent logic in asking them to contribute rather than asking the public purse to provide these extra officers. However, in practice, a private interest (or semi-private and business-oriented organization like Translink) in the role of paymaster introduces a dynamic into work prioritization that has the potential to corrupt the mandate of the police organization through potential conflict of interest (if the paymaster was to engage in misconduct), as well as through siphoning of limited resources and directing priorities toward potentially unworthy ends. Police do not respond to all crimes or security needs equally, and introducing a user-pays aspect may create a two-tiered public policing (see Ayling, Grabosky and Shearing 2009 for a more complete discussion of these issues).

This aspect of policing in the LMD is just a fraction of the overall policing picture and so the level of private interest in LMD policing should not be overstated. It is not particularly significant by the numbers, as these privately funded public police number between two to three hundred personnel

at any given time in the LMD¹⁷, just a fraction of the over 4,000 total personnel (MPSSG 2011b, c, d). There have certainly been commentaries on private influence on police in the LMD, particularly the VPD's connection to business improvement agencies (Huey, Ericson and Haggerty 2005). The place of private interests in public policing is thus an important contextual issue in understanding the region, but it must also be reiterated that this aspect of policing did not appear significantly in the observations in this study. The remainder of the chapter and the thesis will primarily focus on public policing funded directly by government.

Catch 21: The Political Problematic of LMD Policing

The organization of public policing resources is, above all other considerations, a political choice (Manning 2010; Wood 2007). What the police do, and how they are meant to do it, is the result of a negotiation between multiple actors in liberal democracies. While the traditional goals of order maintenance and law enforcement remain essential to understanding the implementation of police practices, these are ends that can be arrived at through multiple means. Moreover, many other mandates, such as disruption of criminal networks and suppression of risks to populations may be said to be overtaking these traditional goals as the primary focus of police (Ericson and Haggerty 1997; Giacomantonio 2013), and the truth of this statement will differ from force to force. In other words, not all public police have the same job or do it the same way.

Each of the 21 police forces of the LMD shares many characteristics common among urban Anglo-American forces – use of random car patrol, foot patrol, community policing strategies, forensic and civilian analysis capacities, and so on. However, there are also important points of inter-

¹⁷ This estimate is based on the numbers in MPSSG 2011b, which counts 169 SCBCTAPS personnel and 27 Vancouver Airport personnel, as well as figures provided in my study that IMPACT membership numbers around 20-30 officers at any time.

jurisdictional differentiation in delivery of policing, and this differentiation creates a unique problematic for coordination and cooperation across boundaries. In this section, we will examine the three essential aspects of this problematic: the RCMP's role in BC, the socioeconomic barriers to regional cooperation, and the collective action problem of cross-jurisdictional resource-sharing.

The RCMP in BC

What makes the LMD metropolis particularly unique, from a Canadian policing standpoint, is the amount of RCMP policing to be found within its borders. Nowhere else in Canada does the RCMP have such a significant urban presence. The fact that police in the LMD are such a mix of RCMP and municipal police is regularly seen as one of the unique challenges to inter-agency coordination in the region. For many reasons, it must be kept in mind that this dissertation does not take sides on this matter, but rather presents the positions offered by participants during the fieldwork. It is outside the scope of the project to assess the effectiveness of RCMP policing versus its independent municipal counterparts, nor to provide a future plan for LMD policing.¹⁸ Nonetheless, a discussion of these issues cannot be avoided if the rest of the dissertation is to be seen in proper context.

During fieldwork, the most pressing issue of police reform in the province was a negotiation between the federal government and the BC government that could have resulted – but ultimately did not result – in the removal of the provincial and municipal RCMP from the province by 2014 (Bailey 2011), though federal capacity would have remained. This was a particularly interesting development since more than one-third of the RCMP's personnel are based in 'E' Division, which covers BC. It is therefore hard to imagine what the removal of the RCMP from BC would have done

¹⁸ It cannot be emphasized enough that this study was not designed to and therefore cannot provide an independent assessment of what is working and what is not in LMD policing. Despite my attempts at clarification and guarantees to the contrary, many participants clearly participated at least in part in the hope that the final report would show how some or all integration was or wasn't effective, and this dissertation is certain to disappoint in that regard.

to that organization, as well as to the future of coordination of policing in BC and the LMD in particular (CP 2011). While the contract remains in place, there are a number of facts concerning the RCMP relationship with BC that the reader should be aware of to make sense of exactly why such a radical shake-up of policing in BC was being considered, and how these factors help to explain the current idiosyncratic arrangement.

Detachment policing and its discontents

On a national level, the RCMP is organized along a number of ‘business lines’, including federal policing, provincial, municipal, and aboriginal area contract policing, and international policing. We will leave the latter aside for now, since international policing does not figure significantly in the LMD. The RCMP is first and foremost a federal police force, responsible for almost exclusive enforcement of certain federal statutes across the country and without jurisdictional exception. These responsibilities include ‘border integrity, national security, commercial crime, international proceeds of crime, drug enforcement and protective services¹⁹’ (MPSSG 2011b: 3). In this way, they have a truly national jurisdiction on certain matters, generally seen by participants of all stripes as the ‘big picture’ police activities. They also maintain a number of resources available to all police across the country, such as the ViCLAS (Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System), a database all police forces can access in order to identify cross-jurisdictional serious violent criminals; and the Canadian Police College, which provides skills development available to all police in Canada.

Through their second main business line, they offer police services on contract to provinces, municipalities, and aboriginal groups. They are the provincial police force for most of Canada’s provinces (with the exceptions of Ontario and Quebec), which means they provide highway and rural

¹⁹ Protective services include security detail for international figures and diplomats, as well as the Canadian Prime Minister, Governor General, and so on (RCMP 2011).

policing and police services for small communities that would not typically develop their own police forces, normally those under 5,000 population. They also provide municipal police services to over 200 municipalities that could develop their own independent police capacity, but choose the RCMP contract model instead. They do this through RCMP organizational subunits called 'detachments', and these are organized internally in many ways like any other independent public police force, with a few important distinctions.

In all provinces, non-RCMP police services are governed by their respective provincial police legislation, which normally covers matters of mandates, discipline, procedures, complaints and accountability protocols, and so on. RCMP contract police, however, are not generally subject to the provisions of provincial police acts, and instead are governed by the federal *RCMP Act*. This means among other things that to change RCMP protocol to suit some local conditions can often require approval not only from local commanders or a municipal police board, but also from commanders in RCMP headquarters in Ottawa. Significant changes could also require parliamentary action, and may informally require some political assent from provincial governments as well. Further, any requested change to any RCMP contract policing arrangement has to be weighed against the interests of the detachments in the rest of the country; a new labour guideline, reporting protocol, or technological advance applied by or offered to the detachment in Surrey, BC, also has to be acceptable in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, and Deer Lake, Newfoundland, and everywhere else, as well as be in line with the *Act*.

This aspect of RCMP contract policing leaves municipal and provincial governments often quite hamstrung in directing their RCMP contract forces, and led many participants to comment on how independent municipal police forces were much more 'nimble' than their RCMP counterparts:

The RCMP don't have that advantage in a lot of cases because of course they have to go to Ottawa, so that slows them down a little bit. We tend to be very nimble here ... we can get going on a project very quickly and it's not that easy for them sometimes. Sometimes they can get going pretty quick but for us we're much faster.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #52

This has also led to persistent, and largely intractable, concerns about local accountability, since unlike independent municipal police, RCMP detachments cannot be meaningfully directed by a local police board. A number of participants on the RCMP side seemed to suggest that the RCMP was willing to 'open up' the *RCMP Act* to allow greater local control (although, in fact, this decision rests with the federal Parliament):

I think we need you know from an internal perspective ... a modernization of the RCMP Act and all the things that kind of combine or contain within that document, whether that be in terms of category of employ, whether it be classification of positions, promotion systems, rates of pay, discipline, I think we really need a modernization of that thing and that would allow us to be a more nimble organization, nimble in the sense that when we see opportunity we can take advantage of it, and in every area of the organization.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, interview #29

I'm told that our senior management have advocated for that [opening up the Act] and said that that would be a good thing for us to do ... that would be very much a thing that would be useful for us as well as an independent oversight, which is the other aspect that we're looking at right now.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, interview #34

This was certainly part of the negotiations between BC and the RCMP, and it remains to be seen how it will be dealt with in the future. Some RCMP participants suggested that while on the surface it appears that RCMP are less accountable to local control than independent municipal forces, in fact the RCMP are bound by their desire to maintain their contract. They claim to informally cede a significant amount of control to municipal councils in directing police work, perhaps even more than independent municipal police give to their governing bodies. While it is not presently possible to

verify the relative degrees of civilian or political control over police in BC's jurisdictions, there may be some truth to this claim, especially during contract negotiations.

Despite their drawbacks, the RCMP contract comes with a number of benefits. Most observers would admit that the RCMP are among the most competent police in Canada when it comes to handling large-scale operations and complex investigations, and since they have nationwide personnel, they are able to draw on a massive pool of resources when something unexpected comes up. This is a major consideration for small and even medium-sized jurisdictions, who can use this capacity as an insurance policy against complex crime problems (such as multiple murders in a small town) and against emergent situations that would normally overwhelm a small-town police force (such as a natural disaster).

The RCMP also provides an 'off-the-shelf' policing option; contracting jurisdictions do not need to provide training or equipment, nor develop institutional capacities. This aspect of RCMP contracting certainly contributes to some of the inertia that has kept RCMP in places where there is desire for a new arrangement. RCMP contract police are also much cheaper than developing a municipal force. Excluding start-up costs, the normal base savings level for opting for RCMP is 10-30% when compared to an equal level of independent municipal service. Whenever RCMP are contracted to a municipality, the federal government pays 10% of the cost of the detachment for detachments serving populations over 15,000, and 30% for municipalities and incorporated areas between 5,000 and 15,000 people. In provincially-policed areas (towns and villages under 5,000) the province pays 70% of the policing costs, while the federal government maintains its 30% contribution. In these rural areas, local governments pay zero (MPSSG 2011b). Policing is a huge municipal expenditure, so this is no small savings for municipal budgets. For example, the City of Surrey's expenditure on policing is 33% of its annual operating costs, or around \$98M of \$296M in 2010 (Surrey 2010: 105),

and so having RCMP instead of a municipal force saved the city approximately \$9M for an equivalent level of service.

While this sounds like a sweetheart deal, the provincial and federal governments pay their share in return for the right to call away up to 30% of a detachment's personnel for federal or provincial policing matters. In theory, the fact that latent resources (i.e., extra police officers) can be held and re-deployed nationally should assist cost-control efforts by maximizing distribution. In practice, RCMP costs (in line with the cost of all policing in Canada) continue to climb well past the rates of inflation, population growth, and other public sector growth (Murphy 2009). However, as the next section will discuss there is more to this than just the costs of personnel (see also ICURS 2010).

Some independent municipal police participants in this study suggested that the actual savings in the RCMP contract model is less than the RCMP suggest, and they may be referring to the actual cost per officer in the field. A municipal officer costs around \$165,000/year to keep in the field, while an RCMP officer costs the municipality around \$155,000 (MPSSG 2011b). When one factors in the federal 10% rebate, the RCMP officer's cost is actually higher overall than the municipal officer's. Nonetheless, the RCMP option remains much cheaper since, in officers per capita, the RCMP staff at lower levels than municipal forces in BC. Provincial statistics show that in comparison to municipal police, RCMP detachments in municipalities of 15,000 or more have less officers per capita (1 officer per 781 capita in RCMP compared to 1:531 in independent municipal departments), and an overall lower cost per capita (\$185/citizen RCMP versus \$310 municipal) (MPSSG 2011b: 7-8). Low staffing levels help keep costs down, although many participants of all stripes recognized the deleterious effect this had on quality of policing and on officer morale. The MPSSG report warns that a direct comparison between RCMP and municipal districts is misleading, since RCMP detachments receive administrative and personnel support from provincial headquarters and from a number of regional

and provincial units. However, even when these statistics are adjusted to account for this difference (ibid, and also p. 9), it is still clear that the RCMP option is cheaper and provides lower service levels.

This latter claim is further supported by the fact that annual caseload for RCMP officers in BC is 75 cases per officer on average, compared to 41 per officer in independent municipal districts, which means that an RCMP municipal officer is responsible for almost twice as much casework as the average independent municipal officer (ibid). One can reasonably surmise that RCMP officers therefore have less time and do less detailed work on their cases, or that RCMP officers are overworked, when compared to their municipal counterparts. The fieldwork suggested that the truth was an amalgam of these two positions, and this is almost certainly a consequence of the fact that RCMP are non-unionised, while independent municipal officers all have unions.

It is arguable that contract policing was designed as more of a provincial/rural stopgap support for provinces than as an urban solution (e.g. Palango 1999). Contract policing was started in Saskatchewan in 1928 to re-invigorate the purpose of the RCMP, who had initially existed to secure European settlement of the Canadian northwest (ibid). In 1950, the government of British Columbia decided to get rid of the province's police force in favour of an RCMP contract. This is perhaps the most fateful decision for both the LMD arrangement today and the RCMP organization as a whole; at the time (and at a number of times before 1950), the federal government had considered removing or limiting RCMP contract services, and focusing on their federal role instead. However, by increasing the RCMP presence in BC in 1950, the BC government also in many ways buoyed contract policing for better or, as Palango (1999) argues, worse.

This arrangement made sense for the many small communities around BC, which as a province is big enough to fit the United Kingdom within its borders five times over. The RCMP's skill set was well

suited for the challenges of BC, including policing large areas of uninhabited land, aboriginal areas, and rural communities (ibid). These small communities often chose to provide policing under the RCMP contract rather than develop their own independent police. While the contract has been re-negotiated a handful of times since 1950 largely around the federal cost-share – which has dropped from 60% in 1950 to 30% or less in that time (German 1990) – the RCMP presence in BC has remained strong throughout.

Excluding BC, the RCMP has virtually zero large urban policing capacity, and their training centre in Regina, ‘Depot’, trains a ‘generalist’ police officer rather than the ‘first responder’ (Manning 2010) patrol officer traditionally associated with large urban Anglo-American policing. This means, *inter alia*, that RCMP patrol officers (referred to, tellingly, as ‘general duty’ members) are trained to work on their files from initial call response to ultimate resolution. In contrast, first-responder patrol officers focus only on the reactive aspects of calls for service, and transfer most follow-up work to other components of the organization. The work-life of RCMP officers is thus different from officers in most large municipal forces. Large RCMP detachments in the LMD are organized like most other urban police forces – including crime-area and technical specialists, civilian analysts, and support staff as a significant percentage of total operations. However, RCMP and other participants regularly suggested that Depot-trained RCMP experienced growing pains entering this environment, when compared to their independent municipal counterparts trained through the local Justice Institute (JI) police academy (see also Palango 1999).

Socioeconomics and Resisting Regionalization

The problem is that over time when Vancouver was you know the sole centre of the universe and you had these sleepy bedroom communities out there, they’re not sleepy bedroom communities any more. Surrey, Burnaby and New West, these are busy places from a policing perspective and as the Lower Mainland’s evolved now and we’ve got you

know 2.3 million people or whatever it is in the region now, we haven't kept up to it with the policing, and we're still working in these little silos, so [through integration] we tried to do our best, formally and informally coming up with these relationships but still a mess.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #51

Regardless of whether municipal forces in the LMD are independent or RCMP – removing the 'RCMP factor' (Wood 2007) – the region still has to grapple with the fact that there are multiple municipalities all of whom want to retain their own police force. Those BC communities that have the right to organize their own police tend to continue to do so, rather than cede them to provincial control or amalgamate them with encroaching jurisdictions (ibid). Given the demographic shifts of the last 60 years, there is some absurdity here, even if one accepts the importance of local control over at least certain aspects of policing (Wood 2007: 294-5). A common refrain during interviews and discussions went something like, 'If you had to design the ideal police structure for the Vancouver region, you wouldn't design what we have now' (VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #50).

While participants did not necessarily agree on the solution to the arrangement of LMD policing, all agreed there was a problem. Regionalization – bringing all police resources in the LMD under a common command and deployment structure – is currently a hot-button issue and not to be resolved in this dissertation. Nonetheless, even an objective observer must comment on the curious fact that it has not happened in the LMD. Wood (2007: 286) has written:

In BC, police regionalization has also been a recurring theme ... [D]espite generally favourable findings the political will to amalgamate police departments, with a few exceptions, has not been forthcoming.

As noted earlier, the trend in Canada has been towards centralizing police functions (Murphy 1991; Wood 2007), and BC and the LMD have gone against the current in this regard. So what is it about LMD policing that is so resistant to amalgamation or regionalization?

Many participants from all forces claimed that they would welcome a regional command – indeed, the RCMP have proceeded somewhat in this regard, by implementing the LMD command structure – but no one legitimately believed complete regionalization was going to happen any time soon. Resistance to regionalization from Lower Mainland police organizations exists, but it may be overestimated in the media. The more significant barrier to regionalization, identified by participants in the research (and by Wood 2007), was the tension between political actors in the have- and have-not policing jurisdictions in the LMD.

‘No call too small’ versus Priority Policing

And that was really the philosophy that probably resulted in, what is there now, 8 or 9 still municipal PDs out there, because they ... can get at a level of service delivery that is unsurpassed ... no call too small ... they tell their people, phone call comes in and you go there, you talk to that citizen where that isn’t always the case anywhere else ... so once you give citizens a few decades of that, they’re not willing to risk [losing it].

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #57

The issue of sharing police resources in the LMD cannot be understood without recognizing that Greater Vancouver includes one of the worst skid-row districts on the continent in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES), and also boasts some of the most expensive areas to live in the entire country. During fieldwork Vancouver was ranked as world’s least-affordable city, where affordability is calculated as average income versus average home price (CBC 2010). The contrast between wealth and poverty in the LMD is stark, and the policing that the wealthy receive is different from the policing of poorer districts (see also: Huey 2007; Huey, Ericson and Haggerty 2005). This differentiation is maintained, in part, by the fragmentation of policing in the region.

For instance, in 2009 the affluent district of West Vancouver had one officer for every 571 persons, each carrying a caseload of 29 cases per year, and a violent crime rate of 6.3 violent crimes annually

per 1,000 population. Surrey, which is much poorer, had one officer for every 760 persons; even when adjusted for the assistance from provincial and LMD resources, this only improves to one per every 709 persons, and each carrying a caseload of 70, with a violent crime rate of 18.9 (MPSSG 2011b: 7-9). Further, most of Surrey's resources would be deployed at any time in their high-crime areas of Whalley and Newton, and the other areas of town receive decidedly slower service and more limited follow up for non-priority calls. The result is that people who live in relatively rich jurisdictions receive a traditional police service marked by prompt call response and timely follow-up investigation. People in less affluent or higher-crime cities, on the other hand, receive slow or no responses except for specific priority crime types. A 28-year veteran RCMP officer summarized the situation:

A: [T]he politicians were still demanding that we do more so the watchword was do more with less so we ended up stripping the front line, and so you've got fewer uniform police officers so that preventive presence was gone ... [A]s budgets continued to tighten up ... all of a sudden we would start limiting our response ... so the no call too small was gone, so you know in Surrey if your B&E was less than \$5000 you wouldn't see a police officer... so priority policing, you can get a missing person call, a cop wouldn't show up for 6 hours ... Still we'll go to the priority ones, the high priority files, the lower priority files, you wouldn't see attendance

Q: And is that true at both the rural and the urban levels?

A: Urban more so, rural are still sleepy, you'll get your Langleys, your North Van[couver]s, even Richmond where it's just not that busy, and they're still no call too small, they want to see police walking downtown and they'll do it.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, interview #30

In turn, small, low-crime-rate jurisdictions want to protect their ability to provide prompt and thorough service to citizens, since after all, municipal taxes pay some or all of municipal police salaries, and local politicians in the LMD feel the need to satisfy their citizens and be responsible to their budgets (Wood 2007). These cities and towns were said to see collaboration, integration, or amalgamation with high-crime jurisdictions such as Surrey and Vancouver as a threat to their quality

of policing. One could reasonably surmise that in a regional police force, police deployment would be concentrated in high crime areas and on priority calls for service, and responses to relatively minor quality of life issues would become casualties of police rationalization measures.

Rationalization characterizes the current deployment trend in the large cities of the LMD. For example, in the last decade, to decrease the need to dispatch officers to calls for service, the VPD created an internet reporting system for theft under \$5000 and a Telephone Response Team (TRT) to deal with low priority calls by phone rather than dispatch. They also created a unit in 2007 – the District Alternate Response Service, or DARS car – that follows up TRT non-priority calls, such as after-the-fact break-and-enters or non-violent thefts, with an in-person visit and interview. This DARS visit occurs normally a day or more after the initial call for service (Steven 2008), and VPD members on DARS visits rarely expect that their work will result in arrests or useful evidence. This task is normally doled out to the most junior members on any shift and is low-prestige work; for example, on one shift (shift #29), I met a first year officer who complained his shift routine was ‘DARS, wagon²⁰, DARS, wagon’, meaning he rarely got to do work that he considered legitimate. A VPD officer summed up the result of priority policing and rationalization with a touch of irreverence:

You know it’s tough, so we’re not really getting to those calls, you know we’ve got on our, on the boot of our cars we’ve got ‘Beyond The Call’, I’d like to change that some days to ‘Trying To Get To Your Call’, because that’s the reality is, is that we’re just not getting to, we’re not providing the service that the public thinks that we should be providing.

VPD NCO, Interview #19

There is no reason to believe that this situation would change under amalgamation, and it would exacerbate existing tensions with those who already see crime in other jurisdictions as other peoples’ problems. As we will see in the next section, this narrow view of the location of criminal

²⁰ ‘Wagon’ means transporting arrested persons from in the field to holding cells, rather than responding to calls for service.

activity is the third component of the political problematic, and perhaps the most tangible on a day-to-day basis in police work.

The Collective Action Problem of LMD policing

Well, I mean the [smaller police departments], they will try but they are small right so it's difficult for them. So really ... you have two players as you have the Vancouver police department and you have provincial RCMP resources that will go on these things [regional initiatives], and all these other police departments we call them free riders, they ride off our work because they can.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #55

You know, it seems to me that RCMP's always willing to cooperate, always willing to throw in resources and money, whereas we don't always see that with the municipal departments as much.

RCMP NCO, interview #42

LMD police forces, even individual RCMP detachments under LMD command, each face a common issue of who is responsible for, who pays for, and who benefits from, police work. This collective action problem emerges from the multiple and competing jurisdictions, police command structures, and political masters in the metropolis. Crime problems in the region easily cross jurisdictional lines; as the photos in Appendix 3.3 illustrate, the borders between municipalities in the region can be invisible to the uninitiated observer, and can be (and have been) exploited by perceptive criminals. These borders remain meaningful to police, and their existence introduces costs and considerations when pursuing targets who cross municipal lines. Many participants argued that everyone has a stake in almost any crime that occurs in the region, given the potential mobility of offenders across the LMD's contiguous jurisdictions. At the same time no local force wants to take responsibility for multijurisdictional crime, or at least would prefer assistance in its resolution where other jurisdictions are involved.

This collective action problem is certainly present between any two police forces, but it is more acute and persistent when it is between neighbouring jurisdictions like the VPD and Burnaby RCMP than when it is between, for example, VPD and Toronto PD. The general framework of police boundary negotiation will be dealt with in Chapter 5, and a more detailed account of the dynamics of coordination work in the LMD will follow in Chapter 6. This subsection will provide a background to these issues.

The problem of shared resources in the region has both general and specific aspects. The general problem is particular to cities with central business districts that draw in crime from people outside of their jurisdiction. VPD participants regularly complained about the fact that the whole region uses its downtown as a playground but other municipalities do not contribute to the policing of this shared entertainment district:

[T]he population of Vancouver is only 600,000 but on a daily basis we have 8-900,000 people in Vancouver ... everybody's coming to Vancouver to work, for tourism, for entertainment ... we've done lots of analysis in Vancouver to show that 25% of the people that we arrest in Vancouver are not from Vancouver, they're from the suburbs, they're from New West and Surrey and they're taking the Skytrain and they're coming here from all over the place. 33% of the people we write tickets to are not from Vancouver ... When somebody goes on holidays, they don't fly from Toronto to go on holidays in Delta unless they have family in Delta. People go to see where the hub is.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #51

Cities like Surrey, Burnaby and Abbotsford can all make some claim of having a city centre that is used by many non-locals, but certainly Vancouver is the 'hub' of the region (Wood 2007).

On top of this problem of general disorder caused by being a central business district, however, is perhaps the bigger, more specific problem of determining who is responsible for dealing with individual offenders and their offenses. The general protocol dictating police jurisdiction over offenses is that wherever an offense was committed, that jurisdiction ultimately owns the file

related to the offense and has responsibility to do the follow up work. However, not all criminal activities or even individual criminal acts are located in one place and time. An example of an inter-provincial fraud that occurred during observations is illustrative:

We attend a fraud call at a local bank ... [The fraud began with an email exchange between someone in BC and a group in another province]. When we look further into it, this particular scam has been perpetrated at least five other times in other places in the country... [I]t is not clear [which jurisdiction] the file will go to, or if there is another level of the police organization that will be interested in it. There is a fraud section in [the BC jurisdiction], there are police in Manitoba and New Brunswick who might be working on this file, and there is the company who is potentially being defrauded in BC. However, it is not clear what the next step is on the file, or whether any further investigation will happen ... It seems that fraud is not an integrated area as yet.

From field notes, shift #10 (some details changed to ensure anonymity)

This fraud call shows that parts of a crime can take place in multiple locations. Here, three provinces and police of jurisdiction may or may not decide that a substantial enough part of the crime took place in their jurisdiction to warrant follow-up work and ultimate jurisdictional responsibility.²¹

More often, incidents that produced a grey area of work responsibility were of a much more mundane sort. For example:

When we attend Richmond detachment, they are in the midst of a jurisdictional squabble with Vancouver. A car identified in Richmond as having a possibly intoxicated driver crashed just after crossing from Richmond into Vancouver. VPD and Richmond RCMP each wanted the other detachment to take the file, and apparently the Richmond Staff Sergeant was having trouble getting the ... dispatcher to recognize that it should indeed be VPD's file (I have no idea, in the end, whose file it was). During this debate, it is reiterated [to me] by an RCMP member that RCMP will always take a file if no one else will.

From field notes, shift #4 (some details changed to ensure anonymity)

²¹ Given the questionable severity of fraud in the traditional police lexicon, it was likely that no investigation took place in any location.

In this incident, two jurisdictions both potentially could have recorded the same drunk-driving offense, which is a problem of continuous offenses in a multijurisdictional environment. One of the interesting dynamics illustrated here and in the quotes at the beginning of the subsection is that participants from the two major police organizations in the region – VPD and RCMP – made claims during the research that, when no one else will step up to deal with a particular crime problem, their organization will always take on the extra work rather than see a file left unattended. Given the certainty that both organizations cannot at all times be the service of last resort, there is definitely a good deal of hubris wrapped up in these statements.

Most criminal activity, it should be noted, is clearly the responsibility of one jurisdiction or another. However, given the unique boundary issues of the LMD, most participants claimed that, on a regular basis, in some way or another they were either crossing jurisdictional lines or assisting another jurisdiction in the resolution of a file. For example:

Q: [S]ince you've been sort of in general duty, do you have, have you done any cross jurisdictional work?

A: Not really, not that I can think of anyways, I mean there's a lot of our bad guys that cross borders obviously

Q: For sure

A: So in that respect absolutely, you know you deal with other agencies to ask them to go arrest people for you and stuff like that, but in terms of an integrated you know cross jurisdictional operation type of thing, I've never had any

Q: But you do have regular contact with other detachments?

A: Absolutely, absolutely, non-stop. CPIC is the biggest thing that we use constantly, messaging other agencies, request their help. It's not feasible for me to go to Vancouver to check a house to make sure that lady is ok if we get a call from her sister saying she's in Vancouver she's hurting, so you request assistance of other agencies constantly

Q: Ok, so that's a pretty regular thing?

A: I'd say constantly yeah

Note here that the officer initially considered his work as isolated to his jurisdiction, but upon brief reflection realized that working cross-jurisdictionally was a 'constant' in his daily routine. Multijurisdictional work is regularized in the LMD, to the point that it can become imperceptible to police.

The prosecution of an offender – in many ways the ultimate goal of front-line police work – can also be negotiated through multiple jurisdictions. As one VPD investigator (interview #5) explained:

A: It totally affects things where I am now. I have a file right now where a guy did twenty, close to twenty [crimes] ... in Richmond, Vancouver, Burnaby, North Vancouver ... So I've been corresponding with the Richmond crown in order to get them to make sure he's held and keep me updated to make sure if there's any indication that he could get released any time, because Richmond want to put through a bunch of charges. North Van is planning on putting through some more charges on him as well too, and Burnaby I know is putting charges through on him as well too. I'm planning on putting charges in when I get my DNA evidence back ... we have 4 people doing the exact same thing. Right? One person could write up this great big report to crown counsel with all these things, write one warrant, not three, to get his DNA evidence, and it would be way more efficient.

Q: And so they can't just sort of piggyback your DNA warrant, they just can't ... use your reports there?

A: Because it's a different offense ... [I]f he is found not guilty for [my charges] ... then they can't use that evidence any more to support theirs.

Collective action between forces thus requires dealing with systems that can inhibit cooperation despite the best intentions of individual officers, police organizations, and even political actors. As

Chapters 5 and 6 will discuss, certain conditions must be in place for these kinds of boundaries to be bridged. In the LMD, boundary negotiation strategies will have to take into account the multiple dimensions of the local political problematic to be successful.

Variegated Solutions: Integration, Joint Forces and Rationalization

As one would expect, police services in the LMD have a number of initiatives in place to address these issues of multijurisdictionality. Historically and presently, police forces in the LMD have used coordinating meetings as the official venue for information-sharing, developing joint operations and projects, and perhaps also, the airing of inter-jurisdictional grievances. These meetings can be between senior management, middle managers, crime-type specialists, or other actors with a shared purview, and they can be inter- or intra-organizational. Coordinating meetings happen very regularly in some spheres of police activity and rarely in others, and they admit of varying degrees of formality.

Oddly, participants at all levels rarely discussed these coordinating meetings as important facilitators of inter-jurisdictional coordination, and some expressed significant scepticism about their utility. For example, many police units and organizations in the LMD have tried at a number of times to implement regional meetings on things like homicide investigations, and have even tried a ‘regional Compstat’²², which was widely regarded as a failure:

So at the highest levels there’s a blockage there already that’s creating all these different silos where things will never be broken down completely. And then at the lower levels what we’ve tried to do is make the best of what we have. So we’ve tried to come up with these committees, we’ve tried to come up with information sharing ways, formally and informally. We’ve tried to come up with things like a regional Compstat, we’ve done a couple of those ... [A]nd it didn’t really go anywhere, it was not successful. You get into the whole thing though

²² Compstat is a contested term even in police managerial literature. It is generally meant to denote a coordinating meeting which includes spatial crime analysis, crime control strategy development, and performance measurement.

you've got to remember like people get very territorial and people want to know well who's in charge, is this a Vancouver initiative or is it an RCMP initiative or who's running the show here and it's defeatist, quite frankly.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #51

Successful longstanding practices of coordination in this vein include social activities like inter-departmental meet-and-greet gatherings, shared training activities through the JI or CPC, and operations like the Olympics to encourage personal connections between officers in various components of the organizations. Some specialist investigators also belong to professional bodies that organize training and social events; for example, auto-crime investigators throughout BC are members of the BC Association of Auto Theft Investigators (BCAATI), which hold quarterly seminars and luncheons. Nonetheless, there are a number of things that coordinating meetings simply cannot accomplish, even where they are a reasonably effective endeavour:

Yeah [a regional coordinating meeting is] done monthly, it's done monthly for all of the agencies but you know having said that there are daily communications between all of the units ... so there's that kind of communication always, but we don't have any structure in place to have real time sharing of information, and that's what you know I think we're greatly missing right now.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #9

Recent technological advances have expanded organizational capabilities in both real-time information sharing and the development of personal connections. The most important LMD technological advance is PRIME, since it actively connects police in different jurisdictions with one another in real-time (although, as the previous quote illustrates, certain units are still limited in this regard). Alongside PRIME, police in the LMD also installed a common digital radio box into all LMD cars, with channels that could be shared across police forces. Prior to the advent of PRIME and digital radio, real-time cooperation between forces was a complicated matter:

[A] decade ago we couldn't even talk to Burnaby unless we picked up the telephone to phone and say hey we've got a bad guy who's casing the industrial area down at Boundary [Road] and 1st avenue ... but you would never have done that 10 years ago ... Meanwhile Burnaby could check the same guy half an hour later and never know that Vancouver had checked him earlier ... that is huge because we've never been able to chat with each other short of picking up the telephone and calling our dispatch and to phone their dispatch and to go then go their radio, to their car ... I think the public world thought that the police could talk to each other, I think the reality was that we couldn't because the means to do so wasn't there.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #53

[Y]ou have to remember 20 years in this region, we had no integration other than maybe ... CLEU, right? We had no integration. I couldn't talk to a [neighbouring jurisdiction] member ... on the radio. There could be an armed robbery going on across the street and I wouldn't know about it.

Integrated Unit NCO, interview #2

PRIME's interface in the in-car mobile data terminal (MDT) also has an instant-messaging function similar to services like MSN messenger, which was used heavily during observations. PRIME is therefore also a key tool in the maintenance of personal relations, through on-shift online chats with colleagues in other units.

Pre-PRIME, sharing records for on-going investigations was no easy matter, requiring physical attendance at a local police force's records room. Now it only requires a relatively brief search of the shared PRIME system. Some information is still not available on PRIME, but it is considered a massive improvement over the disparate records management systems of old. As one officer explained:

And so for our members to access, say somebody from Vancouver police wanted to access our file, the only way they could [have done] it is come to our office and go through the physical file, whereas now with ... PRIME, there's more information on there. Still a lot of the

sensitive information would not be on there, you'd still have to come physically and talk to us.

Integrated Unit NCO, interview #42

In an attempt to further entrench multijurisdictional cooperation, the RCMP have arranged all of the 13 LMD detachments under a common command (which spawned the acronym 'LMD'; see footnote above). The LMD commander outranks the detachment commanders, and the LMD also employs four multijurisdictional inspector-rank officers called Regional Duty Officers (RDOs), who assume a duty officer position²³ for the entire district. More important than the RDOs' operational role as duty officer, however, is their multijurisdictional liaison role. They spend the majority of their time on shift in informal meetings with RCMP detachment commanders and independent municipal colleagues, maintaining a personal connection to facilitate future cooperation and alleviate inter-departmental frictions.

As well, the RCMP has been the vanguard of integrated units at the national, provincial, and LMD levels. In the last decade, the RCMP has created six integrated units specific to the Lower Mainland, and also provides administrative support for a number of other integrated units organized provincially and nationally (see Appendix 3.1 for full list). Integrated units take specialist functions, usually housed in individual large urban departments, and place them all under a central command that draws personnel from multiple jurisdictions. The central command then doles these specialists out across jurisdictions based on LMD- or province-wide priorities. Integrated units should be differentiated from provincial units, which are also multijurisdictional but would be made up mostly or entirely of provincial officers and paid for by the province. An integrated unit is made up mostly

²³ A duty officer is normally a supreme ranking officer on patrol, and their function is to provide high-level command to daily operations. They are uniformed and drive a patrol car and are common in municipal policing. They respond to calls for service, but also have the capacity to command resources from across their ambit and have the ability to direct shift supervisors in making personnel deployment decisions.

or entirely of seconded officers from municipal forces, or otherwise paid for jointly by municipal forces (though often with some provincial support as well). The distinction between ‘integrated’ and other forms of inter-organizational partnership is not always clear, and is often simply a semantic choice driven by political considerations.

The Semantics of ‘Integration’

The official reason in many cases for achieving multijurisdictionality through an integrated unit is to overcome traditional barriers of cross-jurisdictional coordination, while maintaining local municipal knowledge, in dealing with a specific crime issue. Integrated units as such are a subset of what are known as Joint Forces Operations (JFOs). LMD police were involved in many JFOs during the research, but not all of them were integrated units. The key difference between a JFO and an integrated unit is a degree of permanence as part of the overall policing arrangement. An integrated unit deals with a crime type (such as homicide, auto crime, or gang crime) over an indefinite period of time, and develops procedures and practices somewhat independent of its partner organizations.²⁴ A JFO, on the other hand, would normally be led by one of the partner organizations, and would typically have an end or a potential end in sight. This end might be the successful prosecution of an offender or set of offenders, or the dismantling of a criminal operation whether or not prosecution is achieved. Key JFOs in operation just prior to the fieldwork included project E-Peseta, which dealt with the ‘Surrey Six’ homicides, and Project Evenhanded, which was the investigation of the Pickton serial murders and the DTES’s missing women.²⁵

²⁴ Many integrated units are housed under the provincial RCMP Major Crimes section, but this appears to be more of an artifact of bureaucratic requirement than a claim to RCMP ownership of the unit.

²⁵ There are also an inestimable number of brief and somewhat informal multijurisdictional ‘projects’ at any time in the LMD, and they may last as little as one night or one ‘block’ of shifts (normally four days). Projects,

Not everyone agreed on the meaning of the term integration. Participants regularly raised issues about ‘true’ integrations in the LMD, as some integrated units were not seen to adequately recognize all police departments as equals:

I always put the word true in front of it [integration], ‘cause I think a lot of people use that word very freely to their advantage, and so how I see true integration is that every person, every contributor, every organization that contributes has the same say as every other one that’s there. So if you come to the table you come to the table not just with money and people, you come to the table with money, people, your own culture that you should respect and other people should respect ... and also that you have a stake, you have decision-making, you have the availability to make a decision of where that team goes and where the team prioritizes and what they do in their daily work ... that’s true integration. The other, I’ll call it artificial integration, is where people contribute to one agency and that agency runs it all, that’s not integration, I mean that’s just a shell of integration, so I see that being the difference between the two.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, interview #27

Some participants were quick to point out that not all integrated units should be called ‘integration’, and rather should be seen as ‘resource sharing’ (interview #1) or partial amalgamation arrangements to rationalize police resource distribution. Indeed, many integrations are archetypical rationalization measures, logical extensions of broader Canadian police management trends (Murphy 2004). They are intended to increase efficiency by achieving economies of scale and reducing redundancies, rather than increasing multi-jurisdictional coordination or knowledge exchange. The forensic services, dog handlers, and emergency response team integrations under the LMD command can all be seen in this light.

While integration’s proponents hail its benefits, they are also willing to accept that it is not a panacea, and not all policing should be integrated:

it should be noted, are also not always joint forces even if they involve work in multiple jurisdictions, but by definition integrated units and JFOs are.

As far as I am concerned, our position is integration is good to a certain extent, we're not integrating everything, there have been other proposals for integration that we've said no to, in fact I've said I'm not interested in integrating anything more now because those are the specialist services that I feel on a municipal level should be. Some people say well we should integrate media, we should integrate our robbery squads, we should integrate any, you know, but I don't see the burning need for any of that.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, interview #31

It is worth noting that during the research it became clear that little if any tracking is done to see if efficiency or effectiveness has been improved as a result of any integration or rationalization initiatives.

Integrated units are not a new idea. A few, particularly CLEU/OCA/CFSEU, have been around since the 1970s, and the idea of integrated homicide in the region was promoted since the 1980s by a local crime fiction writer before it was realized in 2003.²⁶ In the last decade or so integrated units have proliferated for various reasons. Wood (2007) identifies Rich Coleman, BC Attorney General in the late 1990s, as the major political visionary behind expanding integration, and participants had conflicting narratives as to why the RCMP have been such significant supporters of this trend. Indeed, given their historically insular organizational nature, it is hard to imagine the RCMP championing initiatives that require broad information sharing, harmonization of policies and procedures, and RCMP officers being commanded by non-RCMP personnel. Participants on all sides suggested that these aspects of integration would have been anathema to RCMP ethos in the past.

Independent municipal participants often posited that the RCMP had to take on integration initiatives to survive in the province; if they did not agree to integration, their contract simply would not be renewed in 2012. Other theories suggest that integration was an idea whose time had come,

²⁶ Michael Slade, a Canadian crime novelist (real name Jay Clarke) has written a number of books, beginning with 1984's *Headhunter*, which detail the exploits of the 'Special X' multijurisdictional RCMP homicide specialist team. It is also rumoured that Clarke, a former lawyer, consulted with the RCMP on the creation of IHIT.

and some RCMP participants claimed that Giuliano Zaccardelli, former RCMP Commissioner of the late 90s and early 2000s, was an ardent and perhaps overzealous supporter of integration throughout the organization, not just in BC:²⁷

I mean integration's a term that can be used and abused and certainly there was a time in the force under Commissioner Zaccardelli when everything, every new unit that was created had the word integration in it because there was such an emphasis on moving people in that direction.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, interview #31

Integration as such was one option among many to solve the political problematic of policing the LMD. Why it was pursued over other possibilities will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter, alongside the narratives that supported change initiatives in LMD policing in recent decades.

Conclusion

We began the chapter by outlining the basic arrangement of LMD policing, noting that the LMD is essentially one metropolis policed by 21 public agencies. The LMD represents a mix of RCMP contract, independent municipal, and district- and province-level integrated units that is unique in Canada and worldwide. The policing arrangement has arisen through a number of historical moments and political and criminal events, and is normally in a state of flux. The fact of multiple and competing public police players in the LMD results in a distinctive and multifaceted political problematic characterized by: an unusually large RCMP presence in the region; a socioeconomic barrier to regionalized policing; and a collective action problem of determining ultimate responsibility for the resources of crime control in the region.

²⁷ Certainly, a majority of current federal integrated units were founded under his tenure as commissioner.

In the preceding, we have looked at a number of historical factors that led to the current arrangement of policing resources in the LMD. In the next chapter, we will start placing these factors into a more coherent theoretical context as we examine the various narratives employed by senior LMD police officers to explain with some specificity what has changed – and what has stayed stable – in their organizations, and why these changes have occurred.

Chapter 4 – Narratives of Change

Introduction

In Chapter 3, we saw organizational innovations arise to deal with the geographic and political problematics of policing the LMD. By and large, police resources remain resistant to amalgamation in the LMD, and so complex solutions have been required to solve issues of coordination between police. The police forces of the LMD, along with the BC government, have put forward a number of initiatives to address these problematics, including but not limited to integration and resource sharing initiatives. There are multiple narratives as to why these initiatives have been implemented at this particular time in history, and it would be rather deterministic to assume that the current arrangement was the only possible arrangement for police actors in the region. External pressures, actors in influential positions, organizational norms, and the introduction of new technologies and techniques at key moments all tell some of the story for why police organizations in the LMD changed in the ways that they did. It is the organizational accounts of these factors to which the thesis now turns.

In this chapter, we will examine the narratives provided by veteran participants on why various change initiatives came about. While we will not be able to determine a definitive account of organizational change in the LMD, these narratives can tell us a great deal about how change is experienced by members of an organization, how it is communicated, and how it is ultimately written into organizational lore. Moreover, they help us understand the internal norms that condition implementation of reforms, which illuminate the actual potential for future change and innovation in a given organizational arrangement (e.g. Gordon, Kornberger and Clegg 2009a). The contextual factors, key individuals, past incidents, and broader developments in Canadian policing

outlined in this chapter all bear on inter- and intra-organizational cooperation and coordination in LMD police work. The narrative examples cited in this chapter were chosen because they were identified as important by the study's participants, and because they will appear with some regularity and in various explanatory capacities throughout the thesis.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that institutionalized organizations such as the public police lack the power or capacity to change their basic structures, goals and activities, and in most cases organizational change is at the fringe rather than the core (Ashworth, Boyne and Delbridge 2009). Yet, given the spread of the public police into novel spheres of activity, jurisdictional arrangements, and networks of provision, we may say that police work has much more fringe than core at this moment in history. There are mandates and potential priorities in constant flux in policing generally and the LMD specifically, and while the possible shapes of reform are constrained by isomorphic pressures such as international best-practice sharing regimes, public and government expectations and demands, technological advancements, and court rulings, police organizations still have a broad capacity to undertake, avoid, or simulate any number of reforms while leaving the core of their operations largely intact.

The chapter will first examine the dominant narrative of evolutionary adaptation as the causal mechanism for a great deal of change in LMD policing; as the world around the police changed, the police were required to keep ahead of or at least keep up with public opinion, political, criminal and technological shifts. It then moves to an examination of critical junctures that are both internal and external in nature, namely, police failures, where questionable police practice stimulates some stakeholder group to subsequently seek to limit police activities in important ways. These evolutionary narratives complement the institutional view of the police organization outlined in

Chapter 2, which suggests that external conditions and particularly stakeholders' beliefs regarding the organization are the paramount factors in determining change and stability.

However, recognizing that there are often multiple options available to an organization facing external pressures, the chapter departs from the evolutionary narrative by examining those participants' stories that emphasized internal leaders, entrepreneurs, and influential groups within the public police assemblage who promoted certain initiatives and reforms above others. Finally, the chapter will conclude by discussing the limited scope of variation between narratives offered during this research, and considering alternative explanations for the arrangement of police resources in the LMD. Examining the institutionally acceptable narratives of change may help to uncover patterns of further isomorphic pressure and tacit rules about how police organizational change will occur.

The change narratives examined in this chapter will be broadly relevant to understanding the resultant dynamics of coordination examined in subsequent chapters. Some purported causes of change – such as major investigative failures resulting from coordination problems – will have directly impacted the way coordination is seen and done in the region today. Others – such as perceptions regarding media treatment of police or changes to disclosure rules – will serve as backcloth shifts in the terrain on which policing is done, with the expectation that these impact the general police *metier* at the unit level. While the data presented in this chapter do not conform to a categorical rule of exclusion/inclusion, as a guideline narrative quotes and examples are selected from research done with those participants who have over 15 years of experience in police work (or adequate familiarity with police including related work, such as through time in civilian analyst or support staff positions) and normally holding a rank above constable. 15 years' experience would normally mean that the participant has been involved in policing since before the increased

attention to integration and the advent of PRIME, and so these participants should be able to offer a perspective on these organizational changes.

Growing Pains

Before examining these narratives, it is worth recognizing that the participants' interpretations, while based in experience, are not necessarily factually accurate. As such, many of the new initiatives, technologies and techniques discussed by participants are discussed as ideal-types (as though their intended form has been realized in practice) or as failures (as though they were fundamentally not fit to purpose). The reader should not be misled that either interpretation is necessarily accurate. It is true that many initiatives in the LMD have yet to take root in hoped-for ways despite years of operation, and others are still in their infancy. But, it is equally true that few of these initiatives have been subject to any sustained evaluation to test whether or not they were successful.

One of the problems that attend any discussion of organizational change is where one locates the threshold of change on the continuum of fluctuations in practice. How long should a reform initiative be given to succeed in structural reform or produce results in statistical outputs before it can be called a failure or discarded? Institutionalized organizations lumber along very slowly, and epochal changes in the way they operate require a vaguely-understood constellation of external shocks, readily available policy alternatives, like-minded senior personnel in key positions, a receptive or apathetic public, and so on. As Willis and Mastrofski (2011) pointedly note, 'Police organizations change. Whether we find that remarkable depends on how much and how quickly we expect them to change.'

Public and political demands on police to be effective leave a great deal of latitude between available courses of action. Indeed, as noted in Chapter 3, the recognized need to curb highway and traffic injuries and fatalities was met with the creation of a new squad and priority initiatives, but the squad was and remains under-staffed and its effectiveness in terms of decreasing fatalities is limited. Even where police do take genuine action, the range of options that may satisfy stakeholders is wide and normally includes contradictory approaches. The internationally-iterated tension between increasing enforcement and increasing community connectedness in achieving reduction of street-level disorder and minor offending is well known in police studies, and appears in LMD skid-row policing strategies (Huey 2007). Similarly, responses to gang crime can involve geographic or other crackdown-style enforcement and harassment of criminals and their families and associates, and can simultaneously involve police-led social assistance and gang exit-strategy programs for at-risk individuals. While the strategy chosen or balance between hard, soft and simulated responses to crime problems will have significant consequences for the minority of disproportionately policed citizens, the vocal public and political stakeholders are normally satisfied by the simple presence of a marker that suggests action. In turn, the advent of integrated units should not be taken as proof of stronger, clearer, or more effective networks of communication or resourcing in the region, and in some cases it has resulted in the opposite of the intended effect.

For example, many participants discussed the drastic increase in the importance of analyst work in policing, and regularly noted the fact that an analyst was normally attached to any project or unit of sufficient standing. Analysts serve as key players in inter-unit coordination, often expected to represent the mechanism by which multiple internal units can connect activities with one another. Unit analysts are supposed to be in contact with one another, and in some police stations have been co-located in the same space to facilitate communication. Yet, observations and discussions with

police and analysts suggest that the output of analysts in real terms is often basic, ‘a few dots on a map’, a list of persons of interest, or other material that could be developed with very basic computer skills and extracted from PRIME with little inter-personal interaction or information brokering.

Moreover, where complex analytical products are developed – such as network maps for organized crime groups or multi-level analyses for identifying possible suspects – they are often left aside in daily operational planning. The expected outcome of coordinated and intelligence-led policing remains elusive:

A: Yeah, we’re never, I don’t think we’re ever ahead of the curve, we’re not predicting the latest crime trends and putting resources into place, from what I’ve seen we’re generally playing catch-up

Q: Do you think you could be ahead of the curve?

A: Well that, we could be if we had more ... analysts working for us, but that’s money and municipalities and provinces will, when they think about policing they think that well they’re just going to get more police officers, well police officers are front line service providers and the higher ups are managers, corporate managers almost, so we need, we do need the criminal, the crime analysts at all levels working to help, and they will get us ahead of the curve. In small scale, with catching prolific offenders, geographic analysis or hot spot policing, identifying where the hot spots are, it’s often hard to do that.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #30

The ascent of technology-oriented intelligence-led local public policing may conceivably be aided over time by a generational shift at the front-lines. During observations, it was noted by multiple participants that the experience levels of officers on the street and in policing generally were lower now than in the past. Where once a rookie patrol officer would have been field-trained by a 10-year veteran, they were now partnered with ‘experienced’ officers only two or three years removed from the academy. Thus, recently-minted (and potentially less change-resistant) officers were becoming prominent in local operations, owing to a general organizational shift away from maintaining

experience on patrol (a phenomenon noted over a decade ago by Palango 1999). As one officer recounts:

I think what you had was ... they [experienced officers] left detachments so you had a more greening of detachments as well because each detachment probably gave up 3 or 4 of those real nugget triple As [senior tactical specialists], in a time when service and experience was starting to go down below the two year level on average anyways, so I think at the onset there was a big drain [to the local level].

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #43

These young officers come from a generation comparatively at ease with technological sophistication, and they appear more ready and able to utilize and be directed by new IT technologies on the job, a theme we will return to shortly. Yet, a significant question remains regarding whether a new breed of officer, recently trained and receptive to IT-led investigative techniques will emerge out of this mix of resistant culture and nascent technology. PRIME, the region's flagship of technological advancement and lodestar for technological reform, has been an on-going project for over a decade now, and there are still plenty of detractors, glitches, updates, schisms, and gaps in its operation.

Following these considerations, many quotes below suggesting the success or failure of a technological, operational or legal shift should be interpreted neutrally regarding whether or not that initiative has actually created, or will soon achieve, any real changes in practice. Rather than representing an historical account of police change in the Lower Mainland, these statements are meant to reflect senior officers' narrative perceptions of these seemingly goal-oriented reforms within a multifunctional organization.

Survival of the Fittest

Without a doubt, the most dominant narratives offered by participants for why police work has changed in recent decades can be grouped under an evolutionary theme. The world around the police is changing, and the police must change with it. Technological advances, public demands, political realities – mostly surrounding need for cost efficiencies – and the changing face of criminal activity all impact on the ways police perceive their tasks. Police organizations can largely be seen to conform to broader trends in policing nationally and internationally, exemplified by the drives in the LMD toward rationalization measures, flattening of hierarchies, and potentially innovative deployment strategies such as community-oriented or problem-solving policing.

As noted in Chapter 2, institutional theories of organization argue that ‘the primary objective of organizational change is not better substantive performance but greater legitimacy,’ (Ashworth, Boyne and Delbridge 2009: 165) and so these changes should not be viewed as instrumental toward some clear goal of efficiency or effectiveness (though these should not be disregarded as potential outcomes). While institutionalized organizations may track performance, this is subservient to – though increasingly a requirement of – satisfying external stakeholders such as government, who hold purse-strings, and publics, who facilitate (or impede) investigations and general order maintenance in part based on judgements of police legitimacy (Hough et al. 2010).

It would be a mistake to presume that stakeholders’ demands were not in some way attached to an articulable reality, and are rarely fabricated without some material basis. For example, the harmonizing of police records systems into PRIME and the advent of a single digital radio system in the LMD emerged through external political pressure from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG), but also responded to a need faced and recognized by police in the region for real-

time coordination. Increasing pressure for cost reduction also points to genuine limits on public funds and skyrocketing costs for police and criminal justice services. Perhaps most significantly, the lack of coordination between police in the region has contributed to major investigation failure, increased victimization of vulnerable populations, and other losses in policing capacity mentioned earlier and elaborated later in this chapter. While it is often satisfying to suggest that police activities are little more than dramatic enactment in a political theatre, such an approach overlooks the consequential sphere of human suffering in which police regularly work and the often immediate importance of their tasks, however marginal they may be in addressing the underlying issues that warrant their intrusion into the lives of citizens (Reiner 2010 chapter 1).

Nonetheless, as should now be clear from Chapter 3, the need to balance political pressures is the underlying thread uniting the ascendance of integration initiatives at their particular moment in history, and as such they did not necessarily follow a clear vision for increased overall police effectiveness. This is summed up reasonably in the following exchange:

Q: And why did it start happening, like around the turn of the century, from what at least on paper it really looks like around the turn of the century integration just jumps right off as an initiative

A: I think that for here relates to the policing contract, the RCMP contract in this province, because and who was it that pushed the integration so much ... there were some politicians, chiefs of police, because they wanted, there was the big talk of regionalized policing, right? ... I don't think that being the turn of the century had anything to do with it, [it] was just the timing of the people that were there so the answer to, rather than having a regional police force was integration, so it was a compromise

Q: Right, so this is the RCMP's kind of response to political pressure?

A: That, and but all the police forces, it's a compromise, that the integration is a compromise to the push for regionalized policing, that's the way I see it. And I think there were a few investigations that also happened around that time, like the missing women's task force for one, I think that probably had a very very big effect on it... So all those things maybe the perfect storm for policing when it came to integration, I think that was the answer for it.

Integrated Unit Analyst, retired officer, interview #19

Others (e.g. at interview #23) characterized it as a ‘survival issue’ for the RCMP, and selling integration politically was their only option for retaining their unique position in the province. As noted in the last chapter, one of the unique characteristics of the LMD is the potential for public-sector competition for provision of police services. Police organizations in BC face the threat of top-down – from MPSSG – orders for re-organization if they are seen to be either inefficient or ineffective in aspects of their service. Alongside the real possibility of regionalization or amalgamations threatening organizations, police units are regularly facing sub-system domain challenges from other units both inter- and intra-organizationally. While reorganizations do not normally cost jobs in policing (members are simply reassigned to other posts), they do create plenty of operational headaches as well as attendant loss of prestige and status for those reassigned unit members. In turn, integration and related organizational support of increased coordination activity – in both personnel and information sharing – can be seen as efforts to salvage organizational domain, even where this meant engaging in inter-organizational compromises regarding authority and autonomy.

Keeping Up with Technology

Alongside the dominant narrative of political survival are other evolutionary claims regarding why integration arose when it did. The impact of isometric pressures – such as popular policing technologies and media and public scrutiny in the age of the internet – certainly limited the options available for organizational change, while at the same time providing an opportunity for new initiatives and reforms. The novel forms that integrated, and other, police units have taken in recent years cannot be solely explained by needs for political legitimacy since legitimacy needs can be satisfied through multiple means. Integration helps police, particularly the RCMP, maintain at minimum a façade of police cooperation and coordination in the region, and this in turn was seen by

participants as necessary for legitimacy in the eyes of public and political stakeholders. However, coordination has been a problem for police in the region for decades, dating back at least to the 1950s. A handful of provincial teams sharing characteristics with the integrated teams of today – the organized-crime agency CLEU and the auto-theft team ATTF, notably – had been developed with limited or low success in the past. The rapid expansion of integration as a solution therefore did not erupt out of some pre-existing model for effective inter-force collaboration, but rather may have emerged because, prior to the late 1990s, the technology required for integration was limited or prohibitively expensive.

Much has been said elsewhere about the technological fetishism of policing in the 21st century (e.g. Manning 2008). The advent of PRIME and ubiquitous touch-screen in-car computers; the development of inter-jurisdictional databases of gang members and associates, violent criminals, and sex offenders; and the use of analysts and data-mining programs such as the ViCLAS and the VPD's CRIME system are all further technological advancements in the name of keeping up with criminal activity. In response to a perception of increased prevalence of gun crime in Canada – though overall rates have actually decreased over the past three decades (Dauvergne and De Socio 2008) – police tactical units are also being licensed with ever more powerful firearms, and certain units carry assault rifles for general rather than only specific duties. And, prior to their recent curtailment, police across Canada as elsewhere in the world bought into the utility of conducted energy weapons (CEWs) as 'non-lethal' and effective means of controlling problem individuals.

Available technology brings with it threats to police work, however, as technological capacity drives expectations that publics, courts and governments place on police organizations. The ability to use a particular technological solution can have unintended tolls against efficiency. A common theme in interviews and observations was the recognition that PRIME, while helpful when trying to gather

data on an individual, vehicle, or place quickly, has significantly increased dull labour on the front end:

The use of computers... has probably made investigations easier, has streamlined it. I mean I say streamlined but it also, adding the data is time consuming.

Integrated unit NCO, interview #17

Now, we've added processes that sort of are counterproductive to some of the technology that we've brought in. We've brought technology in supposedly to put the members back on the road and into the community where they're able to you know do what I said about talking to people and solving crimes, but now we've added to that burden ... I think the joke was kind of made at one point when I was in recruiting because other agencies requiring a certain type of skill set, I said well they're turning us into stenographers that carry guns.

VPD NCO, interview #6

Like this computer that we have now, takes I don't care what anybody says it's way less efficient for a patrol officer to do my job than it was you know prior to 2001 when we first got a computer system... Back then, in the late '90s, way before modern day technology, in the late 90s I was able to investigate a break and enter ... as a patrol officer and phone it in to somebody who could type 100 words a minute, and be back on my bike dealing with another call or active you know preventive patrol in minutes. And now, if I was to do a B&E report it would probably take me, just to write it up, it would be an hour... We've become data entry clerks for Stats Canada ... I'm just aghast at how long it takes me to do what used to take me minutes, not even any report for. A great example is stolen auto recovered, great call for an NCO to take 'cause it's a thing that keeps your guys available for all the priority calls. Used to be able to do that over the radio and now I have to go and sit and type a report for something I could do over there and somebody else was doing that for me. So we've become data entry clerks.

VPD NCO, interview #19

This particular interviewee continued by noting the negative social aspects of computer use and technological capacity in patrol cars:

You know [patrol car] windows are up, right people are on their cell phones, they're on their computers and they you know literally when I was on a bicycle like I used to be offended when marked cars would go by and not say hi, right because you're out there on your own often. And now after being back on patrol with the computers for a few years now, I get it because they're all sitting looking at the next call on their computer or text messaging or

whatever they're doing, right, they're just not, it's not that they're ignoring you, it's just that they don't see you because they're engaged in their computer.

Indeed, during ride-alongs it was regularly observed that officers spent an unexpectedly large amount of time querying the PRIME database for license plates, as well as using the MDT's instant messenger functions to keep in touch with friends on patrol elsewhere. These activities could simply not have taken place prior to the advent of these technologies.

While seemingly unrelated to coordination as such, the expansion of DNA technology into policing was also noted regularly as a technologically-driven shift that has driven existing workloads past manageability. Forensic identification services in the RCMP are shared between detachments through an integrated unit (IFIS), and the drive to keep up with an expanding workload has led to this rationalization-oriented integration. This has not had the hoped-for effect on workload for forensic personnel:

[W]e've had the same number of Ident [forensic specialist] people for the last 30 years as we have now and the amount ... that forensics is dependent upon to lay out a crime scene and to provide information to solve a crime has skyrocketed, so what we usually you know, 10, 12 years ago with the advent of DNA and that, we used to be able to knock off a homicide scene in 8 hours, now you know we're holding it for a week because it takes that much work to go through, well technology has hit us too.

Forensic unit member, interview #26

Behind the perceived need to increase technological sophistication is a perception that the public expects more from police, including increased attention to forensics, internal coherence of systems, fast and reliable analysis, and real-time tracking of offenders through sophisticated surveillance systems. These expectations are in turn driven in part by media representations of police that overestimate system capacity. However, there is some complicity by the police in creating the picture of officers as urban crime-fighting technicians. Historically, police have been co-producers of external perceptions of reality in the public and political spheres, and relatively privileged ones at

that (Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1991). Police perspectives on the world influence the views of stakeholders, and police use this to their advantage.

This is exemplified by the auto-theft team IMPACT, who create for distribution an annual top-ten list of most wanted car thieves, along with a list of most-stolen cars. They then release these at media events that also showcase the latest in auto-theft policing technology, such as exhibitions of license plate auto-recognition software, air support capabilities, and more gruesome technology exhibits such as dog attacks on demonstrators in protective suits, alongside IMPACT's flagship Bait Car²⁸ programme. They produce ready-made media kits including DVDs of video clips, press releases and quotes from senior officers, fact sheets and graphics that can be plugged directly into news products and highlighting the sophistication of the police technological cache. The intention of these media events is to augment the perception of target criminal populations, namely potential car thieves, about the actual probability of arrest.²⁹ This is a strategy in line with Sherman's 'permanent crackdown' thesis on American policing (Sherman 1990). Public events, targeted advertising, and disinformation are all part of a sophisticated media partnership, where reporters knowingly or otherwise eschew objectivity to join the war on crime and satisfy the edicts of the 24-hour news cycle. IMPACT also maintains a website (www.baitcar.com) that shows videos (uploaded through YouTube) of car thieves, often clearly intoxicated and sometimes armed, getting chased and caught by police, and sometimes attacked by dogs. Other police units, such as CFSEU, as well as all municipal forces, maintain websites and make attempts to carve out an online presence.

²⁸ Bait cars are popular cars for theft (such as Jeep Cherokees, Ford F-150s, and Honda Civics) placed as 'bait' for car thieves in auto-theft hot-spots and fitted with surveillance technologies such as on-board cameras and car immobilizers with satellite connections, so that the car can be stopped remotely once it has been stolen.

²⁹ This interpretation of strategy is drawn from interviews with IMPACT members, but I am avoiding using direct quotes as they include operational and tactical information that is protected.

But, their privileged access to media is under challenge from new forms of citizen journalism, increased sensationalism in traditional forms of news media, and a Canadian public much less deferential to authority and possibly even more distrustful of state authority than their American neighbours (Adams 2004). The possibility of being recorded during routine work is palatable:

Well, I mean just the idea that everybody has a video camera now and everybody has a camera, you know you used to just do your job with a mind of, just the safety of the public and keeping yourself safe, and quite frankly that doesn't look very pretty on video cause you know sometimes people have to be put on the ground, they have to be held in place. The public I think just reacts very strongly to see any display of force but I don't think the public realizes that we're not dealing with girl scouts (laughs). I mean, the amount of guns that we seize in a week is unbelievable, how many gun calls we have, shootings, random, the way we perform has to be with safety in mind, and sometimes you've got to be pretty firm to do that so, but, you know there's you know swearing that we might have done in the past like to you know you're minding your p's and q's when you're talking to individuals you're arresting, you know just be conscious that you're constantly, you know somebody's watching you. And I think that's been a help, I think we've become more professional because of that, I think all police forces have, so that's a huge thing. I think the growth of media and you know technology has really changed us for the better, quite frankly.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #26

The conclusion of this Commissioned Officer – that accountability through media exposure is a good thing – is definitely the minority view, and it was far more common for participants to express frustration at the shift in surveillance capacities. The theme of new media sensitivity, and specific initiatives arising from it, are essential considerations in the following section, where we will examine instances of police failure that were seen by participants as catalysts for organizational change.

When Police Fail, Police Organizations (Sometimes) Change

The very principle of a public organization resides in the capability to withstand abrupt changes and crises. However, from an evolutionary perspective, it must also be capable of co-evolution... In our analysis, it is the organization that bends out of shape during a shock, returning to a new stable situation by acting as an adaptive system. (Rochet, Keramidas and Bout 2008: 66)

While the above quote may overestimate the potential for learning in police organizations, the basic principle – that moments of severe disruption from external events provide opportunities for innovation – remains relevant to the public police. In this section, we will look at some variations on the theme of police failures in British Columbian and Canadian history that have resulted in sometimes very significant changes in the work-life of officers at all levels of LMD police organizations. Here ‘failure’ is not conceived of in some objective or measurable sense, but rather failure in the eyes of some relevant stakeholder – government, media, courts, public, and so on – that may have the ability to force police organizations into action. The failures in this section were selected as relevant for explication because they have each been identified by multiple participants in the research as major contributing factors to why police work in the LMD has changed. The first category of events examined in this section – the investigative failures relating to Paul Bernardo and Robert Pickton – are directly linked to the popularization of integration initiatives and more seamless coordination. The subsequent two sets of failures – public and courtroom failures – represent emergent pressures on public police work in the LMD and elsewhere in Canada, and these failures will emerge regularly in participants’ comments throughout the remainder of the thesis.

Police failure provides an interesting lens through which we can examine the impetus to, and creation of narrative around, organizational change. Failures have both internal and external aspects, since they are normally begun by police action, subsequently set upon by stakeholders for interpretation, and finally handed back to police organizations for solution (often after some inquiry or investigation). Again, it is important to keep in mind that the definition of ‘failure’ here is not a value judgement on either the actions of the police or the resulting reforms (even though a judgement may be implied). Rather, failure is the negative interpretation of the incident at the time, by some key stakeholder(s).

Operational Failures: Bernardo and Pickton³⁰

Paul Bernardo and Major Case Management

Paul Bernardo was successful because he was operating cross jurisdictions ... [T]he suspicious circumstances were happening in one jurisdiction, and when he was checked doing another one of those things in another jurisdiction they didn't see the files from the other jurisdiction so it wasn't becoming a cumulative thing, there were silos of information. So from the review of Paul Bernardo and that investigation it was determined by the province of BC that we were going to have one single police records information management environment.

VPD NCO, interview #59

As with so many Canadian governmental mistakes, the investigative failures surrounding Paul Bernardo's serial rapes and murders in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Ontario resulted in a government inquiry. The inquiry found that Bernardo was able to operate for up to 25½ months longer than he should have been able to, as a result of a series of communication breakdowns between the Metro Toronto police, the Niagara Regional Police Service, the Green Ribbon Taskforce and the Centre of Forensic Sciences (Campbell 1996). These organizations answered to separate command structures, and so each allowed certain pieces of information to slip through the cracks that existed between the organizations at the time. When Bernardo began committing similar crimes in other jurisdictions, he and his pattern of offending became invisible. As the inquiry's report noted:

When Bernardo stopped stalking and raping in Toronto and started stalking and raping and killing in St. Catharines and Burlington he might as well have moved to another country for a fresh start. (Campbell 1996: 9)

³⁰ A third major operational failure cited less frequently in the study was the bombing of Air India flight 182 in 1985, which originated at Toronto's Pearson Airport and was a result of a failure of coordination between the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the RCMP. The resulting inquiry, which finished in 2010 (Major 2010), was scathing of the RCMP of 1985. However, this operational failure was not included here because (a) it was not particularly important in participants' comments and (b) it is largely about coordination between police (RCMP) and a set of non-police organizations (CSIS and others), rather than coordination between public police.

Serial killers using jurisdictional boundaries to their advantage is nothing new; Clifford Olsen in BC in the 1980s, as well as Ted Bundy in the USA and the Yorkshire Ripper in the UK all exploited gaps between police services (Campbell 1996). What is interesting about the Bernardo inquiry is that its lessons and recommendations seem to have been taken seriously by police across the country. Two major integration-related initiatives (among many other recommendations) were advanced by the Bernardo review, and while its recommendations were made to the province of Ontario, its effects can still be felt in Ontario, BC, and elsewhere in the country.

First, the review argued for a harmonized Major Case Management (MCM) system and training for that system, so that once a serial murder, sex offense, or other major crime investigation is underway, a constant oversight is provided and all actors in the investigation are immediately aware of the lines of command. The review commission intended MCM to be used for both intra- and inter-jurisdictional investigations. All police forces in BC as well as the Federal RCMP and the Canadian Police College now use and teach a standard MCM model that can be readily understood and applied when a major investigation is undertaken. The importance of harmonizing processes should not be underestimated:

[W]e have on a number of occasions gone into a major incident and drawn ten people from [another internal unit], they can plug right in because of the major case management system that we use, they use the exact same one, they plug into our system and it's easy for them to adopt. Easy.

Integrated unit Commissioned Officer, interview #9

As will be discussed in the next chapter, this kind of systems integration can be very significant in determining whether two police units will cooperate across boundaries.

The second major recommendation, related to the first, was the implementation of a common electronic records management system in Ontario for dealing with major case investigations.

Strangely in British Columbia, the institution of PRIME does not actually satisfy this recommendation. While PRIME has MCM capabilities, most police in BC do not use this capability and rather maintain their own software for MCM (LePard 2010), presumably because of the cost and confusion involved in training the new software. This has caused frustration for LMD police:

The VPD are using PRIME, which is the provincial record system, and many agencies are using PRIME, the RCMP are using ENR [for MCM], so that's a homegrown system right, and we're in this debate about which is better ... I don't sometimes care, it's just that we should just be on one system, and we should have a research project, we should look at the pros and cons and pick one system so that when VPD officers have to work on a Surrey kidnapping, we have to work off the same software. But right now there's no agreement on major case management software.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #50

The Campbell report warns against allowing harmonized records systems like PRIME to be modified at the jurisdictional level:

[I]ts uniformity and ability to share information [should be] guaranteed by a strong prohibition against 'improvements' or tinkering by individual forces that might improve 10% and destroy 90% of its value as a common, uniform, system for information sharing. (Campbell 1996: 33)

PRIME is certainly being tinkered with in the LMD, and numerous participants noted that different forces enter information differently and use PRIME data codes in inconsistent ways, a matter that will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 5. Further, certain forces have yet to update to the latest iteration:

[Y]es the business rules for PRIME change almost monthly ... Other agencies, for instance I think VPD is on PRIME 7.3 or something where we're on PRIME 7.1, you know versions of it eh, there might be these little differences.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #57

Despite these inconsistencies with the Campbell report's recommendations, the RCMP (RCMP 2011) and VPD (LePard 2010b) still credit the Bernardo review as the impetus behind both MCM and PRIME in BC.

Robert Pickton and the Limits of the Bernardo Reforms

In hopes of avoiding another Bernardo-type multijurisdictional predator, or at least catching him early, there was significant political will and funding to put systems in place to quickly identify multijurisdictional crime. Alongside MCM and PRIME, these also included policies designed to increase reporting to systems like ViCLAS to avoid 'linkage blindness' (LePard 2010; Sheptycki 2004) between agencies. These initiatives have, by the accounts of the participants, made cooperating across forces a much easier matter. However, when the reforms were just in their infancy, other killers in British Columbia were successfully exploiting inter-jurisdictional weaknesses in the same way as Bernardo. The following account is based on recent police and government reports from inquiries into what is generally referred to as the Missing Women and subsequent investigations (LePard 2010; Oppal 2012)

In the mid-1990s and into the early 2000s, women began going missing from Vancouver's DTES area at an unusual rate. While this area's residents, and these women in particular – who were all in some way involved in sex trade work – were known to go missing for long periods for various reasons, the rate at which they were disappearing and the rate at which they were not turning up again was particularly alarming. An exact number of how many went missing is hard to come by, since hundreds of women were reported missing in this time frame and many have yet to be accounted for but may not be the victims of foul play. What is clear is that a number of these women were murdered by probably more than one serial killer in the region. The most prolific of

these killers, and the only one caught to date, was Robert Pickton, who was picking up sex trade workers in Vancouver and killing them at his home in Coquitlam, two police jurisdictions away. At least one other serial killer is suspected in murders of DTES women occurring in the Agassiz/Mission region of BC, and Pickton has been ruled out as a suspect in these crimes.

The investigation into the missing women started in 1997. In 1998, Pickton was identified as a potential and later the prime suspect by the VPD in the suspected murders. Since Pickton's property was in RCMP territory, and it was presumed that the women had accompanied him there willingly (thus no kidnapping crime occurred in Vancouver), the VPD handed the investigation to the RCMP. For various reasons – according to the VPD, because (a) the case did not employ a major case management model until much later on and thus had insufficient managerial oversight through all organizations, and (b) the RCMP ceased pursuing Pickton as a suspect prematurely (LePard 2010) – the investigation into Pickton stalled for the better part of three years while Pickton remained active. Pickton was, in the end, only caught by happenstance when a junior RCMP constable searched his home for other reasons and found evidence of some of the missing women.

It should come as little surprise that police organizations as large as those in the LMD had not made all of the necessary organizational adjustments between the Bernardo review of 1996 and the Pickton investigation of 1997 to ensure that the informational cracks had been sealed. Further, in fairness, the shelving of Pickton as a suspect was a judgement call made by people aware of the appropriate information, and even when the MCM rules were followed, Pickton was still not caught by an otherwise apparently capable JFO team.

Since the arrest of Pickton, and almost certainly in part as a result of the failure, integration and multijurisdictional coordination initiatives in the LMD have increased in number and been

entrenched through formalization. The Integrated Homicide Investigation Team, IHIT, was created by the RCMP in 2003 in the aftermath of Pickton, and IHIT is governed by MCM principles (IHIT 2008). IHIT's birth was at the front end of a string of integration initiatives in the LMD that included the creation of LMD command, the RDO program, and the rationalizations of ICARS, dogs, forensics, and Emergency Response Team functions across the 13 RCMP detachments in the LMD. The RCMP and VPD had also finalized a standing MOU for JFO operations in 2010. Prior to the MOU, JFO organization was done on an *ad hoc* basis that was time-intensive and had slowed investigations, including Pickton's, significantly (LePard 2010).

Pickton still looms large over police relations in the region. The VPD have used Pickton as a case for regionalization, suggesting that the integration, protocol and records harmonization initiatives have been inadequate to overcome issues of jurisdictional boundaries. In turn, they have argued and made it their organizational position that a regional police force is the only solution to prevent this kind of operational mismanagement in the future. The fieldwork was begun in September 2010, one month after the LePard report was released by the VPD, and this filled the project's initial interviews with unsolicited discussions of regionalization.

The impacts of the on-going BC government review of the Pickton investigation, combined with the RCMP contract negotiations, on the organization of policing in the LMD has yet to be fully realized. The ultimate impact of the BC government review of the Pickton investigation may not be found in its proposed reforms, since many reforms have been achieved since the investigation closed. Rather, each revelation of operational error from the inquiry will buttress the embarrassment police in the region have experienced over various scandals, including but not limited to Pickton.

Public Failures: Deaths in Custody and Police Investigating Police

[Y]ou know I think certain big drivers here in British Columbia come as a result of a number of inquiries and I often wonder sometimes what would our world be like without ... the Dziekanski case at the YVR [Vancouver International Airport], you know what would our world be like without that, or what would our world be like ... without the Bush inquiry from up in Houston, and now of course the Pickton, and not to say that I'd like to avoid them but you're obviously going to wonder ... the fallout has been years of reviews and inquiries and inquests and commissions and you often kind of wonder you know what would it be like if we didn't have that ... you know [the Ian] Bush [case] drives some of the policy with respect to how ... things are recorded inside detachments and things of that nature, so a lot of different inquests and inquiries ... although I'm not so sure there's not some agendas at work there, however.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #53

It may be argued that all police failures that come to light are in some way 'public' failures, insofar as the public's opinion of the police will be damaged when the police are seen to be incompetent or at least inadequate in fulfilling their role. The failures here are specifically classified as public for two reasons. First, in each case there was a general public, or at least organized interest group, pressure that appears in narratives as the primary driver for changes in police operational policy following these failures. As such, the public, or pockets of it, were the key stakeholders who perceived and acted on the police failures.

Second, they are public rather than operational failures because the police participants did not as a general rule feel that these instances involved any component of operational malfeasance. They were at minimum appropriate, if not also potentially successful, instances of police practice in the eyes of the police. Unlike clear operational breakdowns such as the Pickton investigation, these were not cases of either individual officer misconduct or inadequate organizational policies and procedures. As such, these are public failures also because the public have failed in the eyes of the police; they have failed to grasp the nature of the job and the often unfortunate consequences of police work.

While as a general rule, police in Canada and in BC enjoy positive public opinion (Roberts 2004), it has faced challenges in recent years. There are many factors that play into poor public opinion of police in British Columbia. In the decade prior to the beginning of the fieldwork, police in BC were involved in a string of incidents that led to arguably and sometimes certainly preventable deaths of arrestees, often in relation to relatively minor disturbances. Ian Bush, shot and killed in 2005 while in custody after being intoxicated at a hockey match; Robert Dziekanski, a Polish traveller famously killed in 2007 by police use of CEW/Taser guns at YVR airport (the incident also recorded on mobile phone camera); and Frank Paul, an aboriginal man left in 1998 by VPD members in an alleyway while intoxicated who subsequently died of exposure, have all become touchstone names for police malpractice, brutality and incompetence (MacAlister 2010).

Further, in each case, a subsequent investigation was undertaken that exonerated the officers involved, as they were not in violation of any law, policy or procedural rules. But, of course, these cases were tragic and generally involving a high degree of moral wrong, and understandably have had a cost for police across Canada in terms of trust and legitimacy. Moreover, the investigations into these events were always undertaken by other police, heightening suspicions that police were simply protecting their own.

For a number of reasons, including persistent media scrutiny on these issues and recent releases of inquiries and critical reports on these deaths³¹, the issue of police deaths in custody and the problematic investigations of these deaths appeared as the prominent public relations for police in the Lower Mainland during the study. The deaths in custody in BC admittedly had nothing to do

³¹ The government inquiry report on the death of Frank Paul was released in 2007, as was the inquiry report on Ian Bush. The Dziekanski inquiry was held in two parts, and the final report was released in 2010 during the fieldwork. Also in 2010, David MacAlister, an academic at Simon Fraser University, published a report on police deaths in custody in BC on behalf of the BC Civil Liberties Association. The constant – and, of course, quite appropriate – scrutiny on this issue hangs over all police activity in the region.

with coordination failures, and the resultant reforms – such as the creation of the Independent Investigations Office, tasked with civilian oversight of police-involved death investigations – are only peripherally relevant to the policy basis for coordination. Yet, these incidents and their aftermath appeared regularly in participant comments, likely because in many ways these failures act to compound the embarrassment police in the region feel about genuine police failures such as the Pickton investigation.³²

They also enhance pre-existing feelings of alienation from what they see as misinformed public sentiment. While it was mentioned earlier that police in Canada have traditionally had a reasonably privileged position vis-à-vis representation in news stories (Ericson 1989; Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1991), antipathies with the press are not new to police (Woods 1919/1971). It is unsurprising that police feel they are unfairly targeted:

I think the public doesn't trust us as much as they used to, and while you know we have given them some opportunities to see that we are flawed, and we are, when a policeman makes a mistake it's on the 6:00 news. There's lots of other occupations that I'm sure people equally make mistakes with significant consequences as well, but that doesn't make the 6:00 news.

Integrated Unit NCO, interview #2

While that comment deals with general media unfairness to police, the following quote illustrates how police in the study felt about public perceptions of these specific failures:

I have some fairly strong feelings about what's happened in policing in the Lower Mainland in the last couple of years. I call it the Dziekanski effect, I think I mentioned that to you before. And, so the unfortunate incident at Vancouver airport has had a real significant impact on policing, and by that I mean that the members of the public know, always have known, always will know, that the police have to be there, have to have an authority up to and including the use of deadly force. However, I think since Dziekanski ... the public are

³² These also undoubtedly arose as issues insofar as police participants used the interview as an opportunity to express frustration, but the consistent focus on these incidents and the resultant media and public portrayals of police suggests something particularly important about these failures.

increasingly more vigilant about what the police do, particularly about how the police use force ... So, whereas the public some years ago would have said, guy comes out of store with something in his hand, looks to be a firearm, cop kills him end of story, I think the public are going to say now, well what kind of training have you had? Did you do anything else? ... And combined with the Dziekanski factor if I can use that term or the Dziekanski effect is the YouTube factor, and we see more and more and more people photographing what we're doing ... So we no longer have to just manage the incident, we also have to manage the articulation of that incident, and we have to manage the appearance of that incident, so our responsibilities have gone higher and higher and higher and higher.

Integrated Unit NCO, interview #56

This quote is characteristic of the participants' approach to these deaths as public relations issues rather than problems of police practice. The public perception, rather than the police practice, is normally seen as the obstacle to overcome. The police are aware of the strain this public debate puts on their image, though are not willing to admit wrongdoing. Most participants who discussed the matter expressed some notion that there was already adequate oversight of police-involved death investigations, and that change was unnecessary. For example:

There's so many people in this province who say the police are investigating the police, it's not right, bias, well the fact remains that for years now we've had a civilian body that oversees all these investigations. We've always, we've had it for years, so civilians, it's already been civilianized, but the public perception is that the police investigate the police and whitewash all this stuff. Well I worked for 3 years in internal investigations and every one of my reports was reviewed by a civilian so if they didn't like it they'd tell me.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #52

This quote shows how police can miss the point of critique; here the officer notes that he undertook these investigations, and yet claims that police are not investigating police. He thus fails to recognize the potential for conflict of interest in his findings, and the limited scope for civilian counterparts to question his investigative findings. This and the following excerpt also reflect the persistent notion that the police are always under unfair public pressure which ebbs and flows, and it was just a matter of surviving the flow, rather than acquiescing to the public misperceptions:

Now, recently we, the RCMP has come under increased scrutiny because of a couple of bad public relations files, [such as] Dziekanski ... so we're under intense scrutiny and it is felt from senior management right down to the front lines, so, but that's transient and will fade quickly.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, interview #30

To deal with increasing scrutiny LMD police organizations, like police organizations elsewhere, now employ media relations officers, liaisons, and strategists at all levels, which is a relatively new development and a growing area of the organizations (Reform Implementation Council 2010). Their media strategies are rather intensive, exemplified by the activities of IMPACT outlined earlier in the chapter. As well, both the RCMP and the VPD have taken part in recent documentary shows intended to promote a positive image of the police: *Courage in Red* in the case of the RCMP, and *The Beat*, about DTES policing and the VPD. Both organizations are now also confronting social media, and the VPD have developed a presence on Twitter, where they went so far as to tweet a full day's worth of calls in December 2010. Yet despite all of their public-relations efforts police in the LMD still struggle to overcome some of their most significant failures in the eyes of the public. As we will see in the coming chapters, public opinion has resource-allocation implications for police. The management of public perceptions of incidents such as those outlined above remains *inter alia* a prominent consideration in how and why officers and organizations choose to cooperate or feud across organizational boundaries.

Courtroom Failures: Stinchcombe and McNeil

The operational failures noted above have had a tangible impact in pushing integration initiatives onto the public police agenda, and public failures and the resulting scrutiny has put pressure on all police to manage their image, especially in a politically charged environment like the LMD. However, in sheer volume of new activities conditioned by police failures, nothing comes close to

the impact of recent case law since the advent of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982, which among other things provides constitutional protections against unjust actions from the state. Since then, the Canadian courts have had increased power to overturn convictions on due process grounds outlined in Section 7 of the *Charter*. The courts have also put in place common law restrictions on police power and have added responsibilities to police investigations in light of cases involving bad or questionable police practices.

Canadian courts have used their *Charter* powers with regularity, leading some to ask whether there is a ‘tyranny of the *Charter*’ (Roach 2007). In some cases, the courts have affirmed practices that would be unacceptable in a stricter constitutional system like the United States (Keenan and Brockman 2010), but these decisions – which police could reasonably see as victories from their standpoint – were rarely commented on by participants. Rather, they tend to see the courts as perpetuating a system that increases police responsibilities but fails to support them in carrying out this increased mandate. One senior participant described post-*Charter* arrest and investigation as having ‘become far more complicated, time consuming, resource heavy’ (Integrated Unit NCO, interview #40). Another was equally critical:

[T]he *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has really made a meal of the judicial system and it needs to be reeled in. And I don’t mean that just because people aren’t getting convicted and it’s us against them, it’s that if you look at the administrative process and the cost now, and that severity of sentence ... [you] have this big melodramatic process that’s supposed to be protecting this innocent man from going to jail.

VPD NCO, interview #4

The opinion that the *Charter* has increased police workloads is supported empirically. A widely-cited 2005 study in BC (Malm et al. 2005) showed that the time it takes to process previously straightforward criminal matters such as driving while intoxicated had increased by more than

double in: number of steps required to prosecute; time required to process the offense by the front-line officer; and time required for trial, over the previous 30 years.

Participants identified evidence disclosure issues, generally thought of as originating from the court case of *R. v. Stinchcombe* ([1991] 3 S.C.R. 326)³³ and subsequent rulings, as among the worst shifts in case law in recent decades. In *Stinchcombe*, police failed to disclose relevant evidence. This has resulted in much stricter interpretations of evidentiary disclosure rules, requiring police to spend a great deal more time documenting their actions in the expectation that failure to do so will result in a conviction lost on technical grounds at trial, which in many cases is the least-desirable outcome for police work. Numerous participants remarked that 20 years ago, a murder trial's documentary evidence could be held in a standard banker's box. Now, the evidence can fill entire rooms with millions of documents in large-scale investigations. Indeed, disclosure packages are now being provided on DVD, rather than hard copy, to make them manageable by defence.

The maintenance and production of these records has created 'mega-cases' and subsequent mega-trials that provincial and federal governments are struggling with (ICURS 2010), and the Canadian government has tabled legislation this year to streamline the trial process in this regard (Toews, Nicholson and Strahl 2010). Nonetheless, the requirement for police to produce evidence continues to weigh down front-line and specialist members alike, with few exceptions. In this environment, Canadian police investigators have been said to define their primary role as 'courtroom evidence managers' (Brodeur 2010). The work burden from *Stinchcombe* disclosure has become massive:

³³ *Stinchcombe* was a fraud case in which the investigating police, in this case the RCMP Commercial Crimes division in Alberta, withheld evidence of an interview during pre-trial disclosure. They claimed they felt the interviewee was not credible and thus irrelevant. Prior to *Stinchcombe*, police and Crown prosecutors had some discretion in determining relevance to trial for evidence they chose to disclose. However, upon appeal to the Supreme Court, the withheld interview was found to be relevant. Since then, discretion to withhold evidence, even where it may seem irrelevant, has narrowed significantly due to the court's interpretation of *Charter* rights to a full answer and defence.

It's become much more sophisticated to get a case approved before the courts, and that's probably the biggest stumbling block we have and that's why I cut my investigations short ... just in order to meet the court disclosure requirement. So, for instance I had a 9 day investigation of a kidnapping that involved at the end of the day almost 700 officers. I had to dedicate 6 full-time detectives from my robbery squad just on disclosure for one year ... And that in itself, that's probably been the biggest effect on policing that I've ever seen, it's called the full disclosure rule that really has been dictated I think by defence counsels, because when it first came out in my opinion it was ok, it was relevant information as it relates to the crime. But now it's everything, and relevance really has very little to do with it any more. And the other thing I've noticed over time is that where I used to get up on the stand and be challenged on whether or not this individual did the crime, I'm now challenged on the integrity of the investigation and the integrity of my investigators.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #9

The final claim in this quote – that police are being increasingly challenged at trial – is not new in North America, and versions of the famous notion that 'the principal proceeding may be turned into a trial of the police rather than a trial of the defendant' (Paulsen 1961: 257) was a regular theme in the research. Participants seemed to agree that post-*Charter* Canada had headed in this direction:

[D]isclosure 10, 12 years ago wasn't that big of a deal ... [you'd write] a two-pager [report], and then you're done, right? Now you write up this and then you have another template for that, another template for that, then you need to, my notes all of a sudden are important, the fact that I might have got a speeding ticket seven years ago somehow was important to somebody as well too. If I ever had a disciplinary action and that sort of thing, then that becomes important for disclosure. If I wrote on a napkin to tell my partner to go do something, that becomes part of disclosure. Everything can be disclosed, and it becomes a trial within a trial and it's a huge monster thing.

VPD Constable, interview #5

Adding to this disclosure requirement was the recent case of *R. v. McNeil* (2009 SCC 3,238 CCC (3d)353). *McNeil* was a drug case where the investigating officer was facing police discipline and criminal charges on 'drug-related misconduct' (Ives 2009). *McNeil* was convicted on the officer's testimony. He subsequently discovered the officer's disciplinary record and requested its production. The police and Crown opposed it, but the record was ultimately disclosed, which led to *McNeil's* conviction being overturned. After a review by the Supreme Court, it was determined that

the disciplinary record of an investigating officer could be disclosed under certain circumstances. This decision was based on *Stinchcombe* principles (ibid).

Police in the LMD now have to submit a 'McNeil' disclosure form every time they recommend charges after responding to an incident. This form details any serious misconduct, disciplinary actions, on-going investigations relating to the officer, or lack thereof. The form is not particularly onerous; it can be completed in a matter of minutes. As charges are not laid that often in the average officer's day, it is not an increase to their work volume in the way that *Stinchcombe* was. However, *McNeil* disclosure represents something of an insult to police that exacerbates their often unfriendly estimations of the justice system:

[O]n every single report that we send to a judge now, we have to have this piece of paper that says we're not criminals, and that's, these are like the little things that I've seen come into effect that really make it a little bit frustrating and a little harder to do our jobs ... I think it was *R v McNeil*, and yeah little things like that it's just kind of upsetting that we have to do that kind of stuff.

RCMP General Duty constable, interview #37

Most police, in this study and elsewhere, did not become police officers for the joy of administrative tasks (Ericson 1982; Manning 2003). Police officers are action- and incident-oriented, and paperwork was seen as the 'bane' of patrol officers, devised by 'bean counters' (quotes from shift #10) who have an insatiable appetite for documentation. The paperwork required by post-*Charter* decisions serves to foster cynicism within the police occupation about the overall criminal justice system.

The reforms resulting from these cases are not about coordination per se, and the rules around disclosure are a frustration for all police in Canada. Nonetheless, in relation to this study, these reforms also create increased burdens to inter- and even intra-organizational interactions.

Assistance work – such as helping other police on a call for service or executing a warrant on behalf of police in another jurisdiction – leads to administrative work and increasingly onerous documentation. While most police are happy to engage in the former, few relish the latter and so often seek to avoid engaging in assistance. As we will see in the next chapter, few organizational boundaries are more important than the self-interested regulation of work volume.

Leaders and Entrepreneurs

Changes in environmental factors – criminal behaviour, technological advances, management strategies – and external shocks encapsulated here as ‘failures’ of variable character and scope can tell us something about how instances of organizational change arose, and provide important background for understanding the context in which coordination occurs in the Lower Mainland. Examining the narratives attached to these changes also illuminates how actors within the organizations perceived their circumstances and the importance police actors ascribe to certain factors as drivers of organizational activity. However, the ultimate shape of initiatives – including which get funded, and funded well, and which get discarded among a plethora of options – is influenced at least in part by the key actors within police organizations who promote ideas for reform. External pressures push police to act, but public police in part condition those external pressures. Moreover, police organizations have managed to guard their internal operational decision-making and deployment strategy decisions jealously for the better part of two centuries. As such, the individuals within the public police must be an important part of the story of why and how police organizations change.

As noted in the last chapter, BC Solicitor General Rich Coleman and then-RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli oversaw the implementation and expansion of the integrated team policing

model in BC. These leaders prevailed against a rather significant wave of opposition. The onset of integration may not have been pushed forward so vigorously without there also being a growing push for regionalization. As a senior officer explained, overcoming these persistent opponents is a constant task of keeping partners happy, as questions about the need for integration are ever-present:

Well, yeah, to make integrations happen the biggest thing is communication with partners... But I think most municipalities assume that the RCMP or their local police are able to provide a certain level, an acceptable level of public safety so the question for them in terms of integration is why should we be paying for a specialist to do this and that? And so it tends to be a communication issue, working with councils and mayors and so forth, and for the municipal PDs it's working with police boards, that's huge. And that's not a, that process never ends... Because costs always escalate, units have to expand, you know, and so communications is I think absolutely huge in all of this. The technical drivers, I mean we can take care of most of that, the people skills, we can take care of that. Where I don't think we've done so well is probably in our external communication, we certainly haven't persuaded Rob Gordon at Simon Fraser, Kash Heed, the former chief of Vancouver, and a few others that any of this is any good, you know, because they're constantly criticizing us.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #31

The senior management team of the VPD including in particular Chief Constable Jim Chu and Deputy Chief Doug LePard have also been vocal proponents of regionalization and the removal of the RCMP from major municipal police work (Derosa 2011; LePard 2010). Paul Palango (1999; 2008), one of the few Canadian authors to provide an in-depth account of recent changes to the RCMP, has written specifically and adamantly against the use of integrated teams as a solution to coordination problems between non-RCMP and RCMP forces.

While this contest between high-level figures may account for the onset of integration in general terms, the structures and outcomes of new initiatives in public organizations are driven in large part by their operational managers (Hicklin and Godwin 2009). In policing, these actors arrange and rearrange a malleable resource base by creating, promoting, and securing teams who work on

specific projects, choosing these as priorities over other potential areas of police work. As such, they give concrete shape to police activities within the broad discretionary possibilities of public policing. In this research, the theme of a motivated, business-minded, ladder-climbing entrepreneur as champion of new initiatives emerged with regularity. This archetypical character is in line with Bowling and Sheptycki's (2012) concept of the 'entrepreneur' global-policing actor, though in this case s/he emerges in a largely intra-national context.³⁴

Ideas such as IMPACT and the Bait Car were seen as being created and nurtured by a handful of key players including the current Bait Car program manager, seen as the 'pioneer'³⁵ of the initiative, and Solicitor General Coleman, who has regularly supported IMPACT events. These units are maintained against constant threat of funding cuts, reorganization or worse, even in periods of success:

By the time... you get to write this, this is confidential but it can certainly be in your report no problem, is as recently as last night and yesterday, prominent people, decision makers ... were saying, we're almost getting to the bottom of the barrel ... now they're to the point where, we're probably 65, 70% reduction in theft of and theft from vehicles. At what, you know the law of diminishing returns, whatever it's called, at what point do you stop what you're doing? Maybe take those dollars and put it on impaired driving, put it on some other facet of policing, and yet as I said, that has been done before in other parts of Canada to their chagrin.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #57

The Lower Mainland tactical troop, one of the longest-standing integrated teams (though only recently being called 'integrated'), provides a particularly salient example of a unit whose growth was driven by entrepreneurs. As the story goes, it was begun by motivated individuals in response to an identified need:

³⁴ There are of course international aspects of entrepreneurship in the LMD, such as the importation of ideas such as bait cars, public order tactics from the UK, and the sales of consultant services by individuals and units to police in other countries.

³⁵ From interview #57

[T]he infamous Huey Stewart was the one who got tac troop issues on the go in BC ... with his strength of character and personality ... Huey was at Surrey and he had this tac troop that he'd created, and they have lots of events in Surrey as you can appreciate. But every time they had an event, it bled them out for resources ... so there was some history there and Barry [Daniel, chief of police in Abbotsford at the time] knew what the history on tac troops was, so the result was that there was a gentlemen's agreement between Barry, I think it was Jamie Graham [then-senior officer with the RCMP, later chief of police in Vancouver and then Victoria] that was in place at the time, and they brought in the other OICs of the detachments and said listen ... we need a tac troop, there's a need for a tac troop, and it started [a] pure public order [unit].

Retired Officer, interview #1

Recently, other entrepreneurs in the tactical troop have advocated for adding scene search and counter-terrorism search capacities to the unit's remit, where historically they were only a crowd control unit. This change was also thought to have resulted from the work of a motivated individual commander:

Q: [H]ow long has it been organized on a lower mainland size basis?

A: Oh, for 30 plus years... There's been a tac team that's been down here. It's changed a number of times throughout those years, different formats, different people in charge, a different mandate 30 years ago, there was no mandate for search, for counterterrorism search, that didn't exist, there was no mandate for disaster response or aid to civil emergency, none of that. It was pretty much primarily crowd control 30 years ago with limited equipment and limited experience

...

Q: Ok, and so why, I mean why has the mandate changed to include these new activities over time?

A: Well that's a good question, I would say the number one reason we've expanded into that is the lack of crowd control and crowd management calls where sort of ... the person that was really in charge of the team before ... was, very active, very knowledgeable, but realized that the team was suffering from a lack of call outs, because crowd control call outs are very few and far between, a couple of times a decade. So realizing that the tac team had interested people, the built in command and control elements, and needed those callouts, they kind of expanded into, into search, into if you need a number of members in a hurry, why not call the tac team, and he was able to sell that to some degree to the organization, and we sort of expanded that way.

Integrated Unit NCO, interview #48

Champions of international trade in police best-practice techniques have also been influential in shaping tactical and public order activities in the region. Both the RCMP and the VPD had, in recent years prior to the fieldwork, attempted to learn lessons from police organizations in the UK. The VPD chose to import police knowledge bearers rather than go abroad, and actively recruited UK officers to join through horizontal transfers, primarily as advisers in public order policing:

[T]he Vancouver police department, here the major municipal police agency...they had a major British invasion a number of years ago. A number of trained British policemen joined the Vancouver police department, so they are very familiar with crowd control, counterterrorism searches, crowd management, very familiar with that.

Integrated Unit NCO, interview #48

The RCMP sent a number of up-and-comers to various UK forces on fact-finding missions about innovative police practices including problem-solving, neighbourhood and reassurance policing, the use of analysts, as well as public order strategies. As a group, they subsequently introduced a number of reforms in the province and the LMD modelled after the UK experience:

[I]t stems from for this division stems very specifically from a couple of fact-finding trips that a number of senior people and me went on in 2006 to learn more about I guess Blair era reforms and initiatives, not all of which are covered in glory like the ASBO thing and so on, but still revolutionary from a Canadian perspective. And what was striking about those trips, we all felt, cause some, you know we toured around the Home Office, some of us went to Newcastle, some of us went to Manchester was, in dealing with the issue of sort of problem solving around offending in problem neighbourhoods and communities, how few police officers we met [relative to non-police partners] ... we met people in policing but they were just part of the fabric, we realized we've been trying to do all the stuff around driving down crime from a police only, classically from a police only perspective right, so from that point on we set about setting out structures at the very senior level, at the more operational bureaucratic level, and then at the local, and then in terms of local operations to work with all these [social service] partners.

RCMP Civilian Member, interview #24

Many of those involved in these missions progressed through the senior ranks within the organization, including the Deputy Commissioner for the province and the Officer In Charge of the Lower Mainland District at the time of the study.

By accounting for the contributions of the individuals and leadership groups that steered the Lower Mainland police organizations in one direction or another, these narratives emphasize the importance of visionary or entrepreneurial activity in organizational change processes. The mere presence of identifiable external pressure is no guarantee of organizational change, and is even less a predictor of the direction of that change. Influential actors must therefore be part of this story, and also serve an important role in subsequent organizational lore.

Conclusion

If the narratives presented above are to be believed, then as a general model we may say that environmental pressures provided opportunities for police organizations to shift, and their responses were first and foremost oriented to the maintenance of legitimacy and organizational survival. When external pressure or organizational crisis destabilized the organizational environment enough for a new initiative to be introduced, key figures at both upper and middle management levels offered often hotly contested alternatives, and through a somewhat unclear process one option, or another, or a compromise prevailed. Considerations such as efficiency and effectiveness were certainly taken into account in some cases – especially when addressing clear operational failures – and political considerations, such as organizational survival and public perceptions, were often paramount. This model fits broadly with historical institutional theories of organization and concepts of critical junctures as moments where change can happen (Thelen 1999).

However, these narratives tend to overemphasize the rationality of the process of reorganization. Many new police initiatives in the LMD have never been meaningfully assessed internally or externally regarding whether or not they achieved their stated aims. The histories of all organizations involved in this project are littered with the remains of reorganizations, and few of the units studied in this project had been in place in their current general form for even 10 years. Recall from Chapter 3 that reorganizations often involve a dose of ‘improving acronyms’ alongside potentially meaningful reforms: CFSEU replaces OCA, IGTF replaces VSU, IMPACT replaces ATTF, BET replaces CET, IHIT replaces local homicide units, and so on. As we will see in the coming chapters, the ideas that stood behind these units, and the conditions that secured their success above other similar ideas as well as against rival potential police priorities, were all part of negotiations taking place at multiple levels within and between these police organizations, sometimes over many years before a new unit or system was created. This process of reorganization is not haphazard, but neither is it conscientiously governed by the institution.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that integration and related initiatives are fringe rather than core activities but, given the sheer size of the fringe in public police work today, shifts in these activities can be nonetheless consequential. Yet, the narratives provided here seem to preclude an interpretation of increased inter- and intra-organizational coordination as consequential to the ways in which policing is conducted, and rather treats it as a common-sense response to obvious problems. Of course, in line with recent scholarship on policing, integration initiatives are increasing the police organizational focus on risk and prevention (Ericson and Haggerty 1997); developing business-mindedness at all ranks (Ayling, Grabosky and Shearing 2009; Bowling and Sheptycki 2012); using technology as a buttress for and expansion of traditional police powers (Manning 2008); and creating inter-jurisdictional police arrangements that circumvent legal process (Ericson 2006;

Sheptycki 2002a). Certainly, participants accept that new technologies, fads in deployment techniques, and trends in criminal behaviour impact their activities. But, they do not tend to see these shifts as fundamentally altering their work, which in their opinion is almost invariably fighting crime and satisfying communities. Indeed, in each interview a set of questions was posed regarding whether or not the mandates or roles of the police had shifted, and this was generally dismissed as a possibility. The following two quotes provide satisfying expressions of this sentiment:

No, I think we're all about safe homes and safe communities ... I think that's fair to say, all business lines are like that, everything we do, whether it's a broad or domestic, on a national level, a provincial level or a local level, it's all about safe homes, safe communities, it's just different pieces and different voices like our front-line officers are very much about the neighbourhood and the communities, our federal police officers are very much about the mother ship's coming in with the dope, and where it's coming from, how it's coming, who's involved in organized crime. .. so, but what it really boils down to is the kid on the corner of walk and don't walk, it's safe homes, safe communities, just at different levels.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #32

I mean there have been huge changes within the force but those changes are, in many ways driven by external factors. The reality is that police work is still police work and our mandate is still police work, it's not like we've moved into bus transit or ... we're not a commercial airline now, we are still a law enforcement agency ... so there has been tremendous change but that's typical of all police forces, you've got to change with the times.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #31

Recall from Chapter 2 that organizations create 'rationalized myths' (Meyer and Rowan 1977) that entrench certain possibilities and exclude others. The standard format of the story of change – external events potentially combined with internal entrepreneur(s) – thus represents further isometric institutional pressure not only on how change will happen, but how it will be viewed by those taking part. This kind of interpretation of history is worrisome since, among other things, it remains neutral or unconcerned regarding questions of governance, accountability, ethics, and democratic norms, except where these get in the way of winning the war on crime. The

consequential shifts in the scope and focus of police practice that are visible in Lower Mainland integration activities escape notice under narratives that view all police organizational change as simple adaptation to the problems of law and order (and sometimes, public relations). This is a theme we will return to in the final chapter. Prior to a discussion of the normative implications of these organizational initiatives and their attendant institutional lore, we will now turn over the next two chapters to an empirical examination of the practice of police coordination taking place under integration and related initiatives in the Lower Mainland.

Chapter 5 – A Typology of Police Organizational Boundaries³⁶

In treating this issue, we should be guided by one key principle: desirable relationships should not be confused with existing ones. It should not be assumed that networks drawn up on paper are effectively operating in the field.

(Brodeur 2010: 11)

Introduction

All forms of organization create boundaries of one sort or another and these boundaries create effects on those who encounter them directly or indirectly. In the previous chapter, the consequences of boundary mismanagement were evident in the cases of Bernardo and Pickton. Most police boundary activity is of a more mundane and day-to-day character, but the principles governing the interactions across police organizational boundaries should remain reasonably constant across cases. As discussed in Chapter 2, the study of organizational boundaries has been an important part of organizational studies for over half a century, ever since the field came to view organizations as ‘open systems’ whose actions and structures were responsive to external factors and were influenced by other organizations. While initially the study of organizational boundaries had been limited to boundaries between organizations, more recently researchers have argued that organizational boundaries, both internal and external, are increasingly negotiated and transacted not at the level of the organization as a whole, but rather at the work unit level (Yan and Louis 1999).

This insight has yet to be applied directly to police sociology. However, as large Anglo-American police forces – the bread and butter of police sociology to date – take on the challenges of information coordination and demands for more efficient management, inter- and intra-

³⁶ This chapter has been published in modified form as: Giacomantonio, Chris. 2013. ‘A Typology of Police Organizational Boundaries.’ *Policing and Society*, available online April 2013.

organizational boundaries become increasingly important to understand when examining the work of the public police. The grounds on which police actors successfully cooperate or fail to do so in coordinating resources and information across boundaries have repercussions for operational efficacy, community connectedness, and ultimately legitimacy of police operations.

This chapter outlines and roughly categorizes boundaries found between police units in the Lower Mainland. As noted above, the examination of boundaries begins from the position that work units are the appropriate level of analysis to understand organizational boundary activity, and wherever possible the typology incorporates the vocabulary of organizational sociology from the open-systems tradition. The chapter will first provide a description of police 'files', which are here seen as the central object of boundary negotiations. It will then continue in the vein of organizational sociology by exploring the concepts of boundary spanning, the processes that occur when two or more separate systems or sub-systems interface.

From this conceptual basis, the chapter will then outline the typological categories, conceiving of boundaries as sites of negotiation between units and dividing categories along the kinds of objects of those negotiations. The typology proposes three boundary categories: scarcity (negotiating resources), proximity (negotiating distance), and technical/systemic (negotiating process). Each of these may be further subdivided into physical and virtual boundaries, to remind the reader that boundaries emerge from both conceptual and material realities inherent in constructing police work.

This typology should serve as a framework for future study of organizational boundaries in policing, as well as provide a vocabulary for the remainder of the thesis. Given the unique field site of the Lower Mainland outlined in the previous chapter, this typology cannot presume to be exhaustive of all possible organizational boundaries exhibited by police organizations. It focuses on police-to-

police boundaries, and so will not provide direct insight into the boundary relationships found between police and non-police agencies. It will develop a number of hypotheses about police organizational boundaries that can be tested through empirical study, and provide a nascent empirical base on which these hypotheses can be evaluated.

The Cynosure of the File

Just as almost all police work done by public police organizations can be said to emanate from the *cynosure of the incident* (Manning 2010), almost all coordination of police work can be said to emerge from the central importance of the file in organizing police activities after an incident. To understand this process, it is necessary at this point to provide a more extended description of the object, 'file', than has previously been offered in the thesis. A file may be best described as an official record of a situation in which police resources are deployed, and is represented in the police record system by an identifying code or number. A police file may refer to an incident, and this could include anything from a dropped or mistaken 9-1-1 (US/Canada) or 9-9-9 (UK) emergency call; a report of a suspicious person, a theft, an assault, a fraud, or a murder; or any of the other number of incidents in which the police may be asked to act. A file number can also be generated for investigative action, such as a 'street check' of an individual, a surveillance operation on a suspected criminal, a request for records from a public or private entity, or any other activity which generates useful or potentially useful information. The term file also refers to a repository of this coded information, which is held in a database and includes at minimum the who, what, and when of an incident or investigation, and in some cases the why and how. It will also contain notes about the activities and identities of the attending officers, and the written or code-filled content of files forms the basis on which many subsequent decisions are made.

Virtually all police activity is reactive at some level, and this is a point that has been made consistently in police scholarship even as police organizations work to become more 'proactive' through initiatives such as community-oriented and hot-spot policing. While the thesis will continue to draw distinctions between proactive and reactive work, there is some debate about the meaning of proactive that is outside of the scope of this thesis. It is at least worth recognizing that these proactive activities are almost always in response to pre-established criminal activity, rather than solely oriented to getting ahead of some future criminality (with limited possible exceptions, such as school liaison programs). The vast majority of files are thus generated by reactive patrol officers, and most investigative files also begin at some point with information developed out of patrol work (Brodeur 2010; Ericson 1981). This latter point must be tempered with the reality that there are public police organizations and units, such as those investigating organized crime or subversive political activity, who have very little contact with patrol police and generate their own files through an admittedly less well-understood process of work selection.

In at least the ideal case – and indeed in the vast majority cases – one officer from one unit is assigned as the 'lead' on any given file, such that s/he holds ultimate responsibility for its resolution, and may guard certain types of information related to it until it is resolved. If another officer wants to take action on any aspect of the file, that officer should make contact with the lead officer before doing so. Separate files may exist regarding one suspect (e.g., where one person is suspected of numerous crimes), and related files may be held by different officers in different units (for example a string of events involving a car theft, assault, and robbery). No two officers should be investigating the same crime except in coordination with one another, and neither should two intelligence teams be working to gather information on the same target without prior communication.

Thus, when beginning any investigation, managing officers are supposed to engage in a process of de-confliction, whereby they check with managers of other units to ensure that they are not stepping into anyone else's operation. Where an overlap between files is discovered, the unit investigating the more high-priority crime will generally take control of the file. For example, in one case during observations, a drug unit and a weapons unit were found to be surveilling the same house, and the weapons unit backed off its investigation, handing over its information and providing personnel for assistance to the drug unit.³⁷

Above all, police seek to dispose of their files and remove them from their work docket. A file is held by a police officer until it is resolved, and resolution can be through any number of measures – arresting one or more suspects and recommending charges; investigating an incident (or, where a file is generated proactively, investigating an individual, group, or series of incidents) and determining that there is inadequate evidence for further action; deciding that an incident does not warrant follow-up investigation or was not criminal in nature; referring victims, complainants, and offenders to non-police services; and so on.

Police spend the vast majority of their time picking low-hanging fruit, in other words, processing simple files related to citizen calls for service and keeping 'the usual suspects' (Bowling and Sheptycki 2012) under control through monitoring, investigation, and harassment. This often has little if anything to do with eliminating harm or keeping the peace in a meaningful way, and is simply the most politically and organizationally viable strategy for officers and their supervisors. Because of the broad public and governmental stakeholder groups that the police must please, they are bound

³⁷ While it is not worthwhile in this instance to address the absurdity of drug crime outweighing illegal weapons possession in the eyes of criminal justice systems throughout the English-speaking world, let it be noted that this is a regrettable truth, but also that it has not been police organizations alone who have set this priority.

to be seen to be doing something. They do not normally solve serious social ills; they respond to minor disorderly symptoms. The police are not particularly blameworthy for this state of affairs, and nor is it particularly curious. As previously stated, most people in most organizations most of the time aren't looking for extra work or to make their own lives harder. Those police actors who choose to work outside of the institutional parameters of public police work are regularly met with resistance by those inside and outside the organization (Maguire 1997; Manning 2010; Willis and Mastrofski 2011), making deviance from standard practice an unlikely endeavour.

Again in the ideal case, while most files originate with front-line officers, 'complex' files that originate with patrol officers, which would require investigative sophistication to solve or prosecute, are generally handed from patrol to specialists. This is for two reasons. The first is that patrol personnel, in their own words, are generally seen as 'first responders' and are 'tied to the radio'. The other reason that patrol or general duty officers do not take complex files is that they are seen as not having the skills necessary to secure a conviction or present expert evidence in court.

[T]here's a lot more stress I would say on sections, like specialized sections to deal with unique crime that the average person doesn't have skill sets for, like the presence of economic crime and frauds, the average guy on the road has absolutely no grasp of that sort of thing.

RCMP general duty constable (Interview #36)

As noted in Chapter 3, courtroom evidence-management is the font of investigative work (Brodeur 2010). While all officers will have some investigative training from their days in the academy, investigators and patrol members alike view these skills as perishable, such that they must be used regularly or will be lost.

The use of specialist units in and the removal of generalist patrol officers from most aspects of serious investigations are not new phenomena, but are certainly increasing in response to the

increasing complexity of the criminal justice process noted in Chapter 4. The prosecution of crimes has become progressively more cumbersome for police, with trials for serious crimes now lasting years instead of months, costing millions of dollars and producing thousands and sometimes millions of evidence documents. It is therefore seen as less and less responsible by all members of the criminal justice process to let the success or failure of these trials hinge on the courtroom capabilities of a patrol officer whose many and differentiated daily activities may include intervening in domestic disturbances, breaking up bar fights, writing traffic tickets, helping or arresting intoxicated or addicted persons, talking at a local school, and any other of the litany of tasks assigned to patrol. The result of bad or amateur investigative work by general duty members has resulted not just in verdicts of not guilty, but also in legal precedents that stifle police work, and these potential consequences are known to all police:

The model is it's just more efficient for them that knows how to do it than having police officers try to learn how to do it today and then maybe six months from now [actually investigate it]. And the other issue here is their ability to show competency in the courts, nobody wants a police officer learning how to do an investigation on their investigation... and that is to really ensure that we don't get any bad case law also.

VPD NCO, former serious crime investigator (Interview # 04)

Of course, most files are not ideal cases, and there is a great deal of grey area surrounding who should take ownership of various files. Some incidents, such as non-gang-related homicides, are clear-cut and will be investigated by homicide units³⁸. Others, however, are less so. In some instances, a file could theoretically be held by any of a number of units, especially where the file is intelligence rather than incident-related. Further, while certain crime types may be the official

³⁸ Some police forces will lump homicide into larger investigative units called "Major Crimes", and so not every police force will have a unit designated "Homicide". Nonetheless, virtually all police organizations large and small will have a reasonably straightforward protocol regarding how a homicide is to be investigated.

terrain of one specialist unit, these units may not investigate all crimes that could fall under their ambit. This is generally a resourcing decision.

For example, the VPD robbery section only carries files on high-profile robberies and serial robberies, and street robberies fall to General Investigations or patrol members. Similarly, many allegations of sexual assault fall to patrol rather than Sex Crime Unit (SCU) members for follow-up investigation. Likewise, as one gang crime officer noted during observations (shift #23), virtually all drug dealers (with the possible exception of those who produce and sell their own product, encompassing all links in the production chain) are related in some way to organized crime, and therefore could technically fall under the purview of organized crime units. However, many of these drug files are held by less-prestigious and less-well-resourced local vice squads, rather than becoming the property of higher-stakes multijurisdictional organized crime units such as the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU) in BC. In each case, the lack of specific delineation between section responsibilities can create uncertainty, and through this uncertainty boundaries emerge.

Boundary Spanning: Bridging, Buffering and Creating Boundaries

The ‘discordance and antinomy’ (Brodeur 2010: 13) that characterizes relations within and between public police organizations creates interstices between units. These are negotiated by formal or *ad hoc* ‘interstitial groups’ (Bates and Bacon 1972: 371), where two or more actors from separate units coordinate the interactions between their units through varying degrees of formality and collegiality. In open-systems literature, this kind of interaction across boundaries is referred to as boundary spanning (Aldrich and Herker 1977). Boundary spanning activity can take the form of bridging, buffering, or creating boundaries. Some boundary actors ‘bridge’ boundaries, which means that

they create a relationship that connects the work of one group to the work of another either temporarily or permanently (Aldrich and Herker 1977; Hasenfeld 1972; Yan and Louis 1999). In policing, this can often take the form of secondment, where a member from police force A works with and answers to the commanding officers of police force B for a designated time period. It can also take the form of information-sharing protocols, where force A and force B work separately but create records on a common system with shared conventions, such as PRIME in the LMD.

Boundary actors can also 'buffer' boundaries, such that the work of one unit is protected from influences from other work units through actions of its boundary personnel. For example, in most investigative units, the officer in charge will assume the role of boundary 'guard' (Yan and Louis 1999: 30), and will vet requests for assistance from other units and forces. Operational agreements can also buffer unit boundaries; for example, the Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team (IMPACT) in the LMD is bound by policy to only investigate auto theft and theft from autos. Members of this team cannot be seconded to another unit, nor can slack resources at the unit level be re-deployed to assist another unit. This is different from most other units and unit members, who can be re-deployed at least in theory to virtually any task under the public police ambit.

A third option for boundary actors in dealing with boundary conditions is to create or 'bring up' boundaries (ibid), whereby they construct conditions that insulate the unit from external requests or interference without actually engaging with other units' boundary actors. A common example in modern policing is the 'organizational demand for 'call readiness'' (Jefferson and Grimshaw 1987:71); patrol officers are expected to be responsive to citizen calls for service and, while they will regularly assist non-patrol units, their capacity for assistance is limited by their responsibility to emergent incidents. Patrol members of course do help out units across the police organization, but the nature of their shift schedules, overtime pay structures, and generalized as opposed to

specialized skill sets all bring up a boundary that discourages certain boundary spanning requests from non-patrol units.

Most boundary activity is a combination of these aspects of bridging, buffering and creating boundaries. Boundaries are not static, and boundaries between police units are in a constant state of negotiation, as units are regularly seeking more resources for a workload that is ever-abundant. Boundaries are created and sustained or eliminated through interaction, and have consequences insofar as they are perceived by relevant actors (Heracleous 2004). They are not always coterminous with the boundaries represented in organizational charts or policies governing interactions between various components, although policy and protocol can condition certain types of boundaries. As we will see in the next section, certain boundaries between public police workers remain largely impermeable despite the best efforts of police organizations, and certain boundaries erected by organizations in efforts to buffer unit activities are regularly bridged by unit members through informal and off-the-record strategies.

In the remainder of this chapter, as noted in the introduction, we will begin from the assumption that the work unit is the appropriate level at which to examine boundary bridging, buffering and creation activities. As a consequence of this view, we will also assume that there is no *a priori* difference between inter-organizational boundaries and intra-organizational boundaries, and that similar principles will govern the boundaries between police units within a force and units in separate forces. While organizational affiliation can contribute to a boundary's perceived existence among boundary actors, this does not necessarily determine whether a unit will work with another unit or refuse to do so. In the following section, we will develop a nascent typology and description of boundaries exhibited by police organizations, based on the evidence from the LMD fieldwork and interviews.

A Typology of Police Organizational Boundaries

The typology in this section follows Rigakos's insight that that 'No one remembers twenty categories, and they are rather unhelpful as a learning tool.' (2005: 272) Similar to other typologies of police work (Greene 2000; Rigakos 2005), this typology focuses on operational aspects – the protocols, tasks and routines inherent in police work – in developing its categories. The typology does not conform to any prior typology of organizational boundaries, as it is intended to be descriptive of a particular set of objects – police organizational boundaries – that has not been dealt with previously. It will where appropriate reference conceptual bonds with extant organizational and police scholarship.

As noted in Chapter 2, the theoretical frame for this study does not substantially differentiate intra- and inter-organizational boundaries. In the following, we will approach a boundary as an interstitial area negotiated between actors representing two or more work units. This approach presumes that boundaries only exist in any meaningful way where there is both an area of uncertainty between unit mandates or activities. A boundary only comes into being when an intervention is required by members of those relevant units to secure resources or information. For example, two patrol units from separate forces with a common geographic border can be said to have a boundary, insofar as they share an area that requires constant negotiation over crimes and investigations that cross that space. In contrast, sex-crime investigators in one jurisdiction may have no meaningful boundary with fraud investigators in another or even their own jurisdiction, since they would rarely if ever have to negotiate jurisdiction or share resources. Boundary actors may possibly be any member of a unit, insofar as a boundary actor is anyone engaged in an interstitial negotiation. In most cases this role will be held by a designated individual, such as a liaison or the unit's commanding officer.

For each boundary type the chapter will suggest a set of probable strategies for solution, where solution does not necessarily mean bridging or eliminating the boundary. A solution to a boundary negotiation may be to buffer the boundary, and insulating the work of one component of public policing from another may ultimately be the most appropriate action. 'Appropriate' may here be interpreted in a normative sense (e.g., in protection of the public good or core principles of democratic policing). It may also mean increasing operational efficiency, which is something that often escapes normative consideration (Manning 2010).

The typology has three categories: (1) Scarcity boundaries, or the negotiation of resources; (2) Proximity boundaries, or the negotiation of distance; and (3) Technological/systemic boundaries, or the negotiation of process. Each of these can be subdivided into two further categories, which we will term physical (referring to boundaries that can be seen or touched) and virtual (referring to boundaries that may be invisible but whose effects can be observed in ordering negotiations between units). It is worthwhile to distinguish physical and virtual boundaries insofar as it reminds us to be cognizant of boundaries that emerge through the interactions of units and actors, as well as those that are more obviously visible in the structure or location of various units. Physical and virtual are best seen as existing on a continuum rather than as discrete analytical categories; for example, policies are both physical (in their written form) and virtual (in their interpretation), and so the decision to treat law and policy as members of the 'virtual' category is to some degree an arbitrary one. Boundaries as sites of negotiation rarely exist as ideal types, and often the interstice requires negotiation on multiple fronts.

The chapter deals only sparsely with the role of power dynamics in structuring boundary negotiations, as these will be further discussed in Chapter 6. Yet, it may be useful to foreground the following discussion with some notes about the unevenness of relationships between units.

Certainly, units acting within and between organizations exhibit both a formal and an informal hierarchy relative to one another. This chapter proceeds from the supposition that the informal hierarchy is paramount in ordering negotiations, and that it is not static. The ability of one unit to resolve a negotiation to their benefit will depend on a variety of situational variables. This process will not always prefer one unit type over another. Some factors discussed below may form an implied basis for understanding the important situational determinants in a negotiation, *inter alia*: funds and personnel available to a unit, functional specialization between units, trust and social capital among boundary actors, and the state of law and policy governing unit activity. Readers should also recognize that relationships across a boundary will often be ‘asymmetric’ (Tsai 2002: 182-3), meaning that, in the first case, units involved in a negotiation may not all see the relationship similarly; in the second, they may be differentially inclined to recognize a specific outcome as optimal; and thirdly, may not be required to reciprocate assistance even where they can demand it. These dynamics will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter.

The typology is summed up in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 – Police organizational boundary type matrix (*examples in italics*)

Boundary Type	Boundary Sub-type	
	Physical	Virtual
Scarcity (negotiating resources)	<i>Availability of personnel, person-hours, technological equipment</i>	<i>Priority ordering of incident types; perceived needs at the unit level; limited skill sets</i>
Proximity (negotiating distance)	<i>Geographic barriers such as jurisdictional lines and unit location</i>	<i>Functional barriers such as crime-type specialty or level of unit (muni, prov., fed)</i>
Technical/Systemic (negotiating process)	<i>Separate records databases, radio channels, dispatch services</i>	<i>Divergent incident reporting protocols, legal frameworks, tactical training, administrative/union rules</i>

Scarcity Boundaries

As noted above, unclaimed or contested organizational spaces – interstices – regularly create the need for negotiation. Police units negotiate work tasks, and these tasks are usually connected in some way to an incident or investigation file requiring resolution. This certainly includes inter-agency activities, but it is worth recognizing that internal units within LMD police agencies negotiate file ownership between one another far more often than they negotiate with other police organizations. We will thus refer hereinafter to the object of scarcity-boundary negotiation as ‘interstitial work’.

Public police organizations exist in a world of finite resources, and a focus on one task means neglect of another. While police budgets across Canada have increased significantly in recent years on a cost per capita basis (Murphy 2009), various policies and court rulings have drastically increased the number and length of tasks required to resolve an incident file (Malm et al. 2005). Further, technological advancements such as DNA identification capabilities and increased criminal sophistication and mobility have required intensive and increasingly expensive police work (ICURS 2010). In the LMD and elsewhere, it would be a rarity indeed to find a police department or unit within that department that felt that it had more officers or resources than it needed. Numerous participants during the fieldwork expressed the overconfident notion that most or all crimes could be solved with enough time and energy, but in many if not most cases (depending on the crime type), the lead officer on the file rarely has enough time to do more than a cursory investigation and file appropriate paperwork (see also Ericson 1981).

As a result, when interstitial work emerged the negotiation normally translated immediately into a question of who should contribute what resources. For example, during observations (shift #01), a

known gang member was shot in one municipality and transferred to a hospital in another municipality. This led to a protracted debate about who should guard the hospital room where the gang member recovered, in case of retaliation: attending officers from the city where the shooting took place, or patrol members from the city where the hospital was located. Managers from both jurisdictions manufactured arguments that guard duty was not necessary or if it was, it was the other jurisdiction's responsibility. Ultimately the victim was left without protection. It is worth noting that in this situation guard duty was finally negotiated by high-level commanders (inspectors from each force), rather than unit commanders (sergeants). However, this negotiation only took place after unit commanders at all levels claimed an inability to spare extra personnel for an overnight shift, and no one was willing to pay overtime expenses to bring in extra personnel. Thus, both upper and middle management acted as boundary actors and all actors chose to buffer.

For a more commonplace example of scarcity-boundary buffering, it was a regular occurrence during patrol observations for officers to receive 'Assist other police' calls on their MDTs. These regarded some task that a unit from another jurisdiction wanted done. For example, if someone living in Vancouver committed a crime in Surrey, Surrey RCMP may ask VPD members to execute the arrest warrant on that person, rather than cross jurisdictional lines and execute the arrest themselves. These requests are sent for operationally sound reasons. For example, if an attempt to execute a warrant was met with resistance from the suspect, it would be much better if the police of jurisdiction were in charge of the incident for both liability and operational clarity. However, in the entirety of the LMD observations no patrol officer ever actually responded to this kind of request, and these were normally accorded the lowest priority ranking on the PRIME dispatch system. With 'Assist' calls, patrol officers acted as boundary actors, and almost invariably buffered rather than bridged, often leaving work in the interstice for extended periods.

While it seemed to be significantly rarer, police did not only try to get other police to take on their work tasks, but also sometimes stole work from other police. A common example here is investigative sections 'cherry-picking' easy or high-prestige files from patrol officers once the patrol officers have completed most or all of the essential investigative work. This was a pattern noted by Ericson (1981) and Bayley (1992), and was also discussed during interviews and observations – though never actually observed – during the LMD study. Another example of file poaching that emerged in the LMD study was in cases where a slower jurisdiction shared a geographic boundary with a jurisdiction experiencing a high level of calls; in these cases, often simply to stave off boredom, patrol officers from the neighbouring jurisdiction may offer to attend calls or simply arrive on scene to provide assistance.

For example, during a shift (#30) in Vancouver's district 4, which borders with the RCMP's University detachment, we attended a call related to a drunk driver and found an RCMP member at the scene waiting for us. He admitted to having a slow night in his jurisdiction, which led him to scan the VPD dispatch from his car to see if he could lend a hand. He promised not to steal the VPD officer's 'thunder' by taking the file as his own. Rather, he helped control the drunk driver and provided a written statement for the VPD officer's file submission.

Police of all stripes would also, whether on patrol, en route to an incident, or heading home off shift in their jurisdiction or elsewhere, stop and check in with any other police officer involved in a traffic stop. While traffic stops are routine work, they are thought to be particularly dangerous if the stopped vehicle contains the wrong person or cargo:

[G]uys always appreciate the fact, and this is where some of the education component comes in, because you will drive by and you see four police cars there and people are like, oh wow, how come it takes four of you to do this, and they don't know the situation behind it, maybe the guy's a bad guy, he's a gangster and oftentimes you know it's just having that

presence there that prevent the unnecessary escalation, and especially if the person you're dealing with has this mentality of I'm going to try to run away or I'm going to hurt this officer, well he or she is less likely to do that if there's more officers there, so you know it's a safety thing.

Integrated Unit Commissioned Officer, interview #58

In situations like these the bridging activity – providing unsolicited cost-free assistance – was rarely refused. Irregularly, participants did recall instances of free assistance being offered but turned down, though in these cases there was often another non-resourcing factor that impacted the decision to buffer. For example, a number of integrated units had recounted instances of local jurisdictions either not requesting available services or turning down offers for assistance because of a 'fiefdom' mentality by local managers. However, those were seen as aberrant examples.

As one might expect, the most successful bridging activity occurs where there are significant latent resources or where some party in the boundary negotiation offers to absorb the cost, making further negotiation unnecessary. This is not to say that units will always withhold resources selfishly, and they may contribute even when it means a net resource loss for the unit. In instances where assistance is essential rather than just requested, police will generally assist other police, although the example above about guard duty and the history of the Pickton investigation show that this is far from a certainty. Nonetheless, at a number of points during the observations, officers commented and evidenced through action that if there was a chance that another officer's safety could be jeopardized, if an investigation was high enough priority, or if a call for assistance could be a memorable or interesting one (and this usually meant something involving force, such as a dynamic entry to a dwelling or a confrontation with gang members), they would be willing to assist immediately and without question or consideration of resource availability. This was generally considered 'doing the right thing'.

For example, at numerous points in the fieldwork, participants made a point of discussing a recent complex homicide investigation in the municipality of Delta. The Delta Police Department had no standing investigation assistance agreements with other forces. To have paid the full cost to bring in external investigators would have been impossible for Delta, and to undertake the investigation on their own would have paralyzed the organization. Thus, other police – in this, case, the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) – came to their aid:

Delta's not part of IHIT so theoretically and principally, they should have conduct of that investigation all by themselves... [But] we supported that investigation as much as Delta needed the help over the first few weeks of that investigation because it was the right thing to do, first of all, and second of all it's kind of the way we operate and they won't get a bill for that, it's just you know because of common public safety interest.

RCMP Commissioned Officer, interview #29

Moral obligation was certainly a motivator for bridging, although probably less of one than most police would admit. Indeed, while IHIT did not send Delta a bill, they also withdrew services well before the conclusion of the investigation. Broader systemic responsibilities – such as the recognition of 'common public safety interest' that a violent criminal operating in a neighbouring jurisdiction is also bad for business locally – may also figure heavily into these decisions, thus rendering moot any further idealist, professional, or moral incentives for assistance. Certainly the cynical observer would note that most assistance of this sort is actually of either the *quid pro quo* variety, or may have been ordered by senior management if unit commanders would not authorize it immediately. However, observers of large police forces would also note that unit commanders can quite easily justify the denial of requests within a loosely coupled system, and even senior managers experience significant trouble challenging the unit commanders' denial.

As well, while many police will say that their first priority is to do what is necessary to catch bad guys, in practice they regularly turn down interstitial work even when there is no more pressing

work to be done, in part because they need to remain latent for their own potential work. While this may seem like something of an indictment of the police work ethic, most people in most jobs most of the time would turn down extra work where it interfered with their formal responsibilities. It is essential to remember that police officers are just like other workers in this respect. The expectation of ever-abundant work, even in down-time, seems to be the norm in large-scale urban policing. In turn, officers are discouraged from getting tied up for extended periods in work that is not owned by their unit.

Definition: We may define a scarcity boundary as the negotiation of ownership of interstitial work where resource availability is in question. In these cases, relevant boundary actors – generally unit commanders and above – negotiated areas of appropriate responsibility with regard both to present capacity and future precedents for assistance. We may also say that in most instances, boundaries – of any type – between units were composed in part of scarcity boundaries.

We can say that where a scarcity boundary had emerged, buffering was the preferred strategy by most boundary actors, especially if significant negotiation was required. On the other hand, where resources were made available, bridging could generally be expected by all units involved. Finally, the higher the stakes of an incident or request for assistance, the more likely boundary actors would bridge boundaries whether or not they receive a net resource benefit.

Proximity Boundaries

As the name suggests, proximity of police units to one another is a significant and persistent boundary to coordinating interstitial work or connecting informational dots. This is not just a jurisdictional matter. While it is true that police forces will experience trouble coordinating their activities with other forces across municipal, provincial or national lines, it also emerged during the

fieldwork that units within the same force are less likely to work together *even on matters of mutual interest* if they are not co-located in the same workspace, and at minimum this meant working in the same building. This has become a problem for many police organizations in the LMD, as most police organizations and even some integrated units are fragmented into multiple locations, often because of lack of available spaces. One integrated unit member noted:

For integration to work you have to be in the same room, there's no question about it, you cannot work integrated if you're not in the same room ... [Having part of our unit in another building is] a problem because there is stuff going on between both buildings that people don't know about.

Integrated unit NCO, interview #42

Proximity boundaries are not always (only) physical. For example, there generally exists a virtual proximity boundary between patrol/general duty officers and investigative specialists/detectives even when co-located. This boundary exists for a number of reasons. Patrol officers have a different work routine from specialists – they are incident-focused and work day and night shifts, they are generalists and handle a wide range of incident types, and they generally handle only uncomplicated file work. Specialist and generalist investigators in the LMD and elsewhere, on the other hand, work daytime hours and on-call shifts, they handle a narrow range of incident types, and they handle complex file work; they are much more 'courtroom evidence managers' (Brodeur 2010) than incident responders. Their differing work routines create conditions where patrol and investigators rarely interact face-to-face, and technology has allowed much of the routine information-sharing to be done through email or other computerized means.

Proximity boundaries are often connected to scarcity boundaries. In many cases members reported that the unit with available personnel took over the file, rather than engaging in a semantic or principled debate about crime-type definitions. Yet, these definitional debates can also act as a

defence against interstitial work. In this vein, it was observed that unit commanders were capable of buffering boundaries – turning down work requests – by making arguments that they were unable to assist due to personnel shortages (a strategy often used by patrol commanders, see above), or that the request exceeded their appropriate functional responsibility. This latter strategy was used most prominently by the Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team (IMPACT), and other units with narrow mandates:

All our people, 7 [days] by 24 [hours] for their entire secondment will be focused on and will be tasked with vehicle crime duties. Every chief has been agreed to this and there has been no variation from that. People try to get us for long term this and that and the other thing, and the shootings and, no... No one touches us. No one pulls us away. Whereas other units, they're here there and everywhere.

IMPACT member, interview #57

Most participants claimed that files or related tasks were far easier to transfer through a personal connection in another unit than through recourse to official channels. Unit members normally had the tacit right to take on extra work so long as it was not seen to interfere with pre-existing workload, so it was a regular occurrence that officers were observed to call friends in other units for small favours, generally advice or information about a file, but also potentially for more substantial assistance. Officers regularly discussed 'elevator meetings' and hallway run-ins as the best ways to 'sell' your file (from shift #20), where selling one's file means securing cooperation and resources from those outside or hierarchically above the unit. Conversely, where face-to-face contact was unavailable, bridging was limited.

Where a proximity boundary persisted for an extended period of time, such as with a lengthy investigation, or where the boundary was a stable aspect of the structure of police services, such as between specialists and patrol, units often sought to bring external resources under their control temporarily or permanently. This is an aspect of organizational behaviour remarked on by

Thompson (1967), who noted that organizations seek to subsume relevant components of their environment into their structure to increase stability and predictability. Certain units in the LMD developed their own internal capacity to replace the need to rely on external units for assistance. For example, the Integrated Gang Task Force (IGTF), which is a unit made up of secondments from multiple forces, since 2007 has maintained an internally-directed patrol unit, where previously it had partnered with the VPD's Violence Suppression Unit (VSU) for patrol functions. IGTF largely subsumed the VSU's responsibilities and personnel, although the VPD still maintains its own gang enforcement unit. IGTF thus brought up a boundary; by developing its own internal capacity, it limited its need to work with another agency on a day-to-day basis.

More often, the solution to a persistent boundary was secondment from one unit or force to another. Participants suggested that secondments have become increasingly formalized in recent years, where in decades past they were predominantly 'gentlemen's agreements' (VPD NCO, interview #38). Indeed, formalization is a normal organizational response to persistent uncertainty in inter-agency coordination (Vlaar, Bosch and Volberda 2007). Formalization does not always mean increased facilitation, however; Vlaar and colleagues also point out that high levels of formalization may actually be a sign of poor coordination. To illustrate this point, police in the region in the past 15 years have instituted literally hundreds of memoranda of understanding (MOU) and similar documents between one another and with other agency partners, to deal *inter alia* with resource and personnel sharing.³⁹ Among these agreements are the contracts creating PRIME and the LMD integrated teams, as well as a standing MOU between the RCMP and VPD for joint projects. While these have decreased transaction costs of cooperation in many instances, this research makes clear

³⁹ For example, preliminary interviews with RCMP senior managers provided an estimate of approximately 220 current MOU and similar agreements relating to the RCMP.

that formalization is not sufficient for creating openness at the unit level, and units regularly use formal agreements as shields in negotiations.

Definition: We may define a proximity boundary as the negotiation of ownership of interstitial work where the negotiation surrounds a geographical or functional distance between two or more units. These emerged where the units had areas of mutual interest such as common investigative targets or operational needs, and were often coupled with scarcity boundaries. In these cases, relevant boundary actors – unit commanders or file owners – negotiated the placement of various skill sets through formal or informal channels.

Where a proximity boundary had arisen, boundary actors were seen to bridge boundaries through formal secondments and agreements, joint projects, and informal contact networks with other relevant units. They also buffered boundaries through refusal of assistance, exercising their often wide-ranging capacity to define their units' resource availability and functional responsibilities, often with recourse to formal rules. They similarly brought up boundaries by creating ad hoc or policy-bound limits to their functional responsibility and by developing in-house capacity to eliminate their needs for external assistance. Personal connections or lack thereof appeared to be the most consistent factor in whether bridging or buffering was preferred in cases of proximity boundaries. However, other considerations such as perceived importance of the crime-type or incident, longitudinal persistence of the need to cooperate or coordinate, and of course resource availability were relevant in dictating outcomes of negotiations.

Technical/Systemic Boundaries

This category in the typology brings to mind Sheptycki's (2004) lexicon of organizational pathologies in police intelligence systems. Systems designed for some purpose – tactical coherence, accessible

record-keeping, investigative coordination, real-time communication, and in the case of work/union rules, employee satisfaction – regularly interact with one another, but do not always cooperate. In some instances, two similar systems can fail to cohere, such as the RCMP and municipal police forces' different training protocols, or prior to the turn of the century, the separate and mutually inaccessible records management and dispatch systems held by different police forces across the LMD. This latter set of issues has, as noted above, been addressed by the PRIME system, although officers in the LMD (as officers everywhere) have resisted the new technology in various and idiosyncratic ways. The implementation of PRIME was a bridging strategy largely imposed from the outside via the provincial government, eased to some degree by the use of provincial funds to pay for beta testing and training. PRIME implementation issues remain through today.

We should also be cognizant of information subsystems that exist at the unit level, as many units' communication systems exhibited some idiosyncrasy. Certain units maintained proprietary databases (of criminals, intelligence, and incidents) that are not accessible through PRIME, and other units – joint forces or integrated units particularly – developed their own tactical vocabulary that is a hybrid of the various protocols of the forces involved. Thus, integrated unit members reported (during shift #28) that they could cross jurisdictional boundaries to work on an investigation or execute an arrest, and sometimes experience communication breakdowns with local unit commanders. Integrated units, being multijurisdictional, also had to become adept at navigating multiple bureaucracies, and systems not designed to interact were forced to become compatible. For example, front-line type units such as the IGTF uniform division or IMPACT's enforcement units had to learn the multiple intake procedures at the various holding cells around the LMD, and this regularly caused confusion for both the integrated members and the local jail personnel.

Due to the problems presented by technical/systemic boundaries, officers at all levels had developed the capability to work around a number of glitches – or at least inconveniences – that had arisen. During observations (shift #30), one officer claimed that as a matter of pride he had never taken recourse to the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) between the USA and Canada, though he regularly worked with American police, saying, ‘I hate to test bureaucracy. I’ll do anything to get around it... I’m proud to say I’ve never applied it, I’ve always circumvented it.’ Others regularly discussed the importance of having ‘one good guy’ (shift #22), a trustworthy contact, within relevant units.

Common system-avoidance strategies would thus be similar to strategies described above for overcoming proximity boundaries. Where officers found the need to coordinate activities with other units, their first – rather than last – recourse was generally to utilize a personal connection. This is among the most robust findings of the study, and is in line with other studies of police interaction. Coupled with previous work on international police cooperation (Alain 2001; Gerspacher and Dupont 2007), this finding suggests that personal connections are of utmost importance in bridging boundaries created by cumbersome bureaucratic systems throughout public policing.

The consequences of this aspect of the connections between units is that, where one does not have a personal contact with another unit, cooperation on or transfer of a file is much less likely to occur in those instances where a file’s ownership is ambiguous or where assistance from another unit (rather than outright transfer of file responsibility) is sought. In other words, the available formal operational coordination systems between units were regularly seen as the least effective means for bridging technical/systemic boundaries. Where an informal shortcut was unavailable, buffering became much more likely.

Definition: We may define a technical/systemic boundary as a negotiation resulting from shortcomings in operational coordination arrangements between units. In these cases, relevant boundary actors – unit commanders, technical administrators, human resources managers, and in some cases senior management – had to negotiate the rules for interaction between divergent systems, which often involved the creation of new systems or rule frameworks that either complemented or replaced existing arrangements.

Where a technical/systemic boundary has arisen, boundary actors preferred bridging in cases where (a) the use of unit/agency resources to undertake bridging activity is circumscribed and (b) the creation of new processes results in a net gain for the actors' unit or agency. We saw buffering where either of these conditions are not met, except in cases where bridging is imposed by external forces. Where official bridging strategies were implemented but not seen as effective, informal buffering or bridging – in the forms of non-cooperation or system circumvention through personal contacts, respectively – were observed.

Conclusion

The typology of police organizational boundaries is intended to be a tool for understanding police as organizations, where these organizations are part of a complex network that regularly stretches our understandings of organization and boundaries. Police sharing a functional ambit across inter-organizational boundaries may be more proximal to one another, in terms of ability to coordinate, than police units within the same force who have differing functional responsibilities or work routines. Traditional modes of coordination in police work – working vertically through a formal command structure – are becoming, or have for some time been, irrelevant.

The findings in this chapter clearly present a world of police boundary negotiation that relies much more on horizontal personal connections and informal activities than coherent hierarchical systems and clear responsibilities. This may come as little surprise to many police scholars, who have long recognized the limited value of organizational charts, official protocols and processes as means to understand what the police actually do (Brodeur 2010). Placing this insight at the centre of a sociology of inter- and intra-organizational police coordination is essential to understanding the ways in which police will undertake the challenges of 21st-century policing.

The next task of this thesis will be to further examine the dynamics that shape negotiations under various boundary conditions to extend and refine our expectations about potential negotiation outcomes. This will provide insight into the implicit rules, tacit structures and informal hierarchies that emerge between units faced with a common boundary. As we will see, while there are many formal efforts to systematize boundary activity in the LMD to make it coherent and predictable, the job of coordination remains a fundamentally social, and consequently fluid, form of police work.

Chapter 6 – The Dynamics of Inter-unit Police Coordination

Introduction

The exact volume of work held at the interstices between police units is hard if not impossible to measure, and will vary between organizations. It should be nonetheless clear that there is a significant amount of it, and that there will be more interstitial work as policing becomes increasingly trans-local and internally specialized. Work tasks are regularly negotiated within and between organizations. The patterns of social interaction that determine negotiation outcomes were touched on in the previous chapter, and deserve a more in-depth analysis here. We know from Chapter 5 that boundary actors prefer informal, interpersonal coordination over formal, systematized coordination, and prefer horizontal rather than vertical coordination. We also know that common training and organizational structures facilitate coordination in the same way as divergent and idiosyncratic systems of work and organization inhibit it. In all cases, for two or more units to coordinate their work, a certain threshold must be overcome on the axes of boundary characteristics previously described. And, above all, resource availability is a minimum threshold that must be achieved before coordination or cooperation can take place in most cases.

But, this tells us only part of the story of why some units are more active – and successful – in requesting and securing resources from others. It is certainly not the case that every informal, personal, horizontal contact across a boundary results in successful coordination, even in those instances where resources are available. Equally, not all impersonal, hierarchical negotiations between differently-organized sections of policing fail to achieve a desirable result. While some units are by structure, command, or choice inclined to assist other police with regularity, even these units obfuscate their rules for coordination, lest a clear precedent be set that may result in future

requests that stretch unit mandates beyond recognition. Having developed a theoretical basis for understanding boundaries as interstitial sites of active negotiation, and having outlined terminology describing types of boundaries between police units, the thesis will now examine in further detail what happens within these negotiations. Relying on the notion that police interactions are characterized by tension between common purpose and conflicting interests, this chapter will outline the often countervailing mandates, priorities, and hierarchies that emerge alongside boundary negotiations.

The chapter begins by giving a brief account of the roles of police culture and of law and policy in relation to coordination work. It will then outline the key texts of police file-creation, drawing on institutional ethnographic insights (Smith 2005), and look at the automated rote-processing of police files by a computerized system. As this form of ‘coordination by programming’ (Van de ven, Delbecq and Koenig 1976) represents the vast majority of file coordination, it is centrally important to how police see work tasks and the data markers of citizens as represented through their work. Despite its automation, this system receives human inputs at one end and is subject to human interpretation at the other, thus leaving a significant space for human agency in the determination of all coordination processes.

The chapter then examines the phenomenon of asymmetry between police units involved in boundary negotiation, first through the archetypical hierarchical divide in public police work, between generalist patrol and ‘specialist’ – normally investigative – units, using examples from the fieldwork to illustrate the asymmetric relationships between units in requesting and denying assistance inter- and intra-organizationally. Alongside this asymmetry, the chapter also examines power differentials between forces, and then argues that those components in police work that have well defined boundaries have more predictable and stable experiences with coordination than those

whose mandate remains in question. The chapter closes by discussing the implications of these dynamics for comprehending boundary work as unique police work, and implications for the political and organizational control of this work.

Police Culture as Facilitator

Interstitial work can easily turn into internecine conflict, and past antipathies linger in boundary negotiations. Units in this study were often unable to cooperate or cooperate fully due to a prior pattern of interaction between one section of police and another. The intra- or inter-organizational relationship may have gone sour over a previous boundary issue, such as prior unwillingness to contribute resources in a time of need. In other instances, a high-profile mistake, such as the mismanagement of the Pickton file, cast a shadow over all other collaborative work. Just as positive interpersonal relationships can ease coordination efforts, negative expectations of other units can limit willingness to interact in good faith. These kinds of issues thus normally latch onto and exacerbate boundary negotiation. In many cases, a small issue of negotiation in joint operations becomes inflamed due to historic bad blood.

Moreover, boundary actors did not have to have personal experience of another unit's shortcomings to develop and act on these antipathies, and second- and third-hand knowledge was often acceptable proof that another unit or organization was a suboptimal partner. Physical differences, such as the colour of shirt worn or weapon carried by a particular force, became markers in conversation for the tensions between organizations. Officers in non-RCMP units regularly referred to RCMP officers' grey uniform shirts (in contrast to the independent forces' blue shirts) or the signature gold stripe on their uniform trousers. This latter feature of dress was a particular point of contention in tactical units where black cargo pants are standard issue and a gold stripe can be a

liability as it detracts from stealth. In integrated tactical operations this provided extra grounds for derision against an RCMP organization that was unable to address basic operational needs due to tradition and parochialism.

As stated earlier in Chapter 2, organization requires membership and exclusion. The identities held by boundary actors, especially vis-à-vis other police, remain relevant variables in the boundary negotiation process. Where the actor sees him or herself as responsible to the narrow interests of the unit, this can be detrimental to the process and legitimacy of public policing. Where they view themselves as part of a larger body of public police in service to people, this identity may be beneficial.

To this end, much has been made in police scholarship about the importance of police culture in creating divides within police work, such as between 'management' and 'street cops' (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni 1983), or between detectives and patrol workers (Ericson 1981). Yet, the reader may note the conspicuous absence of any boundaries based on culture in the typology offered in the previous chapter, and this is an explicit omission. If we define police culture as a set of embedded occupational rules about how to 'interpret conduct, retain loyalties, [and] express opinions,' (Skolnick 2008: 35), it must be recognized that these rules are shared within and between organizations and specialisms. As such, culture has less explanatory value in accounting for 'the war within the police' (Brodeur, quoted earlier) than the factors outlined in the last chapter, namely resources, distance, or process between units and forces.

Culture does not normally represent a boundary but rather acts as a facilitator between and within police organizations similarly organized. The following quote illustrates this position:

You know even interagency breakdowns in communication, a lot of the times that's just personality conflicts with a few key people at a management level, and at the worker bee

level they'll still overcome that, still find workarounds on that. Even though two agencies may not be politically working well together at a senior executive management level, at the grassroots level you'll still see the officers you know bypassing that in order to get the job done.

VPD civilian member, interview #60

This sentiment was reiterated countless times and evidenced in observations, and as boundary negotiation 'migrates' to the unit level (Yan and Louis 1999), conflicts between senior managers should become decreasingly relevant to understanding coordination processes. While the thesis has focused on boundaries, there are enough common attitudes, practices and training across police forces that coordination in many cases can be a relatively straightforward matter whether or not there is a pre-existing affinity between units. However, as the focus of this chapter is on the interstitial negotiation process – almost by definition, one where cultural norms have been inadequate to facilitate a transaction – the explanatory utility of police culture will be absent from much of the following commentary.

Coordination, Law, and Policy

Law and policy serve to constrain police officers' choices for action in a given boundary negotiation. However, the content of the law is rarely adequate to explain police actions, both because of normally vague laws relating to police activity, and because of the broad operational discretion police possess. As noted in Chapter 2, police actors 'rule *with law*', not by law (Bowling and Sheptycki 2012). In the realm of police-to-police coordination, there is very little that is statutorily required of officers. This is certainly true in the Canadian intra-national context (LeBeuf 2005), but has also been shown to be the case inter-nationally as well (e.g. Alain 2001). If officers or units withhold information or resources from other police, or give them away freely, they are scarcely

accountable to a system that sets out the conditions under which they should do so, simply because such a system does not exist in a robust manner.

This does not mean that there is no body of legislation and internal policy potentially impacting coordination activities; indeed, there is actually quite a bit of it. However, in practice, what does exist lacks clarity and specificity regarding obligations of officers and units. The law and policy of coordination proposes bureaucratic procedure, and steers clear of claims on the norms or ethics of police behaviour in the interstices. Before engaging a more substantive sociological account of coordination processes, a brief examination of the law and policy framework governing coordination work in the LMD and BC should assist the reader in understanding precisely the limited ways in which law and policy figure into boundary negotiations.

As noted in Chapter 3, ‘gentlemen’s agreements’ previously characterized resource sharing activities. Now, most instances of secondment and partnership are governed by formal policy negotiated between forces. It is unclear whether this formalization has helped or hindered coordination activities, since on the one hand these agreements iron out administrative concerns, while on the other they discourage the informal, spontaneous and grey areas of activity where police actors tend to thrive, innovate and above all, circumvent bureaucracy. For the purposes of this chapter it will be adequate to assume formalization has mixed effects, and these effects are secondary in comparative importance to the other processes discussed below.

With the exception of these formalized Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) or similar agreements⁴⁰ – negotiated bilaterally or multilaterally between forces, and containing little concrete

⁴⁰ In the police war of acronyms, some forces do not like the term MOU, and substitute with others:

“[S]o it’s funny, for some agencies wording is a big deal, they couldn’t, they for some reason they don’t want to call it an MOU, they have to call it an SA, some agencies have to call it an MOA, in the

direction except regarding funding and bureaucratic procedure – there is little an individual officer or unit supervisor can reference to justify their actions in the interstices. Conversely, this also means little can be done to challenge their decisions. Certainly, the limited capacity for internal and external control of police organizations through formal means is not unique to coordination work, but perhaps it is simply more significant – insofar as policy is more absent – in policing’s third spaces (Sassen 2008).

According to the *BC Police Act*, all police officers in British Columbia (with the exception of those in federal units), whether municipal, provincial, or integrated, have jurisdiction to enforce the Canadian *Criminal Code* and the laws of BC throughout the province. Thus, officers have a universal provincial jurisdiction, meaning that officers can undertake investigations and operations, effect arrests, gather intelligence and develop sources in any location in the province. Moreover, the local police of jurisdiction do not have a monopolistic authority over police operations in their local area, and any deference to local authority in coordinating police work is done as a matter of courtesy, to safeguard operational integrity, or to avoid embarrassing miscommunications,⁴¹ rather than out of legal requirement. Words such as ‘integration’ and ‘coordination’ are virtually absent from all policing legislation in the Canadian federal context⁴². The *BC Police Act* accounts for multijurisdictional

G8/G20 that just happened, we had an MMOA, which was a master memorandum of agreement, cause that’s what the RCMP called it, and wanted it to be referred to. They basically say the same things, but there’s different names for depending on who you’re dealing with.” (VPD NCO, interview #38)

⁴¹ As an example of the latter, during observations a recent story arose numerous times, where an officer in plainclothes from one city went to buy coffee in another city and, because he was carrying his sidearm, was mistakenly identified as a citizen in criminal possession of a weapon, leading to an armed response by the police of jurisdiction.

⁴² While a detailed analysis of all provincial policing laws is outside the scope of this study, there are some provinces that have enacted laws, such as Ontario’s *Interprovincial Policing Act* (S.O.2009 c. 30), which directly address police coordination. BC, however, does not have such a law.

activities through allowing for ‘designated’ or ‘specified’ units⁴³ – units created by the provincial Minister of Public Safety that assume a provincial, regional or sub-regional authority over a specific set of responsibilities. The relevant sections of the *Act* – s.4.1, 18.1, and 18.2 – appear to create the legal and administrative space for integrated units and formal JFOs, as well as multijurisdictional entities such as transit police.

While integrated unit members all operate under complex MOU, business rules, and operational guidelines, which dictate protocol in various capacities, the officers are normally only nominally aware that this is the case. Few participants reported having read or regularly reviewing these documents that supposedly guide their activities. Indeed, this is commonly the case with police policy, which, in defence of the officers, is constantly changing but with little operational impact. As outlined in previous chapters, enforcement of non-compliance with police policy is generally *ex post facto* rather than preventive in orientation, and then only in the weakest of senses – a memo, email, or, in more problematic cases of violation, a face-to-face meeting or reassignment for the violating officer(s). Police do not like letter-of-the-law enforcement regarding internal matters, and are both lenient and highly discretionary with their use of policy to proscribe members’ actions.

Where it is not governed by other agreements such as MOU, sharing of police resources is required by s. 68 of the *BC Police Act*, ‘Requests for temporary assistance’, as follows:

Requests for temporary assistance

68 (1) The provincial police force, a municipal police department or a designated policing unit must, on receiving a request for temporary assistance made by another police force, police department or designated policing unit, assign to the requesting police force, police department or designated policing unit the officers and equipment practicable to assign for the purpose.

(2) A police force, police department or designated policing unit that requests and receives assistance under subsection (1) is responsible for all costs of that assistance.

⁴³ Outlined in various parts of the *BC Police Act* – s. 4.1: Designated Policing; s. 18.1: Enforcement officers for enactments; s. 18.2: Regulations respecting a designated law enforcement unit.

Taken at face value, this legislation might lead one to believe that police are under a statutory responsibility to help one another throughout the province. However, the preceding and subsequent discussion makes clear that the operative phrase ‘practicable to assign’ allows boundary actors, particularly middle managers, to define ‘practicable’ on their own terms and thus deny requests for temporary assistance as they see fit.

As a general rule, even less has been done in the articulation of information-sharing policies and protocols than exists in resource-sharing arrangements. This is unsurprising since, with few exceptions, the sharing of information is a reasonably cost-neutral activity for police. Sharing resources, primarily in the form of person-hours, is comparatively expensive, and we would expect organizations to protect themselves from unwanted costs through policies that limit or buffer external requests. Regarding information-sharing, section 68.1 of the *Police Act*, added in 2003 by amendment, creates rules about information management systems, but this section in no way delimits or structures the terms or content of information-sharing between forces.⁴⁴ Otherwise, there is little that statutorily governs inter-force communication.

A multitude of pieces of legislation, not least of which being the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, but also provincial and national Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy (FoIPoP) legislation, may theoretically weigh on all instances of information sharing, but their actual bearing on police-to-police information sharing is not well understood even by government and is thought to be minimal in any case (Canada 2009). These kinds of legislation may provide some backcloth variables explaining the shape of internal policy on information sharing where it exists. However, these types of legal concerns did not surface in observations or interviews as relevant in deciding

⁴⁴ This amendment was presumably done to facilitate the implementation of PRIME, since it requires government approval of any information management system. In 2005, PRIME became the only information management system accepted by the Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General (MPSSG).

what, when, and how to share with other police. Moreover, the sentiment that any information known by police could be legally known by all police was a common refrain in interviews, suggesting that any active legal barriers to sharing police-held information are only between police and non-police agencies, a point reiterated in a recent report by Canada's Auditor General (ibid).

The general legal landscape is summarized in table 6.1:

Table 6.1 – Law and policy relating to police coordination

Law/Policy	Level	Direct references to police coordination work
<i>RCMP Act</i>	Federal	None
FOIPOP legislation	Federal and Provincial	None
<i>BC Police Act</i>	Provincial	s. 68, 'Requests for temporary assistance' s. 68.1, 'Information Management Systems' s. 4.1, 'Designated Policing' (also 18.1 & 18.2)
Unit business rules, MOUs between agencies	Internal	Various, but limited to resourcing (who pays), labour rules, and confidential information sharing

Canadian research done by the RCMP suggests that '[g]enerally, information-sharing is left largely to individual police officers, instead of being determined by a formal process.' (LeBeuf 2005) To this end, little operational consideration is given to internal policy, where it exists. MOU spell out information-sharing arrangements, but only in the broadest terms, and merely regarding what is not to be shared, rather than including any principles guiding what to share or how. Fundamentally, only confidential information is restricted between forces, though again confidentiality is in these cases defined as such by the force or unit rather than by standardized process. Information that is systematically made available, such as in PRIME, can still be protected by the author, thus leaving the formal rules of the system of information sharing subjective in practice. Information that is not readily available through a records system, such as on local databases or individual officer files, is

shared even more informally, through email (albeit normally on a secure server), face-to-face contact, telephone, and granting other police access to local or unit databases (ibid). As such, it is normally left to the discretion of individual officers to bridge or buffer information requests. This is a process mediated by each organization and subsequently, each unit, and with the exception of electronic sharing methods – through database query or email – it is a process that is often left undocumented.

Coordination by Programming

Despite some definitional challenges in categorizing incident files, the vast majority of police files are held by individual officers in units assigned to the particular file-type. Most of the coordination done in public police organizations is thus largely predetermined. Van de ven, Delbecq and Koenig (1976) refer to this as ‘coordination by programming’. This is to be contrasted with ‘coordination by feedback’ (ibid), a process that relies on personal interaction to sort out work responsibilities, and is characteristic of that large remainder of police coordination that escapes systematization. Coordination by programming is impersonal, and is used where work tasks are ‘non-variable’, with little uncertainty about procedures and outcomes. While police workers face wide-ranging situations on a daily basis, the processing of files between units after the fact is relatively straightforward, repetitive, and narrow, and increasingly so under PRIME’s rules. Nonetheless, as this section will show, even automatic police processes are heavily influenced by human agency at multiple points.

Police *qua* information processers enter information into a system, and the system in turn defines the information that is used and can be usable. One of the core insights of the institutional ethnographic method discussed in Chapter 1 is that texts, broadly conceived, mediate social

relations within institutions and between institutions and the people these institutions bear upon (Smith 2005). The creation and maintenance of police records is, in itself, a consequential and subjective process. For example, a PRIME record form allows an entity – a named individual in a police file – to be recorded under the following categories: Applicant; Charged; Of Interest; Other; Recommend Charge; Registered Owner; Subject of Complaint; Suspect Chargeable; Suspect; Victim.⁴⁵ These are obviously not parsimonious categories, and alongside outright mis-categorization of persons, there is also the problem of interpretation for the file creator, for example between ‘Of interest’, ‘Subject of Complaint’ and ‘Suspect’, or ‘Registered Owner’ and ‘Victim’. The category an officer ultimately chooses has repercussions for people and policing.

People seeking employment, security clearance, international mobility, access to credit and insurance, and above all fair treatment from the criminal justice system face a perpetual risk from the state of being misrepresented in official records. In many cases there is little or no way of individuals knowing how they have been identified in police records, especially when these records are in other provinces or on secure databases. This is especially the case in specialist-unit databases that identify people related to priority crimes such as gangs, sex crime and terrorism, where inclusion is particularly pejorative or detrimental against the individual, and often irreversible (e.g. Leyton 2003; Neyroud and Disley 2008). The problem is compounded as this information becomes internationally available (Bowling and Sheptycki 2012). The following anecdote is illustrative:

[During discussion in a patrol car], the NCO ... cautioned that entities [i.e. named individuals] in files need to be properly entered; entering a person improperly as a suspect, especially where the charge is serious, has serious consequences especially when interpreted by someone at the other end of the chain (he provides an example regarding a man being

⁴⁵ This list comes from a PRIME code sheet provided during research. The categories also include PROP REPR, or property report, i.e. without an entity attached. These categories may have since changed and may display differentiation between forces, and are provided for illustrative purposes.

turned down for hockey coaching in Ontario because he was wrongly recorded as a sex-abuse suspect in PRIME).

Field notes, shift #20

Like categorizing entities, categorization of incidents is also a complex task that involves subjective interpretation and risks to individuals, and defines work outcomes for the officers entering information. An officer's choice in the first instance to record or not record an incident as a chargeable crime, and then to determine the seriousness of that charge, can create or eliminate work for police. It also has obviously serious consequences. During the same shift as above, we attended a minor altercation between two residents at a single-room occupancy hotel, and the NCO joked to a line officer, 'Make sure to record this as a disturbance and not a mass-murder'. While clearly sarcastic, this comment points to the broad discretion that first-responders have in initiating and shaping the institutional response to crime. This point is of course old hat in police sociology (Ericson 1982; Skolnick 1994), but the automated processes and large trans-local form-fillable records systems change the parameters under which this discretion is exercised.

Quality and content of inputs is a major factor conditioning the coordination of work across intra- and inter-jurisdictional boundaries. 'Garbage in, garbage out' is a common refrain among police utilizing the PRIME system. Many police, especially in investigative units – who rely heavily on information from PRIME files for deployment decisions – cite problems with junior or zealous officers over-estimating the value of their information and entering too much, irrelevant, or mis-categorized information. Conversely, under-motivated officers are sometimes seen as unwilling to write a thorough report on PRIME, thus limiting the system's ability to usefully and accurately aggregate data.

Gang-crime investigators discussed the issue of 'paper gangsters', a false-positive identification problem that emerges from an iterative process of surveillance and harassment. A social acquaintance of suspected or proven criminals can become a person of serious interest to police simply by their being over-represented in the PRIME system as an associate of gang or organized crime members, which can result in a waste of resources when gang or organized crime units engage in extended investigation or surveillance of paper gangsters. It can also result in increased unwarranted harassment through car stops and street checks to these unfortunate individuals, and since the gang associate databases are not publicly knowable, these individuals have little potential for redress.

The problem with the ... strategy [of identifying gang acquaintances as persons of interest] is that it can produce what are known as 'paper gangsters'. In the hypothetical situation [explained to me on shift], Person A is out one night and runs into a friend from high school. That friend is connected to organized crime, and during a vehicle stop later in the night Person A becomes identified in PRIME with the real gang member [due to their earlier association in the evening]. A few weeks later, Person A is pulled over and during the stop is identified through PRIME as associated, due to the original stop, and a search is effected. This process is repeated a few times until there are multiple PRIME entries, each of which reinforce the initial notion that this is a person of interest, a 'shithead' or otherwise a troublemaker. This process can also begin easily where a person stops into a drug house to buy a small amount of drugs, or stops for a drink at a gang bar, not being aware that their car's plate is entered into the database by a surveilling officer. This issue is compounded if the paper gangster has other markers of gang involvement – drug or weapon possession or violence on his/her record, driving a flashy car, certain types of apparel, etc.

Field notes, shift #21

Despite the significant risks of misidentification and misclassification that attend data entry by line-level officers, it is a process that officers normally try to get through quickly and with limited consideration. In turn, when an officer creates a General Occurrence (GO) report through his or her in-car computer, the system provides a series of prompts to ensure that markers are put in place for the necessary information; whether or not the information is accurate or useful is another matter.

And the way the data entry system is set up, the way PRIME is set up is such that when you write a report, all sorts of pop up windows and boxes come up with boxes to check and answers to, questions to answer so that you have to fill in the data and some of them won't let you continue unless you fill in the data, and even if it lets you continue, you see boxes that you think ok next time I'm going to ask the question that it takes to fill that box.

VPD Patrol Officer, Interview #49

During another shift (#10), a general duty officer demonstrated how one can expedite report writing by using PRIME's error-checking functionality to identify missing information and fill it in quickly. This reverses the historical paper-based process where officers would individually determine relevant information and create a brief written report. Now, the PRIME system and its steering groups – particularly the Tables and Values committee, the component of the PRIME governance structure responsible for creating categories – determine the relevant information. Officers react to information requests in automatic and automated fashion, and space is limited in the system for complex information. If requisite information is missed in the systematized input, it will be caught by quality-assurance officers or civilian staff members who review submitted records in the next step down the chain of information processing. Without suggesting that prior paper-based report-writing was adequate or thorough, one fears this process may result in highly unreflexive information creation. That this information now becomes immediately provincially available is of special concern.

However, as one might expect, police also show resistance to this system by not engaging with it, as illustrated by the following anecdote from observations:

We go to a call of a disturbance at a local hotel... for a party that is out of control... When we return to the car, the acting NCO does not make a GO report of it ... He says that [his force] is a stats-driven organization and so it would look better on him to fill out and submit a report replete with 'entities' (partygoers' names) and details, but it is actually ineffective and he is happy to take the risk that someone asks why no report was submitted rather than waste time on a busy night filling out paperwork on a non-event.

They also recognize the shortcoming of systematized information, which is one of the reasons they continue to prefer discussing files through personal connections rather than wholly trusting the file information.

Once information is entered into this system, as noted earlier, certain types of files will be transferred automatically from first responders to the appropriate specialist unit, and that unit may have little choice in accepting the majority of those files. However, once a file is forwarded by PRIME, human agents on the receiving end retain ability to reject the system's routing decision on individual files either formally, by denying the transfer of file (citing various claims about resources and functional ambit discussed in Chapter 4), or informally, by accepting it and completing it in a cursory manner. As such, the reality of the system is that it is still heavily dependent on human decisions. A human element is therefore ever-present in file negotiation, and it is this element that often determines the threshold at which a particular unit will or will not perform work on a file. The following discussion illustrates the subjective nature of file transfers.

A: So this is a UCR, it's uniform crime reporting, so I pick one of these, assault with child abuse, and it will route... automatically based on that number... [T]hat number there triggers the system to go ok, that has to go to the social worker car, car 87 or 86 right, a copy of that has to go there, a copy of that has to go to robbery assault, so they can be aware of the file. They may delete it after a quick read.

Q: And the reason that someone would sort of take it or not take it is kind of just based on if they have the time or if it's serious, like do they have a directive as to which, again like this is a question of is it grey or is it black and white?...

A: No it's grey, it's grey, because it changes all the time, right? Like we had a sexual assault in the last week there and there, I put it forward saying this is a sexual assault that the report was submitted, the suspect's not around, the report was submitted and I supplemented it as the supervisor and say, this report needs some day shift follow up, unfortunately the member, the initial investigating patrol member is on night shift, won't be able to do it, please assign to a follow up detective to liaise... Ok? And that's the way it is. Now the SOS, the sexual offense squad sergeant could then reply and say, all our detectives are busy, we

won't be able to do it, this can wait until the patrol officer is available on day shift, they will have to deal with it.

VPD Patrol NCO, interview #10

In these terms, we can see that file work is routed based on negotiable guidelines rather than strict rules. Units maintain a core of work based on variably malleable conceptions of their unit's mandate, capabilities and capacity. These conceptions are held both by actors within units and actors making requests of units. The internal and external interpretations of unit mandate and expectations for unit assistance are starting points for any negotiation. As we will see in the next section, they are consequential for both individual instances and persistent patterns of boundary negotiation.

Accounting for Asymmetry

Alongside their broad capacities for interpretation of fluid categories, routing systems, and automated processes, boundary actors also have to face a political reality. They are engaging in coordination work among other institutional actors, and their boundary actions are conditioned by and in response to these other actors. Indeed, a boundary cannot exist without the engaging of external actors. Relationships across boundaries are not always equal, and some boundary actors inhabit relatively powerful or disempowered bargaining positions.

In discussing the outcomes of work coordination, negotiation may not always be an appropriate term, since it suggests that both sides have the ability to withdraw from the interaction. For many police units, their boundary actors hold no capacity for refusal and little persuasive power when faced with requests for undesired interstitial work. For others, they have the capacity to demand rather than merely request that a boundary be bridged or buffered. In Chapter 5, it was noted that

boundary relations may be 'asymmetric', a term drawn from Tsai (2002: 182-3). He describes asymmetry (in this case, regarding intra-organizational information-sharing) as follows:

The fact that unit *i* considers unit *j* a competitor, does not mean that unit *j* also views unit *i* as a competitor ... Similarly, the fact that unit *i* shares its knowledge with unit *j*, does not mean that unit *j* would also share its knowledge with unit *i* in return.

Extending this concept into the realm of policing coordination, we may also expect that the fact that unit *i* is required (formally or implicitly) to share information or resources with unit *j*, does not mean that unit *j* must also share information or resources with unit *i*. While in some ways unlike units in private organizations, who often compete for profit or markers of return on investment, police units nonetheless compete with one another insofar as they want to retain or expand their domain status in an unstable institutional environment where medium-term unit survival is normally uncertain. While institutional and police-cultural factors restrict the level of competition in the sharing of information and resources between police units, there is certainly an aspect of exchange and trade between units (see also LeBeuf 2005) despite the notion of common purpose. Participants regularly referenced the owing of favours as a factor in working with others, and regularly turned down or avoided interstitial tasks where a personal or unit-level gain could not be articulated.

This kind of 'coopetition' (ibid: 180) relationship creates a power dynamic that is iterative and malleable. As Gordon, Kornberger and Clegg (2009b) argue in their work on power in police organizations:

The legitimacy of formal structures and rule-based authority cannot be taken for granted; rather it has to be regarded as a contingent variable dependent on local and temporal circumstances. That is, the efficacy of authority is not simply based on formally sanctioned rules and positional power, but also socially constituted norms. (pp. 16-7)

They go on to state that 'power is an inherent characteristic of every aspect of organizational life' (p. 17) in public organizations, rather than something exercised only by specific actors at specific times.

Power relationships between individuals and components are developed through interaction, and are often based on sets of implicit assumptions held by actors. These assumptions – conceived of by Gordon, Kornberger and Clegg as surrounding legitimacy and authority, or the recognized right to make demands – are then reproduced and strengthened through continued practice.

This approach to power in organizations is complementary to the findings presented in the thesis thus far, since it is obvious enough that social processes regularly overrule and displace policy guidelines and official protocols. Moreover, while police organizations are hierarchically organized, there is normally no official hierarchy between units, and from an official standpoint the sergeant in charge of a traffic squad is equal to the sergeant in charge of a homicide team. Further, there is no policy basis for a hierarchy between organizations, such that the chief constable of Port Moody's 50-strong department is in no way answerable to the chief constable of the 1300-plus-member VPD.

It should be recognized that, within this study, there is a hierarchy between RCMP detachments and the RCMP provincial and federal command, who may make demands on detachments under numerous circumstances. As well, some detachments are headed by sergeants or inspectors, who are hierarchically below the superintendents that head other detachments. Thus, an official – and real – power difference can be found between RCMP components, based on formal rank and organization structure. But, the fact that a formal hierarchy can be said to exist does not necessarily problematize the claim that informal rules and socially constituted norms help determine boundary negotiations in the LMD, or in public policing more generally.

Below we will examine three sets of examples which will draw out the actual content of asymmetrical relationships in the LMD. The first two are classically thought of as asymmetric relationships in police work – the relationship between patrol and specialist units, and the

relationship between large and small police forces. The final category looks at the definitional quality of unit boundaries as a factor that makes units either well-insulated or susceptible to unwanted interstitial work requests.

Patrol Work, the 'Backbone' of Policing

Patrol work as they say is the backbone of the department, and sometimes they say it with their tongue in cheek more than others. Patrol ... documents and gets things ready so that they can be resolved by specialty squads like property section or major crimes or other investigative sections.

VPD Patrol Constable, former covert investigator, interview #49

In this subsection, we will examine the archetypical asymmetric relationship in police work, between patrol personnel and others in the organization who will be broadly referred to as 'specialists' though this is certainly a gross distinction. This revisits a decades-old theme in police scholarship (Bayley 1992; Ericson 1981; Ericson 1982; Manning 1977), though it seeks to provide an updated analysis by applying the language of boundaries, and using recent empirical evidence from the LMD field. The following will nonetheless confirm the expected: that despite increased specialization within patrol functions, institutional focuses on bottom-up information-processing and intelligence-led strategies, and technological sophistication available to the patrol officer, in the 20 years since David Bayley outlined the disempowerment of general duty personnel, little has changed in the social ordering of police organizations:

General-duties officers often resent having to hand over interesting criminal cases to plainclothes detectives from remote headquarters. They are made to feel like ignorant menials. So their response to crimes sometimes becomes perfunctory, even though research shows that they may be in the best position to collect information that will be critical for solution. (David Bayley (1992: 524))

It is worth noting that, while many comments in this section come from participants who were at the time of the study employed as patrol or general duty members, the nature of police work in the LMD

(as elsewhere) is such that it is commonplace for members to take on multiple jobs throughout their careers, and usually switch jobs within the organization every two to five years. Thus, many patrol participants had specialist experience, and all specialists had patrol experience.

Members of LMD police organizations often refer to uniformed patrol police work as the ‘backbone’ of policing. Taken at face value, if patrol policing is indeed the backbone, what does this say of the work of the rest of the organization? While it is clearly not intended to be a metaphor of great depth or accuracy, during observations it was often suggested that the work of patrol provides the support necessary for all other parts to function, and without patrol all other police work ceases to be possible.⁴⁶ However, there also exists –among some patrol officers – a contradictory definition of the notion of backbone, which argues that all other functions exist to support patrol, to take file follow-up work off of their hands so that they can return to the core job of policing, to wit: responding to calls for service. Whichever way the phrase is interpreted, the thrust of the concept is: patrol work is indispensable. The metaphor of backbone was so pervasive during the fieldwork in the LMD that it almost appears as a sort of ameliorative fiction, a myth that managers create to give meaning to often (at least seemingly) meaningless line-level police work.

The perpetuation of the idea that patrol is the most critical work done by police organizations contrasts with patrol officers’ lived experience of being subservient to specialist work, and this seems to result in a sort of cognitive dissonance for line-level cops. Patrol workers are in many ways in an institutionally disempowered position relative to personnel in other units. Indeed, during one

⁴⁶ Interestingly, the RCMP *Plans and Priorities 2003-04* document (at p. 11) also invokes the backbone metaphor, describing the National Police Services (NPS) as the “backbone for all operations and policing efforts” in Canada. NPS provides the national records system CPIC, the Canadian Police College training centre, and a number of other services. In an age where functional specialization distances much police work from any form of physical or virtual contact with front-line personnel, there is certainly a space to debate exactly how crucial patrol work is relative to things like common training centres and central information repositories. Looking at recent suggestions in the UK that patrol work can reasonably be outsourced to private contractors, we see a further weakening of the centrality of patrol work in public policing.

shift with relatively junior patrol officers, the dialectic nature of participants' beliefs about patrol work and the work given to patrol officers became readily apparent:

[The officers] have interacted with other [specialist] units on occasion, for example during a homicide investigation where they were asked to do video canvassing and ended up 'briefing people who were above our pay grade', a fact which definitely excited them. They also discuss another instance where they brought a file to the Sex Crimes unit, and then were brought back in to do follow-up later on. However, [they suggest that] this sort of action is rare, and generally patrol gets downloaded the grunt work, especially in those cases where the work is unlikely to produce a result (such as video canvassing, or B&E follow-ups)...I ask where they see the patrol within the larger picture [of police activity], and they say that they are fundamentally the 'eyes and ears' of the organization, that they deal with most of the files and forward the information to supervisors and other components of the organization – who they refer to as 'carpet cops' – who then choose to act or not act on it.

Field Notes, shift #15

In this example, it is noteworthy that the patrol personnel were certainly proud of their assistance to a high-level investigation – especially the fact that investigators were relying on them for facts and direction. However, the actual content of their work – video canvassing – was clearly among the least exciting things they could ever be asked to do. Indeed, in other cases (e.g. during shift #10) where participant officers engaged in video canvassing for lesser crimes (usually thefts from shops), this activity was invariably seen as a waste of time and a tedious one at that. Some patrol members have spent time in specialist sections and so can assist in surveillance, undercover, or investigative roles, but most officers on patrol are junior, and joining a specialist section, while not always a promotion in rank, is seen as a career advance that must be earned through years of low-prestige work.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Some specialist sections also require formal or informal markers of merit, especially those where technical ability is highly relevant (such as forensics and accident reconstructions). However, promotion and transfer within police organizations has never been clearly linked to officers' abilities (see e.g. Manning 2010), and participants regularly discussed specialist sections that became organizational hiding-places for low-grade senior officers.

Adding to their disempowerment, patrol members generally lack the contact network that more senior specialist officers maintain. This is stated as a general principle with exceptions, since every police force in the study seems to have a few patrol officers who have remained on patrol for much or all of the duration of their careers by choice and have developed good contacts throughout the region. However, in most cases, most patrol constables are junior members and only know specialist personnel in passing. In cases where their patrol headquarters are physically separate from many specialists – as is the case in both RCMP⁴⁸ and VPD⁴⁹ – this proximity boundary between patrol and specialist is exacerbated. Lacking personal contacts makes it much harder to collect information and advice on how to proceed with a file, and can limit a patrol officer's capacity to secure assistance.

Increasing their distance from the rest of the organization is the fact that patrol work is organized differently from other police work. In Chapter 4, it was noted that differing work routines create proximity boundaries for police, and most other sections have very different work routines than patrol officers. Thus, we would expect that in most cases non-patrol sections will not do patrol work nor work easily with patrol officers, except insofar as they download tasks to them. However, the reverse is not true – patrol will not refuse tasks doled out by specialists, and these tasks are often humble ones.

Information flows are similarly weighted toward specialists and away from generalist patrol members. Information is gathered by all components of the police organization, and most information gathered by patrol can be accessed by investigators through database querying or

⁴⁸ RCMP detachments may have their own in-house investigative teams, but also use for example IHIT, IGTF, IMPACT and CFSEU investigator services, all of which are located away from any detachment headquarters.

⁴⁹ The VPD have recently moved a number of their personnel, including the bulk of their investigative capacities, into a building on the city's edge. VPD personnel were previously divided primarily between two buildings that were a short drive (or long walk) apart from one another, but now there is a much larger physical proximity boundary.

personal contact. It cannot, however, be said that most information gathered by specialists can be accessed by patrol, or really even by other specialist units without permission. In other words, patrol members are expected to provide relevant information to investigators when asked. In contrast, patrol police may make inquiries to investigators, but it is expected that investigators may exercise a right to withhold information from patrol members without apology or justification and without expecting any consequences from their decision to withhold. This is even the case in instances where patrol capacity or overall efficiency is diminished in properly investigating an incident.

Investigators withhold information for multiple reasons – a belief that information is insecure at lower levels of the organization or the sharing of it will compromise a more important investigation; a responsibility to protect sources; and in some cases a more irrational ‘silo’ mentality within investigative units (see also LeBeuf 2005). This latter factor provides a counterpoint to the notion that the ‘worker bees’ tend to work harmoniously together:

You know my personal experience is once you get together with whoever it is from the other agencies it's usually a positive experience, but ... [in a recent homicide investigation on a jurisdictional border] the communication between us and the RCMP in that situation was horrible. You know, it was absolutely horrible... You've got too many egos, yeah, too many people butting heads, it's their little empire, they want to hang onto [their information].

VPD NCO, interview #19

Investigators rights to withhold information are not challenged in significant ways. While there are noteworthy efforts underway in many policing jurisdictions to encourage sharing of information between police forces, these efforts are much more successful in harnessing patrol-level information, and the efforts to share specialist investigative files across organizational boundaries are still limited in scope (ibid; Canada 2009).

Patrol constables thus lack exchange currency in most cases, and this buttresses their scarcity boundary when making requests of other units. Again, there are those who can offer some specialist skills, but in general their only currencies to be traded with specialist personnel are willingness to do menial tasks and local knowledge of their 'beat' or patrol area. Moreover, they may receive little in return from specialists who request their services, and in some cases experience a net loss insofar as they increase their workload without either prestige or extra pay. Given that both individual officers and their managers in patrol sections have some ability to resist external requests for assistance from other units, it is somewhat mysterious that they do not more actively withhold their local knowledge or deny taskings from horizontal partners in the police hierarchy. It would appear that both patrol and specialists subscribe to the conception of patrol as support for the rest of the organization, rather than seeing specialists as a way of freeing up patrol resources. This is for defensible operational reasons, but it nonetheless eliminates the primary bargaining chip that a patrol sergeant or constable may have in seeking to sell a file to or request work from specialists. Moreover, since patrol members are often junior to specialists, they tend to see the grunt work of their early years as paying dues, and expect to move to a position in the future where they become the purveyors rather than the recipients of tedious tasks. Through this process of interpretation they remain, by acceptance of institutional norms, relatively disempowered in boundary negotiations.

Powerful Forces

While the case was made in the previous chapter that force identity is not necessarily an impediment to inter-organizational negotiations at the unit level, this claim is not the same as saying there is no power differential between forces. Most LMD police forces have the technical ability to deny requests for assistance from other forces, although RCMP detachments are required to follow

policy set by RCMP LMD and provincial command and so their decisions are constrained hierarchically. Notwithstanding the power of the regional and provincial RCMP and the provincial government to impose requirements on forces and detachments to cooperate, the real ability of a police force and its units to transfer interstitial work rests largely in its estimation of potential needs for assistance. This is not entirely dependent on resource availability, since a small force with few resources may rarely see serious crime or civic emergencies, and its senior managers may consider the force adequately equipped and thus not requiring partnership in specialized equipment, investigative support, or emergency response. Indeed, such was the case in the City of Delta, which as noted in Chapter 3 has become something of a cautionary tale for those police forces opting out of regional partnerships.

The VPD in particular have carved out a set of terms for formal coordination in the province that is inward-looking and ultimately quite advantageous to the VPD. If any provincial, regional, or sub-regional unit seeks a secondment from the Vancouver police, that unit must satisfy one condition at minimum – they must pay for the full cost of the secondment. For most other secondment partnerships, each partner agency will pay a share, or the provincial government will cover some or all of the cost. The VPD does not, in the estimation of its senior management, require much assistance from other police to satisfactorily police its geographic jurisdiction, and tend to consider themselves the superior actor in the region in municipal public police:

There's some things though that we refuse to join in on just because, like for example like IHIT...Like the solve rate for IHIT is abysmal ... You come to Vancouver and our solve rate for homicides is incredible compared to IHIT. So we would never give up that to an IHIT model which we know is inefficient when we know that we're solving our homicides here and they're not solving all those people getting murdered out there. So we're not going to participate in things that will actually water down the police service that you get in Vancouver ... Cause a lot of the things quite frankly we think we're doing a better job

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #51

[S]o it's going to be we're going to do what's in the interest of the city of Vancouver, rather than what we'd rather do which is focus on the interests of the region and have a regional response ... we're not going to have cooperation in that way, well then of course we're going to focus on our resources on who pays us, which is the taxpayers of Vancouver... And it's unfortunate that we've, we're always interested in a regional response, but at the end of the day if we don't have one we're going to focus on Vancouver, and we've made Vancouver safer. No one else can say that they've only had like I say I mean we've had fewer murders than much smaller jurisdictions on a per capita basis.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #55

Other police in the region, however, regularly require assistance from the VPD. In any negotiation, then, the VPD bridges or buffers only in their interest, while other police forces – notably the smaller forces in the formal partnerships – have a diminished ability to make demands or draw resources without incurring a cost.

The inability of certain jurisdictions – especially those with low levels of serious criminal activity – to secure resources from regional units creates political tensions. For example, while IHIT must respond to any homicide taking place within their partner jurisdictions, there remains a selection process regarding which files to pursue and which to shelve for potential future consideration.

But you know each of the, each department, integrated partner has their own interests and the interests of the different areas are specific to their needs so what's important in Surrey may not be important in Abbotsford or New Westminster or North Vancouver. Each have their own pressures, money, community pressures, what file they think is important to solve... Whereas ... we're deciding what our priorities are, to investigate which murders, which of our priority files, those may not be necessarily the priority files of what the partners think should be the priority files... [W]e have to really go out of our way to communicate why we are you know doing these projects as opposed to those particular jurisdictions' priorities.

IHIT member, interview #42

For largely proactive teams such as IGTF, IMPACT and CFSEU, their selection of projects faces similar pressure of keeping all stakeholders happy. While participants suggested that their integrated units are intelligence-led and dispassionately select their targets based on things like chance of success

and strategic value, they also readily admit that from time to time they attend to low-priority problems in small jurisdictions, to keep their partners (primarily local mayors and councils) satisfied that there was some value for money.

The bigger downside [to integrated units] is who sets the priorities of the integrated team, because if the officers are pulled out of Vancouver and they work in Surrey and Maple Ridge all day when they're supposed to do a regional basis on an equitable basis, that's always hard to resolve, and the fact of the matter is that as much as we might complain they're never in Vancouver, and the opposite occur, right where Burnaby or Richmond may complain they're never in those cities, so how do you find that fair way to identify enforcement priorities.

VPD Commissioned Officer, interview #50

It is worth noting that this research cannot determine a hierarchy of which forces are most powerful in negotiations within the LMD, and in many instances it depends on one's situational definition of power. Vancouver PD and the RCMP provincial and LMD management command a significant amount of resources and sway over provincial policy. They also have a tacit veto to coordination activities inasmuch as their withdrawal from partnerships can effectively sink those initiatives. Yet, small forces in the region may be seen as having a differently but equally advantageous situation; they have the ability to 'free-ride' large-scale operations as noted in Chapter 3, as they have shallower pockets and less sophisticated capabilities. They can leave the administrative, equipment and personnel costs largely to the big players in the region, while reaping the benefits from these operations. To this end, many officers from all forces in the study were able to point to ways in which their organization was getting the short end of the stick in inter-jurisdictional partnerships, and thought their organization was contributing beyond their share to the security of the region.

Good Fences (and Good Gates) make Good Neighbours

Securing or denying assistance is easiest for those units with a clearly defined functional and jurisdictional ambit. Conversely, as with much police work, the lack of clear definition of mandate, purpose, and performance goals within many units provide opportunities for enterprising officers to sell their files to, secure assistance from and, in some cases, to lastingly stretch the boundaries of these ductile units. IMPACT's largely impermeable policy of non-assistance on interstitial work unrelated to auto theft, and patrol workers' comparatively weak ability to deny the offloading of low-prestige interstitial work, have both received adequate comment to this point. Boundary definition is an issue for all units, and so in this subsection we will look at examples from other kinds of police to demonstrate the broader importance of well-defined boundaries in police coordination work. We will begin with an extended look at a unique type of police, emergency response teams, as a brief case study in the issues of boundary definition, and then turn to the general challenge that many units face of defining, communicating and demonstrating their mandate.

ERT

Emergency response teams, roughly equivalent to SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) in the USA but also with search and rescue and a handful of other capabilities, have recently become full-time in the Lower Mainland, and this shift is true for the RCMP-based LMD ERT and the VPD's ERT as well. ERT used to be a part-time role for police, as ERT members were regular officers who carried a pager and tactical gear with them on shift, and would be called upon when needed; now, ERT teams take shifts lying in wait for emergency response on a 24/7 basis. Of course, there is not an emergency situation in the LMD at all times, so they fill their down-time with a number of tasks.

Much of the work of ERT police is made up of group exercises and training and creating tactical plans for future operations, plus, of course, a good deal of waiting around for an emergency. ERT members also assist local police of jurisdiction in a purely back-up capacity. They are discouraged from leading on non-ERT files or getting involved in day-to-day police operations, since this can mean members getting caught up in low-level work, including court appearances, filling out incident paperwork, and so on. Despite this buffer from much mundane file-related work, ERT units can still be called on to do unwanted tasks.

One of the problems that police units face in defining and protecting unit boundaries is inactivity, and this is certainly true of ERTs. If a police unit does not have active operations, it can normally be called upon to do almost any kind of unclaimed interstitial work. Based on interviews with senior LMD ERT members, the research found that the ERT was seen by other police as operating more like a fire-hall (i.e., hanging about and waiting for work) than a police unit. ERT members are by policy supposed to be full-time emergency responders, used in specific situations when basic police skills are inadequate. Yet, the belief among other police that ERT members are not busy led in the past to calls for ERT to attend non-emergencies and other inappropriate work with some regularity:

A: I know for sure we've been called for calls that really aren't ERT calls but the [requesting] unit doesn't have the manpower, the resources, you don't want to be calling people in on overtime and just think well ERT's got a team working, let's just call them and they can do it for us, when it's really not, it's not an ERT call

Q: Yeah, there's nothing emergent about it

A: There's nothing emergent about, exactly, for the critical incident commander to authorize you know ERT to come and do this, if he just looks at the threat level, the threat level's not there so yeah so there's for sure been circumstances where it's well they've got this full time unit, ERT they just drive around and drink coffee, they're doing nothing, let's just call them and have them do it.

LMD ERT member, interview #44

This problem required a re-establishment of unit boundaries, and the LMD ERT tried to educate municipal partners about the appropriate use of the service:

When I first came to this unit, back in ... 2007, what I initially started seeing is an inappropriate use of ERT resources because ... when the unit started up they had to make a name for themselves and demonstrate that we were here and it was a 24/7 operation ... I started seeing that that there were certain calls that I'd say well this is not, this is not something that would fall under the ERT mandate, this is not an ERT response, but because we had conditioned certain detachment areas, primarily Surrey because all they had to do was walk down a hallway to have contact with us, they started utilizing, what they were searching for is bodies to fill in the holes that they had on a certain situation. They [weren't] necessarily ... looking for an ERT response, what they needed is to ensure that well because of sick or people on [an educational or training] course, vacation, whatever, they just needed to plug numbers in, so that ERT just became a number-plugger so we had to start weaning these units, detachments off that principle that, no that's not what we're here for.

LMD ERT member, interview #45

ERT members have also tried to communicate their appropriate role through an 'educational liaison' initiative⁵⁰, whereby they have officers report to local police detachments (rather than ERT headquarters) at the start of their shift and 'market' the service to the local shift commanders, explaining what assistance they can provide and inquiring about possible local interest in using ERT resources. It is worth noting that this strategy of educating other police on a specialist unit's function was used informally or formally by all specialist police units in this study.

Interestingly, actively defining unit boundaries can go too far, and over-successful buffering of boundaries has resulted in an unwanted sort of inactivity. The above quote from interview #45 continues as follows:

[S]o that weaning has, I don't know if the pendulum has swung too far over, what I've in a personal opinion what I've seen over the last year is not albeit not a drop in call response but the calls that I would anticipate that we would be notified for and assist with, we're not getting, certain jurisdictional areas that we don't hear from, I know that they're doing police work, I know that they're doing warrants and maybe high risk events involved, or high risk

⁵⁰ Discussed in interview #43

portions of the warrants that they're executing, be it drug warrants or property crime, whatever the warrant may be, yet we're not being notified and utilized.

It is particularly odd that emergency response members were not always used when the situation should warrant an ERT call-out since, unlike requesting assistance from certain other police resources, ERT call-outs are cost-free.⁵¹ While requests for ERT can be denied by the officer in charge of ERT, or by LMD regional command, it is still somewhat strange that local police would not at least make a request for assistance. This was thought to be due to a number of reasons. First, before ERT was made a full-time team in 2006, they were on a cost-per-call basis, and so prior habits of avoiding a call-out may still condition decisions at the detachment level:

The reality of the part time world was, as soon as you called out an ERT team the overtime clock started to run, the dollar clock started to run, so there would be times where if it was a borderline call there would be a reluctance to bring out an ERT team. So it was just the expectation that in a lot of circumstances, GD or the general duty units, they would deal with a lot of these issues or they would deal with them a lot longer before the emergency response team would be called out.

LMD ERT member, interview #46

To this end, it was also suggested that non-ERT police enjoy action-packed files such as executing warrants on high-risk suspects or dwellings, and so were reluctant to give up their emergency response capacities, leading to non-requests for ERT. As well, in some instances, where current or former ERT members were in the jurisdiction and available to assist informally, officers on scene felt that a full ERT call-out was unnecessary. This reinforces the persistent claim in this thesis of the potential for informality and circumvention in police rule systems, including deployment policies:

Right, [if there is no emergency operation, ERT members will] assist the general duty members, they'll go to any calls that are even remotely of concern from a danger perspective, if they have a relationship with the drug sections they'll often get involved with

⁵¹ More accurately, the cost of ERT is already part of the organizational budget, and so whether they are called out once or twenty times in a week, the organizational cost remains stable (so long as off-duty members are not also called in).

that, not so much from the planning perspective but from ideas will be bounced by them and if in fact the drug sections are looking for assistance but it doesn't actually meet the criteria for a full ERT deployment, often we'll send a couple of guys just along to provide some experience to go with them.

LMD ERT member, interview #46

Regarding the VPD's ERT, similar issues of latency exist. During one shift (#18), I attended a meeting where middle managers were discussing the problem of unexecuted warrants in the PRIME system. Patrol officers did not want to pick up warrant requests, and so there was a serious backlog of active warrants for arrest being left unattempted or unexecuted for extended periods of time. The solution proposed at the meeting was to have ERT members (as well as dog handlers, who have similar work routines to ERT) take on some of the responsibility, since they would have the time during most shifts to execute a handful of warrants while they were waiting for something emergent to occur. While it is not known if this policy was ultimately adopted, it points to the issue of protecting ones' boundaries lest a precedent – of ownership of tedious interstitial work – be set.

Defining Mandate

Like the ERTs, many police units struggle with having, communicating, and demonstrating to other police that they have a clear mandate, where mandate may be thought of as a unit's specific and specifiable role in the overall organizational mission, something akin to Thompson's (2003) concept of domain. That the mission of the public police is broad, amorphous and internally inconsistent makes this a very complex task at the unit level. Compounding the problem of creating a stable unit mandate is the constant state of policy flux facing police. Police organizations can be readily and easily re-organized to accommodate operational experiments, policy initiatives, political goals, emerging crime trends and criminal actors, or public needs for satisfaction. Police managers are therefore regularly negotiating for their unit's identity. Insofar as police units compete with one

another for resources within the organization, and organizations compete with one another for resources from government, middle managers need to foster the belief among senior managers that their unit's mandate is an operational priority, and that their unit is capable of producing demonstrable results to satisfy politics and publics.

While it was noted in Chapter 3 that the current provincial organized crime unit, CFSEU, is in many ways just a reiteration of 30 years of acronym restructuring (from CLEU to OCA and now CFSEU), each of these reorganizations brought with it new players, funding structures, deployment possibilities, and operational foci. Similarly, when Vancouver's Violence Suppression Team became the provincial Integrated Gang Task Force uniform division, their membership, geographic remit, potential organizational uses, and daily operational protocols all changed in important ways.

Even when units possess a well-defined mandate and (near) monopoly on an operational area, this does not solve all issues of boundary definition, and a strong claim to a domain may create too much work. Many units wish to be able to attend every potential call under their functional jurisdiction, such as the crash reconstructionists at ICARS, but are unable to because of a shortage of personnel. Others, such as forensic identification units, need to contain the expectations of units that make requests of them, since it is unreasonable to expect expensive techniques (such as testing evidence for DNA) to be used on routine crimes such as break and enters or common assaults.

One solution used to satisfy requesting police (and expectant victims) who want forensic work to be done has been the use of low-cost forensics officers with limited expertise, called Scene-of-Crime Officers (SOCO), who can dust for fingerprints and gather simple evidence in non-serious crimes (especially ones where the police do not expect to actually have a successful investigation).⁵² SOCO

⁵² This understanding of the role of SOCO emerged from discussions and observations on shifts #12 and #25.

officers, it appears, were initially developed to act as a resource to small rural police forces that could not maintain full-time forensics units. SOCO officers are regular police members who receive limited forensics training for the collection and preservation of evidence, but are not full forensic analysts, and often hold other policing duties.⁵³ This is another rationalization measure, like the Telephone Response Team (TRT) and DARS car discussed in Chapter 3. Police participants were at times cynical about the utility of SOCO, and in the VPD, the SOCO unit now refers to itself as a CSI (Crime Scene Investigation) unit, possibly to overcome prejudicial opinions about their role.

Like SOCO, the VPD's general investigations unit (GIU) faced a problem of prestige and ability to produce results, since general investigation sections are generally a dumping ground for all crimes too minor for major crime sections, and too complex or labour-intensive for patrol members. Rather than changing their unit name, however, GIU addressed the problem of defining their mandate by shifting from general investigation to a robbery-only focus. This kind of organizational adaptation should give any observer pause, as there is a sort of comic absurdity at play here: at some point, senior management was persuaded that the problem with general investigations was that its focus was too general. From the unit perspective, however, it has solved problems of efficiency and coherence:

[GIU] used to be just a catch all, back probably about 5, 6 years ago, but the sergeant that's here now kind of said, we should probably just really focus on what our mandate is, become specialized in one area, and then we're going to be more efficient and we're going to be, our focus is going to be on one thing instead of just all over the map, and since then it's become a fairly big unit and [its] success rate is good too.

VPD Constable, interview #5

⁵³ These are not to be confused with the British SOCO, who are civilian personnel and organized differently.

Oddly, GIU has also caught one other kind of file under its new, more efficient framework – cases involving threats to political figures. This is certainly not because there is a common investigative skill to robbery investigation and investigating political threats; rather, it was a low-volume crime-type that was not held by any other unit and so fell *de facto* to GIU.⁵⁴ Examples such as this one serve as a reminder that police units may restrict their activities to those in which they can be seen to be doing something, and that units seek survival through legitimacy-proving activities.

Conclusion

Public police work, more than ever before, is being characterized by trans-local and transnational calls for integration and cooperation. Organizational boundaries – the unclaimed or contested interstices between units – are being negotiated at all levels from junior constables to senior managers. Coordination of resources, management of work, and alignment of information and intelligence is being done largely at the level of the work unit. These activities are not centrally managed and are subject to the strength or weakness of individual communications networks developed by officers, particularly unit managers. This is not necessarily a problem. However, it raises a number of concerns particularly regarding the political control of police organizations. As governments call on police to coordinate between each other, the amount of activity at the interstices of policing will increase.

Law and policy do little to clarify roles, responsibilities, or principles of coordination work. Formalized integration, through MOU and similar frameworks, has the potential to confront the novel challenges of multijurisdictional accountability. At present, these arrangements do little in this regard. What is available is passively understood by police and government, and in any case has a

⁵⁴ Information from interview #21, VPD NCO; reiterated in interview #5, VPD GIU member.

very limited amount to say about the ways in which coordination work should occur. Informality again characterizes the system of law and policy, meaning simultaneously that law related to coordination is something of a 'grey hole' (Dyzenhaus 2006: 3) that offers 'the façade or form of the rule of law rather than any substantive protections.'

Actual coordination practice can only be understood with reference to the set of rules, hierarchies, and protocols that emerge through interaction of police actors, and can often be understood without any reference to law at all. While probably not a revelation to legal anthropologists, it poses serious concerns of accountability and transparency. The third spaces of intra-national policing face a problem of governance that is as much a problem of finding a space for knowable and communicable rules for actors as it is one of catching bad-guys across organizational boundaries. At present, only the latter issue – effective crime-fighting – receives any serious attention from government, and the consequences of this as policing becomes increasingly trans-local ought not to be underestimated.

The adaptations used to buffer or bridge interstitial work drive organizational change. This does not mean that organizational change is only a product of boundary negotiations, since these negotiations often happen in large part because of external pressures coming to bear on police organizations, and so external factors remain of utmost relevance. Nonetheless, organizational change cannot happen without boundary negotiation also happening, and the constellation of internal and inter-organizational collaboration at any given time is the field in which organizational change is realized. Institutional reforms are path-dependent (Thelen 1999); we can see from the above that the empirical, local reality of police work has a habit of confounding the intentions of policy makers and managers, as structures, initiatives and reforms are shaped to the unique history and material circumstances of the local iteration of public policing.

Police working on boundaries have to negotiate demands as all police do (Huey 2007). However, in their capacities as inter- or intra-organizational boundary actors, they do not only negotiate the demands of multiple stakeholders looking for a common solution to a problem of order or an incident of law-breaking. Rather, they are also themselves stakeholders interacting with other negotiators, and acting in furtherance of unit needs, mandates, and goals. The product of these efforts may be coherent and efficient, but there is no guarantee of that and limited evidence of it. The will to protect, buffer, and deny at the unit boundary can, as noted in earlier chapters, result in investigative and operational failures. Alongside this problem, insularity also leads to the development and entrenchment of an organizational arrangement characterized not only by competition between components, but also the development of units whose purposes are unclear and whose efforts are divided between policing and unit survival.

Insularity, however, is not the only problem of coordination. Under-defined boundaries and openness to extend unit activities well past unit mandates can result in frustration for workers, confusion for internal and external partners, and entrenched informal relations that are hard if not impossible to track for purposes of organizational control. Respecting that police do not wish to be rule-bound (either overly, or at all) in their execution of duties, the sheer amount of work that is coordinated informally suggests that it would be a near impossibility to account for organizational activities in any meaningful way at any given time, except through the crude statistical outputs given to publics from time to time on indicators like authorized and actual unit strength, number of arrests and value of goods seized in a given year, and so on (see e.g. RCMP 2010a). The visibility of police work, opaque as it already is, will become increasingly limited. Further, localized accountability mechanisms such as complaints commissions and internal discipline procedures have yet to address

adequately how police are to be held responsible across organizational boundaries (Sheptycki 2002a).

The challenge of police coordination is also an opportunity. The data examined in the thesis to this point describes a world where strict law- or policy-bound control of police actors in the interstices is neither possible nor desirable. Moreover, coordination, especially inter-jurisdictional coordination, presents a novel administrative space that is being contested by multiple stakeholders in public police work. The fact that coordination processes are not yet institutionalized and are in flux creates the possibility of novel ethical and normative approaches to this activity precisely because the norms and ethics of this work remain unclaimed. While local-jurisdictional sensibilities about roles and mandates of police work currently have the strongest hold on the inter-jurisdictional field, and while coordination may appear to many as a mere management problem about allocation of resources between similar spaces, it is worth considering that it is unique work that requires more than bureaucratic harmonization. It may require new forms of governance.

Chapter 7 – A Problem of Governance: The Importance of Understanding Police Coordination

[A]n integrated, multi-sited policing and security environment raises serious questions about the adequacy of conventional institutional governance and public accountability mechanisms.

Murphy and McKenna (2007: 32)

Early in the thesis, it was argued that police sociology stood apart from much organizational sociology unnecessarily. While there are many things police sociology can learn from organizational sociology – *inter alia* its adherence to reasonably transferable terminology and concepts, its general ideological neutrality regarding both methods and results, and its interest in communicating analogous findings across similar organizational forms – there are, conversely, lessons for organizational sociology to be found in police sociology.

Good police scholarship normally involves an examination of the social consequences of police activity as among its primary purposes. These consequences are often hard to grasp or express through systematic measurement, parochial terminology, or unidirectional analysis designed to address efficiency or effectiveness in the first case. In turn, studies of the police often include future-oriented commentary on the risks posed by police practice to some aspect of social life. Given the political importance of the police as a social institution and a cornerstone of security provision in democratic societies, police scholars often overstate the potential consequences of proposed or enacted changes to police practice or policy in efforts to sound early warnings for publics and policymakers (Giacomantonio 2010).

Research on policing, like police work itself, is an inescapably political public service⁵⁵ that bears particularly on already marginalized individuals and communities. The consequences of a bad idea or initiative in policing may acutely impact the lives of citizens in ways that, for example, a failed educational initiative may not. In this sense, police research not only asks of new policy initiatives, ‘What is the likelihood that this will improve police practice?’, but also, ‘What is at stake if it fails?’, and, often equally importantly, ‘What may be lost even if this succeeds?’

Poignantly, Bradley, Walker and Wilkie (1986: 4-5) in an early examination of police management, argued that:

Those who believe that policework can and ought to be reduced to a science, and that its organisation and management merely require an applied social technology, thereby demonstrate neglect of, or indifference to, the very nature of the activity which police officers undertake... [A] police service which seeks to escape from the dilemmas inherent in the police role in our kind of society behind the carapace of a glossy, ‘high-tech’ professionalism is retreating along a path which divorces it from those it is supposed to serve.

We have seen in Chapter 4 that police actors, and managers in particular, approach coordination as an administrative task that is simply an extension of jurisdictional mandates. However, for various reasons set out in Chapter 2 regarding conceptions of jurisdictional governance, and with respect to evidence in Chapters 5 and 6 of the actual shape of interstitial police practice, we know through this research that coordination work is unique work and different from jurisdictional work in important ways. The dynamics of integration and coordination in public police activity require thoughtful consideration, especially while interstitial activity expands as governments, publics, and police themselves increasingly expect and require coordination between public police units inter- and

⁵⁵ It is probably fair to say that the activities of all public institutions are inescapably political, and so scholarship on these should follow the lead of police scholarship rather than the often business-mindedness of strictly organizational analyses.

intra-jurisdictionally. The risks posed by this kind of activity to accountability, transparency, equity, and control in and of public police work are and will be substantial.

As such, while this chapter will attempt to avoid exaggerations of the problems currently and potentially arising from coordination work, it will nonetheless close out the thesis with an analysis of coordination practice grounded in a recognition of the importance of public police in society, and with particular regard to liberal democratic values of accountability and transparency in governance. It will not analyse these findings on behalf of managers or administrators, as is more customary in organizational sociology works, as well as in much police-oriented academic literature. The following will therefore not provide direct insight for police practitioners seeking to achieve more for less, to integrate information or work systems coherently, or to make competing partners get along with one another in major or minor joint operations.

There are certainly lessons to these ends to be found in previous chapters, but the more important and foundational task prior to any further organizational development *toward* coordination is an assessment of the case *against* coordination. Coordinating police work – whether under the auspices of integration, mutual aid, amalgamation and regionalization, information awareness, intelligence-led policing, interoperability, or any other among a wide set of related goals – emerged in recent years as a rationalized myth, a solution for problems of insecurity in a trans-local world. The utility of integration in local police work has never really been tested or evaluated. While the will to coordinate police work is meant to address – and likely succeeds in many respects in combatting – crime problems that are hard or impossible to tackle through local police deployments alone, coordination has not been pursued with regard to the principles and limits that have guided the development of jurisdictional policing in democratic societies.

This case study was designed to address a largely ignored yet increasingly important question in police sociology – how do various components of public police interact with one another within and between organizations? By examining the multiple proximal police organizations and inter-organizational teams in the Lower Mainland, it has found that the work involved in police coordination is normally *ad hoc*, contested and negotiated. The comprehension of police coordination work as a distinct area of activity needs to become central to the control and oversight of policing networks. To date, these have been at best passing considerations raised in commentary documents (e.g. Murphy and McKenna 2007), and never taken seriously at the administrative, policy, or legislative tables. Yet, the techniques used to uphold democratic policing principles in jurisdictional work may be inadequate to the task of inter-jurisdictional oversight, and a new configuration for governance may be called for.

The chapter will elaborate the general problematic of police governance in the interstices, reviewing the arguments from Chapter 2 in light of the research evidence presented in subsequent chapters. It will begin by re-visiting the issue of integration and coordination initiatives as organizational change processes examined in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, and seek to characterize the ways in which these initiatives (and related activities) have changed the ways in which police undertake their work. Building on this, the chapter will examine the evidence presented in chapters 5 and 6 on the actual practice of policing that attends boundary work, the dynamics of negotiation, and the current modes of control in these novel administrative spaces. This discussion will highlight the problems of accountability, transparency and equity as they relate to public police work in a democratic society.

From these concerns, the chapter will then examine possible ways to address these actual and potential problems through governance mechanisms. It will discuss legal, organizational, and cultural levers that may have purchase in shepherding this realm of activity in 21st-century police

work. While the chapter will not propose a panacea to address these issues – recognizing the tension between separate local and unit police mandates, as well as the parallel problems of interstitial police governance and police governance more generally – it will provide an intellectual framework on which these governance questions may be posed and considered. It is worth noting that some of the arguments in this chapter will be primarily applicable to inter-jurisdictional coordination work, though where appropriate they will be applied to intra-organizational coordination processes as well.

Coordination work may present issues to be addressed, but it is not to be avoided or eschewed simply because of the historically localized gaze of uniformed public police. There are genuine benefits to coordination between police, and not solely as an offering to the gods of efficiency and effectiveness. Normatively, inter-jurisdictional police work could provide avenues for *better* accountability vis-à-vis its jurisdictional counterparts, if structured in such a way as to encourage mutually reinforcing checks and balances between jurisdictional partners. Theoretically, coordination work may increase the number of engaged stakeholders in these areas of police operations, both because inter-jurisdictional teams are often oriented to high-profile criminal activity which will enact multiple jurisdictional publics and media, and because the results of these initiatives bear on legitimacy claims for multiple organizations rather than only a single police force.⁵⁶ Intra-organizational coordination between units may have similar benefits for similar reasons, insofar as the reputations of multiple managers – and line-level officers – may be implicated when multiple units team up.

⁵⁶ Credit is due to Jonny Steinberg, University of Oxford, for pointing this out after I made an early presentation on these ideas at St. Peter's College, Oxford, 9 November 2012.

It should be recalled that current inter-unit arrangements are characterized by informal relationships and contact networks as the driving force behind successful coordination. However, and equally, there is a tendency to increasingly formalize many aspects of these operations and partnerships. Without attempting to undermine the discretion and personal contact networks that are the lifeblood of much police work, including but not limited to inter-unit coordination work, we can identify opportunities within the on-going realities of police coordination to support governance that renders these practices transparent, accountable, and appropriate for local democratic systems situated as they are in often dis-aggregating and de-centred realms of state administration.

Understanding Integration as Change

As outlined in Chapter 2 and reiterated in Chapter 4, the reforms toward increased integration, coordination and harmonization in the LMD and elsewhere do not represent an institutional change to or new era for policing, meaning that they do not impugn the core principles guiding police practice, or the potential activities of police actors in organizations so reformed. Rather, integration has the capacity to emphasize often problematic aspects of police practice, even though precedents for all forms of practice under integration are well-established and widespread in traditional jurisdictional settings. In this sense, the change encapsulated in integration initiatives can be thought of as an amplification of pre-existing facets of police activity, rather than the creation of a new paradigm for police organization. In the following subsections, we will characterize the kinds of shifts in practice and organization promoted by integration as towards intelligence-led policing values; redistribution of police resources toward priority crime types and away from broader concerns with community wellbeing; and increasing formalization encouraging standard practice, homogenous protocols and training, and capacities to contribute to a global – or at least globalizing – policing apparatus.

Intelligence-led Values

Conceptually, inter-jurisdictional work, as well as coordination between increasingly specialized intra-jurisdictional units, is amenable to a particular view of police work. A managerial, rationalized, and supra-local view of effectiveness, a hunger for information and technological sophistication, a tendency to focus on disruption-oriented and proactive interventions ahead of and sometimes replacing reactive work, and an increased ability to circumvent legal and bureaucratic protections of process are all characteristic of the work that occurs in the interstitial areas of public police organization. These parallel the values of the intelligence-led model of policing, and reflect an increasing affinity between jurisdictional agencies and the high-policing mentality one may expect to find in organizations such as the federal RCMP, the FBI in the US, or the Serious and Organized Crime Agency (now subsumed in the National Crime Agency) in the UK.

To the degree that the will to coordination continues apace, we would expect a further institutionalization of these values in jurisdictional police organizations involved in integrations, especially as opposed to values that promote a respect for privacy and caution towards mass collection of information, police work as an interpersonal craft, localized autonomy in and direction of police operations, responsiveness to community attitudes when assessing the appropriateness of police activity (this latter requiring adequate transparency mechanisms), due process, and so on.

This is little more than the standard critique of the ascendance of intelligence-led policing and the diminishing of the community-oriented approach (Deukmedjian 2006), though integration initiatives give us a window through which to view an active mechanism whereby this new mentality is disseminated. While Innes et al (2009) have made a compelling case that intelligence-led police work should actually seek 'community intelligence', which broadly means information not only

relating to crime but also to community-level priority setting (in this sense, intelligence-led work as an extension of community policing values), during the research there was little if any evidence that such community feedback mechanisms existed within integrated activities and coordination work.

Redistribution

The coordination of police resources across jurisdictional lines is often put forward as an obvious response to common-sense problems of effectiveness and efficiency, but it also involves redistribution. However police priorities are chosen, a focus on one area of potential activity necessarily means taking focus away from another. Thus, the opaque processes that determine actual operational choices at the line level are actually also distributional choices. Even though they are considered public goods, services like the police are neither indivisible nor non-excludable. Police work is limited by its resource base as well as the priorities of those commanding the organization. The distribution of police in a society is meant to be a political choice far before it is a matter for efficient administration (Manning 2010).

In these terms, the problem of inter-jurisdictional policing is also about equity of access to police resources, participatory (i.e. external formal political) balancing of priorities for deployment in a world of limited resources, and maintenance of a healthy internal tension between competing priorities within police organizations. Integration initiatives change the informal priority ordering inherent in the distribution of public police within a society. Because inter-jurisdictional units are simultaneously less responsive to jurisdictional political processes and disconnected from community concerns; less exposed to the tensions inherent in jurisdictional 'multi-functional' police organizations with a broad operational base of activities; and therefore more capable of often myopic visions of the goals of 'good' police work than jurisdictional teams, we may expect inter-

jurisdictional work to be less concerned with – and less reflective of – equity in distribution of police resources. Police organizations normally exhibit a measure of internal incoherence and conflict *when they are operating normally* (see also Brodeur 2010). A public organization that follows a unidirectional path to a clear goal is almost certainly not reflective of the tension in society surrounding its particular form of service, and therefore is inadequate in important ways.

As part and parcel of this tension is inequality and asymmetry between organizational actors. Police organizations are open systems, susceptible to external pressures and constantly balancing against the needs of multiple stakeholders. Within a system of police organizations, an individual organization acts as a singular stakeholder in certain instances, while its internal units also seek to promote their interests vis-à-vis other internal units as well as against external pressures and other units in other organizations. Some police come from forces or units within those forces that have an amplified ability to marshal and direct inter-jurisdictional resources, request secondments and personnel assistance, and obtain or withhold information. Inter-jurisdictional teams are often the result of initiatives begun by enterprising individuals within organizations, and where these teams set priorities for jurisdictional forces, these asymmetric relationships and the internal tension of police work can exacerbate the problems of non-responsiveness to jurisdictional governance.

Formalization Towards Standardization

Materially, integration and similar initiatives are changing police work by introducing a model of organization that is not in principle novel but is being refined in practice. Joint-forces operations have probably existed as long as multiple proximal police forces have operated anywhere in the world. However, the shift in the structure of partnerships from ad hoc and informal gentlemen's

agreements to formalized and contractual matters invokes, and likely parallels, broader efforts to accountability and accountancy in public police work.

Where such formalization has been an effective means of facilitating coordination – such as the establishment of a standing MOU between the VPD and RCMP to avoid bureaucratic complications like those experienced during the Pickton investigation; or the maintenance of firm and comprehensible boundaries of activity for units such as ERT and IMPACT to limit the need for boundary negotiation on inappropriate requests – these shifts can help establish ways to avoid investigation or communication breakdowns, inhibit the development of inter-organizational antipathies, and avoid redundancies in respect of the public purse. They can also create transparency in operations insofar as the new policies are followed. Where this formalization has created new boundaries to coordination, such as by imposing a necessary resource cost on coordination – which, for example, has been the VPD’s strategy vis-à-vis secondments – we would expect a degree of circumvention of protocol through informal coordination activity that in turn renders certain activities largely invisible to much of the police organization, and even more so to the public.

Recognizing the potential benefits of harmonization of local policies, formalization in coordination also promotes homogenization in police operations. Among the boundaries outlined in the typology, the technical/systemic boundary is seen as perhaps the most embarrassing and unjustifiable in its persistence. Disparate working rules and operational protocols between coordination partners are an often absurd but ever-present aspect of boundary negotiation in the LMD. Solutions to these boundary issues include for example the adoption of records systems such as PRIME and the uniform implementation of the Major Case Management (MCM) model of serious crime investigation throughout police forces in BC. In this sense, coordination of internal structures

across organizations may promote efficiency, and is not necessarily antithetical to otherwise localized control of police activities. However, this approach again presumes coherence between local mandates, and presumes that where disparate organizational structures exist, they are little more than administrative vestiges to be reformed as necessary.

Re-visiting Governance Across Boundaries

Participants argued in Chapter 4 that many of the current systemic shortcomings in coordination can be considered a product of the new-ness of multiple initiatives, and the glitches and failures of coordination are part and parcel of a process of organizational growth. However, this is an optimistic view of the shelf-life of many of these initiatives, as well as an underestimation of the rigidity that comes with those initiatives that last long enough to become institutionally normalized. Keeping in mind that few of the units in this study were older than a decade, with some only a few years old or less, it is hard to imagine the process whereby these initiatives stabilize into coherence. Rather, they are part of a new movement in police management that emphasizes constant reform as an organizational survival tool, rather than an unavoidable consequence of competing political and operational pressures as might once have been thought. Senior police management are in this way actually promoting the chaotic atmosphere that avoids the pitfalls of institutionalization but also inhibits stability and transparency.

Coordination work thus decreases local variations in police activity while simultaneously creating novel forms of organization. These sometimes countervailing forces allow police to more readily plug into a global policing apparatus, where interoperability between components and capacities for rapid re-arrangements of police resources are seen as essential in confronting new challenges for law and order. Protocols are standardized while structures of organization are rendered fluid. In

these terms a police officer capable of working in a standardized fashion, such as in MCM for joint investigations, becomes an asset not only for her home force but potentially for all other police organizations using the same model. This process of constant reorganization creates real, but not insurmountable, problems for democratic policing in inter-jurisdictional settings. Whether or not the increased capacity for interconnection in policing is a good thing depends at least in part on how that global (or national, or regional) multi-agency policing assemblage is governed.

Governance as a category of activities is often semantically taken for granted in writing on the police. When authors refer to it, it seems that they are often referring to its conceptual cousins 'control' and 'oversight', and this broad approach to governance as an idea is germane to this thesis. However, it is worth elaborating what is meant by governance in this case, lest the intentions of the chapter be misinterpreted.

Recent literature that emphasizes the changing governance in policing (Crawford 2006; Hermer et al. 2005; Loader 2000; Stenning 2009) approaches governance as a category including at minimum the provision and regulation of agencies and actors who may impact on a specified public good, in this case, security. As Loader (2000: 324) outlines, this is not limited to the mechanisms that make the public police (or the broader state justice apparatus) visible, available and accountable to democratic principles. Rather, it includes – by virtue of the policing field extending into – 'forms secured *through* government; to transnational police arrangements taking place *above* government; to markets in policing and security services unfolding *beyond* government; and to policing activities engaged in by citizens *below* government.'

Under this mode of thinking about police governance, 'we need to take note of how the involvement of public, private and voluntary agencies within policing and security networks renders limited and

inadequate extant intra-organizational, or *node-specific*, forms of accountability.’ (ibid: 333) In these terms, recent thinking on police governance has been brought conceptually into a broader milieu of actors engaged in *policing*. The governance of one policing institution implicates and affects the others, and considering the governance of one policing node without addressing the others is thought of as incomplete.

Without seeking to detract from this insight, as this thesis is concerned explicitly with state police institutions its focus on governance will be somewhat narrower. Indeed, while it has been broadly shown in this thesis that current intra-organizational forms of governance for inter-organizational work are inadequate in important ways – thus agreeing with Loader’s point, above – this does not mean that intra-organizational governance mechanisms cannot be designed in ways that respect the extensive presence of inter-organizational partnerships between public police organizations. While such an approach to some degree neglects (or is momentarily uninterested in) the broader set of policing actors, the discrete – if incomplete – governance of public police coordination from an intra-organizational standpoint seems to be a necessary condition for further developing the broader governance of policing.

Governance here refers to the active and intentional shaping of public police activity, designing it to conform to a set of articulable principles regarding how the job of public policing should be done. This can include but is not limited to training and other attempts to change police cultures; organizational restructuring; and the development of legal and policy constraints on, or expansions of, police powers. Insofar as can be avoided, the following will not attempt to develop a framework for governing things which are fundamentally un-governable by police organizations, such as the socio-economic and political worlds in which police act or the broader institutional arrangements of actors who may impact on the general security of a polity.

It will also avoid reaching for a world where public police activities are far more limited than at present, such as one where they are solely devoted to catching criminals rather than involved in 'softer' tasks such as reassurance work. This is written with the expectation that the public police in the Anglo-American context will continue to be the dominant central node in the 'governance of security' (Wood and Shearing 2007) that they will retain a broad though non-exclusive social ambit over criminal and non-criminal problems of order and welfare, and that the issues for the governance of police coordination as stated here will remain relevant to police institutions for the foreseeable future.

The governance problem of police coordination as outlined earlier in the chapter can be summed up under two major themes. The first is the problem of horizontal coordination between units, a social process that cannot be effectively rule-bound because it does not defer to hierarchy or policy. It is a pragmatic activity done in a dynamic and confusing job. The second problem is one of transparency, which is exacerbated by horizontal coordination, and impacts on accountability as well as equity. Police practice in the interstices is comparatively invisible, and while most police practice is opaque to citizens outside of police organizations, the practice that occurs between units is notably hard to track by those within the organization as well.

Mechanisms of Control

Organizational boundaries will inescapably emerge through interaction, and in each case illuminate a gap in police activity through which important work may fall and over which important principles may falter. The priorities of police forces are set to some degree by political and administrative leaders who outline budgets and targets for police organizations. However, both the organization and environment within which police work are shifting spaces where orders from above are

translated creatively under pressurized conditions. This field of activity thus requires significant discretion at the line and mid-management levels, which means loose rules and limited adherence to pre-defined parameters of activity. It has been regularly remarked that the police occupation is unique in that, the lower down the organizational hierarchy, the greater the level of actor discretion (see e.g. Ericson 1982). Of particular importance to this thesis, this means that line-level police also have increased discretion to network with police across jurisdictional lines, and to undertake activities through those networks under minimal constraints.

In Chapter 2, it was noted that formal and informal internal discipline, alongside social pressure, norms and expectations – including external community pressure as well as the peer pressure and internal norms of their fellow officers – are among the most important factors in maintaining predictable and acceptable practice by police under consent-based Anglo-American models of police activity (Punch 2009). Two of these factors – discipline and community feedback – are largely untenable in inter-jurisdictional policing organized under an intelligence-led model, and the third – internal norms – is tenuous.

Regarding discipline, inter-jurisdictional partnerships tend to separate command structures from control structures. Secondment-based teams such as CFSEU and IMPACT, where all or almost all members are on loan from jurisdictional police, tend to direct their priorities and operations internally, while leaving serious discipline (e.g. loss of pay, rank, or job) to the seconding organization. In an environment with strong police unions or multiple competing police organizations – such as in the Lower Mainland – it would be highly unlikely to find an instance where an inter-jurisdictional team had the ability to invoke meaningful and significant discipline on a member seconded from a jurisdictional force.

Jurisdictional forces will want to both guard their seconded members – placed as they are in often unique or uncharted settings – and guard their rights to discipline those members, lest they cede any jurisdictional sovereignty. The research was clear that a problem of individual organizations as ‘fiefdoms’ remains despite all efforts to harmonize operations. The will to protect individual police in coordinated environments makes some common and moral sense, given the already complex task of determining individual responsibility in an organization that is both paramilitary and highly discretionary at the line level. The distance between operational decision-making at the inter-jurisdictional level coupled with accountability and discipline processes often held at the jurisdictional level may ultimately confuse issues of individual and organizational responsibility where they arise; and the limited know-ability of actual police activity in the interstices can further serve to reinforce this veil. As such, while it would be an overstatement to suggest that addressing individual or systemic misconduct in police work is ever easy, it should be even harder in instances where such a large bureaucratic leap is involved.

Other inter-jurisdictional teams reverse the split between command and control, as some units offer their services to local commanders while moving discipline to the inter-jurisdictional level. For example, the homicide team IHIT is not primarily secondment-based. Most of its members are transferred outright to become IHIT members, no longer associated with a local jurisdiction. Their operating model is such that it cedes command authority to the jurisdiction in which it operates, and its business rules state as follows:

While the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team reports to the District Officer, Lower Mainland District, the unit is accountable to the Chief Constable or Officer in Charge of the agency in which the homicide has occurred. Each agency is responsible to its community, municipal council and police board. As such IHIT will operate in a manner that respects their individual governance and responsibilities. (IHIT Business Rules, p. 3)

It was noted by participants that the IHIT business rules represented the foundational model for many other Integrated Unit business rules throughout the LMD, and integrations such as the Tactical Troop and IFIS (Forensics) work in similar fashion. Under these arrangements, the unit takes its orders from the local commander, but officer discipline and accountability remain the provenance of the integrated team's senior officers and the LMD District Officer. Again, this creates a disconnect between organizational and individual structures of accountability and responsibility regarding conduct and quality of practice, albeit in the opposite direction of the secondment-based model.⁵⁷

With fairness to those currently involved in the governance of integrated teams and other joint-force operation, this research was not afforded access to extended observation within these oversight settings, and so cannot comment on the actual practice of discipline or managerial control in these teams. Moreover, it was reiterated persistently in interviews that there was never confusion regarding chain-of-command within the unit or during operations. The separation of command from control processes is therefore raised primarily as a theoretical but not insubstantial objection at this point.

Community engagement also suffers in inter-unit work. As police in inter-jurisdictional (and indeed some specialist intra-jurisdictional) settings are not required to deal with the everyday politics of jurisdictional police work, they do not need to think of their work in terms of jurisdictional priorities, and are often organized around a single crime type. Their goals as police actors are thus narrowed to a parochial focus on a single type of outcome – decrease auto theft, put gang members in jail,

⁵⁷ It is worth reiterating at this point that the concern of the thesis is coordination work between public police organizations, so these statements do not necessarily hold for work within fundamentally multijurisdictional or global teams and organizations that have limited or no responsibility to cohere with jurisdictional-level priorities, and where command and control are bound up in the same organization without limitation. These considerations should be relevant, however, for instances when two multijurisdictional police organizations interact and coordinate their work.

solve homicides, and so on. This is illustrated in the contrast between the following two quotes, the first from an integrated team member (interview #34):

Q: [H]ow do you measure success in police work?

A: In this unit, or in general?

Q: I guess either

A: I mean probably when I first started you looked at a, did bad guy X commit the crime and did bad guy X go to jail? You know, but that's, I think now especially in the world of drugs or major crime I think that's far too simplistic... [Y]ou have to measure not just the success of yeah you got bad guy X for this homicide but we also disrupted this criminal group in terms of effectively being able to go out and commit more homicide... so on a strict numbers sense that's not very good statistics but in the global sense ... I think you have to measure that too so, which is sometimes frustrating.

In this instance, the officer focuses directly on his crime-type, and the 'global sense' refers primarily to prevention of further crime, rather than some broader picture including communities or other areas of police activity. Contrast this with an example of a common ideal expressed by generalist officers (taken from interview #49):

Q: Ok. So what do you consider to be successful police work? What does success look like to you?

A: Success, well success I guess is measured in a bunch of ways. I think it can be measured in crime statistics and can be measured in satisfaction surveys, and you know we want the public to be happy with the job and service that we're providing for them and we want to bring down crime statistics so you know, catch bad guys and reduce disorder and reduce the calls for service levels. Success is being able to answer, to attend to a call and feel like you've made a difference whether it's you know catching the bad guy or if it's just separating combatants or if it's helping somebody get access to the services they need. You know you end up especially as a patrolman ... being part crime fighter part social worker part nanny sometimes, and anytime you can on a day to day basis attend to those calls and have a positive outcome, you think you've had success, and then in the bigger picture, any time you're able to bring down crime statistics or identify crime trends and work to reducing you know disorder on a bigger scale then that's a success, and sometimes just getting home safely is a success.

Here the generalist officer notes multiple means of measuring success, and the goals of police work become much broader than from the view of a specialist. Examining police organizations from the

unit level, this is an understandable division of mentalities and likely to continue to emerge in police organizations similarly organized. Inter-jurisdictional teams are not normally teams of generalists. Moreover, with the exception of sometimes having to respond to competing demands for service from multiple partner forces, they are not required to consider how their files fit into local jurisdictional priorities, and rather prefer to select files based on unit priorities and big-picture (i.e. supra-local) analysis. Their specialist ambit combined with their de-coupling from local experience thus allows these teams to forget the inherent tension within and balance to be struck by public police activities. They become crime-fighters in both the best and worst senses of this concept: they may gain effectiveness in specific policing tasks, but are also given space to shirk a large remainder of what is involved in the police function in a democratic society.

This narrowing of mandate under specialized and supra-local organizational sub-systems may impact on the institutional norms that emerge in coordination work. It is hard at this point to say whether or not a new set of norms is observable. While the research sought a number of avenues to determine differences between the experience of jurisdictional policing and inter-jurisdictional or multi-unit work (particularly to determine differences between working in an integrated unit and a traditional local deployment – see the Appendices 1.1-1.4 for interview and observation strategies), most police participants could not identify important differences other than the fact that participating in integrated units involved working with police from other forces. They thought by and large that, other than the change in scenery, their work was simply a logical, and sometimes innovative, extension of jurisdictional activity. This parallels the narratives offered in Chapter 4. However, if the thesis is correct that coordination work is indeed unique work – work that can disconnect at least somewhat from local politics and administration; that serves to make police resources and information more globally available through standardization; and that situates all

police as potential boundary actors in service of their unit interests – then it is worth considering how the internal operating norms of this field might be shaped in the future. In particular, this may stimulate recognition of the morphological properties of boundary spanning activities on jurisdictional organizations and their priorities. We will return to this point later in the chapter.

In considering opportunities for governance in this area, it is not entirely fair to approach coordination work as solely a problem of institutional circumvention and rule-bending, or as a space that only encourages problematic practice and sub-par work outcomes. There are ways in which we may see coordination work as beneficial as both a necessary filling of operational gaps, and as a means through which organizations can achieve new perspective by disrupting established internal patterns. By subjecting a boundary to negotiation – whether over a functional or physical jurisdiction, a specific crime problem or target, or an operational system or technology – the units that bring the boundary into being may also bring their activities under scrutiny. Moreover, as elaborated in Chapter 4, where a boundary negotiation emerges out of an inter-unit failure of some sort, all unit partners will be under pressure – from courts, publics, and/or other police – to minimize future similar failures.

Informal coordination work also requires boundary actors to take risks for one another, since individual officers and supervisors can get in trouble for spending time (or worse, money) on other units' priorities without proper authorization. Avoiding procedures to get the job of policing done in a timely manner may be a preferred strategy in boundaries, but it runs counter to the 'CYA' (Cover Your Ass) ethos said to be prevalent in public police work and occupational culture (Paoline 2003). Police officers can almost invariably be protected from discipline or dismissal when they follow protocol, but at least some of this assurance evaporates when an officer engages in 'noble cause' corruption, seeking justice through unofficial or unsanctioned means. Given the potential

amplification of consequences, then, we can further imagine ways in which the dynamics of inter-unit coordination can support more rigorous oversight and more robust forms of transparency and accountability than work done in closed-system settings.

Structural Determinants of Police Work

Recognizing both the positive and negative potential for police coordination work to support transparency, accountability and equity in consent-based policing systems, the chapter will now turn to developing a framework for conceiving of new forms of institutional governance for policing in the interstitial areas of law enforcement and order maintenance. These new forms need to take into account the dynamics of interstitial practice and boundaries as sites of negotiation to have utility in guiding police activity.

In their classic 1987 work, Grimshaw and Jefferson set out three fundamental structural variables that condition police work, and the chapter will take these as a point of departure. While Grimshaw and Jefferson were investigating jurisdictional work – specifically patrol police work – their general structural argument remains relevant, though requires some reorientation here. The variables they propose are law, work, and democracy. Their definition of law (p. 16) is relatively straightforward, and not confined to ‘law-in-books’: ‘The law surrounding policework... is thus a product, at any moment in time, of statutory enactment, common-law right and successive, largely court-based interpretations of them.’ This definition continues to be relevant to Canadian police, and in Canada the added variable of the *Charter* amplifies the importance of law and case-law in circumscribing or creating police powers (Stribopolous 2005).

Their concept of work combines an approach of occupational culture/sub-culture theories of police activity with a recognition of the potential importance of internal policy – routine orders, protocols,

and so on – as variables that subsequently condition police cultures. This thesis has previously taken the position that the structure of internal policies and protocols – the organization of work tasks – precedes and conditions occupational cultures, and indeed this is a logical extension of Grimshaw and Jefferson’s approach to law as applied to work policies. They conceive of democracy as a structural variable that is largely made up of community feedback mechanisms, the least of which being traditional democratic tools such as elections. Police respond to individuals and groups through requests for service, meetings, complaints, media reports, and so on. Moreover – and an argument since reiterated by Huey (2007) in the Canadian case – police create informal hierarchies of community members, to whom they differentially respond regarding priority-setting.

Grimshaw and Jefferson ultimately conclude (at p. 280) that the ‘structure which assigns the others their place, the fundamentally determining structure, is law.’ In this they do not only or even primarily mean that it is the substance of the *criminal* law that structures police work. Rather, the law constantly precedes and conditions other organizational (work) and community (democracy) structures and iterative responses to those structures. This is not meant to over-emphasize the value or potential value of courts and legislation to circumscribe police activity. It has been shown regularly in this thesis that stringent law-based police procedures or due process requirements can result in circumvention at the line level. Much police work – especially in inter-jurisdictional preventive operations – is also unlikely to suffer scrutiny by courts, thus limiting the legal safeguard. As well, as Bowling and Sheptycki (2012) argue, police rule *with* law, not *by* law, and so the degree to which law constrains the other factors remains unclear. Nonetheless, Grimshaw and Jefferson’s central point – that all police activity is structurally constrained by law, even though the confines of that law are unclear and constantly under challenge – seems like an appropriate starting place for considering a governance framework for coordination.

Principles of a Governance Framework

The goal of the following discussion will be to succinctly outline the principles that should be considered in developing governance strategies for coordination work. Governance mechanisms may include development of law, internal policies, ethical or operational training, or some other means of reform. The chapter will not draft a skeletal legal structure, nor outline a universal standard of inter-jurisdictional practice. The thesis has provided a sociological basis for understanding the work that occurs when multiple police units attempt to coordinate their work with one another through boundary negotiation, and it has shown that these negotiations are at present less than ideal. Negotiations over boundaries will increase in number as public police actors network with one another in response to globalizing trends in both management and criminal activity. This will raise issues of governance that need to be addressed. In turn, the following will offer an intellectual guide to considering how one might apply these findings to geographically, politically and historically specific locations and situations where police coordination issues have arisen or may imminently arise.

If law is the determinant structure for the sub-structures of work and democracy/community feedback, then it is the most reasonable place to begin a discussion of the principles for the governance of police coordination. As outlined in Chapter 6, the current law and policy of police coordination in Canada, and British Columbia in particular, is under-developed and haphazard. Recent government reports (Canada 2009; LeBeuf 2005) highlight the fact that law enforcement officers are unclear about the impact of information and privacy legislation on the sharing of information between police agencies. The grounds for mutual resource assistance between police, while increasingly formalized regarding procedure, remain similarly unpredictable.

Under these conditions, police officers who seek assistance from other units in their own or other organizations face a situation where the success of their request hinges on tenuous factors such as proximity, personal connections, internal systemic coherence, and other things that may unintentionally increase or decrease transaction costs in coordination. Coordination is done horizontally in the first case, meaning that recourse to senior officers to mediate boundary negotiations is practically suboptimal and avoided. There is no way to eliminate all of these pragmatic hurdles to coordination, but there may be ways to make them more predictable and outcomes more consistent.

At present, coordination agreements for integrations and other partnerships between forces are negotiated in BC on a force-by-force basis, with some oversight by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG). This mirrors, for example, the legal format of oversight for collaboration agreements in the UK, which are operational responsibility-sharing agreements between jurisdictional forces under a loose framework outlined by s. 23 of the *Police Act 1996* and subsequent amendments. This approach to coordination creates variability between agreements, which makes the decision to assist or withhold assistance complicated and differentiated between as well as within forces. A sergeant working in New Westminster may provide assistance for a file in Coquitlam and deny it on a similar request from Port Moody. A constable in Vancouver may quickly execute a warrant for a colleague in Delta, but may leave a warrant from Abbotsford 'stacked' in her file queue for days on end. A Major Crime investigator in Surrey may take on a file from a former partner working in the Robbery section, but may turn down work from an unknown colleague with an under-sold file from the Sex Crimes Unit. Some aspect of these decisions will be based on pre-existing workload at the line level, but such a consideration has limited explanatory capacity. As we have seen, police will buffer requests for assistance even when resources are available, and will

choose not to coordinate even on matters of mutual interest. Variability on its own is not necessarily a problem, but unpredictability is.

As such, a governance system for coordination would enhance predictability to increase transparency in boundary negotiations. This builds on the principle in the previous chapter regarding good fences and gates. Units and organizations need to know the boundaries of other units and organizations – what they can and cannot provide, the time it will take to arrange provision, and the specified costs of various requests for assistance. This would help eliminate much of the often capricious hubris that goes along with the granting of assistance. The VPD's standing MOU regarding partnerships with the RCMP is an example of such a well-delineated approach; the terms for coordination are set well in advance and known to all potential partners, even if they may increase transactions costs for coordination. It is an open question as to whether assistance or denial of assistance is the right response in a given situation; a file that is important to one jurisdiction may not be a priority for, or actually run counter to the goals of, another. This is ultimately an acceptable result in democratic jurisdictions that have appropriately competing conceptions of good police work.

Alongside policy clarifying coordination relationships, the work structures around coordination should respond to the unique tracking issues that attend boundary negotiations. Interstitial governance must be situated interstitially; to the degree that a regional, national or global police partnership emerges, a parallel oversight mechanism must exist that can direct the partnership's activities independently of individual partner agencies or units. The basic infrastructure for this kind of oversight normally exists in joint-forces operations, as most of these will have an articulated governance structure consisting of representatives from all partnering police forces and potentially government members as well. Their terms of reference in some cases also include an explicit

recognition of the multi-local nature of their task, as we saw in IHIT's business rules. However, the separation of command from control processes that currently characterizes these arrangements can only serve to complicate the already complicated task of creating meaningful individual and organizational accountability structures in policing. Since it would be incoherent to develop a governance framework for coordination that relied on ultimate deference to the local, these key tasks of governance – specifically including officer discipline – need to occur in spaces that are administratively analogous to the third spaces of police coordination.

Recognizing that a great deal of coordination is done in non-formalized settings – and without seeking to inhibit the agility of police coordination by adding layers of bureaucracy – it will not always be possible to have an instance of coordination fall under the purview of a formal oversight body that can offer real-time guidance in the interstices. In these instances, it will fall to the individual officers engaged in coordination to ensure their work is rendered transparent. Despite the fact police despise increased paperwork, this also means that records should be kept of requests for resource or information assistance, and requests should be granted or denied with explicit justifications. This would make them reviewable and helps to build precedent, and reviews of negotiations and their outcomes should regularly be undertaken by a standing body organized either inter-organizationally or potentially above the organizations (i.e. in the realm of civilian government).

Records are currently kept for formal resource requests between forces, but they disappear in the realm of informal coordination. It is of course impracticable to enforce full compliance with such a requirement for record-keeping in line-level interactions. The reader may reasonably object that this would simply lead to more circumvention to avoid reviewability. To counteract this probability, the record-keeping required needs to be made non-onerous but obligatory and automated – part of

the coordination-by-programming system, a rote process that becomes routine. In this sense, a governance system for coordination needs to grapple with the pre-existing work routines that facilitate or inhibit coordination.

Whether or not strong law exists, of course, the system of governance will ultimately be shaped by its acceptance and translation from policy to practice at the line-level. Given the evidence, we must rule out active community feedback (Grimshaw and Jefferson's 'democracy') as a structuring variable for coordination work. Police practice in the spaces of coordination will have to rely primarily on internalized values regarding the specific stakes of coordination between units. Properly structuring coordination work will therefore require, as a first step, some acceptance by police that coordination work is neither simply an efficient extension of jurisdictional priorities nor inconsequential for the way police work is ultimately done. At least in the LMD, police are not currently trained to work with other police. Indeed, in interviews officers were asked whether or not they received training for integration, either during basic training or as a prerequisite for joining a joint forces operation. No participants could point to a specific instance of training oriented to the practical sides of integration or coordination. The creation of such training represents an opportunity to shape organizational values in this sphere.

Police have also not been taught the legal basis for coordination. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, this is at least in part because such a system of law does not yet coherently exist, and this also represents an opportunity for institutional development. An important caveat to the creation of any policy and procedural framework for coordination is that it requires clear mechanisms for meaningful enforcement of standards of practice. In states of risk and insecurity, law has often been used as a way to mollify procedural concerns while actually decreasing substantive protection against arbitrary or over-zealous police practice. This can take the form of Dyzenhaus's 'grey holes'

(2006: 42), where 'there are some legal constraints on executive [in this case, police] action... but the constraints are so insubstantial that they pretty well permit the government to do as it pleases.' In Dyzenhaus's view, these are more damaging to the rule of law than 'black holes', which are areas of activity where law and legal protection simply do not exist. At least where black holes exist, one can point to the need for creation of law and policy; where grey holes exist, simulated but insubstantial legal protections keep reform and critique at bay.

Of course, given the need for discretion and the inability to imagine all situations an officer may face, the law that conditions police work in the interstices will likely admit of grey holes, and Canadian courts (despite the police opinion to the contrary) have been often more supportive of questionable police powers than even their American counterparts (Keenan and Brockman 2010). Again, this brings to the fore the need to rely on internal organizational or occupational norms for creation and maintenance of democratic police practice in the interstices.

A Constabulary Ethic for Coordination Work

Absent strong pressure to address coordination proactively – and in the face of competing pressures to generally do more than can be done – police officers and their organizations have approached coordination work as something to be dealt with only after problems have arisen. Alongside the bureaucratic headaches and lost effectiveness of such an *ad hoc* approach, this also inhibits any real reflection on or development of a principled basis through which police may coordinate with one another. Coordination will be a problem differentially faced by individual police; for example, those officers in liaison positions or involved in trans-local/organized crime investigations may face coordination issues daily, while some officers may never need to work outside of their home jurisdiction and may rarely interact with other internal units. However, given the open-system and

globalizing aspects of police work in the 21st century, any and all police may be drawn into coordination work, and the lack of a set of fundamental principles on which they may rely in these situations is concerning. This section will thus consider available mechanisms for building a principled approach to coordination work.

The promotion of a professional code of conduct – a policy outline of principles that should guide police activity in the grey areas of policing’s interstices – could be a useful tool to this end, though these codes can and regularly do create further grey holes as well. Police codes of conduct (and related mechanisms such as codes of practice, a more popular though generally equivalent term in the UK) can be drafted with specificity and in these cases can provide guidance where uncertainty arises. They can also be written in ways that they would be impossible to enforce – circumscribing far too much necessary police activity, therefore requiring creative interpretations to allow routine police work – or they can be designed in ways that allow virtually any police activity to occur without running afoul of their stated principles.

For example, the British Columbia *Code of Professional Conduct Regulation*, created by the Solicitor General under *Police Act* prerogative, creates grounds for disciplinary action against any police officer in a situation where (at s. 5.b) ‘the police officer's conduct, while on duty, is oppressive or abusive to any person.’ It further outlines grounds for discipline in situations where an officer (at s. 10.) ‘(a) without good and sufficient cause arrests, detains or searches a person’ or ‘(b) uses unnecessary force on a person.’ This of course seems appropriate, but absent any attempt to define ‘oppressive’, ‘abusive’, ‘good and sufficient cause’ and so on, the quality of conduct is then left to administrative tribunals such as the Police Complaint Commission. This cannot help but contribute to the fact that, of over 1,100 complaints against BC police in 2011, only 87 were substantiated through the Commission’s processes (BC 2011).

As a general rule, codes of conduct have been found to be of limited value in *defining* activity, and often reflect pre-existing norms rather than effectively impose new ones (Doig and Wilson 1998). They can reiterate and strengthen positive values, but require a shared and commensurate value set among organizational members as a precondition to this end. This reinforces the view that a foundational understanding of the institutional norms underpinning coordination work needs to become part of public police organizations' working knowledge, and should precede efforts at further organizational reform towards coordination. This is in many ways the central challenge to achieving institutional acceptance of any governance initiative to this end. It will require years of reiteration, and must have a foundation in general training related to working in joint-forces or multi-unit environments, which as noted above is currently non-existent.

Such training, it would seem, should be oriented towards decision-making rather than rule-following. In a series of works, James Sheptycki (Sheptycki 2002a; Sheptycki 2002b) has argued for a 'constabulary ethic' in the field of transnational policing. While transnational police work – especially where it is done outside of or above democratic states – is far more perilous to sovereign states and their social fabrics than the kinds of social processes described in this thesis, the logic behind the establishment of a constabulary ethic remains relevant to intra-national coordination work. Police avoid being rule-bound wherever possible, but this does not normally result in wanton abuses of power. They are kept in line, argues Sheptycki (c.f. Gordon, Kornberger and Clegg 2009a; Punch 2009) by adherence to ethical principles embedded in the working norms and tacit rules of their occupation. These ethics in turn guide choices in complex situations. A constabulary ethic is positioned morally above and giving vigour to the basic standards of adherence to law, due process and policies such as codes of conduct. It provides police with strengthened legitimacy claims when confronted with the controversial work of maintaining order and welfare through law enforcement

and intervention in the lives of people. He suggests that, ‘the point of trying to foster a constabulary ethic is to heighten the standards of moral success’ (2002b: 20).

A basis exists both in policy and practice for further development in an ethical approach to coordination. As noted in Chapter 6, common police culture acts as a facilitator to coordination, and in many situations police approach their task as one that connects with all other police in service of the public. Moreover, in the *British Columbia Police Code of Ethics*⁵⁸, the drafters have recognized the importance of organizational partnerships as something worth explicit consideration, in the following section:

The Policing Profession and Partners

Consistent with our duties and responsibilities to the public, we are also responsible to the policing profession. First, we must always respect and to the best of our abilities abide by the standards of the profession, while at the same time seeking to improve them. To accomplish this, we will demonstrate a willingness to engage in open dialogue, which raises important issues and significant opportunities that can advance the profession for the purpose of providing better policing service to the public. This entails an openness to change and recognition of the need for the policing profession to develop informed, collaborative and participative police officers.

In addition to the policing profession, we are responsible to other professions that also serve the public. We must always cooperate with other police and law enforcement professionals, and with all those in the criminal justice system, in order to develop an open, just, and impartial justice system. As well, we must always strive to cooperate with other public service professionals in order to advance the public good. This involves the sharing of information in a relationship-building manner that celebrates the interdependent nature of professionals in promoting the goals of the justice system. This information sharing must balance confidentiality needs and due process with the needs of professionals, who are working for justice and the common good.

While an important ethical recognition of the issues that attend police partnerships, this is not a sufficient basis on which one may approach the complexity of coordination work between police. Although police may cooperate in some situations, it is patently obvious that they also approach coordination as actors in service of unit-level interests, and that on these grounds police boundary actors differ in their assessments of priorities and mandates. Further, statements in law and policy

⁵⁸ Created by BC police forces, and not a piece of official government policy or regulation; found at <http://www.jibc.ca/programs-courses/schools-departments/school-public-safety-security/police-academy/resources/code-ethics/british-columbia-police-code-ethics>

regarding the provision of mutual assistance wherever ‘practicable’⁵⁹ neglect the massive spaces between assistance that is possible, assistance that is requested, and assistance that is granted. Not only do some police not receive the level of support they expect or seek from other police, but conversely, some police cease to ask for it or consistently deny help to others based on prejudicial assessments of the costs involved with coordination.

A further and articulable set of principles under which police may adjudge ‘the public good’ and the ‘balance [between] confidentiality needs and due process with the needs of professionals’ therefore remains an unresolved condition. Based on the findings in this thesis, such a set of principles should include, though not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- 1. Proportionality and predictability:** Requests for assistance between units, as well as decisions to assist or not, should be proportional to the priorities of the police involved as weighed against other potential priorities. This means that boundary actors as well as police organizations should avoid treating all other police units as latent generalist police resources available for broad redeployment. They should seek and grant assistance in ways that can be defended both in the individual instance as well as with regard to broader precedents about how their organization should work. In considering coordination, they should have regard to the broader context in which each potential partner sits. This is partially addressed in the above passage from the *Code of Ethics*, but also requires the recognition that not all police will be working toward a common conception of the good. Such recognition may be among the hardest hurdles to overcome in the current climate, especially given the prevalence of intelligence-led and NPM thinking in police management.

⁵⁹ For example, in the *BC Police Act 1996* provision for Temporary Mutual Assistance, shown in Chapter 6.

2. Regard to the local: It was argued above that inter-jurisdictional governance needs to occur inter-jurisdictionally and supra-locally, as this seems the most sociologically reasonable approach to creating accountability. A case was also made that direct community input could not be an effective structuring variable for interstitial work. However, police work remains in all cases locally situated – its impact is felt by people in specific places. To counter-balance the distance from local priorities at which boundary negotiations often occur, police involved in inter- and in some cases intra-organizational coordination will need to make extra effort to determine how and if their activities feed into the well-being of their jurisdictional responsibilities,⁶⁰ and should seek to determine the basis of local-level as well as regional-level consent. Such determination of consent must be broad and inclusive of those individuals that will be affected by a police partnership, as well as those who will be affected by the absence of policing in other priority areas. This consideration parallels Loader's (2000: 337) argument for a 'politics of recognition' in the ideal governance of the policing field. The assignment of local liaison responsibilities to members of inter-jurisdictional teams and the development of the Regional Duty Officer position by the Lower Mainland RCMP represent efforts to this end. While police may need to override such consent in undertaking those activities that have little or no decidedly local benefit, they should be aware of the fundamentally local-political nature of police service provision. In this sense, public police must continue to strive to 'see like a city' and see like citizens who are part of a local polity as much and probably more than they are members of a national or global one. Other coordination processes – such as information systems harmonization – should not be seen as unequivocal goods under these terms, since they can be costly where

⁶⁰ The reasoning further holds that a national police force engaged in inter-jurisdictional activity (e.g., with another national or supra-national police body) should have regard to its national-level responsibilities as a foreground to any international obligations.

they result in threats to privacy or harm the integrity – and accuracy – of intelligence processes and security assessments of individuals and groups.

3. **Transparency and reviewability:** Wherever possible, negotiations over coordination should be a matter of record, and all efforts made to justify their outcomes based on articulable conditions of extant priorities and assessments of community feedback. Police can and will coordinate preferentially through personal contact networks, but should not prefer personal contacts in the adjudication of appropriate action across boundaries. A properly-designed system should not create overly-onerous record-keeping; indeed, queries to shared databases such as PRIME already produce an automatic record showing that a file has been accessed, and similar mechanisms could be created for other areas of work coordination. Justifications for action across boundaries could be similarly succinct, so long as this did not result in un-reflexive decision-making by boundary actors. Any system of transparency would therefore also have to recognize the possibility for forms – paperwork processes – to significantly shape work outcomes (recalling e.g. Smith 2005). Regular review and audit of these processes could enhance the integrity of records related to coordination.

Future Research Agenda

This thesis has provided a sociological basis on which we may understand police coordination processes and dynamics. Remaining, however, is the development of a body of international evidence outlining the existing institutional norms of coordination work and the inter- and intra-national differences in coordination activity between various, though similarly-organized, police organizations. If a principled basis for coordination work is to be developed and implemented, we first need to understand the distance between the ideal principles outlined above and the actual

state of practice (and thinking) in multiple locations. While there is a strong case to be made for likely parallels between the Lower Mainland experience of coordination and that of police elsewhere, for example in the US – who deal with multiple overlapping jurisdictions as a matter of course (Bayley 1992) – and the UK – whose police are increasingly called to collaborate with one another through formalized and informal arrangements (HMIC 2012), there are likely some important differences between their approaches to coordination work.

Multiple authors who have received significant attention in this thesis (Bowling and Sheptycki 2012; Brodeur 2010; Manning 2010) have called for a sociological account of international policing networks, and an extended commitment for empirical endeavours to this end. This thesis has provided a starting point that can connect a future empirical project to the wealth of intra-national policing scholarship that exists, but has little to say about how police units may interact across international boundaries. What sociological work exists on these international partnerships suggests similar modes of coordination (Alain 2001; Gerspacher and Dupont 2007) to those found in this thesis, but these studies have been limited to Western Europe. As the study of police boundaries extends from the local to the transnational, we will want to understand the shape of interactions between sometimes vastly different local police cultures and structures, especially coordination work done between jurisdictions that do not share a common border.

A full examination of inter-unit dynamics will also require an analysis of the role of sociological variables such as age, nationality, race and gender in conditioning the behaviour of boundary actors, to understand among other things the impact of broader cultural change efforts (see e.g. Loftus 2009) on the ways police build their networks. As well, the intra-unit dynamics from which boundary actors emerge have been largely unexamined here. The ways in which boundary actors adopt identities, interpret the interests of their unit, develop viewpoints about other units, and

choose among available actions is not a deterministic process, though it is conditioned and constrained by organizational factors. Comprehending the agency of individual police actors, imbued as they are with powerful discretion, is in many ways essential to understanding the often informal and unmanaged, but nonetheless vital and consequential, processes of police coordination.

Epilogue – The Future of Coordination in BC

As noted in Chapter 3, at the outset of the thesis fieldwork the VPD's LePard report on the Missing Women (LePard 2010) had just been released, and the publicity this generated ultimately coloured the content of interviews and observations. It is perhaps fitting that during the finalization of the thesis, the government of British Columbia concluded its own commission of inquiry and published its report on the Missing Women and the failures of the Pickton investigation (Oppal 2012). As one may have predicted (especially given that the report's author, Wally Oppal, is a long-time proponent of a regional police solution for Greater Vancouver), the report argues as one of its 63 recommendations for the creation of a regional police force. This is based primarily on the counterfactual of *if* better coordination had existed – preferably in the form of a regional police body – *then* Pickton would have been caught earlier and the cost of life would have been lessened. The report's executive summary (at p. 151) states: 'It is clear from the evidence that a regional police force stood a good chance of apprehending Robert Pickton much earlier.' He further continues to claim that 'It is clear that the integration of some policing functions is an insufficient response' and that a regional force would improve 'communication, access to information, and accountability' (ibid).

While the report may ultimately be minimally important as an instrument of reform – given the broad political opposition to regionalization, and the many relevant reforms that have taken place in

the intervening decade since Pickton's apprehension – this is the frustrating kind of *ad hoc* policymaking that will continue to attend discussions of police coordination until (and probably well after) its sociological and policy basis are better understood, developed, and considered as a specific area of inquiry. There is plenty of evidence that the creation of a large single organization can generate as many information flow and accountability problems as the coordination of multiple small organizations unless issues of internal coordination are addressed head-on. Moreover, the current regional and provincial integrations that characterize LMD policing are largely recent inventions, and while they may be sub-optimal from an efficiency standpoint, they have not been shown to fail in the ways that the Pickton investigation so tragically did.

There are ways in which a regional police force could improve coordination as a general matter, and there is no essential reason to avoid it either. However, regionalization does not only sacrifice local control in respect of broader effectiveness and efficiency (notwithstanding that regional police amalgamations are also largely untested and rather mythologized in these spheres). In the reform climate of recent decades, amalgamation almost invariably results in rationalizations of key services and concurrent losses of essential feedback and reassurance mechanisms between police and communities. These bear on the legitimacy claims of police forces vis-à-vis the policed, and contribute to a view that increasingly approaches police work as 'an applied social technology', contrary to the longstanding cautions of social and political philosophy on the matter.

Ultimately – whether some or all of the LMD is further regionalized – any attempt to make coordination between police better in some way needs to take into account what is broadly known in the organizational sociology literature on coordination and the work of public institutions: coordination is something done increasingly at the work unit level, and the goals of work units within public institutions are regularly – and properly – in opposition with one another in important

ways. Failing to account for this aspect of public organization in the Lower Mainland and elsewhere will ultimately result in further police coordination failures that will be subject to public and court shaming of police, and legal and organizational reform potentially without end.

This is a worrying prospect for the development of transparency and accountability processes for police coordination, which will need to contend with an ever-shifting target of inquiry and will likely do so with at best limited success. The principles outlined in this chapter may provide a starting point on which a governance arrangement can be conceived, but without a political and institutional acceptance that police coordination is more consequential and complex than a simple administrative response to trans-local problems of crime and disorder, it is unlikely that such governance would be translated from policy to practice in ways that engender democratic police work.

Appendices

Appendix 1.1	Patrol Police Observation Themes
Appendix 1.2	Integrated Unit Observation Themes
Appendix 1.3	Sample interview schedule (1)
Appendix 1.4	Sample interview schedule (2)
Appendix 1.5	Participant Information Form
Appendix 3.1	Police Forces in the Lower Mainland
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Appendix 3.3	LMD municipal borders (selected photos)

Appendix 1.1 – Patrol Police Observation Themes

Work on Shift

- 'Street' or Patrol work vs. Paperwork/Information work
 - o Time spent on each
 - o Methods of both
 - Particularly, use or threat of force to maintain order
- Any partnership work to be found in Paperwork or Street Work
 - o Submission of forms to PRIME-BC
 - o Other information-sharing work/methods? (e.g., through talk?)
 - o Interaction with other police
 - o Interaction with integrated units
 - o Interaction with non-police agencies
- Geography of work
 - o Times/places on patrol
 - o Attending incidents
 - o Time spent in meetings
 - Formal/informal, reported/unreported
 - Content
 - What counts as a meeting?
- Any other unexpected kinds of work emerging from observations?
 - o Not classifiable as either paperwork or traditional patrol

Talk on Shift

- Prompted/unprompted distinction (ie, did I directly ask?)
- About 'Real' or important vs. Unimportant work
- About new initiatives
 - o References to policy/documents
- About the past/perceptions of the past
- About work with other (patrol & non-patrol) police
- About the difference between patrol and non-patrol
- About resources/needs
- References to allegiances/team

Appendix 1.2 – Integrated Unit Observation Themes

WORK ON SHIFT

Paperwork/Information Work vs. ‘Street’ or non-paper unit work

- Time spent on each
- Methods of both
 - o Any presence of ‘use of force’ in integrated units?
- Any partnership work to be found in Paperwork or Street Work
 - o Submission of forms to PRIME-BC
 - o Other information-sharing work/methods? (e.g., through talk?)
 - o Interaction with other police
 - o Interaction with integrated units
 - o Interaction with non-police agencies
- Geography of work – where does unit work happen?
- Any other unexpected kinds of work emerging from observations?
 - o Not classifiable as either paperwork or unit-mandated work

Meeting Work

- Time spent in meetings
- Content of Meetings
 - o Problem-oriented (e.g., attempting to solve a specific order or crime issue)
 - o Resource-oriented (e.g., deciding responsibilities, costs, negotiating between partners)
 - o Public-Relations talk (e.g., regarding opportunities to look good, show the flag, avoid negative attention)
 - o Formal/Informal distinctions
 - Meeting in a pre-determined place/time or impromptu?
 - Motions/minutes/records of decisions?
 - Tasks/enforceability of results?
 - Differences between meetings held informally and meetings held formally?
- Players/members of meetings
 - o Which members of the unit attend
 - o Multi-agency participants?
 - o How often with which players?
 - o Hierarchy within meetings?
 - Explicit/Implicit
 - Resource/other oriented

TALK ON SHIFT

- Prompted/unprompted distinction (ie, did I directly ask?)
- About ‘Real’ or important vs. Unimportant work
- About new initiatives
 - o References to policy/documents
- About the past/perceptions of the past
- About work with other (patrol & non-patrol) police
- About the difference between patrol and non-patrol
- About resources/needs
- References to allegiances/team

Appendix 1.3 – Sample interview schedule (1)



Interview Schedule Integrated Units

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS (ASK 2-4 TOGETHER)

- Q1: Name (to be omitted from final transcript)
- Q2: Age
- Q3: Rank and Unit
- Q4: Time on Force
- Q5: Time in Current Position
- Q6: Most recent position, prior to current one
- Q7: Estimate number of previous positions
- Q8: How did you select, or how were you selected for, your current position?

POLICE MANDATE

- M1: In your own words, what is the mandate of the police?
- M2: What is the mandate of your unit?
- M3: How do you measure successful police work?
- M4: Why did you get into police work?
- M5: In your time on the force, or by your estimation, has police work changed in any significant ways in the past 10 years? (if over 10 years, follow up: What about the past 20 years?)
 - M5a: Why do you think these changes have come about?
 - M5b: (if necessary) How, if at all, do you think these changes have impacted your work?
 - M5c: Have the ways in which you measure success changed?
- M6: What are the main problems facing the Lower Mainland?

INTEGRATION

- I1: Do you have any reason to believe that the amount of cross-jurisdiction work in the Lower Mainland is increasing?
 - I1a: How is this work generally accomplished?
- I2: Do you work with other integrated units or cross-jurisdictional units or task forces? Which ones?
- I3: How often, and in what ways, do you interact with general duty officers?

I4: What are the goals of integrated unit work?

I5: How often would you say you use information generated by other police forces in your work?

I5a: What kinds of this sort of information do you use, if any?

I5b: (if experienced) Would you say you are doing this more now than you had in the past?

I5c: Do you use any information from non-police agencies, such as social service agencies, with any regularity?

I6: Are there any agencies or situations from which it is hard to get or share information?

I7: What training do members receive to participate in this unit?

I8: What resources have been given to this unit to accomplish its mandate?

I8a: Are these resources enough? (if not, follow-up: What is missing?)

I8: Prior to the advent of the integration initiatives (and other mentioned integrations), how was cross-jurisdictional coordination accomplished, or was it accomplished?

I8a: How were resources shared prior to integration?

I8b: What would have been different in the past about the way the work of the (presently) integrated units was done?

I9: What are some of the obstacles, if any, to cross-jurisdictional work?

I10: Is your primary working responsibility to this unit or to your force?

I10a: Do these responsibilities ever come into conflict?

Final Questions

F1: What would you say are the biggest changes in society that have affected the work of the police?

F2: What, if anything, would you change about the way your unit works?

Appendix 1.4 – Sample interview schedule (2)



Interview Schedule Commissioned Officer preliminary interviews

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS (ASK 1-3 TOGETHER)

Q1: Name (to be omitted from final transcript)

Q2: Age

Q3: Rank

Q4: Time on Force

Q5: Time in Current Office

Q6: Estimate of number of previous offices

Q7: Most recent position, prior to current office

Q8: How did you select, or how were you selected for, your current position?

POLICE MANDATE

M1: In your own words, what is the mandate of the (RCMP E Division/RCMP Surrey Detachment/VPD)?

M1a (RCMP only): Does it differ between Federal, Provincial, and Municipal levels, or is the mandate consistent throughout the organization?

M2: In your time on the force, has the mandate of the force changed, and if so, in what ways?

M2a: (If yes – follow up) What was the mandate before?

M2b: In your time on the force, have the activities of the organization changed in significant ways? If so, how?

M2c: Are there any areas of the force where this change is most pronounced?

M2d: What areas if any of the force's practice have remained largely unchanged?

M2e: How have these changes impacted the work of street-level police officers?

M3: What has driven these changes? (if they assert no/little change, ask about 'major recent (RCMP/VPD) initiatives' as a placeholder for change)

M3a: Were there any people that were instrumental in bringing about change?

M3b: Were there any events that brought on change?

M3c: Would you characterize these changes as gradual or rapid?

M3d: What have been the goals of these changes? (enumerate if necessary)

M4: Since you began working for the police, in what ways has the world outside the police changed?

INTEGRATION

I1: (RCMP) One of the major new initiatives of the RCMP E Division has been integration efforts. What does the term, integration, mean to you?

I1.1: (VPD) This study is looking in part at integration efforts between police forces, as well as between police and non-police agencies. In what ways if any would you say the VPD is involved in integration efforts?

- I2: Can you outline the kinds of integration efforts the (RCMP/VPD) is involved in?
 I2a: (RCMP definitely/VPD maybe) How do the integrated units work?
- I3: Prior to the advent of the integration initiatives (and other mentioned integrations), how was cross-jurisdictional coordination accomplished, or was it accomplished?
- I4: What do you see as the goals of this kind of integration?
- I5: What resources (personnel, technical/technological, and monetary) are required to integrate the work of multiple forces?
 I5a: Do you have the resources required to do this properly?
 I5b: Does integration require extra resources, or does it save resources?
 I4b.1: Does this differ between cases?
- I6: What training if any do members receive on how to work for or with integrated units/efforts?
- I7: What are the major obstacles to integration?
 I7a: Do they come from inside or outside the force, or both?
- I8: Is integration a force-wide initiative, or does it apply only to certain areas of the organization?
 I8a: What areas, if any, are not significantly impacted by integration initiatives?
 I8b: What are the benefits to traditional police functions, functions such as patrol, order maintenance, and criminal investigations? (follow-up if necessary – any benefit to patrol specifically?)
- I9 (RCMP only): What are some of the important formal non-police partnerships that you work with?
 I9b: Are there any important informal partnerships that I should be aware of?
- I10: Is there a downside to integration efforts? Was any aspect of policing better before?
- I11: Is there tension between police and partner organizations in these relationships?
 I11a: What are the sources of tension between (the RCMP/VPD) and your partner agencies?
 I11b: How, if at all, does this tension get resolved?
- I12: How do commanders manage and monitor those officers working in integrated/multi-jurisdictional efforts?
 I12a: Are there any operational differences that are unique to working in integrated units?
 I12b: Is there ever any confusion or tension about chain of command in these units?

Final Questions

- F1: How do you measure successful police work?
- F2: What, if anything, would you change in the (RCMP/VPD) organization?

Appendix 1.5 – Participant Information Form

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

Understanding Police Organizational Change: A case study of integration in a Canadian policing district

Project Information

Principal Investigator: Chris Giacomantonio, Doctoral Student, University of Oxford
Research Type: Qualitative – Observation and Interviews
Intended time period: Beginning October 2010, lasting approximately 6 months

Overview

My research is intended to examine the ways in which different units interact with one another in major police organizations, as well as how these units interact with other external police and other organizations, as an effort to understanding the changing nature of public policing under integration initiatives. Policing in the Lower Mainland District (LMD) is obviously a very complicated picture, given its multiple police organizations, and due to this the RCMP and VPD have become active in police integration and interoperability efforts. This makes the LMD a very good place to undertake this kind of research. The effects of integration on police work are currently not well understood, and the study seeks to address this issue by examining the front-line work of police under these initiatives.

Participant Selection

The research uses the viewpoints and experiences of police constables, officers and staff doing police work as its evidence base. If you are participating in this research, you will be asked to accommodate me as an observer of your work for at least one full work shift, as well as partake in an audio-recorded interview of between one and two hours in length. It is important for me to engage in observation of participants in their daily routines, where possible, to provide context to their interview responses.

Rights of Participants

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may at any time ask questions of the researcher. If at any time you do not feel comfortable with the research you may withdraw from or refuse to participate in further research.

Participating in this study does not pose a risk to participants greater than that experienced during routine daily duties. Participating in this study will not result in any direct benefit to participants; however the findings of the study will be useful to police practitioners and academics interested in understanding the changes currently facing the public police.

Anonymity

All comments and observations arising from this research will be kept anonymous in any discussions or presentations prior to the final thesis, as well as in the final dissertation and any subsequent publications deriving from this research.

All audio-recordings from interviews and notes from observations will be kept under lock and key at Simon Fraser University for the duration of the fieldwork, and under lock and key at the Oxford Centre for Criminology thereafter. Any identifying information relating to data in this study will only be seen by the Principal Investigator and potentially his thesis assessors, except in the event that any part of the data is requested by court order, to which I would comply. All data collected by the project will be destroyed within two years of the finalization of the thesis dissertation.

Publication of Results

This research is being done in partial fulfilment of the requirements of my doctoral degree at the University of Oxford, and will result in a thesis dissertation and potentially other publications.

Participants in this study will have an opportunity to see the thesis before it is published. Participants at this point will be welcome to submit comments regarding the thesis to me via the contact information above. However, in all cases final editorial authority rests with me as the author and Principal Investigator.

If there is a Problem

This project has been approved by the Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC).

If you have a concern about any aspect of this project, please speak to me through the contact information above, and I will do my best to answer your query. If you remain unhappy and wish to make a formal complaint, please contact Dr. Chris Ballinger (ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk) who will then direct your complaint to the appropriate body.

With many thanks for your participation in this research.

Sincerely,



Chris Giacomantonio
Principal Investigator

DPhil Candidate
Centre for Criminology
Faculty of Law
University of Oxford

Appendix 3.1 – Police Forces in the Lower Mainland

LMD Municipal/Detachment police

(sources: BC Police Services (MPSSG 2011b) & policeinternational.com)

Municipal Forces

Abbotsford Police Department (APD)
Delta Police Department (DPD)
New Westminster Police Service (NWPS)
Port Moody Police Department (PMPD)
Vancouver Police Department (VPD)
West Vancouver Police Department (WVPD)

RCMP Detachments

*(*covers multiple municipalities)*

Burnaby
Coquitlam*
Langley
Mission
North Vancouver
Richmond
Ridge Meadows*
Sea to Sky*
Sunshine Coast
Surrey
University
Upper Fraser Valley*
White Rock

Other LMD Police

South Coast BC Transit Authority Police Service (SCBC-TAPS)
Canadian Forces Military Police – Chilliwack

Other Police operating in LMD

RCMP Federal and Provincial Units
Canadian National Railway Police
Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA)

Integrated Teams operating in the LMD

*(Source: RCMP in BC website (RCMP 2011); *Restricted to all or part of the LMD; all others provincial or national)*

Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT)*

Integrated Collision Analysis Reconstruction Service (ICARS)*

Integrated Forensic Identification Services (IFIS)*

Integrated Lower Mainland Dogs team*

RCMP LMD Emergency Response Team (LMD ERT)*

Lower Mainland Traffic Safety Helicopter Program (Air 1 and Air 2)*

Municipal Integrated Emergency Response Team (MIERT)*

Integrated First Nations Unit (IFNU)*

Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team (IMPACT)

Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unity (CFSEU), including:

- Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (OMG) enforcement
- Integrated Gang Task Force (IGTF)
- Organized Crime Agency (OCA)

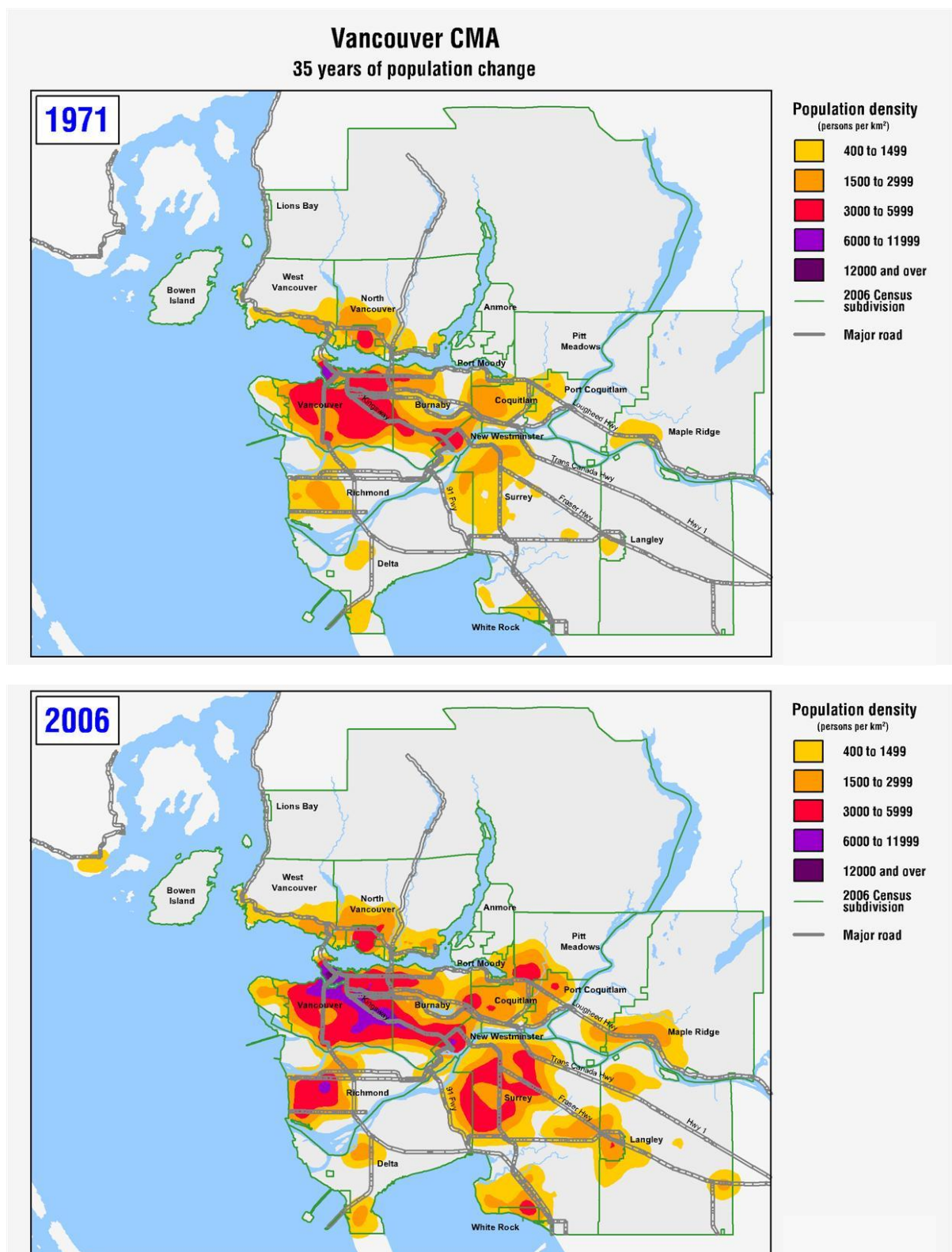
Integrated Market Enforcement Teams (IMET)

BC Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (E-INSET)

Integrated Proceeds of Crime (IPOC)

Integrated Road Safety Unit (IRSU)

Appendix 3.2 – GVRD population density 1971 & 2006 (Canada 2006)



Appendix 3.3 - LMD municipal borders (selected photos)

Below are photos⁶¹ intended to provide a visual illustration of the boundaries between cities in the Lower Mainland. Unlike most large municipal police jurisdictions in the province, there are no unincorporated or rural areas between many of the LMD's jurisdictions, leaving a sharp rather than gradual boundary between policed spaces. Crossing any of the roads pictured here brings one into a separate police jurisdiction. These are populous streets including business districts and residential neighbourhoods where there is no clear physical or visual break from one city to the next, except for the colour of the street signs. It is easy to see how criminal actors and continuous criminal acts can cross these borders and complicate matters for jurisdictional work allocations, with or without intending to do so.



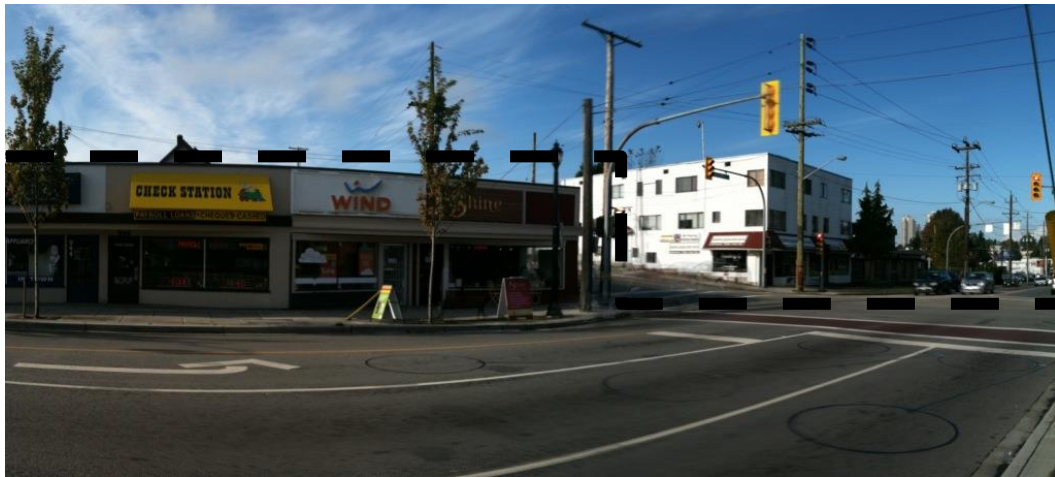
Delta Surrey
Scott Rd/120th Ave (Border of Surrey and Delta)



Vancouver Burnaby
Boundary Road (Border of Burnaby and Vancouver)

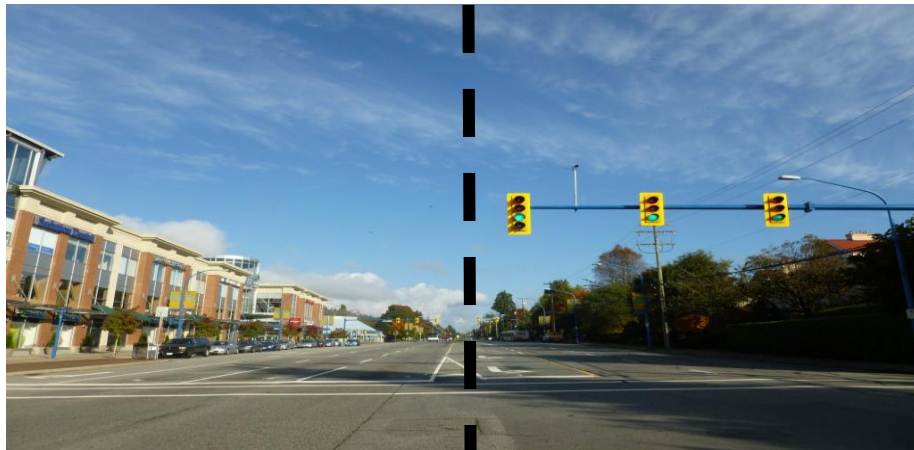
⁶¹ Photo credit for all photos is Bora 480 photos

Burnaby



New
Westminster

10th Ave (Border of Burnaby and New Westminster)



Burnaby

Coquitlam

North Road (Border of Burnaby and Coquitlam)

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