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A Comparative Study of Factors Related to Adoption, Management, and Impact of Police Consolidation and Amalgamation in Norfolk, County, England, and Kent and Ottawa Counties, Michigan, United States

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FACTORS RELATED TO ADOPTION,
MANAGEMENT, AND IMPACT OF POLICE CONSOLIDATION
AND AMALGAMATION IN NORFOLK, COUNTY, ENGLAND,
AND KENT AND OTTAWA COUNTIES,
MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES

by

Terry Lee Fisk

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FACTORS RELATED TO ADOPTION,
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MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES

Terry Lee Fisk, D.P.A.

Western Michigan University, 2004

The evolution of law enforcement in the United States has created a circumstance where thousands of smaller communities are served by a police agency, some of which may not have the capability or resources to provide adequate police service. Many of these agencies operate within a geographical area where they are joined by common boundaries, yet each operates as an autonomous police force. One possible solution to this quandary is to consolidate those existing agencies experiencing difficulties in the provision of police services into single, larger departments with combined resources.

The purpose of this research was to determine what factors existed that impact on the consolidation of police forces. More specifically, it explored how these factors come into play when decision makers were faced with possibility of eliminating existing agencies and merging them into a larger organization.

This study was conducted by selecting three counties as individual study sites: Kent County, Michigan, due to its limited history with consolidation; Ottawa County,

Michigan, because of its experience with two consolidations; and Norfolk County, England, based on its long experience with management of merged agencies.

Data were collected from interviews with police management officials in all three counties. An analysis of the data, using an ethnographic software program, identified nine primary factors that have the potential of influencing the consolidation process. Of these factors, two ranked as the most critical: (1) Management Issues, and (2) Local Control and Identity. Management issues, such as merging varying pay scales, benefit packages, labor contracts, and seniority, were seen as potential difficulties requiring a great deal of planning and, in most cases, compromise. Local Control and Identity focused on the unwillingness of individual communities to relinquish political and operational control of their police force and a subsequent loss of community identity.

The consolidation of existing police organizations is a complex undertaking. It requires careful planning, political will, and a willingness on the part of all to work toward a common good: the provision of effective and efficient police services.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

On January 1, 1982, in Michigan, by a vote of the residents of both the City of Battle Creek and Battle Creek Township, the township ceased to exist. On that date, Battle Creek Township became part of the city with all governmental services, including the 15 members of the township's police department, being merged into the new metropolitan government. In the summer of 1995, the leadership in the Township of Bedford, located adjacent to the City of Battle Creek, voted to abolish its police department and contract with the city for police services. In a similar manner, in 1996 another township adjacent to Battle Creek, Pennfield Township, elected to dissolve its police force and provide police services to the citizens of the township by contracting with the City of Battle Creek. These events provide examples that some governmental entities are forced to consider at some point, namely, how to provide essential services to citizens in the face of limited or diminishing fiscal resources, or when an agency is faced with seemingly insurmountable management problems.

Talk of police service consolidation often rubs frayed nerves. These discussions usually take place during a time of fiscal or administrative distress. Additionally, there exists a public expectation that police services will be maintained despite these difficulties. But reality is that the subject will keep coming up as long as budgets are

strained, tax increases are proposed, and police agencies must deal with dual jurisdictions (Hoffman, 1993).

Faced with seemingly ever increasing demands for public services and a sometimes uncertain financial future, jurisdictions such as these three townships seek alternative means for the provision of such services as law enforcement. Consolidation of police services is one available option.

Examples of this option include contracting for services with another jurisdiction that has an existing police department, or the establishment of a regional police force that includes two or more political jurisdictions. The latter example would include countywide organizations.

Consolidation of police forces is not a new idea, as there are examples of such initiatives around the country. In Kentucky, the City of Lexington combined with Fayette County as a metropolitan government in the early 1970s that included the consolidation of their separate police departments into a single agency. Las Vegas, Nevada completed a similar consolidation about the same time when the county, city and three surrounding smaller jurisdictions combined their police forces into the current Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. In Pennsylvania, the York Regional Police Department was formed when several jurisdictions combined to created their own police force. The merger involved the absorption of several existing smaller departments into the new entity (Fisk, VanMeter, & White, 1994).

Recognition of the Problem

As early as 1934, the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement identified a general lack of coordination and consolidation between police forces nationally and felt that it was seriously affecting the police in their ability to fight crime (President's Commission, 1967).

Subsequent to the passage of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, various commissions were appointed to study the provision of police services and were charged with the responsibility of coming up with recommendations.

In 1973, the National Advisory Commission on Goals and Standards recommended the elimination of very small police departments arguing that many small police agencies were not able to provide an adequate level of service to their citizens. While a super agency is not the answer, they argued, there is a definite need to eliminate unnecessary fragmentation, and duplication and to increase efficiency and cost effectiveness of the law enforcement.

At the same time, the concept of a single, national police force would be completely contrary and abhorrent to the ideals of democracy and individualism upon which our country was founded. The idea of a national organization, similar to what has taken place in England, is not an option; yet, at the same time, we may be able to use some of the experiences in England to guide decisions regarding the elimination of smaller, less efficient police departments.

The focus of this research is on the consolidation of police forces within the United States. The debate about consolidation as a solution to this perceived dilemma

has come down to a number of specific issues as identified by Herley (1989) and Wickum (1986).

1. Many small municipalities cannot afford to support their own police forces at an adequate level of funding. Those attempting to do so risk their capacity to provide adequate public services in other areas of responsibility.

2. Small police departments cannot recruit, train, and retain highly qualified personnel. There is a tendency to lose these officers to larger, better paying organizations where opportunities for advancement and skill development abound.

3. Small police departments are sometimes not sufficiently professional and modernized to serve the needs of the community. They cannot afford new equipment, technology, or safety features that larger agencies can.

4. Supervision and administration are sometimes inadequate in small police agencies, thereby adding to the liability costs of the jurisdiction.

5. The existence of many small forces, for example in a metropolitan area, can lead to confusion among citizens about jurisdiction and to professional jealousy.

6. Formal and informal coordination among multiple police departments is generally lacking or insufficient.

Problems such as those just identified serve as evidence that little attention was paid to the development of police services at the local level in a systematic sense.

American police departments were formed in response to social issues and served at the discretion of the dominant political institutions of the time (O'Brien & Marcus,

1979). No thought was given then, and, despite numerous recommendations to address the problem, little thought has been given since to this issue.

The irony of the situation is that the police system upon which the United States modeled itself, England, long ago recognized the problems inherent in such a system and eliminated these problems through a series of amalgamations. By consolidating its police service into 43 regional police departments, it has virtually expunged the problems of multiple and overlapping jurisdictions, duplication of services and costs, and incompatible systems, while at the same time providing full-time police service to all citizens.

Some American police agencies have undertaken consolidation to deal with their fiscal and operational problems. While some of these initiatives have proven successful, many others could be considered but are not. Local political factors often play a significant role in the deliberation about the best means to provide these services to citizens, and critical to the debate is how to maintain a sense of control. The British, with no shortage of political problems of their own, managed to successfully consolidate over a period of several decades. The concern here is what lessons can law enforcement in the United States gain from the English experiences?

Purpose of the Study

It is the advisability and feasibility of consolidating police forces or creating larger regional forces in lieu of the maintenance or establishment of more numerous smaller departments that will be the focus of this study. More specifically, this study

will explore the issues involved in such a consolidation and the factors that are involved in such an event. The decision to consolidate existing small agencies into a larger single organization under a new structure is fraught with political and economic concerns. Matters of control of such a personal service as police protection and the suggestion that we change this service from very traditional to a more nontraditional organizational structure are not easy for local policy makers to address or, in some cases, for citizens to accept.

Fiscal matters, issues of police management, concern about local control, and levels of police service are all part of the debate. The intent of this examination of consolidation is to identify and analyze the core issues involved in such a decision.

Significance of the Study

In general terms, law enforcement in the United States was founded upon the basic police model developed in England. American law enforcement borrowed selectively so that American policing was different not only in its administrative structure but also in terms of the role it played in the community (Walker, 1977). Walker, in discussing the history of police reform in this nation, pointed out that the London Metropolitan Police, the original model for a police department, was a highly centralized agency and arm of the Home Office. Hence it was, from its inception, tethered to the federal level of government. The citizens of London, therefore, had no direct means of controlling or influencing police practices. American police forces, on the other hand, reflected the general style of local government. They were anything

but centralized. The strong desire of early American communities to run their own affairs, the difficulties of travel, and the lack of communication all tended to reinforce the emphasis on local control and isolation.

According to Walker (1977), policing and the organization of police forces in the United States took a path of independence during this evolution. Cities such as Boston (1838) and New York (1845) established police organizations, and as the nation grew, more cities created their own individual police agencies, each operating independently from other such organizations. Townships, villages, and cities formed a layer commonly referred to as “local” law enforcement.

At the county level, colonial governors followed the English template by appointing sheriffs. Their duties were broad and included laws enforcement, jury selection, operating jails, and general civil service (Light, 1999). This level of service came to be especially strong in the areas of the South and West as formal law enforcement organizations were created in these regions (Walker, 1977).

Yet another layer came later with the creation of the first “state police” agency in Pennsylvania. Formed as a means to control striking coal miners, a need was seen for a police force with general law enforcement responsibilities on a larger geographical scale.

The net effect of this process of development is a multilayered mosaic of law enforcement agencies. This movement toward localized independent police agencies has created a situation today where literally thousands of police agencies exist in the United States.

The 1999 Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), reveals that there were nearly 19,000 general purpose police agencies in the United States. A general purpose agency is defined as one that has sworn officers with general arrest powers. Of these, some 13,500 were local police departments, 3,088 were sheriff's offices, and 1,316 were special police, forces with limited jurisdiction, or special enforcement responsibilities. An example of the latter would be the New York City Port Authority Police Department. All of the states, except for Hawaii, have some form of state police or highway patrol organization.

Of these agencies, approximately 75% employ less than 25 sworn police personnel; 50% of all local agencies (local and county) have 5 or less. That means that approximately 9,500 police organizations in this nation have 5 or fewer police personnel and do not operate even a minimum of police service such as 24-hour police protection. The report also indicated that some 1,160 police departments had no full-time officers at all.

This proliferation of local police forces has occurred without regard to the coordination of police service, compatibility of systems, or concern for what even other geographically linked jurisdictions are doing in terms of law enforcement service. The police system appears to be fragmented, overlapping, confused, and subject to bickering, and at times suffers from jealousy over jurisdictional power. It is, in effect, no system at all (O'Brien & Marcus, 1979).

As law enforcement evolved, undesirable outcomes have emerged that have negatively impacted these agencies and their communities with the result that a number of administrative difficulties pertaining to police command and control hamper the effective provision of police services. Among these difficulties are multiple jurisdictional problems, duplication of services, and duplication of costs.

In many areas of the country, communities within the political area of a county, where that county has a separate sheriff's office, form their own police agency. Consequently, there are areas in which there may be state, county, and local law enforcement agencies, all with police jurisdiction over the same geographical area. Taxpayers in such areas must support these overlapping missions with multiple budgets (Clede, 1997).

Part of the problem then is this proliferation of departments. But as Samuel Walker (1998) has pointed out, this evolution has another aspect, namely, that the police play an extremely complex role in today's society. He posits that in our democratic society law enforcement has a balance of conflicting duties. These can be summarized as follows: First, a wide variety of tasks, only a few of which deal with law enforcement. Police serve as social workers, problem solvers, truant officers, and any number of other roles that have direct bearing on enforcing criminal law violations. Second, he suggests that many of these tasks are vague; and, finally, many of these responsibilities often conflict with one another. Police are responsible for both maintaining order and protecting constitutional liberties. It is a balance of public order and individual rights and freedoms.

Hence, we have a dual complexity, the overlapping roles as described by Walker, and the lack of a cohesive interagency structure within which thousands of independent police agencies operate.

Law enforcement is a complex public service and, in many cases, operates with a strong attachment between the police force and the community it serves. It is necessary, therefore, to determine if there are means of providing law enforcement protection other than the traditional methods, without sacrificing the balance of public order and individual rights and freedoms that Walker refers to.

Another part of the issue, from a governmental perspective, is that America is fond of its police departments. Many communities include the existence of a police department as part of their identity. The communities' desire to have the police close to the people they serve and to operate under the immediate control of the political leadership of the community are strong values. The desired outcome is to have the police be an integral part of their community. One needs only to look at the resurgence of community policing to see evidence of an attempt to integrate the police into the community.

The development of this relationship is one of the greatest advantages of keeping police service in the localities they serve and under local control. However, there are great disadvantages when the local department is too small or when citizens distrust their police department to execute their duties in a responsible manner. There can be problems in recruiting, training, administrative expertise, purchasing, and a general lack of economy of scale. They may not be able to afford proper facilities and

equipment or important support services such as evidence technicians, scientific labs, and criminal investigators with special skills or area of expertise. These are very significant shortcomings, which have been exacerbated by the large number of small police forces nationally.

Research Question

The consolidation of police forces is a complex undertaking. It has the potential to impact the police officers involved, their commanders, the political leaders of the community, and, of course, the citizens. The researcher's purpose in this study was to examine this process of consolidation and to identify the primary factors involved. The research question is, "What are the major factors involved in a consolidation of police services and how do they impact the decision process?"

Limitations

This study was limited to police executives and senior command personnel in the departments within each case study area. A total of 24 interviews ($N = 24$) were conducted. The sample size was small and directed; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable. Another limitation was that the amalgamations in Norfolk County that set up the current administrative structure took place some 30 years ago and only a small number of those interviewed had firsthand experience with the actual transformation from multiple agencies in the county to the unified force. However, in those interviews, an effort was made at the outset of each session to discuss the

research and the intent of the interview which framed their views in terms of operating the single large agency as opposed to having several departments as it used to be.

While there was some record of public sentiment during the public debate about amalgamation in England, there is a general lack of detailed public record of the discussions that occurred at that time.

Contributions to Knowledge

The results of this research will help those who engage in consideration of police consolidation to understand what some of the foremost issues are that will influence their decisions both in a political and administrative sense. There is a general lack of scholarly research that focuses on the factors involved in consolidation beyond a theoretical framework. In addition, little public record exists when consolidations have occurred to fill that void. It is hoped that the insights gained from this research will make a valuable contribution to this field of knowledge and serve as a source upon which a framework can be built for meaningful discussion and analysis of police consolidation efforts in the United States.

The Chapters in the Dissertation

In Chapter I, the researcher provided an overview of the problem, the purpose and significance of the research, and how the research will add to the field of knowledge regarding police consolidations. Chapter II is a review of literature

relevant to the study. This discussion includes an examination of the idea of consolidation, the impact that fragmentation of law enforcement has on the delivery of police services, an overview of the amalgamation of police forces in England, consolidation studies within the United States, and the opposing view held by public choice theories. Chapter III provides a discussion of the methodology of the study, and Chapter IV the findings of the research. Chapter V includes a summary of the study, conclusions, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF POLICE CONSOLIDATION

The focus of this study is an exploration of the proposition that policy makers might consider consolidation as a means of providing law enforcement services in lieu of having a number of individual police departments in a given geographical area. Also considered are the significant management issues related to that type of organization that might factor into the decision.

The study of the consolidation of police forces occurs from the perspective of two competing viewpoints: one that supports consolidation as means of addressing several existing problems, and another that values the general status quo of smaller agencies as the best course of action. There are a limited number of studies related to consolidation, and those that have been done, whether supporting or opposed, are limited in scope, usually focusing on a limited geographical area. Many of the studies have focused on the economics of consolidation (Clede, 1997; Finney, 1977; Lindquest, 1976; Romine & Skoler, 1971; Sinclair, 1998) without considering other variables. One of the few truly comprehensive studies of consolidation was completed on behalf of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, United States Department of Justice (Koepsell, & Girard, 1979). There is no evidence that any comprehensive study has been undertaken since that time, a lapse of over 20 years. While this immediate research is not an attempt to serve as a national study, it is worth noting that

the lack of such comprehensive investigation as that provided in a study of the scope conducted by Koepsell and Girard should not impede the discussion about consolidations.

Inside the law enforcement community, consolidation is a discussion that is generally avoided. The memberships of organizations such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and regionally, the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, are not necessarily fond of looking at an issue that, if successful, could greatly diminish their membership. There has been general writing about the topic, but in most cases it has addressed specific instances of consolidation. There have been a few national studies specifically on this topic, and lacking some incentive to do so, it is unlikely that any will occur in the immediate future.

A significant amount of this writing on the issue of police consolidation has come from those engaged in discussions centered around the theory of public choice. Researchers such as Ostrom and Whitaker (1973) and Horgan (1980) have a general focus on the maintenance of smaller government and on keeping public services close to the people. Their positions will be offered in more detail later in this chapter.

While there is a general lack of volume of material related to this issue, there is enough of a body of literature to offer some insight into the thoughts surrounding the issue of consolidation of police forces. This chapter will examine the issue starting with the idea of consolidation, followed by an examination of the fragmentation of law enforcement and its related deficiencies. An historical review of consolidation in England follows to provide an understanding of what the police forces in that nation

experienced in their movement toward consolidation. Finally, there is an examination of consolidation from the perspective of public choice theorists.

The Idea of Consolidation

Since the turn of the century, consolidationist thinking has been at the forefront of proponents of “good government,” though many of the first principles underlying the doctrine of consolidation are now questioned more and more in other spheres of governmental activity. Specifically, those who support the public choice philosophy raise doubts. In law enforcement, arguments for consolidating the production and provision of services have been advanced as viable solutions to many problems facing contemporary police agencies. It is argued that we cannot continue the fiscal strain of supporting law enforcement agencies that are not efficient and cost-effective. Many proponents of consolidation believe that our society is losing the war on crime. Even current statistics that reflect overall declines in crime are not sufficient evidence for the true consolidationists, as they believe the real issues go far beyond mere crime data.

We are all haunted by the possibilities inherent in the violence, hatred, and fear that beset our society; we are equally aware of the great responsibility that falls to the police service for preventing these possibilities from becoming reality. Here we pause fearfully, for if the police service responds in the manner it did in the 1960s, failure is assured (Garmire, 1972).

Granted, Garmire (1972) is reflecting on the performance of the police during a decade that was not a shining hour for law enforcement. But the basis of his reflection,

fear of crime and hatred, remain relevant today in this post-September 11th environment with the newly developed emphasis on homeland security at all levels of law enforcement. It is this belief, combined with the increasing costs of law enforcement services, that provides the mainspring of the consolidationists' drive for far-ranging reform.

In 1977, the National Sheriff's Association conducted a literature review on police consolidation funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (Delahunt, 1977). That study contained an extensive review of the literature related to consolidation until that time. While the study had a definite pro-consolidation bias, it did offer a number of observations that seem as pertinent to the argument today as when they were noted in 1977.

There were several themes that the study focused on. One was the idea that there are simply too many governments and that they are too small to be able to serve as viable providers of service to their constituents. They argued that as a result of the large number of jurisdictions, there exists a "maze" of "local officials, governmental bodies, conflicting objectives, and overlapping jurisdictions." But changing this state of affairs is not always easy (Delahunt, 1977, p. 3).

In a report prepared for the Michigan City Management Association in 1995, David Rusk stated that unfortunately "annexation and consolidation are not seen as feasible alternatives for many Michigan municipalities" (Rusk, 1995, p. 1). In that report, Rusk talks about "big-box" cooperative government and "small-box" governments. Big box governments are those that manage to find ways to operate at

some level in tandem with other governments, particularly those with a direct geographical relationship. He cites counties such as Genessee County, Michigan as an example of a “small-box” relationship with its 14 municipalities, 17 townships, and 17 different school districts.

The natural extension of this maze, according to Rusk, is the fragmentation of law enforcement. A number of authors summarize the matter of the number of police agencies using the same language: “too many and too small.” Contained within their argument is one fact that remains in place today as one of the core issues regarding consolidation, namely, that “parochial political boundaries continue to fix the operations of each law enforcement department to its own particular area” (Rusk, 1995, p. 1).

Consolidationists loose a cascade of numbers to support their contention that the delivery of law enforcement services is fragmented throughout all of the United States. An often-cited report came in 1967 from the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. It found that almost 90% of local units of government maintained law enforcement departments of fewer than 10 personnel. Only about 5% field forces of 25 or more personnel. These numbers have not seen a dramatic change in the subsequent 30 years.

Taking a different tack, Gary Halter (1993) did a study on City-City consolidations in the United States. He reached several interesting conclusions regarding those consolidations that occurred with only cities involved. First, most occurred between very small cities or when one city is considerably larger than the

other. Second, consolidation occurred when one of the consolidating cities was facing a severe population decline, and third, when delivery and/or financial problems were present.

Supporting the latter position is research done by James Christenson and Carolyn Sachs. They report that population redistribution and the centralization of economic activity in metropolitan areas have strained the capabilities of local governments to provide adequate public services (Christenson & Sachs, 1980).

The Fragmentation of Law Enforcement

For over 50 years, many political scientists, urban planners, and other social scientists writing about urban areas have agreed that a major urban problem is the existence of a large number of independent jurisdictions within a single metropolitan area (Dye, 1988). Some argue that the majority of fragmentation-related problems are problems because of the fiscal restrictions under which units of local government must function. Underlying many of the problems is a lack of the resources necessary to provide an adequate level of service (Dolan, 1990).

During this same period of development there has been a proliferation of local police departments. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) estimates that as of July 1999 there were 16,612 local police agencies. The BJS defines "local" as all city, township, and county law enforcement agencies. State and federal law enforcement agencies are not counted in this survey. Along with this attention to the issue of local government growth is an increasing recognition that there exists a great amount of

duplication and inefficiency in the current system. Consolidation as a response to this fragmentation has been discussed for many years.

Although the issue of consolidation versus local government fragmentation has been on the policy agenda of those seeking the reform of metropolitan government for 50 years, debate still exists about whether fragmentation actually produces an unacceptable number of harmful side effects. Across the country, officials in communities facing increasing degrees of fiscal stress and decreasing levels of service delivery are arguing the pros and cons of consolidating units of government or centralizing the provision of services as a possible solution (Dolan, 1990).

For clarification, local government fragmentation is, according to Dolan, a term attributed to the proliferation of government units that may exist within a given region (Dolan, 1990, p. 29). Dolan references J. S. Goodman's (1980) work on fragmentation in which he identifies four forms. The first is the proliferation of incorporated communities within the metropolitan area. Second is the overlapping of city and county functions and responsibilities. A third form is the existence of special districts, public authorities, and school districts, and finally, the extension of boundaries of metropolitan areas without concern for state lines (Dolan, 1990, p. 29). The second issue, that of overlapping functions and responsibilities, is especially noteworthy to our discussion of law enforcement services.

With almost every one of these new urban or suburban areas has come, sooner or later, a police force. Many of the areas referred to by both Dolan and Goodman are

not large in size but they may have, in some cases, a very high concentration of population.

As the debate continues about whether or not policy makers should address this issue by engaging in consolidations or by using other legislative mechanisms to reduce the number of units of government, the police departments continue to operate, often at minimal size. The BJS reports that as of July 1999, there were 7,095 city and township police departments with 25 or less full-time sworn police personnel. This accounts for 42.4% of all the police agencies in the nation.

Therein lies the dilemma for policy makers and police administrators. On the one hand, police chiefs of small departments argue that small departments provide the personal type of police services necessary and requested in the communities they serve. On the other hand, national advisory commissions and state advisory boards, along with police administration experts, advocate that more effective, efficient, and less costly law enforcement is feasible only if numerous small, local departments are eliminated. The increase in urban districts traceable in many cases to the isolation of small police departments in heavily populated sections would seem to make necessary some form of cooperation.

As early as 1920 this problem was recognized (Fosdick, 1920) by those who advocated for the consolidation of forces. Fosdick argued that police consolidation for metropolitan areas would undoubtedly produce beneficial results in the United States. But even Fosdick could not have predicted the number of police agencies that would eventually be formed in this nation.

Others joined the discussion, such as The Wickersham Commission, in 1933.

This Commission picked up on the theme of consolidation when it finished its report on the investigation of police corruption by concluding that the abundance of police forces in most states and the varying standards of organization contributed immeasurably to the general low grade of police performance in this country. The Commission drew a strong correlation between the fragmented system of law enforcement and corruption it found within the ranks of the police.

Proponents of consolidation (Smith, 1940; Vollmer, 1936) continued the discussions by citing various arguments in support of the concept of consolidation. The generalized issues of jurisdictional isolation and economics, such as the need for each agency to maintain its own police facilities, added to the sheer complexity, confusion, and destructive rivalries arising out of overlapping jurisdictions.

Three subsequent national commissions further explored the efficiency of thousands of independent and often conflicting police jurisdictions. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) produced an extensive work, *Task Force Report—The Police*, that was an exhaustive examination of how we police our society. Contained within the analysis were several observations regarding the impact of the fragmentation of law enforcement agencies and how this interferes with the provision of effective police service (President's Commission, 1967, p. 96). The matter of fragmentation was viewed as so serious that the Commission saw it as a fundamental problem resulting in a general lack of crime repression.

The state of individualism among police forces was seen as a barrier to cooperative efforts, including the sharing of criminal intelligence. Except for some informal instances, little or no effort was made to provide coordination for the provision of general law enforcement. More specifically, the Commission noted that the number of departments administered and staffed by untrained, part-time police personnel was distressing (President's Commission, 1967).

Finally, the Commission addressed the realization that the cost of providing basic police services is paramount when considering the structure of law enforcement in the United States. It posited that certain staff, auxiliary, and field services are beyond the resources of many police departments and even extended this lack of fiscal resources, in some cases, to the provision of basic patrol services.

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (1971) continued the theme that many areas are faced with an almost hopeless proliferation of small and inefficient local police departments. They concluded that a 10-person force has difficulty providing full-time patrol and investigative services, not to mention the essential support services of communications, crime laboratory, and records management.

Two years later, the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973) issued another in-depth analysis of law enforcement with its *Report on Police*. This report continued attempts to identify the threshold for what constitutes the minimum size that a police agency should be. Concurring with the findings of the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, this latest Commission

also said that police agencies that employ 10 or fewer sworn police personnel should consolidate for improved efficiency and effectiveness.

The only comprehensive study that has focused specifically on the consolidation of police departments followed in 1979. Funded by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, Koepsell and Girard asked in the preface to their report why, if consolidation is a “viable alternative,” has the growth in the number of consolidated agencies been limited?

The study did not attempt to draw conclusions regarding the viability of consolidation. It focused on developing a better understanding of the transition from a more traditional system of law enforcement into a consolidated scheme. It examined issues such as assessing the feasibility of merged services, legal mandates, fiscal and managerial planning, transitioning to a new system, relationships between government units joined in such an endeavor, and suggestions on the assessment of such a system. This study, perhaps more than any done on the matter of police consolidation, presented a fair and objective analysis of what is involved in the process of consolidation and how it might impact the governments and individuals involved.

The study points out that small police departments are costly and ineffective, and cannot provide the professional, specialized law enforcement services necessary to effectively police a community. They collectively held the view that consolidation should remove jurisdictional barriers and conflict, and prevent duplication of services, all with an eye toward maximizing available tax dollars designated for the provision of these services.

Peter Coolly (1975) identified six main arguments for these pro-consolidation views. His summary list seems to traverse many of the discussion items found in the literature that supports or objectively discusses the idea of consolidation:

1. Many small municipalities cannot afford to support their own police at an adequate level of funding.
2. Small police departments cannot recruit, train, or retain highly qualified personnel.
3. Small police departments are not sufficiently professional and modernized to serve the needs of their communities.
4. Supervision and administration are inadequate in small police agencies.
5. The existence of many small forces in a metropolitan area leads to confusion and rivalry.
6. Formal and informal coordination among police departments in metropolitan areas is lacking or insufficient.

A Brief History of Consolidation in England

It is interesting to note that while we have a small body of literature in the United States regarding the issue of consolidation, it eclipses that found in England. During the research phase in England, both in searching the archives at the Police College in Bramshill and in talking with those interviewed informally about documentation related to consolidation, it was determined that minimal attention had been paid to the issue.

Despite this lack of literature, it is important to take a look at consolidation in England as we examine the issue in the American context. The issue is the same, but the manner of its accomplishment and the volume of written records addressing consolidation in the two countries is noteworthy for its difference.

One of the more comprehensive treatments of the subject came in a book written by B. D. Butcher (1989) and published by the Norfolk Constabulary. It was a history of the police force, but imbedded into that history was a general overview of consolidation within England as well. Consolidation in England appears to have had its roots in the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. This act required police forces to be established in the 178 boroughs which held a charter of self-government. Four such boroughs were in Norfolk County: Thetford, Kings Lynn, Great Yarmouth, and Norwich.

Disagreement exists among historians regarding the intent of the act (Butcher, 1989), but the driving force was concern for the level of crimes of civil disorder. It was hoped that a professional police force, as the act allowed, could preserve the peace.

Similar to literature in the United States relative to consolidation, a measure such as that proposed in 1835 was not without its detractors. Personal and professional concerns over a modern police force and the accompanying loss of personal liberties were expressed. There was also a general lack of supervision as boroughs and groups of parishes tried to form police forces (Butcher, 1989).

In 1840, the Norfolk Rural Police Department was formed. This police force came into existence based on the passage of the County Police Act of 1839 which

allowed for, rather than forced, a paid police force in areas not having their own force. In 1839, while there were 56 counties in England and Wales, only 8 took immediate action to form a force. Norfolk was one of those that did.

The five police departments that then existed in the county were entirely separate and had little to do with each other. On occasion they came into conflict. One of the primary difficulties facing them was the division of accountability. The borough forces were governed by a Watch Committee in each borough, while the Rural Police were governed by Magistrates from around the county (Butcher, 1989).

The first alteration in this countywide arrangement occurred in 1857 when on July 22nd the Thetford force amalgamated with the Rural Police. This event occurred as the result of the County and Borough Act of 1856, which provided for the first time that the Home Office would pay for local policing, at that time 25% of the total cost of operation (a figure changed to 51% in 1989). One catch in the Act was that no money would be provided to small boroughs with their own force. At that time, Thetford had the smallest police force in the country. Faced with the lack of local fiscal resources, Thetford combined its police force with the Rural force (Butcher, 1989).

In a similar manner, faced with a cost of operating its own police force which was growing beyond its means, Kings Lynn, as of March 31, 1947, dissolved its police force. The local paper at the time noted a “fear of remoteness” at losing its force (Butcher, 1989, p. 19).

The period of consolidation of police forces in England between 1840 and 1947 was a constant fight for organizational changes, facilities, and manpower. As smaller

police departments were amalgamated into larger ones, there was an ongoing effort to strike the balance between need and expense.

The final leg of the journey toward complete consolidation for many agencies, including the Norfolk Constabulary, occurred in the mid-1960s with the rejection of nationalism and an affirmation of local government (Critchley, 1997). In his history of the Norfolk Constabulary, Butcher quotes from a local newspaper that commented on the day the Norfolk Joint Police Authority arrived: "No glasses chinked when the Norfolk Joint Police Authority came into being. There was no ceremony. The changeover was accomplished without fuss or formality" (Butcher, 1989, p. 71).

What led to that day for many cities such as Norwich, according to Butcher, were two important developments. First, a new emphasis on a community relations approach to crime-solving emerged, and second, implementation of new technology where smaller organizations were simply not able to keep pace with these developments due to their limited resources. This feeling is summarized by the belief that technology and public support could "only partially substitute for the large growth in establishments otherwise justified given the increase in crime and traffic problems" (Butcher, 1989, p. 81)

By 1966 the final movement toward the total amalgamation of police forces in England was under way. The Police Act of 1964 removed the limit of 100,000 in population, which meant that there were no cities exempt from the consolidations desired by the Home Office.

On May 18, 1966, the Home Office announced a national program of amalgamations. Small forces could negotiate with neighbors, but it was no longer a debatable issue (Police Review, 1996). It was, as Butcher (1989) called it, a shotgun union. As a result of a series of compromises with the cities of Norwich and Great Yarmouth, the Norfolk Rural Police disappeared at the same time as its city departments. The Norfolk Joint Police Department was formed. That organization existed until April of 1974 when, as part of a general reorganization of local governments, the Norfolk Constabulary was born.

Consolidations in England were not without controversy. A national weekly journal of policing, the *Police Review*, in Great Britain provides a litany of examples of cities that did not take the idea of losing their police force in good spirit. The May 12, 1967 issue of the *Police Review* reported that the Mayor of Middlesbrough expressed the view that everyone in the Tees-side and North Riding area was against the amalgamation and that Middlesbrough “had the core of a good Police Force which could be developed into a body capable of handling Tees-side on the same high standard” (*Police Review*, 1967, p. 416).

Officials in Essex and Southend boroughs voiced similar complaints. In his summary of their objections as noted in the *Police Review* of January 12, 1968, Mr. E. S. Fay, in his report to the Home Secretary about the scheme to merge the two departments “reports that Southend’s main contention was broadly that (a) the borough Force was highly efficient and (b) Police efficiency in Southend would be diminished by amalgamation.”

However, within the same summary Mr. Fay concluded:

I would expect amalgamation to produce greater efficiency stemming from integration with a larger Force with its better promotion prospects, wider fund of experience, greater provision of specialized services, and greater flexibility that the (Southend) county borough Force can claim. (*Police Review*, 1968, p. 30)

A reading of the *Police Review* covering the years 1966 to 1968 yielded numerous similar references as city after city objected to the idea of consolidation, especially when it was forced on them by the Home Office. However, at the end of an inquiry into the proposed compulsory amalgamation of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Oxford and Reading Forces consolidation, as published in the *Police Review* of July 14, 1997, Mr. William Mars-Jones wrote the following summary:

The main objection to the proposed scheme came from the Buckinghamshire Police Committee, and it was clear that the Police Committee was intensely proud of their Force and genuinely believed that it was big enough and good enough to stand on its own two feet.

It is easy to lose sight of the fact that persons upon whom the success or failure of the proposed scheme primarily depends are the men and women now serving in the Police Forces concerned, and those who may join them hereafter if the scheme is implemented.

Citing comments from a lay witness, Mr. Pomfret, who spoke at the public meeting about the proposed amalgamation, Mr. Mars-Jones included the following in his summary:

What I am saying is that cooperation there may be, but there is no substitute for one single, integrated, homogeneous Force. Consider the individual policeman. He has a difficult and arduous job. To carry it out, he is entitled from society to the best training, equipment and support that is possible. He is also entitled to good career prospects in return for diligence and application. (*Police Review*, 1997, p. 608)

Based on those comments, Mr. Mars-Jones concluded that “Civic pride, time-honored local associations and loyalties, admirable though they are, must give way to the interests of those who carry the burden of keeping the Queen’s peace.”

While sentiments were not as eloquently phrased as those of Mr. Mars-Jones, those in the United States also faced the difficult process of moving toward consolidation driven by legislative acts such as Proposition 13 in California.

Consolidation Studies in California

During the 1980s there was a surge of interest in police consolidation, much of it focused in California. The discussion and interest was driven largely by the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, a legislative act that placed limitations on tax revenues. Many local governmental leaders feared that it would severely impair their ability to provide police services. There have also been a number of agencies in the state that disbanded due to budget problems (Herley, 1989).

The situation facing many local governments in the state led to two different studies that provided an in-depth assessment of the idea of consolidation. The first was conducted by Thomas Wickum (1986). While the specific focus of his study was on contracting for police services as a means of consolidating police coverage, he looked at the concept as a mechanism for regionalizing (consolidating) law enforcement services under a single agency umbrella.

The general theme of this research dealt with the premise of disbanding existing smaller city police departments in favor of a single, larger force (Wickum, 1986). Using

a survey design, Wickum was able to identify several major elements that might lead a unit of government to disband its police force in favor of a broader arrangement. These elements were: (a) high costs, (b) liability concerns, and (c) a lack of police credibility.

In terms of cost, the respondents noted concern not only for the traditional expenses of a police department, such as salaries, fringe benefits, equipment, and facilities, but also matters of recruitment, training, required medical expenses, compliance with minority issues, and the exceedingly high cost of liability insurance (Wickum, 1986).

At the same time he was able to identify a number of forms of resistance that the Chief of Police, City Manager, residents, and elected officials might offer when confronted with the option of eliminating their police force and joining a larger entity.

Wickum identified several forms of resistance that might include:

1. Loss of local control;
2. The inability to control costs;
3. Local concerns ignored by the new agency;
4. The head of the larger agency not residing in the jurisdiction;
5. A loss of local identity from not having their own police department;
6. The inability of the city to control the quality of the police officers in the new agency;
7. Fear that levels of service would decline;
8. An inherent distrust by cities when dealing with other units of government.

Wickum concluded from his study that full-service law enforcement agencies lacking fiscal resources to continue operating in their present manner would be forced to look at other alternatives. Mechanisms would then have to be found to attempt to overcome potential resistance.

Issues of local control and local identity noted by Wickum were also identified in other literature regarding police consolidation (Horgan, 1980; Ostrom & Whitaker, 1973).

In 1989, Peter G. Herley conducted an extensive study that focused specifically on the concept of consolidation in California. At the time Herley did his research, 42% of California's 350 city police departments has less than 25 sworn personnel. Herley references a survey of 146 small police department administrators whose Chiefs of Police saw "Consolidation as the 'coming thing'" if small department personnel had any hope of continuing employment in the future and providing the service the public expects (Herley, 1989, p. 4).

In his research, Herley (1989) also identified a number of key issues related to consolidation efforts. These included (a) local control, (b) recruitment and retention, (c) promotional opportunities, (d) insurance costs, (e) training costs, (f) costs of technology, (g) investigative services, (h) purchasing, and (i) communications.

Herley (1989) was also able to isolate a number of potential sources of resistance to consolidation, again referencing Chiefs of Police who might be directly impacted by having their agency merged into a larger organization:

1. Loss of identity with their specific department;

2. Distrust between departments and inter-agency jealousies;
3. Issues of parity between officers of different merged departments who had different compensation and benefit packages;
4. Impersonal service;
5. A negative effect on service levels;
6. Viable methods of cost sharing would be difficult.

But Herley was also able to identify some advantages to consolidation.

Although the list of concerns expressed by Chiefs contained a number of very personal concerns of the Chiefs and their officers, the benefits identified in this study are significant:

1. Cost savings;
2. Better quality of service;
3. Elimination of duplication of effort;
4. Sharing of resources;
5. A wider range of employee expertise;
6. Improved professionalism;
7. Better officer retention;
8. Better trained staff.

An Opposing View: The Advocacy of Public Choice

Another interesting perspective regarding consolidation comes from those who hold a different view of the usefulness of consolidating police specifically, and

government in general. One such school of thought is the group of theorists who support the theory of public choice. The consolidationist argument dominated from the mid-1950s until about the early mid-1970s without challenge. At about that time a new polycentrist perspective was developed based more on economic reasoning than on the traditional public administration concerns that had structured the arguments in favor of consolidation (Schneider, 1986). These theorists believe that consolidationist thinkers base their position solely on the assumptions of efficiency and economy, which imply that bigger and fewer administrative units will provide more cost-efficient, specialized, and improved services (Christenson & Sachs, 1980).

This theory has led to a perspective that is counter to those who believe that bigger may be better. The theory of public choice blends ideas of cooperative federalism and political economy to mount a rigorous challenge to the basic principles of consolidationist thought (Ostrom, 1973). Hence, the two philosophical orientations are “bigger is better” versus “small is beautiful.”

Elinor Ostrom states that there is, among public choice advocates, a fear that in the search for efficiency and economy, the desires and values of the citizen will be minimized or disregarded entirely.

In order to understand the view of law enforcement service provision by those in the public choice camp, it is first necessary to understand some basic foundations of public choice thinking. Ostrom (1971) developed these basic concepts:

1. Citizens are consumers;

2. Government activity is the production and provision of public goods and services;

3. Institutional arrangements for making decisions that affect the production, provision, and consumption of public goods and services have a critical influence on the performance of public entities (Ostrom, 1971).

Others take a slightly more simplistic view of public choice. Leon Felkins (1997) boils it down to simple politics—that decisions made by politicians at all levels are motivated by self-interest. The theme of political self-interest is a view held by others as well (Downs, 1967). Hence, small police jurisdictions are here to stay.

In any event, public choice theorists like Bish and Ostrom (1974) view the tens of thousands of units of government and jurisdictions in the United States as so many different public firms or public enterprises. These enterprises produce an economy which exists to provide citizens with public goods and services, to include the provision of public safety.

Public goods are quite different from private goods. Private goods such as a pair of shoes or an automobile are each separate and divisible units of consumption. One can choose how many pairs of shoes to have or how many automobiles to own. They are packageable. Because they are packageable, producers of such goods can prevent individuals from consuming these goods unless they are willing to pay the price.

With public goods, such as law enforcement, there is a complex hybrid of multiple police forces, each acting independently for the most part from all of the others. However, unlike the shoes and vehicles, one cannot chose how many of these

units of service to consume. Individuals cannot be excluded from consuming public goods once these goods are provided to someone else. Thus, once the public goods of peace and security are provided to a neighborhood, they are freely available for anyone to enjoy (Bish & Ostrom, 1974).

Ostrom (1978) later continued this definition of services by saying that police services are produced regularly most of the time. By regular production she meant the provision of the service is available on a routine basis to individuals in the area it serves. Duplication in service delivery, she contends, occurs when two or more regular producers supply a service to the same consuming unit without coordination or alteration.

Grounded in the belief that police services are best provided in small governmental jurisdictions, Ostrom and Smith (1976) attack the issue of consolidation with a study conducted in the St. Louis metropolitan area. They collected data by using citizen surveys and conducting interviews with 712 police officers in the 29 police agencies in this metropolitan area. Their findings were:

1. Size did not matter on most indicators they used in the study;
2. In areas of community relations, small departments rated higher than their larger counterparts;
3. The education level of officers in the smaller departments, an indicator that they said represents professionalism in an agency, was no less than that of officers in the larger departments.

However, in answer to their own question about small departments being viable, these researchers did not eliminate the possibility that some smaller agencies should be eliminated and combined into medium-sized agencies. “One would not make a categorical recommendation against combining some of the smaller police departments into medium-sized departments in an area like St. Louis” (Ostrom & Smith, 1976, p. 196).

Public Choice: Some Counter Views

The advocates of public choice are not without their detractors. Lyons and Lowery (1989) identified several myths about public choice theory that they then applied to a study of two Kentucky urban areas, Louisville-Jefferson County, an area of highly fragmented government, and Lexington-Fayette County, which operates under a consolidated form of government.

Their research focused on a number of assumptions made by public choice theorists:

1. Consolidated governments are inherently larger, more remote, and more bureaucratic than those found in highly fragmented systems;
2. Citizens living in consolidated settings are less efficacious about their local government;
3. Smaller is better when it comes to fostering good citizenship;
4. Citizen dissatisfaction with services is generally higher in consolidated systems.

They concluded:

Citizens living in smaller local jurisdictions located in the more fragmented system were not better informed about the scope and nature of the local tax-service package; they were not efficacious about the relationships with the local government; they were not more likely to participate in local affairs; and they were not more satisfied with the local services and the performance of local government than their counterparts living in the consolidated setting. (Lyons & Lowery, 1989, p. 533)

Dowding and Hindmoor (1997) take an even more aggressive stance against public choice theorists by arguing that those engaged in public choice advocacy have failed to find empirical corroboration for their findings.

There have been a number of extensive studies of law enforcement that were conducted by impartial commissions on a national scale. These studies had the charge of looking at law enforcement at times when the field was under attack (corruption in the 1930s, a dismal record with minority groups in the 1960s) and making recommendations that would improve the delivery of police service to all citizens. The 1930s saw the continuation of the spoils system inherent in local government for several decades, and the 1960s witnessed violence in the streets and a law enforcement response that was ill conceived and only added to the gulf between minority communities and police in their communities. It cannot be ignored that all of the commissions reached several similar conclusions, namely, that police need to be professionalized through education and training, that they need to have adequate funding to keep up with technology, and that very small police departments cannot, in most cases, serve as effectively and efficiently as larger agencies.

From the practitioner point of view, we find there are a number of very specific issues that they were able to identify in their research. Many were used in this research project to frame the initial coding of data that were collected. From the studies done by those supporting public choice, we have an increased awareness of the importance of how police service effectiveness is perceived.

Public choice research brings a number of valid points into the discussion when policy makers are deliberating on consolidation. But the limitation of these theories is that they focus on metropolitan government and police departments. An examination of the work of Ostrom and others finds that all of their research focuses on departments that are in an immediate geographical relationship to a large city.

The consolidationist advocates take a broader view. There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of small local police departments that are “stand alone” agencies, meaning that they are not in direct relation to a large city. And when viewed in the more narrow sense of confining the discussion to metropolitan areas, there is a lack of consensus on what would be effective in those areas.

In their study of metropolitan governments, Bollens and Schmandt (1982) identified a core reality regarding law enforcement. While showing the fragmentation of such areas in terms of multiple governmental entities, they recognized an organizational pattern specific to law enforcement, “Regardless of size or financial resources, virtually every city, town, or village regards itself as capable of providing adequate law enforcement within its boundaries.” They found during their study that in the Chicago

metropolitan area there were nearly 350 locally maintained police forces (Bollens & Schmandt, 1982, p. 289).

While remaining neutral in regards to whether or not these numbers represent a significant problem, they did acknowledge that past studies have recommended the creation of a single police force for metro areas, or at least the consolidation of smaller forces.

Despite the limitations of a lack of scholarly research by studies such as those in California, and the perspective of those who advocate public choice, we are able to discern a general understanding of many of the issues relevant to our discussion of police consolidation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study was intended not only to provide a finding of the factors paramount in the discussion about police consolidation but to develop an in-depth understanding of what those factors mean. It was decided early on that the use of case studies would be the methodology used as the research framework and intensive one-on-one interviews would be the technique used to collect the desired data.

There are three basic critiques of the qualitative scientific perspective which highlight the strengths of the case study. First, probability samples and significance tests do not ensure accurate explanation; second, the scientific method does not control for researcher bias; and third, the survey research preferred by scientific method advocates is not useful for applied questions (Stoecker, 1991). In this research, the intent was to deal with applied questions regarding police consolidation. In this context, the case study is not as much a method of inquiry in the most typical sense, but more a design feature to help frame the boundaries of information gathering (Stoecker, 1991). As a research strategy, the distinguishing characteristic of the case study is that it is used to examine a contemporary phenomenon in this research, police consolidation, not in a theoretical sense but in its real-life context, especially when the boundaries are not clear (Yin, 1980).

Consideration was given to other data collection mechanisms such as using a survey, but it was determined that in this research, the desired depth could best be obtained by using a technique that allowed for the probing of responses given to a series of core questions. The desire was to develop more than just the number of times that a response was given; it was also an attempt to develop a deeper understanding of why that response was offered.

Case Study as Methodology

The primary research method used in this study was the case study method of data collection. In this research, it was determined that three cases would be used, two in the United States and one in England, to allow for some comparative findings.

Bradshaw and Wallace (1991) posit that the case study constitutes an important type of comparative research and, in fact, is the preferred strategy in certain instances. They cite Kohn, who says any comparison we make within a single country is necessarily limited to the one set of political, economic, and historical contexts represented by that particular country. Further, “Kohn has long argued that studies of the United States (a case) should be compared and contrasted with other countries” (Kohn, 1989, as cited in Bradshaw & Wallace, 1991, p. 158).

Several of the arguments for the use of case studies as a research methodology apply to this research. Bradshaw and Wallace (1991) believe in the importance of history and that a primary purpose of case study research is to specify and elaborate on historical processes that impact social phenomenon. Further, a

society is influenced by different historical circumstances that provide insight into its current condition (Bradshaw & Wallace, 1991). Even relatively similar societies such as England and the United States have very different histories, as is certainly the case with England and American law enforcement. Again they quote Kohn: "The intent in all analysis of cross-national similarities is to develop generalizations that transcend particular historical experiences in a search for more general explanatory principles" (Bradshaw & Wallace, 1991, p. 158).

In general, the purpose of case studies is to examine the historical, economic, political, and cultural features of individual cases. Good comparative cases do not ignore the historical processes of each country under investigation, and they do not generalize indiscriminately beyond those cases (Bradshaw & Wallace, 1991). The research in this study was greatly influenced by the history of both the Norfolk Constabulary and of Kent and Ottawa Counties, as in each case there was a historical foundation that impacted the views offered during the interview phase of the data collection process.

Another important benefit of using the case study approach is that it provides an in-depth analysis of a specific topic. According to Becker (1978), this data collection method is appropriate for qualitative research efforts intended to gather in-depth or specific information or data on one or only a few illustrative cases. Yin (1980) indicates that the case study approach is a method of inquiry that searches for patterns by comparing results with patterns predicted from literature, and explanation

building in which the researcher looks for causal links and explores plausible explanations and attempts to build an explanation about the case.

Case studies then attempt to explain a phenomenon. An explanatory case study consists of an accurate rendition of the facts of the case, offers some consideration of alternative explanations of these facts, and draws a conclusion based on the single explanation that appears most congruent with the facts. When the lessons from each case study are compared, a common explanation should emerge.

The case study approach is also a preferable method of inquiry when how or why questions are being explored, as was the case in this research. In essence, according to Yin (1980), the case study becomes an exploratory investigation.

While the term *case study* usually refers to individual groups, institutions such as police agencies and even whole communities can be the focus of such studies. For example, Patton (1990) posits that case studies are quite often useful where one needs to understand a particular problem or situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information—rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few examples.

This study incorporated a multisite international case study methodology. The use of multisite methodology is certainly not new. Researchers such as Yin (1994) and Herriott (1990) recognize and appreciate the uniqueness of multisite research. Essentially, the value of this method is that based on (a) the quality of strategies in defining the object of study and in the selection of the mechanism through which to understand it, and (b) the methodological rigor displayed in the description of this

subject in the form of an analysis that can be understood in action (Hamel, DuFour, & Fortin, 1993).

Hamel et al. (1993) raised questions about the process that exist when utilizing the multisite approach in case study research. These concerns focus on three design issues: (1) the degree to which data should be structured; (2) a heavy reliance on semistructured procedures, clearly a major departure from the traditional, single case approach; and (3) the length of time to be spent at each site for purposes of data collection. (Hamel et al., 1993, p. 23).

There are, of course, drawbacks to case study methodology. This research design has been faulted for its lack of representativeness and its “lack of rigor in the collection, construction, and analysis of the materials that give rise to the study.” As such, Hamel et al. believe no judgment can be made relative to the representativeness of the findings.

There is also the issue of bias. But, because the cases used in this study were compared directly, it is possible to note aspects from the subjectivity of the informants and to see where the researcher’s own subjectivity intrudes.

It is not the intent of this researcher that the findings necessarily be generalized to the entire police population in the United States or England. Not even in grouped studies, such as Ottawa and Kent Counties, can the evaluator generate conclusive evidence of generalization. The strength of the evidence is a matter of judgment (Kennedy, 1979). Rather, the results will serve as an extrapolation. Unlike generalization, an extrapolation signals that the research has gone beyond the narrow

confines of the data to think about other applications of the findings. These extrapolations are “modest speculations” on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions. Extrapolations are logical, thoughtful, and problem-oriented, rather than based on statistical probabilities (Patton, 1990).

In this research an interview instrument was designed for each site as the device to collect data. It contained a number of core questions, each designed to allow the respondent to provide information in a nonstructured, free-flowing manner. The interviews included follow-up questions that allowed for probing of the initial responses and facilitated, in many cases, expansion on the original responses.

Interviewing as a Data Collection Technique

In order to access the perspectives of the persons identified as respondents, the use of the interview method is an integral component of data collection within case study methodology. To understand complicated problems, one must be able to explore the topic with the interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

According to Patton (1990), there are three categories of interviews used to accomplish this task; (1) the general interview approach, (2) a standardized open-ended and interview guide, and (3) the informal conversational approach.

The standardized open-ended interviews consist of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each the same questions with essentially the same words (Patton,

1990). The informal conversational interview relies on a more spontaneous generalization of questions in the natural flow of an interaction. Finally, the general interview guide approach involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins. The issues being explored do not need to be taken in any particular order, and specific wording is not necessarily determined in advance of the interview (Patton, 1990).

While some systemization is often necessary in multisite studies, the informal conversational approach was used in this project. This technique employed a loosely framed approach, using only a few predetermined questions to serve as a guide. As indicated by Fitzgerald and Cox (1994), informal interviews are appropriate for use in exploratory studies, such as in this research, since the desired outcome was to gather more in-depth information than would be achieved through a more structured interview.

While this method required little structure, a template of core questions was created that were specific to the two environments being studied. Two sets of questions were developed, each specific to the general situation regarding consolidation in the United States and England (Appendix B). While the focus of the questions was generally the same, police consolidation, the questions were modified to meet the historical and contemporary view needed in England, which was different from the view of the agencies in Kent and Ottawa Counties in the United States. For example, the respondents in the Kent and Ottawa interviews were asked: What

factors do you think could lead to the decision to consolidate the police forces in (Kent/Ottawa) County?

For those being interviewed regarding the Norfolk Constabulary, the following comparable question was posed: Beyond the legislative mandate that ultimately required the amalgamation of police forces in Norfolk County, what factors in your opinion led to the decision to consolidate police forces?

The intent of the interview process was to begin with somewhat general, open-ended questions and allow respondents to focus on their area of interest in their response. Information was then developed by the utilization of probing questions as the discussions became more specific. These probing questions became useful when the first response lacked the detail or depth desired, or if clarity was needed. It is this probing and use of follow-up questions that proved to be the hallmark of qualitative interviewing by allowing for the pursuit of themes that were discovered, encouraging the elaboration of responses and exploring the implications of what was said (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This was especially important when attempting to understand the historical foundations of consolidation in the Norfolk Constabulary and the subsequent impact of the consolidations on service to their citizens.

Interview Subjects

All 24 respondents ($N = 24$) in this research, whether in United States police agencies in Kent and Ottawa Counties in Michigan or in the Norfolk Constabulary in England were all current or retired senior command personnel. In the case of the

United States police officers, no one below the rank of Captain was interviewed. In England, the lowest rank interviewed was Superintendent, a rank equivalent to that of Captain. In Kent and Ottawa Counties, interviews were secured with the Chief of Police in almost every agency in both counties. In England, interviews were with current senior members of the Norfolk Constabulary and retired members of that agency.

The targeting of these senior police officers for this study evolved from a desire to interview those most likely to be in the position to develop and/or implement policy within their organization, what Marshall and Rossman (1995) refer to as elite interviews. They would be the persons within the department that members of a governing board, and citizens, would be most likely to seek guidance from if that jurisdiction were discussing the issue of consolidation. They are regarded, because of their rank, length of service, or experience, as experts in their field.

These elite interviews, according to Marshall and Rossman (1995), have a number of advantages. These subjects can provide an overview of their department and its relationship to other departments, and they can provide information on the departments' past histories, current policies, and future plans. A total of 24 interviews of these elite police command personnel were conducted.

Interview Format

The interview format consisted of face-to-face interviews. All interviews took place at their place of employment, with the exception of a retired Chief Constable

and Deputy Chief Constable. The interviews of the retired personnel took place in private residences. The objective of these interviews was to encourage the respondents to express their experiences, feelings, opinions, expertise, and knowledge as it related to police consolidation. This face-to-face process allowed for immediate feedback when questions were posed.

The length of the interviews varied, but in most all cases, the interview ran between 1 and 2 hours. Care was taken during the interviews in Norfolk County to ensure that all questions were answered as completely as possible due to the complexity of any follow-up interviews that would be necessary. Even with that restriction, timeframes were maintained. In all three case studies, though, interviews continued until no new information was being developed.

In order to assure the reliability of the information, while preserving all of the qualitative information collected during this stage of the study, responses to the interviews were tape recorded with the consent of the respondent. Respondents were further assured that their responses would be reported in a manner that protected their confidentiality. As a backup in case of audio failure during the interviews, handwritten notes were also taken.

At the conclusion of all interviews, each one was transcribed to produce a written record. The researcher chose to personally transcribe each of the interviews. In this manner, it was possible to revisit each of the interviews and hear each respondent a second time. This proved to be of great value, not only in capturing what they said, but also the nuances evident when comments were made.

While there are significant advantages to collecting data through interviews, there were some disadvantages as well. In this research, those were: (a) the nature of an international case study methodology, (b) accessibility to subjects that are expert in the area of study, (c) flexibility, and (d) the biases of those being interviewed.

As this research was international in nature, it carried potential problems in variations in language, the meaning of certain words, and differences in structures. For example, consolidations of police forces in England occurred by decree of the Home Office (the central government). Since the majority of funding for local police operations comes from the Home Office, the consolidations were imposed, in some cases not by choice. In this country, the situation is entirely different. That difference made it necessary to adjust the core questions, but by making that paradigm shift, it was possible to gain the desired information.

In terms of language, there are subtle differences, for example, *establishment* to the English means the same thing as *manpower* in the United States. These differences were fairly easily overcome by simple practice. Once in England to complete that portion of the research, it was possible to spend time with the host police official discussing the nature of the research. During these informal conversations, several of the language variations were clarified. By the time the actual interviews began, there was a comfort level with those few language variances that existed.

For the Norfolk Constabulary case study, accessibility was arranged through a series of contacts with two retired Constabulary members who had been in senior

command positions. Access was not difficult, as it was found that the members of the Constabulary were very open to a discussion on consolidation. In all cases, they were candid and professional in their treatment of the questions and provided excellent information.

For the senior command personnel in the Kent and Ottawa United States studies, access was not a barrier. Most of the command were known to the researcher on a professional level, and when asked to participate in this study, they were more than willing to do so. While their opinions about consolidation varied, as did their experience with the subject, all were frank in their answers and added the desired dimension to the data collected.

When interviewing to compile data, there can sometimes be a problem with flexibility (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). It was thought that it might become necessary to adapt questions in accord with interviewee wishes, even within the less formal format that was employed. In order to address this potential problem, when each interview was arranged, the subject of the interview was informed of the topic of discussion and its relation to the research being conducted. At the outset of each interview, the respondents were reminded of the topic of discussion. During the course of this research, there was not a single instance where a core question had to be adapted to meet the requirements of a subject being interviewed.

Finally, there was the issue of the biases of those being interviewed. The concept of consolidation of police forces is one that, among professionals in the field and especially among American police forces, carries with it a great deal of emotional

impact. The interviews in this research study were conducted with the realization that both personal and professional bias were present. Whether in England or the United States, each respondent had his or her own perspective on the feasibility or advisability of consolidating forces and what factors were important in that process. They also had strong views on a number of management issues related to the operation of consolidated police forces. These views were based on their own experiences and history, as well as that of the organizations involved. In some cases, there also existed a threat. Senior law enforcement officials in some police agencies in the Kent and Ottawa case studies could foresee consolidation as a threat to their very employment.

But it was this bias that added richness to the interviews. Many of those interviewed were passionate about many of the issues related to the consolidation of forces. Some were open and supportive of the idea, while others found fault with the concept. All were able to provide insightful information about what the issues were from their perspective. In all cases, the views offered by the respondents were stated clearly and were an expression of the beliefs that they held.

Analysis of the Data

As mentioned above, data collection for this research project was based on a number of in-depth interviews. The challenge was to make sense of the massive amounts of data that were collected as a result of the interviews, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating what the data revealed.

To begin the process of analysis, all interviews were transcribed by the researcher. This allowed the researcher not only to hear the interview for a second time as it had been conducted, but it also provided a second opportunity to hear how issues were raised and the meaning attached to those issues through the nuances of voice inflexion, humor, and other emotions.

After these interviews were transcribed, they were loaded into a program utilizing ethnographic software to facilitate the management of the data. An initial working document was generated that combined all of the interviews into a single document from which the coding of the data began.

At the core of the analysis was this coding of the data. Lofland and Lofland (1995) view coding as a basic and concrete way to develop the analysis of the data. They define the word (or set of words) applied to an item of data in answering questions of inquiry as code. These labels (codes) then were used to classify items of information pertinent to the research. This coding process served as a means to categorize and sort the data. It served as a shorthand mechanism to label, separate, and organize the information contained in the various interviews.

Specifically, the coding process began with the reading of each individual interview, paragraph by paragraph, and marking off each time a particular idea or concept was mentioned or explained. This process was aided by a preliminary set of codes that had been developed based upon the review of the literature on police consolidation and a pilot study that was conducted in Calhoun County, Michigan.

Following the pilot study, there were no changes that needed to be made in the survey questions.

Following this initial coding came the second level of analysis. Here the various comments made that related to a single topic were grouped together into what Lofland and Lofland (1995) refer to as “families,” as topics dealing with these specific code identifiers were gathered together. At the end of this grouping process, it was determined that there were nine of these families, which translated into nine primary factors related to the consolidation of police forces.

Factors

The following factors, presented in the order of frequency, were identified as a result of the coding process. A brief description is also provided of what issues found in the analysis related to that subject.

Management: Matters of poor management that would lead to the abandonment of the current police agency or improved management practices under a consolidated system.

Local Control and Local Identity: Matters of local control, identity of the community with the police department, and political concerns.

Efficiency: Concerns about the current lack of efficiency or the desire to improve the efficiency of the organization.

Fiscal: Concerns expressed about the current cost of police operations and/or cost savings that might occur by the consolidation of police forces.

Career: Impacts on the career of officers and other departmental personnel, both within the current structure and if they were part of a consolidated police force.

Service: The level of service provided either by the existing police department or by the creation of a new policing arrangement.

Jurisdiction: Issues related to boundaries and past initiatives in which two or more governmental units have been involved.

Support: Whether there was existing support in the community for the current form of police service.

The Unknown: Fear of the unknown. With the existing department, the citizens know what they have, as do agency personnel. Even with serious problems, there may be the desire to keep the current arrangement rather than risk the unknown of the new system.

Within each of these factors are embedded a number of issues. As the coding was accomplished, there were a number of issues raised that might have fit into more than one category. Their final inclusion in one category or another was determined not to be as important as the discussion of what that issue meant.

Table 1 identifies the number of times respondents referenced each of the factors.

The following chapter will provide an in-depth discussion of each of these factors and their relationship to each case study in this research.

Table 1
Frequency of Responses for Each Factor

Factor	Frequency
Management	84
Local Control and Local Identity	82
Efficiency	55
Fiscal	50
Career	38
Service	37
Jurisdiction	29
Support	23
Unknown	5

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify what factors are involved in the consolidation of police services in the United States and England. In this chapter, the interview data are used to identify each of the factors. Also presented is a more detailed discussion, by case study, of each factor. To augment the discussion, excerpts from various interviews are included to highlight the findings.

The interviews used in this research took place during the summer and fall of 2000. Those in the United States, Kent County and Ottawa County, were generally completed in the fall, while those in Norfolk County, England were over a 2-week period in the summer. In all, 24 interviews were conducted. The number of interviews in each case study was nearly the same in the three jurisdictions, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Number of Interviews Conducted in Each County

County	Number of Interviews
Kent	8
Ottawa	7
Norfolk	9

Due to the limited number of interviewees in each case study, the researcher chose to identify each interviewee by a vague reference to title, such as senior police official or Chief Constable, retired. This was done to ensure the confidentiality of each participant. Since all of those interviewed were senior in status, there was no need to identify them any further.

Each of the counties in the United States offered a unique opportunity to look at police consolidation. Those in Kent County had a relatively limited history in dealing with consolidations, limited to those instances where they have had discussion about the consolidation of some basic services such as central dispatch. Those in Ottawa County have a record of consolidation that includes the merger of two departments into a single agency and the total elimination of another in favor of contracting with the sheriff's office. Those in England's Norfolk Constabulary were able to offer an historical view of the amalgamation of several forces into their current structure as well as identify many issues related to the management and operation of such an organization.

Results and Discussion

Table 3 presents the factors in the order of frequency and the frequency of each factor by county.

Table 3
Frequency of Factor by County

Factor	Norfolk	Kent	Ottawa
Management	53	19	12
Local Control and Local Identity	32	20	30
Efficiency	29	18	8
Fiscal	20	13	17
Career	17	7	14
Service	18	9	10
Jurisdiction	16	8	5
Support	11	8	4
Unknown	2	3	0

Factor: Management Issues

One of the most significant factors developed as a result of this research was the factor of management. Embedded within this factor were a great number of issues related to the management of a consolidated agency and to creating a consolidated police department. A number of issues that fell into this category were mentioned in all three case studies. The focus of this factor is on poor management practices or improved management techniques that would result from consolidation.

Norfolk County, England

The amalgamation of police forces was driven by statutory legislation that at first encouraged the voluntary amalgamation of police forces and, for those who resisted, finally required it. At the heart of this effort were two issues that were heard repeatedly when interviewing past and current police officials within the Norfolk Constabulary—efficiency and effectiveness. There is a strong interest, almost a requirement, within the current operations of police forces in the United Kingdom that they be efficient in their operations, both in a fiscal sense and in their operations. As a result of these goals, one issue that was mentioned often was the matter of duplication.

These police officials were keenly aware of the benefit of not having a number of independent police agencies operating within their county. On several occasions they mentioned one of the benefits of an amalgamated department as having accomplished the task of eliminating duplicate administrative bodies and support staffs. One of the desired outcomes of this reform was that there was a general standardization of administrative processes within the county. No longer were agencies operating incompatible administrative systems. As was noted in one interview:

In a larger police force area you can go from one police station to the next and you know that if you need a firearm or have firearms trouble, that the armory is going to be the same with the same weapons, procedures and so forth.

There also exists a standardization of personnel at all levels due to similar assignments and duties wherever they might be in the force area.

Such standardization is of value to the citizens as well. By having standardized police operations, the citizens need not wonder about the operation of the police in any given part of the county. As one Chief Superintendent said:

They [the citizens] can understand the policing situation in Norfolk because if they live in Great Yarmouth they know that the policing system is going to be the same in Norwich or wherever they go in Norfolk. They know there is going to be a consistent approach within the massive area rather than different police forces.

Also included in this discussion of standardization was the issue of a single leader, a single administrative head in charge of this single administrative unit. It is the belief of several of the administrators interviewed in this study that by having a single administrative head in this large organization, they have someone who has the big picture of policing in Norfolk County, something that is probably lost in a diversified system such as that found in the United States.

The concept of the single authority as agency head also carried into the political arena. The relationship between the Chief Constable of the amalgamated forces and with those government bodies charged with responsibility for the oversight of police operations included the overseeing prudent expenditure of funds.

Another strength of having this large organization, again mentioned by almost every official interviewed, was the quality of training. Prior to the amalgamations, many of the smaller police forces throughout England and Wales were not able to provide the desired levels of training to their officers. While some of the larger forces such as Norwich did have their own training facilities, many did not.

The Norfolk Constabulary operates a centralized training facility near the city of Norwich. At this facility there are any number of on-going training programs for officers of the force. It is this centralization of training, and the emphasis on training, that were evident as a positive outcome of the amalgamations. For example, the following historical view was presented by a Chief Superintendent:

Small forces could not afford to run a training department. We used to have, in our force, one of the Inspectors told every now and then that the young constables had not had any training for 12 months so give them a lecture on something. You know, that was it, that was the professionalism.

This theme of inadequate training surfaced in a number of ways. One example was how young constables were assigned during their probationary period. As part of their training, they were assigned to work in high volume areas such as Norwich, Great Yarmouth, and Kings Lynn. In their zest to create a good impression during this probationary period and to learn about enforcement, they were aggressive. As one Chief Superintendent put it:

You have this bunch of kids walking around in uniform and these kids want to get their experience in what to do, so they go and nick them [citizens] for speeding or for traffic tickets or whatever and all the rest because that is how they get their experience.

The emphasis on training had an impact on their organizational structure. When the Constabulary determines how many personnel are needed in their “establishment,” they factor in a given number that will always be away from duty for training at any given time. In the United States it is common to use a rule of thumb that five police officers are needed to staff a 24/7 patrol post; they use a factor of 7 or 7½ to accomplish the same thing. They wondered, how could a force of 10 police

officers ever have the type of on-going training commitment that they have in Norfolk with their consolidated department?

Now the entire force is trained at the central training facility. They have learned that “the cost of not training is a bit more expensive than the cost of not training.” At this training facility they have a professional training staff as well as a large area from which to bring in specialized trainers. In this manner, “the staff has the same education and is doing the same job.”

A significant emphasis by those of the Constabulary dealt with the structure of the organization and the accountability of its managers. From an historical perspective, said one retired Chief Constable, they have “come miles in terms of accountability. . . . You have got this big organization plus you are trying to pacify and please this enormous community or several communities within one area.”

Like many of the forces in England, Norfolk has been through a number of organizational changes since the amalgamations of 1968. The main focus of the new structure, according to one Chief Superintendent, “is to make the force leaner and more efficient in management terms.” They went to what are called basic command units, which are more focused, leaner in management terms, and assign local responsibility to the local Inspector within their geographical patch.

This design reduces the number of senior officers but keeps the local focus. They have, in effect, made police chiefs locally of their inspectors. They have defined geographical areas and “the responsibility of those inspectors then is the day-to-day policing responsibility, problem solving, and liaison with the local communities and

local authorities.” It was this greater responsibility that respondents emphasized when asked about management issues related to the operation of the force. It was evident in many of the interviews that the Chief Inspectors and Inspectors enjoyed the advent of these responsibilities and the opportunity to manage their police force with less interference.

The command officers said that they have, under the newer structure, more “clout” in their division. They decide what the staffing hours will be, given their allocated resources. If they want to up the staffing, “I just deny leave or don’t send people to courses.”

This accountability also extends to financial matters. Under the new structure, these localized Inspectors receive a certain amount of money to operate their force. These police chiefs are responsible for policing their force area within these budgetary allocations.

The final piece of these new responsibilities is the accountability. That is assessed by inspections conducted by Her Majesty’s Inspectors from the Home Office. To quote one of the Chief Inspectors:

Her Majesty’s Inspectors are going to begin inspecting the areas as separate police units rather than the force as a whole. . . . HMI will be looking at us as command units. . . . The goal is to see how we can achieve the best value for what we do and that is where the savings come in.

There were a number of other comments by those interviewed pertaining to the management of a larger police force. These included career prospects and specialization. Both were discussed in the factor identified as Career. But, from a

management perspective, having a force where personnel have these opportunities for career enhancement was clearly a positive development.

There were two final terms that appeared frequently in discussions with senior command officers of this police force: efficiency and resilience. They were used almost interchangeably. In simple terms, it means that the commanders in the field have the ability and resources to move any number of police officers within the county of Norfolk to meet demands for service. On a more local level, those Inspectors with local responsibility have the same resilience in terms of assigning personnel. According to a Chief Inspector, "If you have got lots and lots of little forces and are trying to exercise any form of common practice or influence, it is extremely difficult. In a bigger organization you gain more efficiency, you have more influence." In the United States, larger police forces such as New York City and Houston have such resiliency in their operations, but thousands of other local police forces have no such opportunity.

Not everything shared during these interviews as it relates to the management of larger police forces was positive. There were a number of significant problems. In discussing some of the problems he encountered as a Deputy Chief Constable and later Chief Constable of larger forces in Norfolk, England, one interviewee discussed policing by consent and what that means in terms of the operational ability of the force:

It's the brilliant British attitude that we police by consent. It actually is true that we do police by consent of the populace and especially an unarmed police, and you lose that, while losing your local knowledge and they're being moved off you lose this, because people don't know you. . . . People don't know you and they become reluctant to get involved. They become reluctant to become witnesses in court.

One of the constant challenges facing this larger force is to maintain this connectivity with the community. It is the driving force behind the structural changes, and it was a theme throughout these interviews. There exists a strong sensitivity to this community base, the consent of the people to allow themselves to be policed. A breakdown in this consensual agreement occurs when the force becomes distant from those it serves. Attempts to deal with the problem through technology were mentioned a number of times, largely through the use of e-mail and the publication of e-mail addresses of senior Inspectors to encourage contact by the citizens with their police force. But it was evident that this was a problem that many of the commanders in Norfolk regarded as a serious matter.

A second serious problem has to do with the personnel within the organization itself. The Norfolk Constabulary has an establishment of approximately 1,400 sworn police personnel, but this Constabulary also operates within a national system. It is possible for senior command personnel to move from one Constabulary to another for promotion as well as to stay within their own organization. This organizational mobility, both for senior command and those in the lower command ranks within the Norfolk Constabulary, creates a number of management issues.

One of those issues, according to one interviewee, was the lack of organizational stability:

A Superintendent comes to run an area and, all of a sudden, the guy has been there 18 months, and he's moved on and you get a new one. Each of these commanders comes in with his or her own ideas and the poor guy at the bottom, this is the guy it really affects; he doesn't know if he is coming or going.

It creates what a retired Chief Constable referred to as the Seagull Syndrome, meaning, "They fly in, crap on everybody, and fly out. They are there just to satisfy their own ego." He continued:

They will get posted to an area especially a divisional commander, a superintendent, and they say, "Right, we promote you to superintendent and you are going to be Divisional Commander in Great Yarmouth" and they will go there and they will think, "Right, how soon can I get out of here and get the next rank." And that happens in big organizations.

Finally, there is the issue of communication within the agency. One can end up with, as one interviewee said, distance policy making. Distance policy making is defined as a lack of understanding and identification with the policy under which the officers on the ground have to work.

Akin to this problem is general communication. A Chief Superintendent described it this way:

It is easy to communicate with 15 officers. When I was a sergeant with 11 officers I could communicate with them. They knew everything I was doing, they knew my thoughts because I'd see them on a daily basis. In a massive organization you end up doing "management by memo." Suddenly this guy who is working at Great Yarmouth who hasn't seen the Chief Constable for 2 years, perhaps 4 years, then all of a sudden this memo comes out from the Chief Constable, and he says, "What does this guy know about what I am doing on the ground here," you know, and all of a sudden, before you know it, there is unrest and morale goes straight down the path.

There were three other main themes that emerged concerning the management of the Norfolk Constabulary, namely, politics, the impact on the officers, and the management of change within the organization.

Several of the interviewees in the Constabulary discussed the politics of policing. From these discussions an interesting criticism emerged. It was believed that

smaller police forces were corrupt. This corruption was not necessarily financial; rather it was political in nature.

This belief about local corruption, in one form dealt with the static police organizations that existed when there were a number of smaller police forces. This led to several difficulties. One Chief Constable who is now retired said:

And what they did find was that small units, who were static, same people working there all the time throughout their lives in 30 years in one town could open itself up to corruption. There were people who get away with murder, you know, not paying traffic tickets and stuff like that.

The focus of these comments was also on the political influence that each local governing board possesses when managing its local police force. As one Chief Superintendent described it, "They all bring a political color and they all bring their own influences on policing."

Since 1974, when the local government structure was changed by legislative act to include the management of police forces, some of those earlier political concerns were addressed. The act created more of a tripartite arrangement. The members of this arrangement consist of the Home Office, in the person of the Home Secretary who sets the national policing goals and provides 51% of the funding for local law enforcement; the Police Authority, which oversees the general operation of the force to ensure it operates in an efficient and effective manner; and the Chief Constable, who has operational control of the force.

These changes were intentionally directed to exclude the localized and sometimes corrupt practices by politicians, corrupt in the sense of bringing undue influence and having the Chief (Constable) working to the needs of his or her political

committee. The major reform for the police was the change in the composition of the Police Authority, a change that remains in effect today.

Initially the old system of Watch Committee influence had remained, causing a great deal of tension between the older political view of force management and the newer and much larger forces that were created as a result of the amalgamations. To resolve this tension, the Police Authority was created, and it now has a structure consisting of 50% of those elected by the area served by that particular Constabulary and 50% appointed by the Authority itself. This allows for local input of those serving as well as police executive input. As a result, there remains a focus on local control but, according to those interviewed, much of the political corruption has been removed from the process.

There is also a direct impact on the officers themselves. One problem unique to Norfolk at the time of the amalgamations that most police in the United States would probably not experience under a consolidation was the matter of distance.

Officers under the old system joined the Norwich or Great Yarmouth police forces with the intention that they would be spending their entire career within that city. This issue of borough identity was an important factor when the Norwich and Great Yarmouth police forces were eliminated. As one Chief Constable described it:

The borough identity of the borough police was very strong. In fact, the borough identity continued, as it did within Norwich, and to a less extent Kings Mill, while those officers who joined the borough were still serving, they were legally bound to serve within the borough. Although there was some resistance, it took almost 30 years to work its way through because officers who joined in '66 or '67 joined as the borough and stayed here in the borough. Gradually that has become weaker, that borough identity, because people have retired.

During the amalgamations, one of the great upheavals from the perspective of the officers was that they did not want to be posted to other locations within Norfolk County; they wanted to remain in their home area. Partly this resulted from a desire to avoid having to uproot the family and move 30 or 40 miles to another part of the county.

This issue of moving personnel about within the force area became a great concern. It also emerged, according to one senior official, with regard to promotions:

This is an issue, they can be moved anywhere in the force area. The higher you go within the organization promotion-wise, you are leaving yourself open to a wider posting. There are people who have been traveling 50 miles each way to work, which might not seem a large amount if you are in America traveling, but certainly with the roads we have in the county, this is an hour and half travel each way.

It was finally resolved by agreeing that those within the old city forces could remain within that city area and would not be moved unless they volunteered to do so.

There were other issues that pertained to serving in a larger police force such as Norfolk. These included a sense of remoteness and a lack of direction, both of which stemmed from what was called distance management.

Several interviewees discussed resulting from distance management. The senior police official of the Norfolk Constabulary, the Chief Constable, is headquartered in Norwich. Several felt that as a result there is a lack of understanding and identification with policy that, according to one Chief Superintendent, "the officers on the ground have to work under. This has led to serious problems from time to time."

Similar feelings were expressed by a retired Chief Constable as he discussed his experiences while running the organization:

The last thing that I put down, again about individual officers, is distance management, management by memo. And this lack of personal contact and understanding and the guys on the ground will tell you, if you speak to some patrol cops and ask when did you last see the Chief Constable, several of them would say "I would say that last time I saw him was when I joined which was 4–5 years ago." "When did the assistant Chief Constable last speak with you?" "I don't know; who is he?" And that is a tragedy. We have this little thing in police management terms, MBWA, Management by Walking Around. That's a wonderful concept, management by walking around, if it's done properly because the adverse of that is Management by Walking Aimlessly and that is what half of them do. That's a major problem.

Finally there was the matter of change. In this respect, the police official in England is no different from one in the United States. Whenever anything new is attempted, there is always the matter of the dynamic of change. When one goes through a massive change, such as the one experienced by the police officers in the various forces that existed in Norfolk County at the time of the amalgamations, one can expect to learn that many lessons. In the interviews with the police command, several of whom were in leadership roles as any number of changes occurred, several mentioned this change process.

Their experience was that the use of planning departments paid off handsomely. By the late 1960s, at the time of the final push toward amalgamation, most forces had planning departments. It was these departments that started things off by producing various committees who met to discuss many of the key issues related to the joining of these various forces, such as staff, future boundaries of divisional areas, authorized establishments, how specialized departments would be merged, and the use of the existing facilities.

One senior official expressed the view that, in his experience, speed when making the change was critical:

I think it is a key element in the change management process, it is the inability of the bureaucracies in the organization to effect the change quickly enough. I was involved in a change in 1992; I was the project manager and one of the things that we learned was that we had to do it quickly. This process we are going through now is very elongated and that is causing tensions. A lot of the staff don't understand the reasons for it.

This last point, letting people know what was being done and why, was mentioned by a number of these informants as important during discussions leading up to an amalgamation. It is important, both within the organization and the community, that open and frank discussions be held about the negative and positive aspects of the pending change in policing.

During one of the first interviews conducted during this research, the interviewee, a retired Inspector from the Norfolk Constabulary, asked a surprising favor: After the research was completed, could this researcher tell him why the amalgamations had been done? It was noteworthy that a person who had been a member of the organization for 30 years would ask such a question.

There seem to be two parts to the answer. First, there is the political, and second, the operational. A retired Chief Constable provided an excellent overview of the political drive for amalgamations:

You asked me at the start, was it political? To some degree it is because I think between the main political parties there is a view about the centralization of whatever, public sector versus the localization of public services, etc. In this country, although the conservatives always are talking about localizing services and facilities, they find that after they get into government, they centralized. Labor, the Socialist Party, are exactly the same. When they are the opposition, they want all things to be at the local level; when they get into power, they

realize they can exert more power; they realize they can exert more control financially; they want more centralization.

This view clearly suggests that no matter which party is in power, the centralization of authority is going to happen. This desire to do so is evident when you recall that 51% of all financial support for local law enforcement in England is provided by the Home Office.

The second reason driving the consolidations was operational improvement. Within these discussions, a great number of operational considerations were identified. The clear message by those interviewed in the Norfolk Constabulary was that, despite some operational concerns, they would not have it any other way. This larger agency provides the police officer with the opportunity to create career paths upon which to build, and a means for those who desire to move up in the command ranks.

One of the great challenges identified by those involved with the Norfolk Constabulary is to keep what they call front-end focus. They believe that the bigger the organization, the bigger the cost savings, and the better it is for the officers. But they always keep that front-end focus—public service.

There are any number of management issues related to the operation of a larger organization. However, when asked, “If given the opportunity to return to a system of smaller, independent police agencies, would you do so?” not one responded in the affirmative.

Kent County, Michigan, United States

There are nine law enforcement agencies within Kent County, excluding the Michigan State Police and a number of federal agencies that maintain offices there. Those who took part in this research saw numerous reasons to support consolidating police forces. These reasons included a lack of commonality between police departments, the belief that larger departments can provide better support systems, the view that better trained personnel result from such mergers, and the conviction that there is a better response to crime problems.

The lack of commonality in how policing is done within the county concerned numerous respondents. With the large number of police agencies concentrated around the larger core department in Grand Rapids, there is a great variance in how policing is done. When one travels from one jurisdiction to another, and such a movement is usually transparent to a citizen, as the communities blend in a seamless manner, one is confronted by a collage of law enforcement processes and methods. "There is not a lot of commonality," said one police chief. "Once we get beyond the required MCOLES training, there is not a commonality between departments and how we approach the business of policing."

Similarly, there is a stark contrast between rural and urban policing. Those in the rural departments, according to some, do not have the kind of aggressive regime as those who work in inner city neighborhoods. Conversely, those who work in urban environments are not used to the type of law enforcement found in a much smaller jurisdiction, unless they had worked in such an agency prior to joining the larger force.

It was an issue that was visited in a number of ways throughout the interviews in this county.

Another theme that emerged in support of merged police agencies was that of bigger is better, especially when it came to support functions. Common agreement seemed to exist that the larger agencies in the county such as the Kent County Sheriff's Office, the Wyoming City Police Department, and the Grand Rapids Police Department clearly had the benefit of greater support functions. These departments have their own laboratory functions, crime scene capabilities that include a number of specialists in crime detection and evidence recovery, and large traffic units. Those in the smaller agencies realized that, given their size, they simply could not provide the level of support that these larger agencies are able to provide.

Another strength of these larger agencies is that they have better training programs. Several of the larger agencies have their own training departments. Training is on-going and of a variety that smaller departments simply cannot emulate. As one of the suburban police chiefs noted, "I think you would have more consistent training across all the different departments; they would be used to working as a cohesive team, globally, instead of in their little jurisdictions."

Finally there was a belief that a consolidated police force, especially in the metropolitan area, would result in a better response to crime problems. Specific police tasks, such as drug enforcement and the investigation of burglaries and robberies, would be much improved if these many boundaries were eliminated and crime data were available without jurisdictional restriction.

A number of concerns were also expressed by those interviewed in this case study. Five of the subjects interviewed in Kent County, were Chiefs of Police. It was expected then that the issue of their role in any consolidation of police forces within the county could be a cause for concern. And indeed, the question posed by several of them was, "If there were a merger of forces, what do you do with the Chief?"

That is a question that would often have to be answered before political and organizational support for consolidation would be given. In general, the consensus was that it would not be possible, or advisable, to "take a bunch of chiefs and try to assimilate them into a new organization," as one larger agency head commented. The consensus was that it might be best to give the current chiefs a golden parachute, give them a retirement package that would allow them to leave the new organization. A chief from one of the smaller agencies involved in this research, though, did not express this concern. His view was that he would find a place in the new organization somewhere and that would be fine with him.

Clearly, one of the major hindrances in any attempt to consolidate police forces in Kent County would be political in nature. If there existed unanimity in any respect, it was that the politics involved in such a merger would be the toughest obstacle. A suburban chief articulated the question that her city administration might ask, "What is in it from the municipality's perspective? Why should we utilize our resources to assist when perhaps we are doing a fine job in and of ourselves?"

Another noted that if three existing departments in the metropolitan Grand Rapids area were merged, then "we have three political heads who have different ideas

about how things should be done, about how things should be funded, etc.” The difficulties were illustrated by an example provided by many of the interviewees, namely, what happened when attempts were made to develop a consolidated central dispatch authority within the county? Currently many of the jurisdictions operate their own dispatch centers, which are staffed on a full-time basis. A few of the smaller agencies contract this service out to the Kent County Sheriff’s Office. There has been dialogue recently about changing this system by creating one central communications system. Several of the administrators came to the same conclusion: the political climate is currently against such an endeavor—opposition comes not from the professionals who run the departments, but from the politicians who fear losing control over their police operations.

As one chief put it, this same fear would manifest itself in any discussions about a full consolidation of police forces:

The political reality of it is, I think you can get these kinds of consolidations through the professional disciplines, but when they run into the political entities, which of the three mayors wants to give up control of the police department, particularly to one of the others? They like each other, they work together, but they are not going to put the prioritization of services in their community up for someone else’s decision unless their back is to the wall financially.

A number of operational issues emerged from the discussions about consolidation in Kent County. Paramount are issues related to the redistribution of the force, i.e., how coverage would change for those communities that engaged in a merger. One such problem is how the balance of call loads would be factored in as one considers the nature of rural policing, since rural call loads are traditionally lower than

urban call loads. A number of respondents expressed concern about those citizens in outlying areas losing coverage (service) as a result of resources being shifted to the more urban areas, especially if call load was the primary determinant in patrol force allocation.

Perhaps no other administrative area received greater comment than issues related to personnel. As those interviewed grappled with the idea of consolidating a number of existing police forces, a variety of potential problems related to the personnel in those agencies involved in such a consolidation arose. Since Michigan is a state wherein most police officers operate under a collective bargaining agreement, there are a number of benefits that have been provided to personnel of various agencies. When the consolidation of two or more such agencies is proposed, a number of collective bargaining issues would thus require attention. Failure to address these matters would, in all likelihood, establish roadblocks to merging forces. These issues include:

Benefits: Most cities have different benefit packages. Health insurance, vacation schedules, and leaves of absence vary a great deal from one labor agreement to another. It would be necessary to blend the various packages so that the personnel in any given department do not feel they have had their overall benefits reduced.

Pay: Probably the most difficult area of contention would be the variation in pay scales. No two departments anywhere in Kent County have the same pay scale. They receive different amounts of compensation on different schedules. To accomplish

consolidation, a new pay scheme would have to be developed that would provide for these various compensation packages—a daunting task.

Seniority: Almost without exception, seniority is used to determine a number of factors important to employees. It is used, for example, in some cases to determine eligibility for participation in promotion processes, who has first right to vacation, and specialty assignments. When merging agencies, how would the seniority of the officers be handled? Would they come in with their years of service intact? When that is done, there are always going to be those who lose. It is an issue that has to be addressed early in the planning stage.

Retirement Systems: There is no central retirement system within Michigan. There are a number of different systems, each with its own nuances. Each of these systems has a different level of fiscal commitment required by the employee and, most difficult of all, each system has a different level of compensation upon retirement. Some provide for fully-paid medical coverage upon retirement, while others do not. Among those officers approaching retirement, compensation and benefits are an area on which most will not feel inclined to compromise.

Concurrent with these personnel issues is the matter of the unionization of police forces in Michigan. Every police officer in Kent County is represented by a union. Any efforts aimed at consolidation will have to go through the unions. As one chief put it:

Michigan is more unionized than any state I know of with regard to policing. You are going to have a very fierce struggle with the unions in terms of their wanting to not give up their identity because you're talking totally eliminating the basis of their financial support. Could that be worked through, possibly by

looking at sheer numbers? You have three or four major players in terms of unions and you may be able to divvy them up somehow, but that is going to be a huge issue. They are going to need to be at the table.

None of the respondents in Kent County have had the experience of merging police agencies into a larger consolidated police force. Several of them did recognize though that one of the problems would be how to determine what qualifications would be required for the new agency and what would happen to those in the current agencies who did not meet the new standards. Would everyone be grandfathered in? Would those who did not meet standards be terminated?

Transitioning from working in a smaller jurisdiction to a larger one is seen as being potentially a traumatic event for some personnel. Many chose to work in smaller towns or townships because they did not want to work in a more urban setting. A decision would have to be made relative to their assignments in the future. Would it be possible, given the nature of the new area covered by a consolidated force, to allow those personnel who prefer the more rural or suburban type of policing to remain there, or would they have to move into a new working environment? Many of these people have been very loyal to their city and small department. Making a move to this more complex organization may be difficult for them.

A number of other potential issues were mentioned and will only be briefly touched upon here. What is important to note, however, is that collectively, such issues as these can require a great deal of attention when planners begin to develop a consolidation scheme to present to governmental and department administrators. One issue is the integration of different levels of specialization. The problem of scheduling

is that departments in any given area may be working an 8-hour, 10-hour, or 12-hour schedule. Personnel often develop a preference, and attempts to change schedules often meet with resistance, whether or not consolidation is involved.

Two other issues were the costs related to transition and what to do with surplus equipment or equipment that does not fit into the new agency. Transition costs can be extensive in the absence of proper planning. New uniforms, repainting existing patrol vehicles, purchasing weapons to standardize firearms across the department, and even stationery—all can result in substantial costs when merging police agencies.

Communication between staff, administrators, and government bodies was also identified as a concern. Chiefs in smaller jurisdictions have constant contact with the majority of their personnel, but fear that such communication would be more difficult to sustain in a larger organization.

Mid-management personnel are concerned about the role change they would potentially experience. Sergeants in a smaller agency often serve as shift commanders, while in larger departments that role is typically held by a lieutenant.

How then, would these roles and ranks be equated? As one chief stated, “At mid-management, how will my role change? I have got a comfortable power structure of people that report to me and are allies to me. Will I be able to build that in a broader organization?” Since these mid-level management personnel are critical to the success of any consolidation effort, these concerns are serious.

Finally, there was a concern about boundaries. When there is an incorporation of two or more existing police jurisdictions, those boundaries will change, while most

likely the political boundaries will remain the same. These new boundaries, respondents felt, must be clearly identified to all of the political entities concerned as policing issues and not political issues.

There was general agreement that there would be some resistance to any merger effort, simply because it is a change in the status quo. A change of the magnitude of a consolidation of police forces is bound to carry with it the potential for conflict, as police officers face the loss of their departmental identity, roles are re-defined, status is potentially impacted, and concerns arise about pay, benefits, and working conditions.

Despite this list of operational and administrative woes concerning consolidation of forces in Kent County, there existed an air of optimism among the administrative officials interviewed in this research. The majority of these respondents agreed that, given the proper circumstances and planning, consolidation could work in some cases within the county. Two statements sum up the views of several administrators. Said the Chief of a mid-sized police force:

I do not go out and sell consolidation. I think the political entities involved have to come to that conclusion for themselves, and they have to want to have it happen by non-police administrators and political types. But, if there is an interest, then certainly we would be interested in doing that. I think that it makes a lot of economic and operational sense.

And, as the chief of a smaller agency put it:

Nothing is insurmountable if two people are willing to sit down and discuss it. It might be a long process, it might be a painful process, with a lot of give and take, but two intelligent people can work out anything if they are willing to sit down and do something with it.

Ottawa County, Michigan, United States

Police administrators in Ottawa County had a generally different outlook than their counterparts in Kent County on management issues related to police consolidation. Ottawa County has a much different history in regard to this issue than Kent County. There is a history of consolidations within Ottawa County. One involved the Ferrysburg and Spring Lake Police Departments that merged into a single, combined force. The other was the decision by the governing body in the city of Coopersville to eliminate its police department and have the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office provide police service on a contractual basis. A third major difference between Kent County and Ottawa County is that the latter has seriously examined the idea of consolidation to the point of having a study done in 1994 (Fisk et al., 1994). These two events and the study were referred to often by respondents.

There were many managerial issues raised that were similar in nature to those mentioned by those subjects in Kent County. The elimination of layers of administration that might result from a consolidation was seen as a positive outcome by several respondents.

Questions were raised about how to manage the combination of varying systems for vacations, different shifts and benefits, and different report systems, since each department in the county has its own method of collecting and reporting data.

One such issue was how to distribute the patrol force. One concern was that a larger force would be taking police from the rural areas for concentration in the higher

call volume areas in the cities. Others viewed the ability to redistribute personnel assets according to need as an advantage of having a larger consolidated agency.

Based on the experience of consolidating Spring Lake and Ferrysburg, a number of issues were identified by a local chief of police who was familiar with the history of the consolidation. Unanticipated problems arose during discussions leading up to the merger: Where is the department going to be located? What will the name of the department be? Who is going to run the department? What will be the color of the uniforms, color of the cars—just a whole list of issues that you don't think are important, that are important, especially to the officers.

Another concern was extra costs. Most of the administrators felt that, especially during the first year, there would be extra costs if two or more existing departments were to combine. Not only costs related to new uniforms and painting of patrol cars, but also some other costly items like the standardization of weapons. But there were even more mundane items, such as those mentioned earlier.

Another issue raised on several occasions dealt with the matter of the size of agencies that might be involved in consolidation. While there was no optimum size suggested by anyone, it seemed that the larger the agency involved in an attempt to merge agencies, the greater the problems. Typical of such responses was the following:

I think the size of the consolidation is really an important issue. Absorbing a community where you have 3–5 officers is one thing, to consolidate a community where you may take on 20–30 officers may be a whole different topic.

Another exchange suggested potential problems from an historical perspective. The administrator of a larger organization stated: "If you take a city like Grand Haven, for example, I would think a consolidation between them and us would be extremely difficult. They have a history, a good positive history." This historical perspective was in evidence when interviewees talked about the elimination of the Coopersville Police Department. The decision was made to eliminate the department, in part, due to turnover in the Chief of Police position and a negative image that the department had in the community. This historical image was never more evident than when, after the department had been eliminated and police service was being provided by the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office, public opinion changed. An administrator in the Sheriff's Office reminisced:

I remember one person making a comment, "You guys are real cops," referring to the Sheriff's Department personnel serving in the city after the old department was eliminated. The irony of the statement was that the large majority of the police officers serving in the city, wearing the uniform of the Sheriff's Department, were former city Coopersville City Police Department personnel. That citizen's view, perhaps representing a large segment of the community, was based on a negative past with their previous agency that was altered by the merger of those officers into a larger organization that was viewed as more professional.

A final issue that came from the respondents in Ottawa County concerned the politics of one agency serving multiple political jurisdictions. Accountability of the force to those responsible for governing the jurisdictions was seen as critically important. It often comes down to, as one said, "a matter of trust," the assurance that the policing being done by a department that is not necessarily "their own" is a good product. One of the major managerial responsibilities of the administration in a larger

force providing service to these multiple governmental units is to ensure that this accountability is present and that there is a maintenance of trust in the relationship.

The perspective of administrators in Ottawa County was that, while there are a number of operational issues that would have to be addressed, decisions about consolidation are on a different level. Successful consolidations occurred thanks to careful planning and the willingness of all involved, from the police officer on the street to the highest administrator, to seriously look at these issues and work within a framework of compromise. Several interviewees talked about how issues related to differing contracts with varying pay scales, retirement systems, and benefits were overcome due to the willingness of all involved to look at the idea of a larger agency providing police service more effectively than had been possible historically. The main criterion for a successful consolidation in Ottawa County came down to community. The consensus was summarized well by the Chief of Police in a smaller community.

It would depend on the type of community and the problems that you had to deal with in that community that you are merging with. You take communities of like size and like backgrounds and crime rates, I think it would work quite well. Then when you did have a problem in your city, you would have more resources available to you.

Most of the informants involved in this study in Ottawa County were administrators when the study regarding consolidation (Fisk et al., 1994) was completed. These interviewees almost invariably mentioned that study during their interviews and their belief that the findings, as they related to Ottawa County, were accurate from a managerial perspective. The study concluded that, while there are a number of administrative problems that would have to be overcome, that consolidation

in Ottawa County, on a regional basis, was a viable way to provide law enforcement services. The study also concluded, however, that the political climate would not support consolidation unless, and until, some set of circumstances developed that would overcome the normal resistance expected with consolidation.

Factor: Local Identity and Local Control

This factor was to identify in the interviews matters of local control from a political perspective and identity of the community with the police department. These two themes were clearly evident. But a third theme also emerged, namely, that of the identity of the officer with his or her police agency. Since this theme was closely related to community identity, it was included within this factor. In all three case studies, each of these themes emanated from many of the respondents. Of all of the factors developed during this research, none was more emotionally presented than this one.

Norfolk County, England

The theme of local political control and the interest of local politicians in maintaining a sense of control over their police force dates back to the historical evolution of policing in England. At the heart of that evolution was political control over the police forces of the nation. Those in political power in Norfolk County were no different from their American counterparts. Giving up the control that had been theirs for so long was not easy at the time of the amalgamations. This political tension

did not seem to ease until the final reorganizations in 1974 which defined the Police Authority as it is today.

The following view, as expressed during one interview, seemed to provide a good synopsis of the feelings of those engaged in the political process when the final changes were forced on them:

I suspect that most local populations and police authorities, had they had a choice, would have let things lie as they were. Because most local authorities, I am talking about publicly elected officials, counselors, etc., whether they are small borough counselors, city counselors, county counselors or what, like to feel that they have control over their local police, and it was only with reluctance that the boroughs and the cities gave way and allowed the counties, in the main, to amalgamate and really take over their forces.

This political control was more than just ceremonial. Direct local political control was a major influence on the management of police forces prior to the amalgamations. Afterwards, they could no longer, as one senior executive stated, “run the police officials like they used to.”

This control, at its worst, was extremely direct and involved. Under the old system, they lost direct control over recruitment, promotion, and discipline. Chief Constables, indeed most of their force, operated at the whim of the local Police Commission, and its influences were many and deep. The changes did cause these local politicians to lose that control and along with it, one can argue, some face as well.

The question then is, who was more upset about the amalgamations and the elimination of local police forces—the citizen, in the impacted areas, or the politicians? Perhaps the following, as expressed by a retired Chief Constable, provides one view in response:

Almost from the beginning, the public really did not mind; it was the politicians that minded. I think the public, so long as a police officer turned up when they rang for assistance, they were not concerned what the badge was on the policeman who arrived at their door. It was mostly political, a loss of power. The politicians might try to stir the public up and try to make them aware of things they were going to lose, power over their local officers. But, I don't think it was ever really accepted by the man in the street that this was going to be a problem.

The public certainly expressed concern or fear about losing out in the amalgamations. But it was clearly the view of many interviewees associated with this Constabulary, past and present, that it was much more of an issue for the politicians than it ever was for the man on the street.

As the changes were made in the local governance of police forces in England, Norfolk County included, there remained a sensitivity to the issue of local control on the part of those desiring some political influence over police operations. Previously, the tripartite arrangement was discussed—the relationship between the Home Office, the Police Authority (local council), and the Chief Constable. This arrangement was clearly intended to ensure that a degree of political influence and oversight of the police remained at the local level by ensuring that the Police Authority composition included those elected to positions on the Authority.

The second theme embedded in this factor of local control has to do with the citizens themselves. From the perception of the police officials, what was the attitude of the man on the street as their police forces were eliminated and this new, and much larger police force replaced them? There is an old saying that perception is reality. In the case of policing in Norfolk County, this saying may indeed apply.

One primary problem was the view of the public that those providing police services were much more remote than they had been. That is an issue to which the administrators of the Norfolk Constabulary were, and continue to be, sensitive. If what they said is true, the reality is that police service has actually improved, but perceptions, according to one Chief Superintendent, remain:

What some parishes and some communities are saying, "We used to have senior people at North Yorkshire, we have not got those anymore so you have withdrawn your policing interest in our area to Yarmouth and how can you manage sixty miles away in Yarmouth?" The answer is that we have not withdrawn, we have actually enhanced locally. We have put assets there to manage that.

This sense of distance was identified a number of times as a major concern of the local citizenry. Today, having a single police means one centralized administrative location, hence the change from the old days when a citizen could walk into the local police station and speak directly to the Chief Constable, their own Chief Constable, for their area. When they lose that personal contact, they feel they are getting a worse deal in terms of policing, even if that is not the reality. The result of this remoteness is a perceived reduction in the sense of ownership and identity with their police force. In the past, they may have known the Chief Constable on a personal basis, but no longer.

To counter this feeling of a loss of contact with the police force, a great deal of attention has been paid, during administrative reorganizations, to retaining this sense of local ownership. One method is to use various means to ensure that if a citizen wants to contact a command person within the police hierarchy, he or she can do so through mechanisms such as the internet.

On a more personal basis, the force has a number of programs where personnel from the agency conduct parish constable meetings. Here, according to one Chief Superintendent, "We have the parish constables and members of the community meet, and they are only concerned about their small parish; they are not concerned about the global issues." Such meetings provide a mechanism for the Constabulary to overcome some of these feelings of remoteness, both for the citizen, and their perception of the force and for the constables and their feeling a part of the community.

Even noting these efforts, there was a view often expressed, as in the case of one retired Chief Constable, that in general, the citizens in Norfolk County, and perhaps throughout England, are neither as involved with, nor as interested in, the police forces as are citizens in the United States.

I think a small amount of the community, the ones who were involved in things that happen, who sat on local committees, not necessarily for the police, but who sat on local education committees because those who were involved in local community affairs would get to know where the police fitted into the situation.

But I don't think the populace in general, I think a great majority of the population who are not so much involved in the community organizations would realize the distinction of the new force arrangement. It may be different in the States, where there is a much closer community effort and involvement in local things.

The clear consensus among these police officials was that the local public, as long as they get their service if they need it, are not really too concerned about what police force it is.

Local control also relates to the attitudes of the officers themselves. It is seen in the identification, the attachment, that these officers had with the departments, both before and after the amalgamations. Many of the interviewees talked about this

attachment both from a nostalgic point of view and in terms of how it impacted the transition to the larger police force.

This identification with their own force was, according to most, complete for those who had been members of each of the individual police forces, the Norwich and Great Yarmouth City police forces and Norfolk County Police. "Prior to January 1st," said a retired Deputy Chief Superintendent, "they were Norfolk County, Great Yarmouth Borough and the City of Norwich. Each had its own identity and its own Chief Constable. When I say identity, I mean uniforms, badges, crests, letter heading, and the like."

There existed within this identity a strong sense of pride in their own force. These forces were manned by police personnel who had, for the most part, joined that particular force with the intent of serving their career in that department. Each department had its own history and its little "background funds" as they were called, funds used within the community to support outreach efforts of the separate forces. While not an element causing open revolt at the time of the merger of these three forces, it was evident that this element of pride in the old force had an impact on how quickly many of these personnel assimilated into the new organization.

There were other issues that accompanied this local identity and relationship with the old community, many of them organizational issues, but some were more personal to the individual officer. One Deputy Chief Superintendent identified these personal issues as a loss of contact with the organization, the feeling that they no longer belonged to the organization, and isolation. This was compounded by a

movement away from the smaller agencies where all the officers know the Chief Constable and “know exactly what your policies were, where they stood. . . . There was a consistency.” The disadvantage of such a loss was expressed by one commander of the current Constabulary:

The disadvantages, before they had a very local interest. They joined Yarmouth or Norwich City because they were very local people. They wanted to join that police force. They had that local responsibility and they had that sense of ownership and belonging to the town. As the county moved into amalgamation and through to what was then joint policing and to the Norfolk Constabulary, they still had local identity, that the force was taking not such a local force and things became a little less clear. They, for themselves, saw a disadvantage that their local police chief had gone, that in his place was someone who was not as much in control.

So, less control, so for the officers themselves they started to feel things were starting to erode. They had to adjust to the new identity of the Joint Police and the Norfolk Constabulary. They had to get used to the fact that the force was responsible for things beyond the borders. It was an issue that was to have an impact on the organization long after the merger of the forces.

Along with this loss of connectivity with the organization was, to some degree, an associated problem, a loss of local knowledge. Some argued that this was not as serious as others believed; nonetheless, it was identified as a problem that did have a negative impact on the efficiency of the force. Local knowledge in this sense referred to the intelligence that the local officer had on those within the community, in particular those bent on criminal activity. It is, as one said, “knowing your people.” Many felt that lost was this local knowledge when one moved into a larger force with increased patrol area size and additional responsibilities.

While these views of local identity on the part of the officer were present in many of the commentaries offered by commanders in the force, there were many positive comments about moving away from these separate forces as well. One Deputy Chief Constable said:

I would not want to go back to those separate police forces. . . . I think, it is the same reason that we merged five into three, it is the number. I think people need a wider focus, that they would become too isolated from the rest of policing. . . . If the only interest the officers had was just in the city itself as opposed to what was going on around it, they would lose out.

Moving to that larger force did not mean the total loss of what was called local flavor. Despite the strong feelings that were evident at the time of the mergers in 1968, the dominant feeling now, as expressed by a current Chief Inspector, is that this local connection between the force and the citizens has not only been maintained but has, in many ways, been strengthened.

You talk about resistance, the resistance didn't come so much from the officers themselves because if you were to ask the officers, say at one of our remoter places, what change has happened, what is different, they would probably say "very little" because what we tried to achieve was to retain the local flavor of policing. They now have a local police chief, a local inspector who is directly responsible for what is going on on a day-to-day basis. So they have more local folks than they had before. The fact that their area command is almost sixty miles away is almost irrelevant to them because we provide them with support, etc. It is available to them. The fact that they have to phone people up here doesn't really matter to them. Internally, there has not been a big problem. What we have done with Chief Inspectors is given them more local focus to retain the local identity, so the Inspectors in the northern part of the area report to a Chief Inspector who then takes a bigger view of what is going on in a particular district.

Kent County, Michigan, United States

In general, the political influence regarding the control, or ownership, of the local police department was a strong control issue from the police administrator's viewpoint. There was a consensus that no matter how administratively correct it might be to consider a consolidation of police forces in a given area, the resistance to such a change would be resolute. It is, according to one informant, a derivative of the idea of home rule. As he stated, "I don't think that anyone could justify on an efficiency basis the fact that we have a dozen police agencies in a county that is more similar than dissimilar. What bars it more than anything is home rule." It is that we have a system of government that is grounded in the idea that local government controls that which happens within its jurisdiction in areas such as the provision of public safety.

A number of the informants supported their belief in a strong desire for local political control by examples of discussions they had had with various persons regarding the idea of consolidation. In one case, the informant had been asked to make a presentation to a city council regarding the elimination of that city's police in favor of contracting with another agency. Following the presentation, the officer found out that only two of the council members had wanted to discuss it; the others were very upset about the idea and protective of their police force. Their opinion was explained to him:

The other council members made it known very emphatically that they did not want us to do that. They enjoyed having their local police department, to stop all the traffic in front of the local funeral home when they had a funeral. They rather enjoyed their local officers who had grown up in the community.

In a similar manner, another administrator, when discussing the idea with a city manager, was told, "In no uncertain terms, he wanted his own department because he needed to maintain his type of control over the resources that served the city." It was a recurrent theme, whether the respondent was talking about a city council, county board, or a group of township leaders.

At the core of the issue was the belief that if the governmental unit agreed to a consolidation in any form, it would lose its control over the policing of its community. It is an issue especially prevalent in the more rural areas as they see a diversion of service to the larger metropolitan areas.

Of note also was the funeral home traffic issue for some. Many of these smaller police forces perform duties for their political leadership that a larger force, having a wider area of responsibility, might not be able to provide. Many of these smaller jurisdictions seem willing to pay for such service, even while acknowledging issues such as low pay, turnover of personnel, and lack of training.

One interviewee, familiar with the policing consolidation that has taken place in metropolitan Toronto, noted:

When you look at it in the political parts of metropolitan politics and use examples like Toronto, which has absorbed many small communities throughout the years, it has worked real well for them. But it is an unknown if it will work well here in the United States system.

Despite this air of doubt, a number of these police administrators felt, as one senior command officer summarized the issue, "I still think that we can create local community control and yet have the benefits of single unit resources."

Many of those in Kent County also harbored concerns about the view the citizens would take of consolidation attempts. It is, many respondents felt, a matter of a “winner” and a “loser.” As stated by one senior command officer:

Our citizens would see that as the other community getting all of the pluses and ours getting all of the minuses. I don’t think they would like it. They would believe, I think, that it would enhance the service in one jurisdiction much more than it would in another.

One point heard on several occasions was that the local citizens know their police officer and that moving from that smaller police force into a larger one would create a situation where this feeling of contact between the officer on the street and the citizen would be lost. This issue of familiarity manifests itself in any number of ways, from having the name of their city on the side of the patrol car, to their participation in programs such as Civilian Police Academies that are sponsored by the local police department. One concern raised by many of the administrators in smaller jurisdictions in this regard dealt with the accessibility of the chief of police to the general public. One would, as one administrator said, “lose that ability to walk into the chief’s office and say, ‘What do you think?’ or walk into the chief’s office and say, ‘I don’t like this.’” This level of contact with local citizens on the part of many of the administrators was an important manner between themselves and the citizens within their community.

Does this need to have easy accessibility to the chief administrative officer of a department apply only to the smaller, localized police force? One top-level urban administrator felt that this was not the case. When discussing the idea of a regionalized police force, he offered the following:

My assumption would be that a consolidated service like that, you would have someone put as a supervisor regionally operating different sections of this metro department. You would need the right people there that would be responsive and would be into the civic groups and regular community policing. It could go on where people don't realize the change and realize the benefit of added coverage and better services. The key would be the accessibility and the personalities in place that would represent some type of administrator that is accessible to the local community.

Two very distinct schools of thought emerged as to just how involved citizens really are in their police departments. It may be recalled that police officials in Norfolk County commented on their belief that people in the United States are much more involved in their local government, and hence their police departments, than those in England. But that is not a universal feeling among police administrators in Kent County. One group supported the belief that in general, citizens are totally apathetic toward their police department until it directly affects them in some way. They do not care who comes when they dial 9-1-1, so long as someone in a uniform appears. Others believe that there is a strong association between the police and the citizen

There exists a belief that the larger the force, the less likely that the citizen will be able to maintain contact with those in uniform. To some, larger means impersonal policing. "I don't think it necessarily means a loss of local services," said one interviewee, "but there seems to be an anonymity that goes along with size."

Finally, there is the matter of the individual police officer. Compared to their colleagues in England, Kent County, Michigan officers had a notably different view of the attachment of the individual officer to his or her department. When queried specifically about the potential feelings of the individual officers should a consolidation occur, only one administrator saw the loss of identity with their current police

department as a potential problem. The other responses to this question focused on issues such as promotion ability, working in a force with the ability to specialize, and other advantages discussed at other points within these findings. The overwhelming sentiment was that the benefits to be gained by the merger of smaller agencies into a larger entity overcame the attachment these officers might feel for their current police force.

Ottawa County, Michigan, United States

The level of concern about the political implications of police consolidation expressed by Ottawa County interviewees was lower than those in Kent County. That is not to suggest that many did not see the political issue as important. A Chief of Police noted: "The biggest issue would be the political issue that you would have to deal with. Nobody wants to give up their political domain. The local mayor, councils, whatever, want to control their own department."

The feeling was that these political groups are, to some extent, driven by their public egos. They pride themselves on providing quality service to their citizens, and it would unacceptable not to have input into the delivery. It is, as one administrator pointed out, "both an internal and an external situation." It comes down to "selling it to the public that, yes, this is the most efficient and effective way of doing policing."

These concerns, having been compared to those respondents in the Kent County study, the issue of politics generated much less discussion. Perhaps this is because of the more positive experiences that have occurred within Ottawa County

and a generally prevailing view that the consolidation of some existing police forces in the county, given the right circumstances, would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of police service in some communities.

Much more attention by these interviewees was directed to the matter of public feelings about the potential elimination of current police departments in favor of larger organizations. As one Chief of Police put it:

I think before you consolidate, you really have to gauge the community's feelings. I think sometimes as police administrators we think we know what is best. We say we can do this more efficiently; we can do it cheaper. But the community may not want that—Do they want to save a few bucks and make it more efficient or do they like it as it is?

It is this ability to understand what the community wants that is a constant theme throughout these discussions about local control and community identity with their police force.

There were several views about just what this idea of “politics” means. One officer defined the term as the emotions involved in the community's attachment to a police organization. The following comment by a senior official was representative of this issue:

This issue is that we also have to deal with politics and I would consider this the emotional side of things. People view the possession of a police force in their municipality as being desirable, because it is to a degree their identity. Once they have established that identity, whether it makes economic sense or not, tradition, so to speak, takes over and it does not matter if it makes sense or not. It is just that we have always done it this way. It does not necessarily have to do with even the level of delivery of service, but how you feel about those people in uniform. That is the image of the community. It is our department, and how the agency is projected is a direct reflection of how the citizens feel about themselves. The police officer is the first person that is identifiable with that unit of government.

The notion of keeping this community symbol, no matter the cost, was a theme heard often. One Chief of Police explained:

They are more concerned about maintaining that identity, so, I have found it very interesting that sometimes people are willing to pay more to keep their small departments. There are communities that probably could save money by contracting services with the Sheriff's Department, but they are unwilling to do that because they are losing that identity. People enjoy having that police car driving down the street and saying, "That is my police car."

Beyond this issue of emotional attachment is the further element of fear.

Several informants discussed the belief that citizens want those cars in their neighborhoods because that is what prevents crime. They fear that under consolidation, those cars will be gone. This visibility is a real issue to these citizens.

Those in Kent County, as well as those in England, expressed the additional fear that there would a loss of familiarity under consolidation. They fear that they "will not know their police" because they will be part of a bigger group of people. These officers will be more, as one administrator put it, "like an occupation force." This response is a fear that must be recognized, this same informant continued, "But the administrators have to be willing to take those issues and address them appropriately."

One story related by a senior official regarded the period of time during which Coopersville was deciding whether or not to eliminate its police department. It provides an interesting insight into this most emotional of issues. There was a meeting in the city to allow citizen input as to the advisability of having a contract with the Sheriff's Office.

One gentleman stood up in the back of the room and said, "We don't want to lose our local police officers." He was told that was fine and was asked to be allowed a personal question. You have five police officers; if I were to ask, of

those five officers, can you name me two? And if you can tell me, the chief's name? He gave the chief's name that was two chiefs back and he couldn't name two of the local officers. He was then asked, because of the long standing involvement of the Sheriff's Office, can you name two or three deputies? He rattled off a half dozen deputies from the general district area up there that he had known for years. So, that is what he was telling us. That is his fear of losing "personal identity" with the local police.

So the question becomes, in Ottawa County, do these interviewees feel that this matter of local identity is sufficiently strong to preclude police consolidation? The general consensus, among those who had shown a willingness to consider consolidations as an alternative, was that the issue of community identity was not necessarily a deal killer. Said one administrator, "I would think if you could provide the same quality of service and the people had the same feelings of security and the community doesn't deteriorate, they could probably accept it."

Again, Coopersville is an example of potential acceptance. When the transition from the local department to the Sheriff's Office took place, it was done with some careful planning. Said one official:

At midnight we changed out of their uniform, the same people, and put them in different uniforms and we moved a black and white patrol car in there at five to twelve and got the other cars out of there. They were virtually the same officers. We told them they were responsible and one of the first duties was to go out and introduce themselves to all the businesses in their quadrant. It was really amazing that within 30 days everybody knew who their deputies were. And they were the same people who had been the police officers.

There is no question that community identity with a local police force is an emotional and therefore political reality. One example of how this identity can be transferred to a larger organization in a seamless manner does not suggest that these administrators denigrated the potential impact of this issue. But these informants did

feel that it was not an issue that should, if properly acknowledged and addressed, interfere with a transition into a consolidated agency.

Finally, what about the officers themselves? The underlying question is whether officers who have worked for a particular agency and within a specific community can make the transition to a larger, consolidated department. By far, the consensus of the Ottawa County informants was that such a transition was possible. "There are internal rivalries," said one, "when agencies are combined, but professional police officers can make this transition." It is, according to this consensus, a matter of preparing the officers for working in a new environment and, in most cases, at a different pace. Call loads are different, and operational procedures may be new. But when combined with the workings of a program such as Community Policing, those officers who have worked in a smaller, more intimate community can make the transition. The benefits, they feel, to the officer on an individual and professional basis far outweigh such issues as interagency jealousy.

Factor: Efficiency

Another of the significant factors concerns efficiency. It was a factor prevalent in the English view of their amalgamations. Indeed, it was a driving force behind much of what they did at that time. The view of efficiency was similar but received lesser emphasis than in the English model. Specifically, this factor concerns the lack of effective use of police forces and the resources available to them. This would include

the application of technology, the development of systems that are functionally compatible, and the ability of police forces to interact on a formal basis.

Norfolk County, England

There were five elements of a generally positive nature identified concerning efficiency through the Norfolk County case. Two were the most often discussed. One was the gain of a consistency in equipment and technology and the resulting increase in the availability of resources. The other was the accompanying resiliency that this created. Three other elements were identified somewhat less frequently. The first of these was the historical view of the inefficiency of smaller forces. In general, there exists a belief that smaller police forces lack efficiency due, among other things, to differing policies that forces had even on matters that were similar in nature. These smaller forces served as independent units as do the American forces, and the informants discussed the inefficiencies that this situation creates. Many of these inefficiencies, such as incompatible communication and computer systems, will be discussed momentarily.

Maintaining consistency across the entire area of the amalgamated force was an efficiency of benefit to the public, though usually without its general knowledge. A local citizen traveling in Norfolk County and having need of police services would be assisted by police personnel who were similar to the officers they were accustomed to in other parts of the county. This is because the force operates as a single unit with similar vehicles, radio equipment, and operational procedures. Such consistency makes

it much easier for a citizen to deal with a police force and to understand how that force interacts and works with its citizenry.

Cooperation among forces was an operational gain cited often by these administrators. There was, historically in the county, a degree of jealousy and rivalry among the forces. Amalgamation was a positive step in the elimination of such sometimes counter-productive practices. A Chief Inspector observed:

There is increased cooperation in surrounding areas. I mean mainly it's the same force. I don't know how your boundaries go in the United States, but here there used to be this jealousy, rivalry, whatever you want to call it between the different forces. Because we were this borough force within this big county, there could be this animosity between all levels, on an individual level and on a personality level, so that if you had an immediate pursuit or whatever, you could have problems because, you know, you are leaving the borough area, you need to go on the Norfolk radio and so forth, and depending on how they felt as to whether you got the cooperation or not. Now, if you are all working in this large one-force area, then you actually reduce all of these problems so, you know, it's got to be a benefit in that sense.

This elimination of such barriers to effective police work was mentioned on a number of occasions as one of the great benefits of eliminating the smaller departments and combining into a unified police force.

As mentioned above, the two most discussed issues relating to efficiency were the gain in consistency, both in terms of equipment and systems, and the increased resources. On several occasions informants lamented about the old days in which forces neighboring each other were unable to communicate due to incompatible radio systems. This problem was more acute when, during the investigation of serious crimes, these agencies were not able to compile data relevant to a case due to such incompatibility. This advantage of the amalgamated force was summarized by one

official: "Efficiency was a factor. Certainly one crime reporting system, one traffic accident recording system, one administrative system for the county must have been a better proposition. End of year statistical returns alone would inevitably be more accurate and realistic." This standardization of systems across the force allowed for such compatibility across the nation as well as within Norfolk County.

This new efficiency is seen even in more mundane areas, such as the office equipment and supplies needed to operate a larger force. With headquarters serving as the administrative clearinghouse for support services, the various districts can order from a central location with its common forms and other equipment. "So if we want a box of paper," according to a superintendent, "or whatever, we look at a menu and say, I'll take one of those, and it comes down the line."

When reflecting on the advantages of the larger force, many expressed their belief that one of the greatest advantages of the amalgamated force was the availability of resources, specifically personnel. It allows for a great deal of resiliency, the ability to draw upon significant numbers of police personnel from other districts within the county force when such manpower needs arise. Since the force operates under a unified command, these requests can be handled in an expedient manner without the jurisdictional quibbling common when police forces operate separately. It eliminates the older difficulty of having to "beg or borrow" from other forces. If those forces were not inclined to send support, there was little that the requesting department could do about it. Along with numbers comes experience. A Chief Superintendent, when discussing this advantage noted:

Now, if you've got a murder what will happen is, you can draft other officers in from all over the place with a lot more expertise because in a greater organization you've got the potential to have greater experts and you can bring them in.

This ability to augment your force by the drafting of others within the same force who possesses the desired expertise was viewed as an enormous advantage. Whether it is to call out experts, dogs, or even helicopters, these are advantages that smaller forces would not have.

Kent County, Michigan, United States

For purposes of this study, the factor identified as efficiency examines both the views of police administrators regarding a lack of efficiency in a given police agency format and the desire to improve efficiency. One of the themes expressed in Kent County was their belief, in general, that a consolidation of two or more forces would likely produce several improvements related to the efficiency of police operations. Political and financial considerations aside, there are a number of improvements that could be made in the provision of police services. Concurrent with the expression of these potential improvements was an underlying feeling of frustration. In the absence of consolidation, there is a perception that efficiencies do not currently exist.

Many of the issues raised were the same as those identified in Norfolk County. Here, however, they are desired goals as opposed to the latter's sense of having gained these efficiencies as a result of their completed amalgamations. The main advantage, seen by those in Kent County, was the better utilization of human assets. When

comparing what a larger force and smaller agencies can do if efficiently utilizing police officers, a Senior Police Official commented:

Here, in terms of personnel to throw at a problem, when it needs a lot of personnel, small agencies can't do that. We had a homicide where I sent four detectives and two scientific support people over to Wisconsin for a week to work. We still had to carry on business for the rest of the service area. Small agencies can't do that. Had this area had a small department with 15 or 18 officers, they could not have done that. That same homicide took two other officers to Texas for 4 or 5 days. In the first 10 days of that investigation we spent 405 overtime hours, let alone all of the regular time we spent. Small agencies can't do that.

In a similar fashion, several of the problems with having smaller, sometimes uncommunicative, police agencies were classified as a lack of coordination. One police executive offered the following view:

If you want to equalize the performance result, then I think that our system has to be much more equal and it is not. We have 83 counties; we have 83 different ways to approach policing. We have statewide hiring standards; that does not mean we hire the same people. We certainly don't train the same people after we hire them. We don't equipment them the same, we don't use the same kind of reports. That is maddening to me. There is not a need to have all those different kinds of systems functioning under the umbrella of criminal justice. It does not support achieving far greater results.

Embedded in this statement are a number of the arguments offered by informants regarding problems with the current system of segmented law enforcement agencies within Kent County, in particular in the metropolitan area surrounding Grand Rapids. Many of the officials in this metro area point out that while they have some ability to seek manpower from other agencies under emergency conditions through mutual aid, no such assistance is readily available for those situations that require greater human assets on a more routine basis. A major case will be a serious drain on their staffing requirements as well as on their financial resources. These are not matters

of minor significance. A concern was expressed more than once that the citizens of these areas are under the impression that law enforcement operates in a manner that optimizes the sharing of resources among the various law enforcement agencies in a given area. These interviewees understand that this is not the case, and offer it as one the major gains they can envision for consolidating police forces into larger, more efficient agencies.

Related to this are other means identified to improve police service. These include a larger pool of personnel who are specialists in given areas, and the elimination of duplication of all services, including communication. The matter of communication was of special concern to a number of the respondents. The following comment by a Senior Police Official reflects this concern:

Going back to duplication of effort, we have in our area a tremendous communication gap due to technology. Let me explain that. Dispatch centers, there are some three or four different ones in Kent County alone. They don't communicate with each other, unless it is a directed communication. So, my officer working in our eastern-most district car may be responding to a county complaint that another police department who has their own dispatch service through another organization has no idea we are responding to. We are well within their reach and grasp. So the duplication of effort and certainly the communication, I think, are the two biggest factors that would lead me to think that consolidation of services might be a wise direction.

It would, many concluded, provide a higher level of service, with a more timely response to complaints and improved communication over the current fractured system. The end result was a consensus that larger agencies, as a result of consolidation, would most likely improve crime resolution by being able to apply greater resources in that area. It comes down, said this official, to a pooling of fiscal

resources that would allow for the accomplishment of these desired goals of improved service.

Certainly, because many of our funding resources are based on organizational size, it would provide a better size to allow for a better opportunity to apply for other resource and funding options for the department. A shared organization would also share funding resources to develop new technology and replace old technology as it outdates itself. Whereas a small department today may have to depend on a larger department's ability to keep up with technological developments, a single department would manage that responsibility on its own in a partnership with the community so they could provide a better overall service to the community.

The ultimate goal was stated by a police official who concurred with the above conclusions regarding improving communication and service in general. He identified the ultimate goal as keeping everyone working in the same direction. Even though people may have geographical areas or responsibilities, they understand that they are all working together to accomplish the greater good for the whole organization and the whole community rather than their individual areas.

Accomplishing this "greater good" was the underlying motive heard from many of these Kent County informants. There were those who did not believe that the consolidation of police forces would occur. They cited the political impediments as paramount. But when discussing the factor of efficiency, these informants were passionate in their belief that there exists the potential of greatly improving the quality of police service to the citizens they serve, and that they would be able to do so

without losing their central character of having a personal relationship with their community. No other factor seemed to elicit this sentiment more.

Ottawa County, Michigan, United States

Many of the issues related to efficiency identified in the Kent County case study were also found in Ottawa County. One notable exception was the inclusion of the ability more efficiently to provide on-going training for police personnel. While the issues mentioned in the Ottawa County study were generally the same, they had just as much passion for them. Indeed, when many of these informants talked about how they could provide a much better level of service for their communities if they had the ability to provide greater levels of manpower when needed, they were as passionate as their colleagues in Kent County.

Specific cases were cited where problems related to gang activity. They could have used a greater influx both of patrol and investigative resources than the home agency was able to provide, and the ability to backup other units without the necessity of gaining approval from a higher authority. One informant discussed the ability to provide a full-time detective to work on crime and also the addition of school liaison and DARE services to their public schools as a direct result of a consolidation.

Improved efficiency in Ottawa County related to the ability to call upon additional human resources when the occasion called for it and, as mentioned, the ability to train, because they would have sufficient staff that would allow them to pull

personnel from line duty and accomplish the continual training so necessary in the field of law enforcement today. A Chief Executive thus observed:

The amount of training that is required, the amount of continual re-training that is required . . . the community and citizens can't afford to have a small department because it is going to take more people. In order to have somebody on the street, you are going to have to have more people just because of the training requirements alone. You add all of those things together, it is just to the point that the citizen can't afford to have a department in a small community by itself.

Contemporary police administrators in Ottawa County, as in the other communities included in this study, are aware of the severe impact that the need to continuously update personnel through training has on the ability to maintain a well prepared police force. For the smaller agencies, these requirements present a unique dilemma of having to train while maintaining service. It is no easy task.

The view of one executive summed up the feelings of many. Admittedly an advocate of consolidation in an agency where such views are not universally shared, this informant spoke of this same ultimate goal as did others, that of providing better service to their community for the good of the citizens they serve and the personnel within the organization.

So, as far as the consolidation, I think the citizens would be served much better, particularly in those immediate need cases. We can respond more units, more quickly than if we have this checkerboard of police services, not crossing this line. So I think anything we can do to consolidate those services would allow us to be more effective for the community and more efficient for the community.

The desire of all of the informants, whether they support the overall idea of consolidation or not, is to provide the most efficient police force they can for their citizens. Each of the interviews produced the common feeling that political and other

issues notwithstanding, the larger police forces would be able to provide these improvements in efficiency.

Factor: Fiscal Considerations

It is generally recognized that the matter of cost of police service is of paramount importance at all local levels of government township, village, city, and county. As a result, it is not surprising to find that fiscal considerations emerged as one of the factors included in the debate regarding the consolidation of police forces. Specifically, this factor includes concerns expressed about the current cost and cost savings to be recognized by alternative service formats. In each of the case studies, the matter of cost was evident as a consideration when looking at smaller versus larger police forces.

Norfolk County, England

The view of fiscal issues in Norfolk County is perhaps most at odds with the cases studied in the United States. This is a result of the means by which the British police are funded. Without going into detail beyond the scope of this research, in today's law enforcement scheme within England, local police operations are funded on a 51/49 percentage basis, with 51% of the funding coming from the Home Office and 49% coming from local taxes. As a result, many of the general guidelines of law enforcement, such as annual targets or goals, come not from a local analysis of need but as edicts from the Home Office. This financial arrangement has been a result of

financial strains on the system as a whole, rather than as a direct result of the amalgamations as such.

The same issues concerning the politics of the operating police forces in Norfolk County relate to the fiscal factor as well. The means of operating prior to the amalgamations compared to those of today are much different. From the perspective of several interviewees, operations are much improved. An example was provided by a retired Chief Constable:

Prior to the current arrangement, the county police forces were governed by a committee of the County Counsel. It was difficult when two-thirds of them were County Counselors, sat on other committees of the County Counsel, shared in the total financial pie, were involved in slicing up the financial pie, money going to social services, education, fire service, etc., to realize that they were supposed to be independent.

It is different now. The Police Authority now is independent of the County Counsel and the majority of the people on the Authority are not County Counselors. The County Counselors have representation on it, but a minority representation. In fact, the budget has certainly to be taken to the County Counsel but goes now to the home Secretary, central government, for final approval. No longer does the County Counsel have control over the budget they had 10 years ago.

This shift in control of the budgetary process of the Constabulary resulted from an evolution within overall government structure that ultimately improved the fiscal processes for the administration of the local police services.

There were also more specific references to fiscal considerations resulting from the amalgamations. The general consensus of the informants in Norfolk County was that the amalgamation of police forces was driven, in large part, as a means to eliminate fiscal waste. As one said, "All the politicians and the government expected that after an amalgamation there would be some savings." They expected that these

savings would come from the elimination of some ranks within an amalgamated force and eliminating some layers of management, and by moving into centralized purchasing, which provides the standardizing of equipment with its associated cost savings.

In regard to the elimination of ranks specifically, the informants believed that with the elimination of numerous police forces, they would be able to provide a leaner structure with fewer upper management positions, and hence a savings in personnel costs. As the organization has continued to redefine itself and change its structure to meet the current demands placed upon it, this desire to continue this streamlined management structure remains in place.

Within this restructuring also comes the local management of fiscal resources.

As one area commander described the process:

We have an area focus. An area budget which is more devolved at my level and as time goes on we will be almost autonomous to manage our affairs. We have targets set and we have them match resources against targets.

The most significant savings from the amalgamations stemmed, without question, from being able to eliminate small, individualized purchasing practices in favor of a larger centralized process. When looking at smaller police operations, the Area Commander observed:

How do you equip that with police vehicles, how do you equip it with uniforms, how do you equip it with all manner of different things, because you are actually buying small quantities of off the shelf products whereas to get any value for money that is what we talked about. My understanding is that by amalgamating, everything allegedly got cheaper.

This evaluation of the fiscal comparison between smaller forces and a single larger force was representative of several heard during the interviews, particularly from those in higher ranks who tended to play a larger role in the fiscal operation of the Norfolk Constabulary. In looking at the operation of the Constabulary, it is clear that, in part driven by the targets set by the Home Office during budgetary approvals, the concept of “best value” is of a dominant importance in the operation of the force. Does all of this savings and refinement of the budgetary process come at no cost? Not according to some of those interviewed. There is a concern, as expressed by a Chief Superintendent, that while the Constabulary does well at meeting its targets for fiscal responsibility, there may be a cost in service terms.

I think a lot of relations have grown worse because the money is tight. We don't have the money and we have to do what we can to keep the service that we provide and try to make more use out of our money. Best value and making the best value, but whose best value? Is it the organization's best value or is it Joe Public when he picks the phone up and needs an officer, does he get an officer?

Kent County, Michigan, United States

Unlike the views of the Ottawa County informants to follow, those interviewed in Kent County were more difficult to categorize. One area of agreement was that finances would be the single ultimate issue that could lead governmental leaders to consider consolidation of police services. It reflects both the cost of the service itself and the ability of the community to support it. If, for example, the cost of doing business for a police department rose so high that with the available taxing authority, a community was unable to support it, then politicians would have to look at some other

means to provide these services. There exists in many communities, according to one informant, a trend against additional tax burdens:

I think it is a trend that is going on and will continue. Especially when tax proposals have been turned down, government may have to look at reorganization. People are not going to keep paying taxes if they are not getting what they are paying for.

This view was expressed in a number of ways. One senior law enforcement official reflected this sentiment:

I think you have a more professional, city manager type of people, even in the smaller towns, who look at the dollars and say this can be done more efficiently than what we are doing. Police agencies are invariably a large user of tax dollars and there are cities around where they are absolutely the biggest user of that city's taxes.

It comes down to getting the biggest "bang for the buck." Do the smaller agencies truly provide that? "To have what we call 24/7 coverage, you are not talking about three people," said one official. "You need a minimum of nine people to provide such coverage." The question is, does the particular local governmental entity have the capacity, or desire, to pay for such a level of service? Some stated that the only way to level out the playing field is to eliminate the duplication of administrative staffs and implement other such cost measures that result from consolidation.

Another area of concern involved the issue of specialization. There is no question that modern law enforcement becomes more complex each day. The gains we have witnessed in DNA as an investigative tool are but one example of the complicated business in which the law enforcement officer participates every day. It is costly to maintain that level of expertise necessary in these changing times. Several of the respondents were frank in their admission that, given their restricted manpower

and fiscal situations, they do not feel that their organization will be able to keep pace with these new demands. One administrator's view reflected that of several respondents: "I think you will see that as the cost of specialization continues to rise, and to maximize the utilization of those specialty teams, I think that could force, just the logistics of that, could force some consolidations."

In Norfolk County, reference was made to levels of service and the balance between "best value" and the service given the citizen. The concern expressed in Kent County was whether the levels of service would be consistent with past experience. One answer seemed to be no. While experiencing a cost savings for the taxpayer, there would be a commensurate decline in service to those same citizens. One chief administrator of a smaller police agency summed up this view as follows:

I think with consolidation there could be a cost savings, but is it going to be at the cost of level of service? I am looking at our \$750,000 to \$800,000 a year budget. If we consolidated manpower services, say you went to a consolidated police department, the cost for shift coverage would be spread out more. It would be a cost savings to the local taxpayer but it would not be a complete duplication of service levels. Instead of two people a shift you would have one car a shift, plus lag times at shift changes, versus doing everything right here in-house. If they were duplicating man for man, there would not be a savings that way.

So the answer would seem to be that yes, there can be a savings under a consolidated agency, but what must be evaluated is at what cost in terms of service would such a savings be accomplished? Balanced against other factors found in this study, there would seem to be answers to that question, but a further discussion of these will come later.

Ottawa County, Michigan, United States

The fiscal comments of those interviewed in Ottawa County police organizations fall into three general categories: the problems that evolve when a governmental unit can no longer afford police services, the economies of merging existing police forces, and the buying power to be gained as a result of such a consolidation. In summary, the interviewees agreed that there would be an expected cost savings if a number of smaller police agencies either were to combine into a larger force or join a larger existing force.

Respondents were asked to answer the following question: "What do you think would drive a community to consider the elimination of their police department?" It was felt that the community would consider consolidation when it could no longer afford to provide police services. One chief administrator thus stated:

The number one thing would be the cost of the police department, the total expenditures for manpower, equipment, and so on. If it got to the point where the tax base was not sufficient to cover the costs, they might look into a merger to reduce costs and try to keep the same types of services they are accustomed to.

But, even with the concern about the ability to provide the service, it was also evident that there must be a case made showing that such a move is economically feasible and desirable—"economically attractive" as one executive put it. At what point does this "economically attractive" condition exist? That depends upon the community itself. Many of the informants were of the opinion that communities having their own force will go to great lengths before they agree to examine other means of providing this service. Even when such a case can be made, they still must convince an

often skeptical electorate that it is the best course of action, sometimes the only course of action, to resolve the problem.

Part of that eventual discussion addresses the costs of operating a smaller department as opposed to a larger one, with the ultimate question being, "Are we getting the most out of our tax dollars?" Many of the Ottawa County informants questioned the viability of smaller agencies from a fiscal perspective. One official stated:

I have just always been a very strong proponent of consolidation, because I look at the dollars that some of these organizations are spending and I don't think that they are getting the service level that they think they are getting out of this. When you look at a small town that has two police officers, some of them over a hundred thousand dollars a year, well look at what that could buy as police service if it was part of a larger organization.

Concern regarding service for dollars spent was evident in many of the comments made. Two further examples, both from senior police officials, provide evidence of the concern about operating smaller agencies.

One senior official noted the cost of maintaining a police force today:

From my experience, today especially, it is costly to operate a department of 3, 4, 5, 6 officers and there are a lot of them around. If you have a department that size and you have another department right next door to you, it just makes sense economically to combine them into one department. You can do so much more for the community.

The other executive emphasized, "Increased budgets, personnel costs, the costs of police service skyrocket even in a 4 or 5 man department."

The difficulty is that many of these smaller police agencies are called upon to provide levels of service that can only be given by much larger organizations with greater resources. Citizens see these other communities receiving such service and,

often mistakenly, believe that they are receiving the same service, even though a much smaller amount of fiscal support is available. It is a complex and challenging issue for many police departments.

The final category of comments refers to economy of scale, the belief that when purchases are made for a larger quantity of goods, cost savings can be experienced. As in Norfolk County, there were a number of comments made about the logic of being able to combine purchases in order to save through lower bulk pricing. It was, according to most, one of the primary benefits of going into a larger organizational structure.

Despite the advantages of eliminating smaller agencies in favor of larger organizations, there are disadvantages too. The transition from one form of policing to another is not be without its financial cost. These costs, if not managed well and within a strong organizational framework, can cancel out most, if not all, of the fiscal benefits accompanying consolidation. Many of these pitfalls come under what one senior administrator referred to as “start-up costs”:

The initial start-up costs would be one of those issues that would tend to stifle moving toward a more centralized position as far as consolidation goes. Some of the start-up costs, if indeed you are going to project this as an increase in service for the public, you are going to have increased costs whether that is for early retirement buyouts in some cases, whether that is additional equipment, whether that is additional facilities, vehicles, etc. If indeed you are going to consolidate, one of the things you may want to do right off the bat is to also project one identity. If indeed you do, that means that all the gear has to reflect that one identity, along with vehicles and so forth. So those initial start-up costs may be prohibitive.

So the fiscal gain or loss as a resulting from consolidation is fluid and depends on the circumstances under which the action is taken. It is, as many indicated, a matter of sound planning and fiscal management.

Factor: Career

Perhaps no other factor developed during the course of this research reflects the human side of police consolidation more than career development. During the course of the interviews, whether in England or in Michigan, it was not possible to discuss consolidation without the human element coming into play. It is, after all, an event that would impact those involved in very real ways. Their perceptions on whether this change from smaller departments to larger is good or bad largely depends on how it impacts their lives and careers.

The definition of this factor includes those issues that impact the careers of officers and other department personnel, both within current structures and if they were to become part of a consolidated force. The views of those in England who have experienced the amalgamations present a wide range of issues related to career. Some of these views are comparable to those in the United States, while others are uniquely “English” in nature.

In all cases, it is important to remember that these informants are all expressing their views as senior command officers. Consequently, these views are perhaps more global than they would be if those interviewed had been solely line personnel or clerical staff.

Norfolk County, England

“It is not about policing; it wasn’t about style of policing; it was always about the human element, and the disruption to the family.” So stated one police official as he looked at the impact in human terms of the amalgamations in Norfolk County on those involved, from the Chief Constables to the line personnel. One of the apparent outcomes of the interviews in this county was that at the time of the amalgamations, and even now as the Norfolk Constabulary considers becoming a more regional force by combining with another county, the view of all concerned is perhaps best described as “What’s in it for me?” It is one of the answers most critical to develop when one is looking at police consolidations, according to a retired Chief Constable:

If you are amalgamating in the States, it would not be two or three forces by the sound of it. You might be talking of several dozen forces amalgamating to become, what I would call, a viable force. Then there is always this position of, “What is in it for me, where shall I be?” Any bright young thing in a force who could see that he is going to get a promotion out of it would be very keen. All those who saw themselves losing out would be against it. You really have to set out your guidelines at the beginning.

When merging police organizations, one of the more difficult political issues involved the Chief officers of the various agencies. It was a concern heard many times in the interviews in Kent and Ottawa counties, and it was one given a great deal of attention at the time of the amalgamations in England. The issue was how best to fit the officers into the new structure, and the answer had many parts. One of the best descriptions of its resolution was given by a past Chief Constable who had a great deal of experience with amalgamations:

Internally, within the force itself you always had problems with the union, what we call the Police Federation, as to how you share out the pie. Inevitably, the senior officers of the smaller forces to be amalgamated would lose their positions. You tried to accommodate them by making them heads of smaller areas. You would certainly change their titles, a Chief Constable would become a Chief Superintendent, or even Superintendent. Very often, the top post of Chief Constable was given the chance of taking early retirement. From my memory, I think quite a few did that. They were offered early retirement with an improved pension. It was assumed that they had served 30–35 years, although they had only served 25 years. They could then take into account extra years to increase their pension and go early, and a number did. A few took posts within the police service, but not directly in charge of a force or within their amalgamated area. They went to training schools as commandants of training schools, regional training schools. They went to the National Police College, taking posts as senior instructors, etc. I don't remember any real problem with absorbing the Chief Officers and the very senior officers of the smaller amalgamated forces. Usually the Chief Officers of the largest force in the amalgamation remained in their posts. But sometimes deals were done politically so that the Chief Constable of the larger force remained Chief Constable in the amalgamated force, but the Chief Constable of the next larger force to be amalgamated became the Deputy Chief Constable, the Deputy Chief Constable of the original largest force moved down a peg and became an Assistant Chief Constable but retained the same salary, and therefore had no loss of income. Slight loss of face perhaps, but that is how things were manipulated.

It was a complex and political process of merging the personnel of multiple agencies together. That issue aside, the interviewees were asked how the amalgamations directly impacted on the personnel in the lower ranks. They cited a number of positive gains when the Norfolk Constabulary became a single force, particularly for those officers who came from the smaller forces in Norwich and Great Yarmouth. These included more opportunity for promotions, an increase in activity, chances at specialization, and better training.

Most often mentioned was the matter of promotion. It seemed logical to many of the informants that the larger the force, the greater the opportunities available to the

officer for promotion. As the Constabulary continues to examine its structure, and given some restrictions placed on it by budgetary constraints, there still exists a large number of supervisory positions available for which a constable can compete.

Issues of promotion in the Norfolk Constabulary carry a slightly different weight than those in the United States because of geography, and the decision to take a promotion is not as clear cut as it might appear. It is 78 miles from Kings Lynn to Great Yarmouth. In order to take a promotion in the Norfolk Constabulary, it is often necessary to move the family to the new post area, or attempt to commute. The latter is often not seen as viable, given the road system in England. Traveling that distance would be a great hardship. As a result, the decision on whether or not to seek a promotion is given a great deal of thought, and, as many informants suggested, the commute keeps many potential supervisors from making the move into higher positions. This situation would become even more prevalent if an anticipated merger with Suffolk County occurs, and the new force area becomes that much larger. It is an issue unique to England, which drives the issue of promotions to a great extent.

Two of the positive outcomes of the amalgamations were increased activity and chances for specialized assignments. With the amalgamations came a realignment of the service areas within the county. As a result of these geographical adjustments, the patrol area of officers, in most cases, became larger. Those who felt this change the most were the officers of the old Norwich and Great Yarmouth city forces, because one result of these new alignments was a greater workload. The informants

held the view that most of the younger officers enjoyed the increased level of activity, while the more senior police officers did not.

An often mentioned advantage of consolidation was the opportunity for specialized training. With the larger force comes any number of tasks that require unique talents, such as K-9 handlers, crime scene technicians, and crime laboratory staff. The amalgamations were viewed as a tremendous chance for officers who might not have otherwise had the opportunity to advance their careers by becoming involved in specialized areas of personal interest. Beyond the chance for promotion, this view of the opportunity for such special assignments was seen as the greatest advantage to the line officers when moving to the larger force.

Finally, and somewhat concurrent with the idea of specialization, was the opportunity for training. With the larger force and the availability of manpower to provide the necessary coverage on the street, it was possible to greatly enhance the Constabulary training programs. There is an on-going program of training. At any given time, a portion of the force is undergoing training, most often at the regional training facility in Norwich. From the administrator's perspective, having this capability to provide continuous training to line and staff personnel is a great benefit to the overall operation of the force and one that might not be possible if the force were smaller.

Kent County, Michigan, United States

In Kent County, career enhancement was the single greatest advantage that the informants saw from consolidation for the general members of their departments. Two terms seemed to be used almost interchangeably, namely, *promotion* and *personal growth*. As one senior official commented:

From a personnel or human resource model, certainly you would be offering a vast number of opportunities to the staff that they would never have had under their former circumstances. Probably many more options for promotion or career direction, career path development than you would have in a small agency, a mid-size agency, or in some cases even a large agency. The options are limited only by the people who are sitting on the board of the organizational committee or in the supervisory or command roles in the organization. Tremendous potential and growth options are available.

As in Norfolk, these informants placed a great deal of weight on the chance in consolidation for advancement by promotion, and the ability to break into areas of specialization that might not otherwise exist. But with opportunity come challenges. Several of those interviewed saw these challenges as the line officers might view them. While an officer in a smaller department might see himself as in line for a promotion due to seniority or whatever, in their smaller department, when they move into a larger agency, more often than not such promotions are done through competition. A Senior Commander observed:

They may think that they are in line for promotion or for some other type of assignment in their own agency, and if they have to compete with a lot of others, they may not be in line with that or they may have to realign themselves or make some effort to get in line. It is true there are more opportunities for advancement and more opportunities for various assignments, but there are more people to compete with.

As with those in Norfolk, the Kent County interviewees recognized a number of side benefits to a consolidation. These included the ability of their officers, especially those in small departments, to work in expanded patrol areas with the accompanying increased call load. They also recognized that having the ability to specialize in various areas brought a degree of career development to the officers of small departments that was only possible if they became part of larger organizations.

Finally, from an administrative perspective, there emerged a new issue as it related to the career track of officers in smaller agencies—turnover. Since all of those interviewed for this research were senior police officials, it is not surprising that they view the issue of turnover as a career consequence in some cases, especially within the smaller agencies. As one Senior Command Officer explained:

If you have an agency that in and of itself is very small, you are either going to put those individuals through a lot of personal changes, or you have someone doing a lot of floating. It is very wearing on the individuals. Hence, you lay the pattern for a great deal of turnover in those size agencies.

This official's comments reflect those of others in small departments who expressed their frustration at not being able to retain younger officers who, all too often, came to the smaller department with the idea of using it as a stepping stone to a larger department, where they saw the most career opportunities. It is an ongoing and difficult problem, and one that, lacking changes in how smaller departments do business, does not seem to have an immediate solution.

Ottawa County, Michigan, United States

When the informants in Ottawa County looked at how the personnel in their departments might respond to the idea of a consolidation, career enhancement was the most frequently identified consideration. Many of the command staff pointed out that the line officers, in particular, would have a greatly enhanced opportunity to perform a variety of different tasks, have more diversity in their call load, have the chance to move into areas of specialization that were simply not possible in the smaller agencies, and have greater opportunities for promotion. It was by general consensus one of the real advantages of merging smaller police forces into a larger single entity.

They also felt, as one expressed it, that these changes might be viewed differently, depending on who one identified within the department. An Executive Officer noted:

If our guys take three calls a night, that is a lot of calls. Then you tell them you are going over here and you are going to have to take 10 to 12 calls a night; that is culture shock. They are not used to that. I am sure the younger guys would probably love it; they would be a lot busier. Middle to the top [in seniority], they may not be as gracious; they may not accept it like the younger ones would.

There are other advantages as well from the perspective of these police managers. There would be a higher competitive standard for promotions. With a larger pool of personnel interested in various promotions and specialized tasks within the department, they would have a much better chance of being able to place the right personnel into the right positions.

Many of the informants also appreciated the ability to upgrade training. As with those in the other case studies, the Ottawa County command personnel felt that having a larger work force would enable them to remove personnel from line duties more easily in order that they might have continuous training to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

Another administrative advantage, and similar to that expressed in Kent County, was the reduction of the “rollover” of personnel. By creating the larger department with its career opportunities and, most probably, better pay and benefits, the problem of constantly training personnel, only to lose them to larger departments would be largely overcome. By having greater career prospects, many agreed that the larger force would be able to attract and retain better qualified people.

Another advantage of consolidation emerged here that was new to the mix. This new element was organizational pride. It is important to remember that many of those interviewed in Ottawa County had a direct or indirect part in the study of consolidation within the county or took part either in the consolidation of Spring Lake and Ferrysburg or the elimination of the Coopersville City Police Department in favor of contractual services with the Sheriff’s Office. This new element was one of organizational pride.

These command personnel felt that, in those immediate cases where a new policing arrangement occurred (and many of the personnel of the old departments were integrated into the new department), a new sense of pride was evident. It came, they believed, partly from career enhancement, but also from becoming part of

something bigger. These administrators said that they viewed this change as a move toward professionalism and that the line officers, in particular, responded to that change in a positive manner. “So I think there is,” said one official “whenever consolidation is talked about, the cops feel very confident in themselves, and if they look at it as something positive, they can, for their future, readily accept it.” Another executive expressed similar sentiments:

I think at the line level, I would be very surprised to find very many line officers in a department of less than 10 full-time people not excited about merging into a larger department. You would have the benefits of advancements, of higher pay, of better benefits. From my experience with officers that we did bring along, every one of them was really excited about going to a larger department.

Factor: Service

Of all the factors that evolved during this research, none was more directly related to the citizen’s perspective of the nature and quality of their police service than this factor. The definition applied to the factor was: “The levels of service provided either by the existing department or by the creation of a new arrangement.” As will be seen, the application of this definition takes on many forms.

Norfolk County, England

There were two themes that developed during the course of the interviews in Norfolk County. One theme concerned the idea of service from the perspective of direct service to the citizens. The second was the ability of management to make decisions that provide better service.

Within the former was a clear division on whether or not service had been improved since the amalgamations. One group of informants tended to support the belief that much of the service customary to citizens within the county had been lost as a result of doing away with the smaller agencies in favor of the county-wide department. Others felt much to the contrary, that indeed nothing had changed and that they were receiving the same general level of service as before. We shall examine first the negative point of view as represented by a retired Superintendent of the Constabulary:

Many communities remain to be convinced that there is now better service. Police are perceived as remote, out of touch with local needs. Resources appear even more stretched, and previously sacrosanct symbols of police presence, such as police stations, are no longer "open all hours." The bobby on the beat is extinct, and no longer are efforts made with the solving of routine crime, which is often "screened out" for lack of "solvability factors." The community, of which I am one, is not impressed.

Such is the view of some of those interviewed who expressed a sense of loss as a result of the amalgamations. It is interesting that in looking at the background of some of those expressing these concerns, we find that several, including the informant just quoted, were members of the Great Yarmouth police force at the time of the amalgamations. As such, the Superintendent had a perspective of policing in that area that included pre- and post-amalgamation, with, perhaps, a prejudice for the former.

Another interesting angle came from an informant who expressed a view that the loss of service, if true, was perhaps not a result of the amalgamations themselves, but resulted from other factors. A Chief Superintendent thus stated:

Some members of the public may well have thought that reorganizing would result in the loss of the community type of policing we had. This did not

happen during the amalgamation period. It has happened in recent years though.

One explanation comes from the argument offered that as the amalgamations progressed, and reorganizations occurred, personnel in the agency were forced into movement that came at the cost of service. It was a common concern that, from a local cop's point of view, when personnel are moved all the time, it is going to restrict the "local knowledge" that they can gain from their involvement in the community. Several felt that such moves occurred often as a result of the amalgamations, particularly as divisional commanders on down in the command ranks were subject to relocation.

As such, these perceived losses of connectivity with the public, combined in some cases with the actual reduction in physical presence of the police as compared to pre-amalgamation, resulted in some fundamental changes in how service is provided to the public today.

The erosion of points of contact with the public occurred. The voids that this has created have been filled by others. Centrally inspired financial savings have led to the introduction of traffic wardens, school crossing patrols, and an enormous increase in the security industry in areas where the police traditionally had a role to play. There are generally perceived to be fewer police officers on the streets than there were previously.

It was not the assessment of all, however, that the situation was as dire as expressed above. Some of the informants wondered if Joe Public even knew that they were being served by a force that went through a number of administrative changes.

Their bottom line was different and more basic; when they wanted a police officer, they expected one to come. "At that stage, to Joe Public, it didn't really matter what we called ourselves," said one area Superintendent. "It did not matter what shape we were, as long as they got the service." So, did the level of service pre-amalgamation and post-amalgamation really change? Some argued that it did not, including a retired Chief Constable:

It is often said that there is a remoteness of the top officials and senior officers from the local communities. I don't particularly go along with this because, in any amalgamated force, you have got the same constables and sergeants usually patrolling and policing the same areas as they did before. The community, the local citizens, are meeting the same officers, whether it is prior to amalgamation or post-amalgamation. Therefore, I don't see that there is any great problem.

One additional gain for the public is the availability of resources for the cop on the beat that resulted from the amalgamations. These resources led to a greater ability to respond to criminal investigations and general complaint response. These included the availability of dog teams, helicopter support, and the ability to call in additional manpower when local circumstances dictated the need.

Those who argued that there are fewer police on the street, from the perspective of the citizen, are justified in their view. The evidence does suggest that the number of officers remained relatively constant, but that these personnel were responsible for a greater area of responsibility. The old bobby on the street did disappear in favor of the more mobile cop. But all was not doom, as the amalgamations also brought about the ability of management to greatly improve the command and control of their staff on a county-wide basis, an advantage that many of

those interviewed, as we will see, viewed as a very positive outcome of the creation of larger forces.

The other definition of service comes from a purely administrative point of view. It describes the ability of the force to respond to those events and needs that arise when having a degree of flexibility for the allocation of resources greatly improves the overall quality of that response. For the Norfolk Constabulary, the ground work for this ability was laid, according to a Chief Constable, at the time of the final movement toward national amalgamation efforts:

You must look straightaway at the government hand in this because the government of the day saw it as a means of improving the police service by expanding the availability of facilities to all forces so that the metropolitan police in London have not got the best facilities, and the smallest force in the rest of the country the worst. They tried to make sure that there was a leveling out of the opportunity to use the best facilities, resources, in the way of training, in the way of forensic science laboratories, and specialists within forces so that amalgamation led to a reduction in forces which led to all forces having access to the same type of facilities thorough out the country.

This leveling of opportunity is an important part of the overall strategy to improve the quality of police service. Its impact on Norfolk County was to provide a means for improvements in training, forensic capability, and other services that, while not transparent to the general citizen, add a great deal to the ability of the police force to provide a quality level of service.

Without question, the foremost advantage of the larger force, according to several of the informants, is the ability to manage their resources in a more effective manner. It was, according to a retired Deputy Chief Constable, one of the desired outcomes of the amalgamations.

It was also believed that there would be improved standards and quality of service, which would be managed and determined centrally for the total single police force area. In this way, we would be able to provide a highly effective and more mobile response to any contingency which may happen within the force area or to provide quick support to our forces.

It was a commonly held view of many of the managers of the Norfolk Constabulary that its ability to manage resources over the larger force area was a fundamental improvement in the provision of police services. Not having such a capability is unacceptable. As one Retired Chief Constable said:

I think it is nonsense that in an area that requires critical policing with huge problems, that you should not be able to bring in sufficient police officers to deal with the problem. I believe that you should have the capability of moving resources about as and when required.

It is this benefit of being a part of a larger organization, and the ability to move officers around to various geographical locations as needed, that is an improvement over the historical situation. The old Norwich City Police or those in Kings Lynn or Great Yarmouth were generally hamstrung in their capabilities simply by the fact that they had limited resources. These restrictions translate, according to those interviewed, into a lesser quality of service to their citizens.

As can be seen, there are a number of opinions relative to the service that the force in Norfolk provides its citizens. One thing that most seemed to agree on, however, is that it is different than before pre-amalgamation. The answer less readily available is whether or not these changes are for the better.

Kent County, Michigan, United States

The perspective of service for those in Kent County relative to the provision of service is somewhat more hypothetical than seen in either Norfolk or Ottawa County. The informants in this case study saw the factor of service from a number of different perspectives including the expectations of the citizens, a small town versus larger city policing responsibility, the concept of service and accountability, and what service might mean in a post-consolidation arrangement.

The bottom line, to most of those interviewed, was that the citizen demands adequate police response when called upon. It is, according to one Senior Police Official, a matter of expectation and demand:

The citizens really want an adequate response at those times that they call. Most people don't call the police very often; we get a lot of calls, but not very many people call very often and they want an adequate response when they do. There is getting to be more and more accountability than there used to be. I think consolidation is going to become more and more of an issue than it has in the past.

It is this spirit of community expectation that was a commonly heard theme, particularly among the informants engaged in law enforcement in smaller communities within Kent County. It comes down to how the policing is done, what type of service that citizens in a given community come to expect, how that community relates to their police, or perhaps more accurately, how the department relates to the community. It is the lifeblood of the small town police force and one of the elements that most fear would be lost under consolidation. One chief executive of a smaller agency within the county discussed his and the department's philosophy in this regard:

I want to say I can't see it happening but I can. Who is to say that tomorrow the Sheriff's Department couldn't come and make an offer like Coopersville? I don't foresee that. Mainly because just of the spirit that the department operates under, all the employees. I don't know a lot of what happened in Coopersville, but it was, problems started at the top and I would follow it in the paper. Problems that they had with individual officers that were not addressed. It was, the way for their counsel to deal with that situation was to disband and to contract. I had conversations with counsel members from there, but I feel two thirds of my burden is to be sure that this department operates in the spirit the community expects the department to operate in. There is every bit as much a burden on the officers and the clerks and our reserves and volunteers to be presenting our department in a positive image when you are basically screwing over the public, out arresting them and writing them tickets and things. You are going to have confrontations, but like when we hire new part-time people, we get someone who doesn't buy into that spirit. They have been listening to battle stories from Grand Rapids P.D. shift parties and they come here and try to operate that way. They are not with us very long because we get a steady stream of complaints. You try to work with them on how you stand at a car and how you speak to people on a traffic stop. The officers that will adhere to that will continue on with us. We don't care if they write a ticket or issue a warning. We have guys who will empty a ticket book in two days and we never get a complaint. They are enforcing the laws, but they are treating the people the way we want them treated.

It is such a definition of spirit that defines the concept of service for many of the chief executives who participated in this study. It is recognition that, in many ways, small town policing is different from that in larger cities. In the smaller department officers and staff tend to do it all—traffic enforcement, criminal investigations, juvenile crime complaints, and barking dogs, while in the larger departments many of these tasks are performed by units specializing in that activity. It is a concern with losing that level of service so often expressed. It is not a matter of wanting to provide more specialized services to their community; it is simply that these smaller agencies tend not to have the resources available to them for this kind of service.

This concept of service and accountability is a very strong intrinsic value that is held by the administrators who participated. Said one Chief Executive:

I look at it that a consolidation of services would tend to go toward the philosophy that follows the big police organizations such as having a Sheriff's Department or a Grand Rapids P.D. that is now going to administer this and say we are going to be very sympathetic to the Kentwood's or to the Lowell's, and the Rockford's and the Sparta's and Cedar Springs. The people who are calling with basically nonsense-type calls that we will respond to and take care of however we can, larger administrations are saying "we don't deal with that kind of stuff" and I am afraid they would carry that philosophy into the consolidated police service.

So the challenge of service from the perspective of those in Kent County is one of both the nature of citizens' expectations and the assurance that the citizens covered by a consolidated police force would experience the same level of service post-consolidation that they did before the merger of forces. It is a daunting challenge.

Ottawa County, Michigan, United States

The challenge of service in Ottawa County, while including some of the same issues as those in Kent and Norfolk County, did add a different dimension to the discussion. They, of course, considered the public aspect of consolidation and agreed that, for the most part, the community defines the nature and degree of law enforcement desired. They also concurred that if and when any discussions regarding consolidation were to be held, one obstacle for the residents might be their determination of whether or not they are getting a good deal from the change. Do they feel that they are getting the same service they had before the consolidation?

The majority of the informants in the Ottawa Case Study adhered to the belief that, with consolidation, the citizens would see an improvement in their overall service for a variety of reasons. This observation by a senior command officer in one of the larger county departments was representative of this view:

A positive impact is again the consolidation of services as far as what the public can expect. And again, going back to what the public wants for services rather than what we think they want for services. I think it would probably have a greater degree in this issue that we call community policing. I think it would give us the ability to function better because our neighborhoods, the neighborhoods and the citizens we service are so transient. I think the more you include in the consolidation, the services will lead to a better understanding as far as the community itself is concerned. Also, the sharing of information between police officers. I think that is one area that we lack in now. "Those are my records and these are your records and the two shall not meet and we shall not share them."

There was also the matter of the management of resources, most pronounced in the opinion of those in Norfolk. They believed that there would be a better use of manpower and more efficient use of public dollars so far as public safety and those issues like quality of life within the community are concerned. Would there be a loss of identity with the individual police officer? Perhaps, they agree. But with programs such as community policing, combined with the ability to manage resources and emphasize the areas of greatest need, much of this loss can be compensated for by a higher level of overall service.

As with those in Kent County, in particular, there was the debate about the small versus the big agency mentality and how that equates as service to the citizen. It is, according to one Senior Official, a matter of perception:

I think it is a perception they have; I am not sure how real it is. I think there is going to be a difference. A small department you can do some things; you have

the time to do them but you couldn't do them if you were regionalized. They have a lot of time on their hands, they have a lot of time, time to check doors. If they were regionalized, you may have one working one area and you may not be able to offer that kind of service.

It is, no doubt, a different kind of policing, and the service provided by a larger agency may indeed be altered from what the community expects. So, the factor of service is somewhat difficult to define. In each of the case studies, one of the common denominators is that service is defined by the community much more than by the agency providing that service.

Factor: Jurisdiction

In Chapter I of this research, some attention was paid to the matter of jurisdiction. It is perceived as one of the larger problems with the structure of American law enforcement and one that leads to a great deal of duplication and wasted resources. As such, it was expected that the factor of jurisdiction would become evident during the field work related to this project. It is defined here as issues related to boundaries and past initiatives in which two or more governmental units have been involved. There are two distinct areas that fall within this factor. One pertains to the operational jurisdiction involving multiple agencies and the other relates to politics.

Norfolk County, England

It was evident from the comments made in Norfolk County that much of the drive toward the amalgamation of police forces in England came from having to address the difficulties arising from having a myriad of police units. This need often

displeased the local units of government. But one of the driving factors of the amalgamations was purely political, having much to do with the manner in which the forces prior to amalgamation were operated. Control then often was driven by political influence rather than policing needs. A retired Chief Constable gave a detailed explanation of the situation that, in his view, was a leading factor in the decision to amalgamate the forces and to change the political structure in which they operate.

If it was left to the police themselves, I don't think for a moment they would want to go back. One of the big factors that the police service gained from the amalgamations in the 40s and also later in the 60s was that the county councils had less power over their police forces than the city and borough councils had. The city and borough councils had quite a large say in promotions, and it was not the Chief Constable of the city who promoted, it was the council, the police authority of council. It paid to be friendly with the mayor and the rest of the politicians in power. In the counties, that was not the same case. In the counties, the Chief Constable alone promoted and disciplined, sacked. So, there the county counselors did not have the same power. You talk about what would happen if the position could be reversed; I don't think any police officer who has a knowledge of it would want a reversal back to the cities and boroughs having control of the police forces and power over promotion and discipline, recruitment, and retirement, etc. I think what was quite a blemish, there is much to be said for the county system with the Chief Constable alone being responsible for promotion and the rest. Not having political influence over it led, in the boroughs and city forces, to police officers pandering to local politicians.

That comment is an interesting historical perspective on the problems experienced in Norfolk County at the time of the amalgamations. It also provides some of the rationale for making the change to a single force.

Operationally, there were also a number of issues raised that are part of this whole jurisdictional issue. One of the problems that came as a result of the amalgamation with the local councils was trying to agree on the future police service in that area. With the amalgamations, these views became more global in nature. There

were any number of difficulties with having multiple forces within the county, many of which have been discussed elsewhere in this research. These included the ability of having one Chief Constable coming before the governing council to make a bid for increases in manpower or expenditures, instead of having a number of individual Chiefs pursuing these goals.

But deciding to have a single force was only the beginning. Now the issue was how were the forces going to fit in and what the boundaries were going to be. It was a difficult problem, as explained by a retired Chief Constable who experienced the event:

There was always an argument over where the police boundaries would run. Would they be along the lines of the political boundaries between council areas or would they be on other boundary lines? For instance, would you follow the boundaries of the communication system, the telephone breakdown? Would you follow geophysical boundaries, the rivers, etc., to be a boundary between the divisions of the amalgamated force? In the main, we tended to try to follow political boundaries, in order to make the divisions within the force area fairly compatible.

These issues were initially resolved at the time of the final amalgamation in Norfolk County in 1968, but they have been under continuous review and modification since that time. They have changed the number of divisions, and hence the boundary lines, a number of times in an attempt to ensure adequate police manpower distribution over the force area. This has been made somewhat easier in Norfolk County, as the responsibility has shifted to a single Police Authority that has oversight accountability for the operation of the force.

The operational issues that evolved from this case study were one of the more universal of all the factors. None of the informants involved in this research expressed a negative feeling about operating a single police force in the county. "Clearly we used

to laugh about crossing the bridge into Yarmouth Borough and that would be a totally separate entity,” said one district Superintendent. The idea of having problems with geographical boundaries within the county was very alien to him, as he has served his entire career in an amalgamated force.

The general feeling was that where previously there had existed a concern only for what took place within the city limits of Great Yarmouth or Norwich by those city forces, now there was an advantage in having the entire force area viewed as a whole. “I would not want to go back to those separate police forces,” said one Superintendent. “If the only interest the officers had was just in the city itself, as opposed to what was going on around it, they would lose out.” They did not want to return to a system where separate police forces were generally on their own. They much prefer the structured and efficient system that is now employed in the county. Under the old system, they argued, it was possible for one force to ignore the request of another for assistance. Now it is possible, as a result of the central command structure, for areas to request assistance with the knowledge that such assistance will be forthcoming. “If you go back to the old county and borough police forces, they would just ignore that. Policing in 2000 needs that degree of flexibility,” said one area commander in describing how they provide assistance to other areas when needed to handle events that demand additional manpower.

They also expressed a desire to avoid the multilayered type of law enforcement common the United States. One district commander expressed it as follows.

If you have a multilayered structure, if you have a state police structure and then a department, it is how these things relate together, then sheriff

departments, who is accountable for what. Either you will fall over each other or things fall down the cracks and that is what we are trying to avoid.

Kent County, Michigan, United States

The same two jurisdictional issues, political and operational, were evident in Kent County. While many of those interviewed thought that some forms of consolidation in the county would be a good idea from a policing perspective, they also felt that there was little, if any, political support for the idea. A consensus was that this political view, pending the overriding by some other strong factors, would hold the current structure in place. As one Chief Executive put it, “Would I support it, yes. Do I think that political support exists for it? Absolutely not.”

The political issues notwithstanding, the respondents viewed the idea of having so many forces, often in contiguous geographical settings, as senseless. As one Chief Executive Officer said: “For example, Lyons-Muir in Ionia County off M-21. Two very small communities. Two totally separate communities separated by a river, the Grand River. They have separate sewers, separate police departments and I think it is silly to stay separated.”

It is, from one viewpoint, a recognition that policing is changing. Or that perhaps it should be changing. Specific to the Michigan situation and the area not only of Kent County but Ottawa County as well, one Chief Executive offered a view of what these changes are and what their impact on potential consolidation might be. Having expressed previously in the interview his general support for consolidation, he offered the following:

As urban sprawl continues, the delineation between the kind of policing in the core city versus the rural sheriff, state police post kind of policing we have seen over 35 years together, is changing. You now have between Grand Rapids and Holland, there is precious few open spaces that are left. You have expanding cities all the way out there and for many sheriff departments in the state, they have probably been more impacted than the local ones because they have gone from rural policing to urban policing as a result of urban sprawl and people moving out of the cities. Our policing has become more closely aligned than separate and different. I don't know what is gained other than the local control issue from having multiple separate agencies that all have their own chiefs and all have their own bureaucracies.

This statement that "our policing has become more closely aligned than separate and different" is a compelling summary of the matter of jurisdiction. The notion that we are doing the same work in a duplicate manner is one that resonated throughout these interviews. Agreement existed that these jurisdictional boundaries need to be changed, but it was also agreed that such changes within the Kent County area will be difficult to attain.

Ottawa County, Michigan, United States

Among Ottawa County, little attention was paid to the factor of jurisdiction. It is perhaps due to the number of instances within the county where such issues have already been resolved, as in the case of the merger of the Spring Lake and Ferrysburg Police Departments. No specific question was asked about giving consideration to further mergers. Nonetheless, a few of the respondents did identify geographical areas mergers which seem to be logical, if not politically acceptable.

From an operational viewpoint, it is seen as a difficult prospect. One of the operational problems foreseen, like those discussed in the Norfolk County study, dealt

with the oversight of merged agencies. How would the operation of the department, including the budget, be managed? It was apparent from the interviews that the organization of such an oversight committee would have to be carefully developed in order to ensure that the communities involved in such a consolidation all felt that they had sufficient political control of the policing service. The greater problem would be persuading those involved to think beyond their own jurisdictional limits. It is not an easy challenge.

Factor: Support

One factor in any discussion regarding the consolidation of police services pertains to attracting support for the idea. In this study the views of the police administrators were sought particularly on the politics of gaining citizen support. In neither case was the intent to be in-depth. It was, rather, the attitude of the police executives and administrators about the issue of support that was being explored and their thoughts about what the reaction might be in Ottawa and Kent counties. For those in Norfolk, it was a more educated response as they were able to provide a post-amalgamation response to this factor.

Norfolk County, England

There was little in the political commentary offered by those interviewed in Norfolk County. In earlier research on consolidation, there was much discussion about the manner of governing the police services and many other issues involved in the

political side of the amalgamations. The perspectives offered in this case study, however, were directed at the response of the citizens.

The prevailing viewpoint was that, so far as the citizens were concerned, their desire was for a good police service, regardless of how the police were organized. They want officers on the streets, officers they know, and a police response when needed. Some expressed the opinion that, as a result of the merger of the forces, there had been a loss of some of the service on the local level. But, other than the absence of the bobby on the street, few people truly saw or understood what the change in police structure really meant.

If these conditions were met, the administrators agreed, then there is general support for the police service. So, during the time of the amalgamations in the 1960s, it was important that the Constabulary gain citizen support during times of transition. One of the means of gaining this support was through a program of information. Operational plans were thus published in local newspapers with groups or individuals encouraged to submit their views. It was one way of ensuring that they felt a part of the process.

There was both an acknowledgment of the success of the transition into a single force within the county and a concern that citizens felt a sense of loss, leading to a loss of support, as a result of the changes. The prevailing sense, as evidenced by one Area Superintendent, was that the amalgamations had occurred with little or no loss of support:

As far as I am aware, the public did not have cause to complaint. The transition appeared to have gone smoothly, especially when the new headquarters

building was built and opened a few months later. Overall, I do not believe there was any real change in the relationship between the community and the force. The changes following amalgamation were relatively few and introduced over a period of time. They did little in the way of affecting the general policing of the county. I expect it was a case of “when I need a policeman I make a phone call and one turns up.” The fact that the officer was probably dispatched by a different system would not have concerned the members of the public.

It was evident that the Constabulary continues to cultivate public support.

Each year they publish a detailed policing plan that informs the community of the past year’s activity within the county and what the goals are for the upcoming year. They encourage citizen input by use of tear off and return comment cards in the back of the report. Several of the informants also talked about their obligation, as part of their duties, to meet with and inform community groups about the activities of the force and to ensure that a flow of information is maintained.

Kent County, Michigan, United States

While many of the administrators in Kent County saw general benefit of consolidation in the enhancement of the careers of their officers, and service to the community, when it comes to the factor of community support for such a change, their overall views turned pessimistic. The prevalent viewpoint was that, in general, the citizens of their respective service areas are satisfied with the police service they receive and would see no reason for making a change. Comments were made such as “I don’t think we could make the case for a change” and “I don’t think the people would like it.” It was evident that the idea of consolidation within the current forces in Kent County would not happen without a reason.

Some felt, however, that, while it was not a viable idea from the perspective of community support, it was not impossible to see it happening given specific circumstances. For example, several of the administrators felt that such an alternative might be viable in other cities that were experiencing fiscal distress that was affecting the provision of police service.

But for those within the Kent County case study, the attitude was that, lacking some other factors, general support of the community for such a change in policing would not be supported by the community. A Chief Executive had this view:

Given my knowledge of these communities, I don't see anything that is significant that would do that. I guess that all of the other possibilities might be external, such as if the legislature acted or the federal government acted and mandated it. That would be a fiat and they might have some reason that would not be supported locally but locals may have to comply.

What then does the support of the community rest on from the administrator's point of view? Would a change in structure have a negative impact on their support or is it something more basic than that? One Chief Executive offered the following observation:

I think the last part may be the key part. I think the citizen wants to feel safe. I think the citizen wants to know that if they call the police, they will get a response. The opinion of the effectiveness of their police department is probably going to be based on their last encounter with the police department. . . . I don't know that the citizen is going to have as much, have an accurate feel as to whether or not the department is effective or not to begin with and whether they are consolidated or not. I don't think they are going to think it makes much difference.

The findings of the study in the case of Kent County would suggest that, lacking an external situation that drives the community to look at a consolidation or

other means of providing police service, the support from the community for such a change would not be there.

Ottawa County, Michigan, United States

In many ways, the views of the administrators in Ottawa County mirrored administrators in Kent County concerning this factor. It comes down to a matter of individual community choice and expectations for their police service. If they feel good about their service, then they express support for their police agency. They concurred also about a possible loss of the personal touch with citizens and a resulting loss of public support.

The views of many were encompassed in a response given by one administrator who took a global view of the county. The reply was given in the form of a question: "Does the community really care? When they call for a cop, they want a cop. Do you think they care if it's their own, the county, or the state?" Imbedded in this response are a number of views, as shown by the reply of one Chief Executive, on the matter of support, and how the factor of support is evaluated within Ottawa County.

If we are providing strictly reactive law enforcement, absolutely not. We get calls all the time where there is a concern and find out that it was another agency that was there. Or that it may have been an officer that was out of their jurisdiction. There are a lot of times they don't look at the color of the car, they don't look at the color of the uniform. But that is relative to reactive law enforcement. Where law enforcement has gone is that it is a lot more proactive. Then I think there are more ownership issues. We believe that it is really important to be visible so the people have a good idea. I think it is important for a person to know if they want to call and complain what department was there so they can at least go in the right direction to complain. Again, it depends on where you are at. When they did the county-wide study here a few years ago, I was amazed because one of the biggest things I feared

was that we were going to have hundreds of thousands of people showing up. It was really amazing to me, the lack of interest that the public had.

A lot of times public interest is driven by what is actually occurring in the community at the time. All they want to know is, first off, when a cop is going to show up when they call 9-1-1 with an issue. There are times when law enforcement and law enforcement administrators worry, think, that the general public is overall concerned. It depends on the communities. I am not so sure that a lot of communities want to pay the price for pro-activity.

There is very strong evidence from these comments and the views expressed by other interviewees that support of a change in policing service is largely a consequence of the perception of service. As a result, while the factor of support was found to be important in the study, there was no clear cut view among those interviewed just what the factor meant. Unlike most of the issues that evolved, the concept of support seemed much more nebulous than most of the others.

Factor: The Unknown

While not as prevalent as the other factors, a factor labeled as The Unknown is included here. It is defined as “fear of the unknown.” With the existing department, everyone knows what they have. Even with problems, there may be a desire to keep the current rather than risk the unknown of the new.

Consolidation of police forces involves change. This act involves taking employees of a police agency who, in many cases, are very comfortable with their situation and saying to them, “This is all going to change; we are going to be something new and different.” No matter the care taken to educate and inform, it is an unknown. Inherent in the unknown is fear.

Norfolk County, England

Police personnel in the service of the Norwich and Great Yarmouth city police forces had no less fear of this unknown at the time of their amalgamation than do their American counterparts today. As an individual, there was a great fear of suddenly not being a Norwich officer anymore. To combat the fear, Norwich police were assured they would remain in the city as Norfolk Rural Police officers. Nonetheless, that was their biggest fear, being removed from where they felt they belonged. A current District Supervisor described it this way:

That having worked in Norwich, they were suddenly going to be forced into working in Kings Lynn, uproot your wife, your family, and move 37 miles away, which perhaps in the States is no big deal, but in the back roads here, it is a big deal.

Fear of the unknown also breeds suspicion, as expressed by a retired Chief Constable of the Norfolk Constabulary, who had a unique view of their final consolidation. He had joined the Constabulary on amalgamation day, 1968. "The only topic on an officer's mind at the division I was posted to was that of suspicion of what were now colleagues from the 'other force.'"

And, as the Chief Constable pointed out, such fear and suspicion is not easy to overcome:

It took a long time to overcome this suspicion of other members from other forces incorporated into the Norfolk force. In fact, members of the old Great Yarmouth force continued to wear their city borough badge on their uniform for many years after the amalgamation.

The Norfolk Constabulary, since the amalgamations of the 1960s, has been a force that has grown its own identity. But, as expressed by a number of the informants

in that force, it took a long time to overcome the fear and anxiety of the merger of various forces and develop a common agency focus.

Kent County, Michigan, United States

This fear of change was also evident in comments made by several of the informants in the Kent County study. "I think they have that relatively unknown thing," said one chief executive, "and as long as it is unknown, they are not really accepting it."

Another executive also felt that the matter of change and its related fear of the unknown was a very important factor in any proposed consolidation.

In my experience, and I am sure in yours too, police officers, police employees, police department members are very resistant to change. It is a significant change, to consolidate. What will my job be? How will I succeed? Who will be my boss? These will be asked by every employee in each agency. What will be expected of me that will be different than what I do today because it is known, that is unknown. So a fear of the unknown will be a big part of it.

Those in law enforcement tend to be on the conservative side. The idea of changing from the status quo to something new is usually difficult. This factor, the unknown, was clearly on the minds of those interviewed in Kent County because, even at their high level of responsibility, the concept of consolidation was abstract.

In Norfolk, where consolidation was not new, when the final amalgamation in the county occurred in 1968, they certainly had an historical framework for understanding what it meant. Yet there, the unknown was defined by suspicion—suspicion about colleagues from other forces and how they would all fit together in this new force. Questions, as one Kent County respondent stated, about "what will my

job be, how will I succeed, who will be my boss” are all questions on a very personal level.

Not properly addressed, fear of the unknown is a powerful negative to consolidation. “Change is good in the long run; they would survive and look back and say, this worked very well,” explained one Kent County interviewee, but he added, “initially they would be skeptical and they would be waiting to see when things are going to start falling apart because of consolidation; they would be waiting for the negatives.”

How long will they wait? The Great Yarmouth Borough officers wore their city badges for years. The skeptics will wait until proven right or personal circumstances within the new consolidated force are such that the new structure has created enough positives, both personally and professionally, to overcome the skepticism and, ultimately, the fear.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Problem

In a study of California law enforcement services, Wickum (1986) found that there existed a number of reasons to support disbanding an existing law enforcement agency, as well as many obstacles that surfaced during deliberations for the purpose of either consolidation with another department or entering into a contractual arrangement for such services. Among the issues cited in that study as reasons for disbanding were the high costs of providing service, liability concerns, and the lack of credibility. Primary obstacles to such an action included the citizens' desire to keep their department, the political interests within the governing body, concerns about loss of service, and an inherent distrust in a new arrangement.

Wickum's (1986) research affirmed the findings of several exhaustive studies of policing in the United States. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) found that the fragmentation of law enforcement was a fundamental problem. The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (1971) in its *Report on Police* identified many problems with small police forces that had limited full-time service and a lack of investigative and support services. The National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, U. S. Department of Justice (1979), determined that the feasibility of large numbers of

smaller police agencies was lacking and that small departments are costly, ineffective, and lack specialized services. All of these studies encouraged the consolidation of law enforcement services.

Summary

The evolution of law enforcement in the United States has created a situation where thousands of communities are now served by a police agency that does not have the capability or resources to provide consistent police service. Many of these smaller agencies operate within a geographical area where they are joined by common boundaries, yet each operates as an independent police force. This creates a situation where law enforcement services are archaic, fragmented, overlapping, confused, and subject to bickering and jealousy over jurisdictional power (O'Brien & Marcus, 1979).

The purpose of this research was to determine what factors exist that impact on the consolidation of police forces. More specifically, it explored how these factors come into play when we are faced with the possibility of eliminating existing smaller agencies and merging the provision of police service within the framework of a larger law enforcement organization. The research identified a number of such factors. In addition, it was possible to probe deeper into these factors and discover a number of significant variables that come into play during such deliberations. One deduction that became readily apparent is that the process of consolidation is a complex one. It consists of issues that are political, operational, and emotional.

There are literally thousands of smaller police agencies in the United States. With the small size of these agencies comes a number of issues that impede their ability to provide full police service in a cost-effective manner to the citizens they serve. But changing from this system of local police departments, no matter what their efficiency level might be, is not an easy task. Communities identify with their police department, and the department to the community, making any suggestion of providing police services in a format that interrupts that relationship as one open to political turmoil.

This case study was conducted using three counties as individual study sites. Kent County, Michigan was chosen due its limited history with the idea of police consolidation. Other than a few township contracts, no police agency in the county has seriously entertained any form of police consolidation involving entire police organizations.

In contrast, Ottawa County, Michigan has a different history. In this county there have been two consolidations. One involved the merger of the Spring Lake and Ferrysburg Police Departments into a single law enforcement agency. The other was the decision of the City of Coopersville to eliminate its police department and contract for police services with the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department.

These two contrasting histories provided an opportunity to discuss the idea of consolidation with senior police executives and command staff from counties from two different perspectives.

The third county, Norfolk County, England, was used as a case study for two reasons. One was to look at a county that has a long history of experience in police consolidation and operates a large police organization. This organization has been consolidated for over 30 years. The second reason was to provide an international perspective to the debate. Of interest was determining if there were any differences between the perspective of American law enforcement leaders and those of their British counterparts concerning consolidation.

Those interviewed in Kent and Ottawa counties were selected because of the position that they held, as either the chief executive or a senior management official, and their availability and willingness to participate in this research. For those in England, an informant was utilized to gain access to senior police officials, both currently working in the organization and retired, who could provide insight into this research.

The researcher selected a qualitative research design that would allow those interviewed an opportunity to fully express their views on the idea of consolidation. The intent of this research was to have the interviewees provide these views from their individual perspectives and how they felt such a change in law enforcement structure would impact their community and their agency.

To collect data, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with 23 police executives during which they were asked to respond to a series of initial questions. These questions were designed to open a dialogue about consolidation and were open-ended in nature. Such questioning, especially in a multiple case study,

provides a common research form that allows for the comparison of data (Creswell, 1998).

To supplement the interview data, the researcher gathered information from newspaper accounts of the actions in Ottawa County and historical documents from the archives of the Bramshill Police College Library, Bramshill, England. Background information also included an extensive study that was conducted on police consolidation in Ottawa County in 1994 (Fisk et al., 1994).

To ensure the confidentiality of the interviewees, no designation is provided other than a reference to them as a police executive or senior police official.

Following the completion of the interviews, each interview was transcribed by the researcher, which provided a second opportunity to listen to each interview, a valuable means of ensuring that the context of the statements was understood. The data were then processed through an ethnographic software program. During this analysis, a series of patterns became evident as families of like responses (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) were developed, and the data were placed into primary factors. The goal of this analysis was both to identify these primary factors and to establish what issues were involved in each of the factors.

It is evident that the presence of one or more of these factors indicates several conditions that have led to the decision to examine an alternative service delivery system or were an integral part of the discussions. Embedded in each of these factors are a number of issues that interviewees identified as key to an understanding of police consolidation.

Norfolk County, England Experience

Representative of the consolidation of police forces is the experience of the police and public officials in England, and particularly in Norfolk County. The experience of amalgamation in England provides a wealth of knowledge about the operational and political aspects of consolidation. Their journey through the political and administrative consolidation of multiple police agencies into a single law enforcement organization provides an opportunity to understand the complexity of such an organizational change. It is a transformation that impacts agency personnel at all levels and the communities they serve.

The Norfolk Constabulary had been through the experience of each of the factors that evolved in this research. Justifications for the amalgamations that resulted in their regional police forces centered on the desire to remove political control, to improve the efficiency of police service by removing jurisdictional concerns, creating a police system that was consistent throughout a given region, and to ensure that those dollars spent on police service are expended in the most beneficial way possible.

While the Constabulary struggles with the ongoing problem of a shortage of funding, they feel that they have been successful in dealing with matters of efficiency and service delivery. They also believe that they have created a system that provides a large number of opportunities for their personnel in terms of specialization and training. They also have an organization that provides for advancement in rank. There also exists a systematic police service. As one drives from one political jurisdiction to another within Norfolk County, one finds the same police uniforms, systems, and

procedures in place. It has eliminated confusion and removed interdepartmental jealousies.

The single factor that the informants in that agency viewed as most negative was the loss of local identity. The British police system was built on the bobby, the officer who walked the streets, knew the neighborhood, and had a rapport with those he served. With the evolution of the regional police forces, those in the Norfolk Constabulary collectively felt that they had lost touch with their citizens and that both the officers on the street and the citizens yearned for a return to old relationships. Despite efforts today aimed at community policing, it remains one of the greatest concerns for those in the Constabulary.

The British View—Beyond Norfolk County

The movement into consolidated police forces in England was not without its difficulties. Many of those interviewed, particularly those who were engaged in police service at the time of the amalgamations or shortly thereafter, talked about the deeply held feelings of those both within the force and in the community as the last of the local police departments disappeared. But looking back at that time of decision, there were those who saw the change as an inevitable political reality of the times. Their revolution was a slow one, taking place over many decades. But as the final push toward total amalgamation was made, there was dialogue about what it meant. Interestingly, much of the conversation was from the citizen perspective, not that of the police officials.

As part of the process of amalgamation, there were public hearings on the scheme that had been developed for the respective communities. At these hearings, members of the public were afforded the opportunity to express their views, both pro and con. Representative of those in opposition was the mayor of Middlesbrough, who appeared at one such hearing and advised the representative of the Home Secretary that in all his experience in local government, he had never known such unanimous opposition on such an issue. Middlesbrough had the core of a good police force that could really be developed into a body which would be capable of handling Tees-side on the same high standard (*Police Review*, May 12, 1967, p. 441). The objections of the mayor notwithstanding, the amalgamation of the Middlesbrough and Tees-side police forces took place.

Not everyone was opposed to the idea of consolidation. In a conversation about the amalgamation of the Buckinghamshire police force with others, it was clear that the Police Committee of that city was intensely proud of its force and genuinely believed that it was big enough and good enough to stand on its own. But a lay witness at the hearing, a Mr. Pomfret, gave testimony in support of the proposed amalgamation.

What I am saying is that co-operation there may be, but there is not substitute for one single, integrated, homogeneous Force. Consider the individual policeman. He has a difficult and arduous job. To carry it out, he is entitled from society to the best training, equipment, and support that are possible. He is also entitled to good career prospects in return for diligence and application. (*Police Review*, July 14, 1967, p. 608)

In a similar vein, a report to the Home Secretary by a Mr. Fay, acting as the representative of the Home Secretary concerning the pending amalgamation of the

Southend Police Force, concluded that two objections were paramount: (1) that the borough force was highly efficient, and (2) police efficiency in Southend would be diminished by amalgamation. He acknowledged the first to be true, but reached the conclusion that “amalgamation will produce greater efficiency stemming from integration with a larger force with its better promotion prospects, wider fund of experience, greater provision of specialized services, and greater flexibility than the (Southend) county borough force can claim” (*Police Review*, January 12, 1968, p. 30).

During the course of this research, many of these views were acknowledged by the informants. They too stated their belief that the amalgamations, despite their initial opposition and operational difficulties, were in the best interest of all concerned.

There is no reason to believe that similar dialogue would not be heard in any attempt to consolidate police forces in the United States. The same issues of identity and local political control are to be expected.

Local Government Responsibilities

Researchers such as James Q. Wilson maintain that the problem facing local law enforcement in this country is basic. It involves providing the highest quality level of law enforcement that is possible for the tax dollar, while being responsive to the enforcement desires of the community. In the view of the President's Commission on

Law Enforcement and the Administration of Criminal Justice (1967, p. 47), the options are clear.

The Commission expressed the view that the basic responsibility of government is the provision of police services to its constituents. If the ability does not exist to provide such services then an alternative must be found. The alternatives identified by the Commission include:

- Abolish the jurisdiction and make some other jurisdiction responsible for services;
- Continue inadequate services; or
- Seek, through joint action, to meet its local responsibilities more adequately.

The first two of these choices are not without problems. The Commission concluded that the first choice is not usually feasible politically, while the second invites a rise in criminal activity and is an abdication of the responsibilities of the governmental unit to provide basic police protection. In its view, only the third option provides a genuine opportunity to continue adequate police services for those jurisdictions experiencing a lack of resources.

Conclusions

The findings of this study not only affirm these earlier findings but also indicate that no fundamental change in police organization on a geographical basis has occurred.

Law enforcement and the provision of these services are part of this nation's political life. Understandably, most communities are reluctant to give up, or alter, their local police department because they are afraid of a loss of local control. Decisions about consolidation will inevitably be made within a context of compromise among the vested interests involved when providing such service (O'Brien & Marcus, 1979). Such decisions about the character of law enforcement inevitably will be made in an incremental and politicized fashion.

Looking ahead as we enter the 21st century, one of the discussions will be what shape we want our law enforcement institutions to take to ensure that they are providing the most effective police service possible for the least amount of money. We will want "the best bang for the buck." What operational systems will be required and what should the management of such police forces look like?

Common sense suggests that for the public good, efforts to upgrade the quality of law enforcement services should be made wherever needed. Two extremes can probably be excluded. First, it is unlikely that we will ever see a system similar to that found in England, namely a system national in its shape. The various constabularies in England wear identical uniforms and operate under the same operational guidelines, all essentially dictated by the Home Secretary, who maintains the system through the budgetary process. Our geographical size and intense sense of individualism preclude the likelihood that the United States will ever seriously move in the direction of a national police force. Nothing found in this research suggested such an alternative.

Second is the likelihood that the current system cannot survive either. We have over 16,000 police forces in this nation. Many of these police agencies consist of fewer than five full-time police personnel who provide service for only a few hours of each day. The findings here have demonstrated a number of management and operational concerns with this reality. It can be argued that the current state of affairs does not provide the most effective and efficient police service attainable. Yet there was also a strong sense of local ownership, defined in terms of local identity and local control. The political reality and ideal in this view is that having a police force, no matter how small or inefficient, gives a community a sense of well-being.

An argument can also be made that such departments will survive due to bureaucratic stagnation and protectionism. We have a police force; therefore, we are a community. This sense of localism is also found in the research by Elinor Ostrom and others, who advocate the maintenance of the status quo under the banner of public choice (Lyons & Lowery, 1989; Ostrom & Whitaker, 1978).

Such points of view are appropriate in any dialogue about police service provision within a community, but there are also arguments that counter these views. One is that much of the work done in public choice research focuses on large urban areas. There is little attention paid to other areas where an alternative might be appropriate. For example, the Northern York Police Department located in Southeastern Pennsylvania is a regional police force serving several communities. This area is not influenced by any large urban area, and the consolidation that has occurred there has worked very well.

Another reality is that some governmental units may simply have no choice but to look at other alternatives due to fiscal constraints. The public choice theorists assume an adequately funded world. But the reality is that funding for local services will not always be available and political leaders may be faced with the stark possibility that they can no longer maintain their own police force. Such was clearly the case in the studies of several cities in California during the 1970s (Herley, 1989).

Law enforcement is involved, in one sense, in a revolution. It is engaged in a continuing process of redefining itself. For example, over the last decade the strategy has moved from that of being a reactive service to a proactive one with community policing at the core of the change. We are changing how we define our role in the community, how we evaluate our agency performance, and what roles our personnel will perform within this new context. It is of no small significance that our policing systems have changed to meet the demands of the public they serve. The logical extension of this revolution, then, is that we will also look at the larger systemic implications of such a revolution. Just because we have always functioned with thousands of police agencies in this nation does not mean that we must always support such a system. Indeed, if our experience with community policing is an indication of what will happen during this time of change, then an argument can be made that systemic change will also become a requirement.

This revolution is taking place neither at the national level nor for the most part at the state level. It is a grassroots transformation. It will be a change characterized by an economic or service-related driving force, but it will take place in

those local communities dedicated to the movement toward effective and efficient police service regardless of past practices. When it does occur, it will happen within the context of strong leadership and community support and usually within the context of some form of fiscal or operational crisis.

The idea of consolidation is almost a trigger word for police chiefs in smaller agencies. During interviews for this research, time and again the chief administrators and even lower level senior staff would include in their responses a statement acknowledging the advantages of consolidation for their department. But their support would probably be lacking, pending a discussion on what their role would be in the new agency. It is unrealistic to believe that a large group of these law enforcement leaders will ever advocate the elimination of numerous departments to establish a single, larger force. Their involvement in such changes will be on a much more individual, and personal, basis.

Such concerns notwithstanding, the possibility remains that these chief executives, political leaders, and their communities will face the necessity to examine new alternatives to provide police protection and services for their communities. Do we need to replace *every* small agency? Absolutely not. There is no reason to believe that we need to move to a system such as the English model, where all agencies become part of a larger, regional type police force. It has worked there; it would not work here. However, there will remain those instances where consolidation will become feasible, and how we manage that process will be important to the success of

such a change. Managing such a change depends on recognizing and understanding the factors involved in police consolidation as found in Table 4.

Table 4
Factors That Influence Police Consolidation

Factor	Descriptor
Management	Considerations such as who benefits and who loses, department structure, personnel issues such as retirement systems and seniority.
Local Control and Identity	Willingness to relinquish political control and local identity
Emphasis on Efficiency	Size of the service area and coordination of services
Demand for Fiscal Consideration	Responsible use of fiscal resources and maximizing buying power
Increased Career Development	Promotion, specialization, and training
Changes in the Nature of Local Service	Level of service and degree of personal perception of service
Size of Jurisdiction	Jurisdictional confusion for citizens
Professional Support Within the Agency	Degree of executive and line support for consolidation
Willingness to Live With Uncertainty	Moving from a known system to a new administrative and operational structure

Imbedded in these factors are any number of issues that must be part of the dialogue. It is important to examine how these agencies will be managed, what the

community's decision-making role in setting police service priorities should be, how the force personnel will be integrated, what benefits they will receive for being part of the new agency, and how levels of funding will be managed for those communities taking part. These are difficult issues that require a great deal of planning and compromise. There is no perfect model that a group of communities can use as a basis for such a dialogue. Each situation is unique. What can help in the process, however, is to use the factors developed during this research as a basis for such discussion and planning. These factors, and the issues imbedded therein, provide an investigative framework that decision makers can use as a basis for their conversation in framing how they would proceed through the process and what they want their new law enforcement agency to look like.

Recommendations

The police function has a long tradition of local autonomy. Regardless of size or financial means, virtually every city, town, or village regards itself capable of providing adequate law enforcement to its citizens (Bollens & Schmandt, 1982). Any discussion regarding the consolidation of police forces, where one of these existing law enforcement agency is in place, will be a complicated process. Gaining acceptance of the idea of consolidation is but one link in a chain of events. That chain begins with an understanding of the issues that will be the heart of such discussions. There are a number of factors that influence the decision makers as well as the police personnel involved in such a possibility (see Table 1). It is evident that two of the factors

developed during this research are clearly the most dominant, namely, the factors of management and local control and local identity.

An examination of the factor of management shows that a large number of issues must be identified and successfully resolved if consolidation is going to occur. Merging personnel with varying rank, seniority, pay, benefits, and even different uniforms are complex issues that require a great deal of attention. Inadequate resolution of these differences, while perhaps not fatal to the consolidation process, would certainly cause resentment, if not outright hostility.

The factor of local control is also a vital one to recognize and manage. The consolidation of police forces is a political decision. It is a decision that is usually made in an emotionally charged atmosphere, usually caused by either a financial or administrative dilemma. Those responsible for solving the problem are often the focus of the frustration of citizens and officers who are opposed to or do not understand the consolidation process.

The solution to the management of both of these factors is planning. Design of a consolidation should be a well-planned and thought-out program that identifies as many of the critical factors at the planning stage as possible. Addressing these many factors will have a great impact on the potential success of the consolidation under consideration. It is apparent from the research that careful planning is the one common component of a successful migration from a number of smaller, traditional police agencies to a consolidated agency.

It is also evident that consolidation is not for everyone. While an agency may have operational or fiscal problems, it does not mean that the one best solution to those problems is to eliminate the department in favor of a different administrative arrangement. The ideal organization of police services ultimately will be a mix of large and small, rather than the creation of enormous departments such as those found in Great Britain. However, many situations do exist where the consolidation of two or more police agencies into a larger force is a viable alternative to current practices.

Whatever the cause, in order to create an atmosphere where it is possible to have a dialogue about consolidation, it is first necessary to have a framework that serves to identify the factors involved. It is a desired outcome of this research that the factors identified can provide such a framework and focus the debate, thereby enabling it to be productive and meaningful. O'Brien and Marcus (1979) concluded that "law enforcement is a part of the weave of the nation's political life, decisions about it will inevitably be made within a context of compromise among the various pressure groups and vested interests, and in light of other political realities" (p. 91). As a result, each community must be examined individually to make a proper assessment of the community's attitudes, traditions, and standards.

Nothing found in this research suggests that law enforcement consolidation is a cure-all for the problems that plague small police agencies. It does, however, represent a viable option that warrants consideration by those seeking alternative methods of police service delivery.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research should be conducted on the feasibility of police consolidation. Prior studies are generally supportive of the idea of police consolidation. Many of these studies have become dated. They also lacked an analysis of how the consolidation of forces impacts individuals within the agencies and communities involved. It is important to continue to examine police consolidation within a more contemporary framework.

This area of study is important because many local jurisdictions are facing the dilemma of not having the resources to provide this basic service that citizens want and expect from their local government. In some cases, confidence in the existing agency has eroded to the point that only a new delivery mechanism will suffice. In either event, those making these decisions require a sound foundation upon which to base their decisions.

Many of the factors in this research also require additional study. The factor of management produced a large number of issues that require additional study. The fiscal impact of consolidation also demands further study. Consolidation is often put forth as the answer to the fiscal problems of a governmental unit, but is that an accurate assumption?

There have been a number of successful consolidations in the United States. Further research of these success stories should be conducted to determine what made them successful and how the factors found in this research relate to those

successes. These studies could include an examination of the financial arrangements that have worked in successful consolidations.

Such research could also include an analysis of how newly consolidated agencies identify with the jurisdiction they serve, and whether the citizens of that area developed a sense of pride and association with the new agency.

Also, further research could include which organizational structures have worked, vis-à-vis contracting with existing agencies or a full regionalization of police services.

Finally, there should be a careful examination of attempts to create a consolidated agency that failed, to determine what specific factors caused the failure.

Appendix A
Protocol Clearance From the Human Subjects
Institutional Review Board

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008-5162
616 387-8293

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: 31 March 2000

To: Peter Kobrak, Principal Investigator
Terry Fisk, Student Investigator for dissertationFrom: Sylvia Culp, Chair *Sylvia Culp*

Re: HSIRB Project Number 00-01-19

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "A Cross-Cultural Comparative Study of Police Consolidation: Factors Related to Adoption and Management" has been **approved** under the **expedited** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: 31 March 2001

Appendix B

Interview Instrument: Norfolk County, England

**Western Michigan University
School of Public Affairs and Administration
Principal Investigator: Dr. Peter Kobrak
Student Investigator: Terry L. Fisk
Year: 2000**

**Interview Instrument
Norfolk County, England**

Beyond the legislative mandate that ultimately required the amalgamation of police forces in Norfolk County, what factors, in your opinion, lead to the decision to consolidate the police forces?

When the final amalgamation of police forces occurred in Norfolk County, what do you think were the primary issues that had to be addressed?

How has the amalgamation of police forces in the county affected the organization?

What has been, or continues to be, the affect on individuals within the force as they serve in a consolidated police force?

What is the relationship between the community and the police force as a result of the amalgamation?

From your perspective, what are the public attitudes about a consolidated police force?

Appendix C

Interview Instrument: Kent and Ottawa County, Michigan

**Western Michigan University
School of Public Affairs and Administration
Principal Investigator: Dr. Peter Kobrak
Student Investigator: Terry L. Fisk
Year: 2000**

**Interview Instrument
Kent and Ottawa County, Michigan**

What factors do you think could lead to the decision to consolidate the police forces in (Kent/Ottawa) County?

Would you favor or oppose the consolidation of police forces? Why do you feel that way?

What do you think are the primary issues that would have to be dealt with in any decision about the consolidation of police departments?

How do you think a consolidation of agencies would affect individuals within the organization?

What impact do you think the consolidation of police forces would have on the community/public?

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