



Collaborative Governance and Partnerships in Policing

Michael Li

*University of Massachusetts Boston,
Boston, USA*

Article DOI: 10.48028/iiprds/ssjprds.v6.i1.10

Abstract

This study has reviewed past literature on policing to shed lights on how collaborative governance may be used in the police service. In sum, evidence suggests that partnership in the police service has a huge potential of benefits in managing crime and safety, but it also requires a substantial level of attention to reap such gains. This research has looked into three distinct forms of partnerships in particular; police-probation, police-community and multi-agency partnerships. Each of these initiatives has their strengths and weak-nesses. The main benefit of police-probation collaboration is that it significantly enhances supervision and apprehending of the offenders. On the other hand, community policing has been found to be effective in reducing the crime rate in the society through information sharing and reporting of cases of lawbreaking in the neighborhood. A multi-agency partnership improves the efficiency of service provision but requires a significant level of vigilance and coordination to minimize chances of conflicts.

Keywords: *Collaborative Governance, Policing, Public-Private Partnerships*

Corresponding Author: Michael Li

First Published: https://www.srcirp.org/pdf/JSS_2017121115100474.pdf

Background to the Study

In order to reduce the crime rate, many law enforcement agencies have formed collaborative partnership with their communities or other government agencies. Such forms of governance structure may have a significant impact on whether and to what extent the police organizations can achieve their goals and missions. The collaboration may be established between the police and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private firms, social service providers, religious bodies and other community members. In the traditional law enforcement, there was a limited role for the citizenry in community safety issues; however, the policing agencies are learning that the public can provide vital information about the criminal events in their neighborhood. Recent evidence suggests that the citizenry may become a crucial source of support to law enforcement agencies as they assist in investigations and report any illegal activities taking place in their communities. Moreover, a collaborative form of governance among various government agencies may also significantly contribute to more effective and efficient provision of public service. In this paper, I seek to advance our understanding about the various forms of partnerships among police, other governmental organizations, and the public by conducting a review of recent literature. Specifically, I propose and summarize the rationale for the formation of the collaborations as found in past literature. This research also explains how the collaboration and partnerships were created and whether they have achieved their goals. The paper will focus on three specific forms of partnerships: police-probation, police-community, and multiagency partnerships.

Literature Review on Various Partnerships in Policing

Police-Probation Partnerships

The collaboration between the police and probation officers has existed for long. However, a revolution took place in the 1990s in Boston where the police-probation partnerships were constituted, and it was realized that such relations were useful since they were dealing with highly interrelated issues. Moreover, the collaboration has improved the supervision of probationers and safety of the community. The past few years have seen various correction and law enforcement agencies come together by drawing staff from each side to form units that work hand in hand to control crime. Previous studies indicate that there is a variety of such partnerships including fugitive apprehension units, information sharing collaboration, interagency problem-solving groups, specialized enforcement team and enhanced supervision section. (Brewer, R. and Grabosky, P. 2014). The enhanced supervision teams do not carry caseloads and hence have adequate time to oversee the probationers. Such partnerships include the San Bernardino's Night-light program, Minneapolis Anti-Violence Initiative, and Project One Voice found in New Haven. Many agencies have also come together to apprehend fugitives and even share information concerning lawbreakers. A good example is the Fugitive Recovery Enforcement Team in San Francisco, California incorporates officers from the San Francisco Police Department and Parole, and Community Services Division of the California Department of Corrections. Therefore, the central question to ask at this juncture is whether and to what extent these partnerships are suitable in executing their duties.

Police-Community Partnerships

Community policing is a common concept of the 21st century that was first popularized in the late 1970s but has been sustained for decades to date. Law enforcement agencies have used the collaboration with the members of the community they serve to improve the relationship with them. Moreover, police-community partnerships have brought a substantial improvement in community safety in the society. A large group of past studies has investigated antecedents affecting the collaboration and its effectiveness in solving the key issues faced by the community. This group of research shows that the desire of the citizens to participate in community policing program is a vital determinant of the success of such arrangements. According to race and ethnicity influenced the willingness of individuals to work with police in the United States. Based on their findings, the blacks were more likely to cooperate with the law enforcement officers than the whites. Ansell, C. and Gash, A. (2008). Furthermore, the minority in the society had shown interest in working with the security agencies since they stood a higher chance to gain from such collaborations. In fact, such findings are surprising given the high tension between the black community and police organizations observed in many parts of the world. Recent studies also suggest that the collaboration between the police and black communities may be facilitated when the proportion of black police officers is higher. Such benefits of “representative bureaucracy” stems from the improved organizational integrity and ethical climate followed by an increase in organizational diversity.

Multi-Agency Partnerships

The dynamics in the twenty-first century has provided an environment where interdependence among organizations defines their success in dealing with the contemporary issues in the society. Security, education, and healthcare are some of the sections that have proven that multi-agency partnerships are crucial in-service delivery. In law enforcement, the police organizations oftentimes depend on many other governments agencies' resource to arrest criminals. Once they have been arrested, they have to be prosecuted, and the judiciary comes in at this stage (Hong 2016). When found guilty, the correction centers are tasked with supervising them and take them through the reintegration process. This simple example indicates that the police may gain from forming multi-agency partnerships to achieve their goals. The police may also be engaged in interagency collaboration among govern-mental organizations that belong to seemingly different areas of service especially when they come together to deal with a particular problem in the community. Previous studies examined managerial factors that must be considered in order to manage a successful multiagency partnership. Another group of studies investigated efficiency implications of such multi-party partnerships of the police. Considering the high cost of crime mitigation and a collaborative effort, all interested parties must actively participate in the partner-ship in order to realize significant a cost sharing. Shjarback, J. A., Pyrooz, D. C., Wolfe, S. E. & Decker, S. H. (2017).

Conclusion

Previous studies in public administration have shown for long the potential benefits and costs of collaborative governance, public-private partnerships, and participation. This study has reviewed past literature on policing to shed lights on how collaborative governance may be

used in the police service. In sum, evidence suggests that partnership in the police service has a huge potential of benefits in managing crime and safety, but it also requires a substantial level of attention to reap such gains. This research has looked into three distinct forms of partnerships in particular; police-probation, police-community and multi-agency partnerships. Each of these initiatives has their strengths and weaknesses. The main benefit of police-probation collaboration is that it significantly enhances supervision and apprehending of the offenders. On the other hand, community policing has been found to be effective in reducing the crime rate in the society through information sharing and reporting of cases of law-breaking in the neighborhood. A multi-agency partnership improves the efficiency of service provision but requires a significant level of vigilance and coordination to minimize chances of conflicts.

References

- Ansell, C. & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative governance in theory and practice, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 18, 543-571. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032>
- Brewer, R. & Grabosky, P. (2014) The unraveling of public security in the United States: The dark side of police-community co-production. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39, 139-154. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-012-9194-y>
- Hong, S. (2016). Representative bureaucracy, organizational integrity, and citizen coproduction: does an increase in police ethnic representativeness reduce crime? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 35, 11-33. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.21876>
- Shjarback, J. A., Pyrooz, D. C., Wolfe, S. E. & Decker, S. H. (2017). De-Policing and crime in the wake of ferguson: Racialized changes in the quantity and quality of policing among Missouri police Departments. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 50, 42-52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2017.04.003>
- Weisburd, D., Telep, C. W. & Lawton, B. A. (2014). Could innovations in policing have contributed to the New York city crime drop even in a period of declining police strength? The case of stop, question and frisk as a hot spot policing strategy, *Justice Quarterly*, 31, 129-153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2012.754920>