NEW APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES FOR EXAMINING AND EVALUATING MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL DRUG TASK FORCES IN ILLINOIS

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Executive Summary

Through a grant provided by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, researchers from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Loyola University Chicago worked to develop a means by which the efforts of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Illinois could be more effectively monitored and evaluated. Through the use of existing aggregate data, as well as offender-level criminal history record information, the research sought to gauge the efforts of multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement units relative to the drug-law violators targeted by traditional local police departments. As a result of the analyses, the following general conclusions were reached:

1) Although the organization of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces across the state is fairly consistent, the role that they play within their specific jurisdiction varies considerably from unit to unit. Some of the units appear to be very narrowly focused and account for a very small proportion of drug enforcement activities within their areas of operation. On the other hand, there are also numerous units, which appear to play a very significant role in the overall drug enforcement efforts within their region of operation.
2) The targets of multijurisidctional drug task forces are quite different from those of local police departments, including those that participate in the task force and those that do not. Task force targets are much more likely to be involved in violations of Illinois' Controlled Substances Act (i.e., offenses involving cocaine, heroin, LSD, and methamphetamine), whereas local police department arrests for drug offenses are more likely to involve cannabis-related offenses.
3) The targets of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces are also more likely to be involved in the sale/delivery of Controlled Substances, while local police department arrests are more likely to involve drug possession.
4) The criminal histories of those targeted by multi-jurisdictional drug task forces did not systematically differ from those of drug offenders arrested by local police departments. Average prior arrests for all offenses, and specifically drug-law violations, did not show any clear pattern or differences, although for some specific units there appeared to be clear and substantial differences.
5) A number of issues with the information included on criminal history records were also identified if they are to be used for evaluative purposes similar to that presented in this report. Specifically, there appears to be a pattern whereby arrests made by multi-jurisdictional drug task forces either are not showing up on criminal history records, or when they are, subsequent information (e.g., filing and disposition decisions) is more likely to be missing from task force arrests than they were for local arrests. This may have to do with the processes used to complete and transmit arrest cards for task force arrestees to the Illinois State Police, which is often times done by local police departments.
6) Based on the analyses presented herein, it is clear that the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Illinois are carrying out a function and targeting offenders that is distinct from local police departments efforts. However, the degree to which this difference is evident, and the substantial role that some task forces are playing in local drug enforcement efforts, may be beyond what was initially envisioned by the federal program, which is supporting some of the activities.

Introduction

In general, multi-jurisdictional drug task forces are defined as units that include (a) full-time officers, (b) from a variety of different law enforcement agencies, (c) within a specific geographic region, (d) that conduct drug investigations and drug enforcement activities, (e) across a geographic region that spans individual departmental jurisdiction. The most recent "war on drugs," which began in the mid-1980s and was formalized with the passage of the federal Anti-Drug Abuse Acts (ADAA) of 1986 and 1988, provided significant financial resources to state and local units of government for the creation and expansion of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces. Recognizing the limitations to traditional local drug control efforts, the federal government, through the State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Act (SLLEAA), and the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts (ADAA) of 1986 and 1988, promoted the development of these types of specialized drug units by providing funds needed to stimulate and facilitate involvement by agencies large and small in these efforts. However, it is important to note that multi-jurisdictional drug task forces were not necessarily "invented" by the ADAA. Indeed, some multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, such as the Metropolitan Enforcement Group of Cook County (serving the suburbs of Chicago), were created through earlier seed money available through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) during the early 1970s.

With the grant funds authorized through these acts, there was increased emphasis and financial support directed at the development of regional multi-jurisdictional drug task forces across the United States. Within the provisions of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, also referred to as the Edward Byrne Memorial Block Grant Program, Congress authorized the distribution of more than $400

million annually in formula block grant funds to state and local units of governments through State Administrative Agencies (SAA). In general, these funds were to supplement existing drug enforcement efforts and had to be spent within specific purpose areas identified in the authorizing legislation, one of which was the creation and/or support of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces. By design and definition, they were intended to increase the capacity of local law enforcement agencies in targeting drug-law violators through increased information sharing, coordination of efforts, and having more time and resources to "work cases" up the distribution chain. Among the purpose areas that could be funded with the block-grant monies, multi-jurisdictional drug task forces were, and continue to be, very popular. Most SAA's allocated a considerable portion of their block-grant funds towards multi-jurisdictional drug task forces. For example, during federal fiscal years 1989 through 1994, more than $700 million of these federal block-grant funds were allocated to multi-jurisdictional task force efforts, accounting for 40 percent of the total block-grant distributions (Dunworth, Haynes, and Saiger, 1997). Between 1986 and 1993 alone, more than 700 drug task forces were formed with federal assistance (Coldren, 1993), and by 1998 more than 1,000 drug task forces were in operation in the United States (National Institute of Justice, 1998). It is estimated that in 1997 more than 6,200 local police officers were assigned full-time to these drug task forces (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000), almost twice as many as the roughly 3,300 agents employed by U.S. Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001).

However, despite the considerable financial investment and the purported role played by these multi-jurisdictional units to fill the void between traditional DEA strategies (high-levels of the drug distribution network) and traditional local police efforts (relatively low-levels of the drug

distribution network, including users), there has been little systematic research to assess the impact and effectiveness of these efforts. The following provides a brief summary for the research to date regarding general local drug enforcement efforts and drug task forces efforts in particular.

Literature Review

In general, a great deal has been written over the past 20 years regarding the role of law enforcement in the United States' drug control efforts, which is usually categorized as either "supply" or "demand" reduction in focus. Kleiman and Smith (1990) analyzed and described law enforcement approaches to drug control efforts that also provide a basis for introducing the role and potential impact of specialized drug enforcement units. They described the "strategic bundles" which law enforcement agencies can develop and adopt for the purpose of reducing drug supply and demand. These strategies, in the words of Kleiman and Smith (1990:82-96), include: "Getting Mr. Big: High-level Enforcement, Sweeping the Streets: Retail-Level Enforcement, Concentrating on One Market: Focused Crackdowns, Suppressing Gang Activity, Controlling User Crime, and Protecting the Youth."

Despite the considerable resources and prevalence of these multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, most of the research and evaluations of these efforts have been limited to descriptions of their prevalence, organizational characteristics or volume of their outputs. One of the most comprehensive national surveys done to gauge the prevalence of drug task force participation among local law enforcement agencies in the United States was conducted by the U.S.

Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics through its 1997 Law Enforcement Management and Administration Survey (LEMAS). Generally speaking, the larger the jurisdiction the more likely the police department was to operate its own specialized drug unit and participate in a drug task force. Similarly, the larger the department, the larger the unit (in terms of assigned officers) and the more officers assigned to drug task forces. For example, more than three-quarters of departments serving a population of 100,000 or more had their own drug unit, compared to less than one-quarter of those departments serving fewer than 25,000 residents. On the other hand, participation in drug task forces was consistently higher across the smaller to medium sized jurisdictions (those with populations under 50,000) than was the maintenance of individual drug units within departments. Another pattern evident in drug task force participation was that the number of full-time officers assigned to drug task forces tended to be less than the number assigned to in-house drug units. Thus, while the choice of strategy (e.g., operation of a specialized drug unit, participation in a drug task force, both or neither) appears to vary based on the size of the population served, this may not be the only, or even direct, explanation of these responses to the drug problem.

Further, some recently published evidence points to aggregate changes in the level of commitment to these drug units and task forces, at least among police departments serving large jurisdictions (more than 250,000 residents). For example, the average number of officers assigned to specialized drug units per large-city police department increased 43 percent between 1990 and 2000, to an average of 123 officers per department, although as a *percent of all officers*, these assignments actually decreased (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002:7). However, a much smaller increase was seen in the assignment of officers to drug task forces: climbing only

15 percent between 1990 and 2000, and averaging only 15 officers per department in 2000 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002: 7).

There have also been numerous national, state, and local evaluations that have attempted to inform the field when it comes to levels of participation and the volume of outputs. For example, a national assessment documented the volume and nature of drug arrests and the seizure of drug-related assets (Justice Research and Statistics Association, 1992). Other analyses of drug task forces across the country have examined operational strategies and organizational structures (Coldren, et. al., 1993). Similarly, there have been numerous evaluations at the state and local level as well, including Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon (see Ruboy, Coldren & Dressler, 1992 for reviews of these evaluations), Ohio (Smith et. al., 2000), Indiana (Schlegel & McGarrell, 1991; Sabath, Doyle, & Ransburg, 1990), Illinois (Olson & Ramker, 2002), and East Texas (Phillips & Orvis, 1999). However, while these evaluations indicate successful task force implementation in the aggregate, they tell us little about the impact of task force membership on individual agencies (Smith et. al., 2000) or why some agencies participate while others do not.

However, despite the substantial proportion of the Byrne Grant Program funds spent on these units, and the different approach they take to drug enforcement vis-à-vis tradition police efforts regarding drug enforcement, few evaluations have been performed to assess the extent to which these task forces achieve different results. Most of the research regarding drug task forces completed to date has been primarily descriptive or process oriented. However, missing from these descriptive studies is a contextual framework within which to understand whether or not

these activities or offenders are any different from those identified and apprehended by local police departments.

Thus, what has been lacking from research on multi-jurisdictional drug task forces has been any substantive move towards answering questions about the effectiveness or efficacy of these units. For example, one of the frequent questions of practitioners and policy makers regarding drug task forces is "have they reduced the prevalence of drug use, or the availability of drugs?" Unfortunately, determining the impact drug task forces have on the "drug problem" in a particular geographic area is quite difficult. (This is not necessarily unique to drug control efforts, but has also been true of gauging the impact of other police strategies, such as focused crackdowns, increased patrols, community policing, etc. for a host of neighborhood or crime problems). Part of this difficulty stems from the fact that measuring the extent and nature of the drug problem is very tenuous, and oftentimes there are few measures that are independent of criminal justice or public policy responses (Kofeld & Decker, 1998). On a national level there are numerous independent indicators of the drug problem, including self-report surveys of the general population, the high-school population, arrestees, and those who suffer adverse consequences associated with their drug use. However, these data are usually not available for specific geographic units (National Academy of Sciences, 2001). Another problem is that of attempting to link the efforts of drug task forces to changes in these indicators. Since the drug problem is being addressed from so many different angles simultaneously—including prevention, treatment, *and* enforcement--attributing any changes specifically to changes in law enforcement strategies (i.e., multi-jurisdictional drug task forces) is almost impossible.

Thus, one reason for the limited research on the impact or effectiveness of drug task forces is partly due to the question of effectiveness being posed as "how have drug task forces reduced the prevalence of the "drug problem" (e.g., use, availability, etc.)," which is a question which cannot be answered. Rather, we propose moving towards answering the question of effectiveness by framing the question using a more intermediate perspective: How are the activities of drug task forces *different* from those of traditional local police departments? By answering this question, practitioners and policy makers can then decide if the identified similarities or differences between drug task force and local police efforts is an appropriate strategy/use of resources. If the differences are few, then the question that needs to be answered next is primarily a policy one: If drug task forces don't do anything different, then why spend the additional resources on their operation? If there are differences, then the question is "Do these differences contribute to a more diverse and effective drug control program portfolio?"

Methodology

The study employed two general approaches to answering the questions regarding whom multijurisdiction drug task forces target, and the extent to which these offenders are different from those arrested by local police departments. The first method took advantage of existing aggregate data regarding drug arrests, prison sentences and other indicators of the extent and nature of the drug problem in the jurisdictions where the task forces operated. Since these data were readily available for each of the 21 multi-jurisdictional drug task forces operating in Illinois, we were able to examine every unit operating in the state. As a result of these analyses, we were also able to develop profiles of each unit in the state, which was one product from the

evaluation (for copies of each of these reports, please visit the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's web-site at www.icjia.state.il.us).

The second approach to examining drug task force targets was through the collection and analyses of offender-level data for a sample of Illinois' multi-jurisdictional drug task forces available through the Illinois Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) system. Specifically, we identified a cross-section of drug task forces in the state, including those serving rural versus urban jurisdictions and those operating as a Metropolitan Enforcement Group, or MEG units, and those operating as a multi-jurisdictional drug task force. While both tend to be referred to as drug task forces, there are some subtle differences that were important to examine. First, MEG units are staffed by local officers and receive a portion of their operating budget through state grants provided by the Illinois State Police. Drug task forces, on the other hand, are supervised by Illinois State Police staff, but do not directly receive state funds for their operations. Illinois law also recognizes MEG units, and limits their jurisdictional activities to only those involving drug and gang-related crime. Task forces, on the other hand, can target any type of illegal activity that their respective policy boards feel is appropriate. Throughout this report, the MEG units and drug task forces are referred to simply as multi-jurisdictional drug task forces.

Use of Aggregate Data to Develop Task Force Typologies and Impact

The first set of analyses attempted to compare the volume and characteristics of drug-law violation arrests made by multi-jurisdictional drug task forces to those made by 1) agencies in the same geographic region that participate and 2) those agencies that do not participate in the

task force using existing aggregate data. One of the benefits to this approach was the fact that the data needed to perform the analyses were readily available, but had never been examined or looked at to answer questions regarding the targets of the drug task forces. Specifically, the answers to three questions were sought:

1) What is the volume of drug arrests made by drug task forces relative to local police departments? This would provide some estimate of the degree to which drug task forces account for a large or small number of arrests *relative to local departments.* Put another way, what proportion of drug arrests in a particular geographic area can be attributed to the drug task force versus local police departments?
2) What is the difference in the nature of drug arrests (e.g., types of drugs involved) between drug task forces, participating, and non-participating police departments? Similarly, what is the difference in the types of substances involved in arrests (task force, participating and non-participating agencies) versus the types of substances involved in drug treatment admissions? Thus, while question one has to do with the relative volume of arrests, question two relates to the *nature of the arrests.* Through this set of analyses, we would be able to determine the extent to which drug task forces identify or target different *types* of drug-law violators than local police departments, and how these targets compare to substance abuse treatment admissions in the geographic area.
3) Finally, to what degree do drug task force arrests result in sentences to prison compared to local arrests? This will provide some sense as to whether drug task force cases are more serious, or stronger, thereby being more likely to result in a period of incarceration.

Thus, the activities of the drug task forces will not be viewed in isolation, as have many previous descriptions of drug task force operations, but rather, *relative* to local police departments in the geographic region covered by the task force. Since the State of Illinois has collected detailed data on drug task force activities for more than two decades, and also has readily available and comparable data to measure other dimensions of local drug enforcement efforts and drug problems, the 21 drug task forces operating in Illinois were the focus of the current study. Thus, for each unit there were two comparative jurisdictions: those local agencies that participated in the unit (e.g., contributed officers or financial resources and were on the policy board) and those local agencies that did not participate in the unit.

In order to determine which agencies should be included among the participating and non-participating agencies, the following process was used for each task force. First, a list of all the participating agencies was obtained for each unit from program documents submitted to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. To identify the non-participating agencies in the general geographic area covered by the unit we first determined which counties the task force operated within. Then, we identified all the local police departments that existed within the county/counties where the task force operated from Illinois State Police/Uniform Crime Reporting records. From this list we eliminated those that participated in the task force (participating agencies), leaving those which operated within the general task force coverage area, but which elected not to participate.[1]

Summarized in Table 1 are each of the 21 task forces operating in Illinois, the number of local law enforcement agencies participating in each unit, the population served by these participating agencies, the number of non-participating agencies, the population they serve, the percent of the agencies in the geographic area which participated in the task force, the percent of the population "covered" by the participating agencies, and the number of counties within which the participating agencies operate. As can be seen in Table 1, there was considerable variation across the task forces in terms of the number of different local police departments participating, the population "served" by these local law enforcement agencies, and the "participation" rate, or the percent of local police departments within the general geographic region of task force operation which were participating in the task force either through the contribution of an officer, or through

[1] There are numerous reasons why local police departments might not participate in the task force, including a lack of resources to participate or a lack of interest/willingness to participate.

either a financial or an in-kind contribution. For example, some of the units served a population in excess of 250,000 residents, while others served relatively smaller jurisdictions. Similarly, some units had almost complete participation among the local police departments in the region, whereas other units had lower rates of participation.

Table 1

Number of Participating and Non-participating Agencies in the Regions Covered by Illinois' Multi-jurisdictional Drug Task Forces and Populations Served in 1999

Unit	Number of Participating Agencies	Participating Agency Population	Number of Non-Participating Agencies	Non-Participating Agency Population	Percent of Agencies Participating	Percent of Population Served	Number of Counties in Coverage Area
BATF	5	58,292	21	39,567	19%	60%	3
CIEG	13	207,062	38	103,674	25%	67%	5
DUMEG	30	833,301	2	26,098	94%	97%	1
ECITF	7	69,974	17	40,213	29%	64%	4
MANS	12	400,439	21	86,359	36%	82%	2
KAMEG	4	101,269	10	254,012	29%	29%	1
LCMEG	19	420,152	15	170,603	56%	71%	1
MEGSI	17	263,624	39	282,946	30%	48%	3
MCNEG	6	269,432	27	96,903	18%	74%	3
NCNTF	12	347,281	44	423,595	21%	45%	3
QCMEG	4	122,412	9	25,263	31%	83%	1
SCIDTF	5	52,787	33	64,906	13%	45%	4
SEIDTF	9	65,174	26	76,626	26%	46%	8
SIDTF	13	97,558	16	61,380	45%	61%	8
SIEG	10	116,406	14	23,826	42%	83%	3
SLANT	5	82,947	12	272,334	29%	23%	3
TF6	8	172,095	14	29,521	36%	85%	3
TF X	7	258,745	15	24,746	32%	91%	2
TF17	6	88,221	25	57,041	19%	61%	2
VEMEG	8	73,211	10	10,602	44%	87%	1
WCITF	11	135,191	28	78,692	28%	63%	8
Total	211	4,235,573	436	2,248,907	33%	65%	69

To answer the research questions, three different types of data were collected and examined: 1) drug-law violation arrest statistics, 2) drug-law violation prison sentences, and 3) admissions to

substance abuse treatment programs for illegal drug abuse. The next section will summarize the sources of these data, how they will be aggregated, and how they are interpreted as indicators of drug task force activities. In addition, these data were also examined in greater detail for each specific multi-jurisdictional task force and published in a series of reports titled "Profile of the _____ Task Force."

Arrest Data

Two primary sources of drug-law violation arrest data were used for the current study. The first were monthly data reports provided by each task force in Illinois to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. These data included the number of arrests made by the unit, and were broken down into specific categories of substances, including: cocaine, crack cocaine, opiates, marijuana, hallucinogens, methamphetamine, and "other dangerous drugs." These data were then aggregated by year and by unit. Arrest data for the comparative jurisdictions (local participating and non-participating police departments) were obtained through the Illinois Uniform Crime Report (UCR) program. Unlike arrest data available for the drug task forces, however, the UCR data are not as specific with respect to the drug involved. The only distinction that can be made in terms of the substance involved in drug arrests by local police departments is between those involving cannabis (identified as violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act) and all other illegal substances (identified as violations of Illinois' Controlled Substances Act). Thus, unlike the data reported by the drug task forces, drug arrests reported by local police departments do not distinguish between arrests for cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, etc., but are instead reported in aggregate as a violation of the Illinois Controlled Substances Act. Therefore, when

comparisons were made between task force and local department arrests, the task force arrests were aggregated into a similar dichotomy (violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act versus Illinois' Controlled Substances Act).

One potential limitation with the comparison of task force arrests to local arrests reported through the UCR is the potential for some double counting of task force arrests. Although the task forces do not report arrests directly to the UCR program, it is possible that some of the local police departments may count task force arrests in their UCR figures. This is due to the fact that many task forces process arrestees (e.g., fingerprint, identify, complete paper work, etc.) through local police departments. The primary reason for this is the fact that the task forces are, for the most part, covert units. When they are going to arrest someone, often times it comes as the result of a warrant being served by uniformed police officers from participating departments. Due to the covert nature of these task forces, they cannot process arrestees through their offices, as this would "blow their cover" and compromise officer safety. Thus, it is possible that some task force arrests are counted by local police departments as "their" arrests, since they processed the offender.

Prison Admission Data

Also contained in the monthly data reports submitted by each task force to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority are the sentences imposed on those offenders arrested by the multi-jurisdictional units and subsequently convicted. From these reports, the number of task force arrestees sentenced to prison were aggregated by year and unit. Data for the overall

number of drug-law violators sentenced to prison from the counties within which the drug task forces operate were obtained from the Illinois Department of Corrections, which provided the aggregate number of admissions to prison for drug-law violations by county and year. These data were then aggregated to correspond to the counties where each task force operated (See Table 1). Thus, we ended up with the number of admissions to prison for 21 separate regions, each corresponding to a specific drug task force, for each year between 1994 and 1999.

To estimate how many convicted offenders were sentenced to prison as a result of a non-multi-jurisdictional unit cases, a two-stage process was followed. First, we obtained from the Illinois Department of Corrections the number of offenders admitted to prison for a drug offense from each individual county in Illinois for each year from 1994 through 1999. These county-level data were then aggregated to correspond to the counties covered by each individual multi-jurisdictional unit. Subtracted from these totals, which would indicate the total number of defendants admitted to prison for a drug offense from each task force region, were the total number of task force offenders sentenced to prison. The result is the number of prison admissions for drug offenses that were not the result of a task force case.

Drug Treatment Admission Data

In order to examine the types of illegal drugs that are most "problematic" within each jurisdiction, we used the distribution of drug treatment admissions as a non-justice system proxy. Specifically, we obtained the aggregate number of individuals admitted to drug treatment from each county, by primary substance of abuse, for 1994 through 1999. These data were then

aggregated so as to correspond to the counties covered by each drug task force. From this information, the proportion of total drug treatment admissions accounted for by marijuana and non-marijuana abusers was calculated.

Although the characteristics, and substances abused by those admitted to treatment may not be reflective of general drug use patterns within a community, one can interpret treatment admissions as reflective of more serious substance abusers. For example, most drug use prevalence surveys done, including those among arrestees, indicate that marijuana is the illegal drug most frequently used. However, a relatively small proportion of treatment admissions in Illinois, as well as across individual counties in Illinois, are for marijuana. This would tend to support the belief that most marijuana users are either 1) not abusers and therefore not a high priority for treatment resources, or 2) priority for admission to treatment is for those abusing drugs other than marijuana, such as cocaine or heroin. Since treatment resources are scarce in most jurisdictions, admissions to treatment are usually intended for those who present serious substance abuse problems.

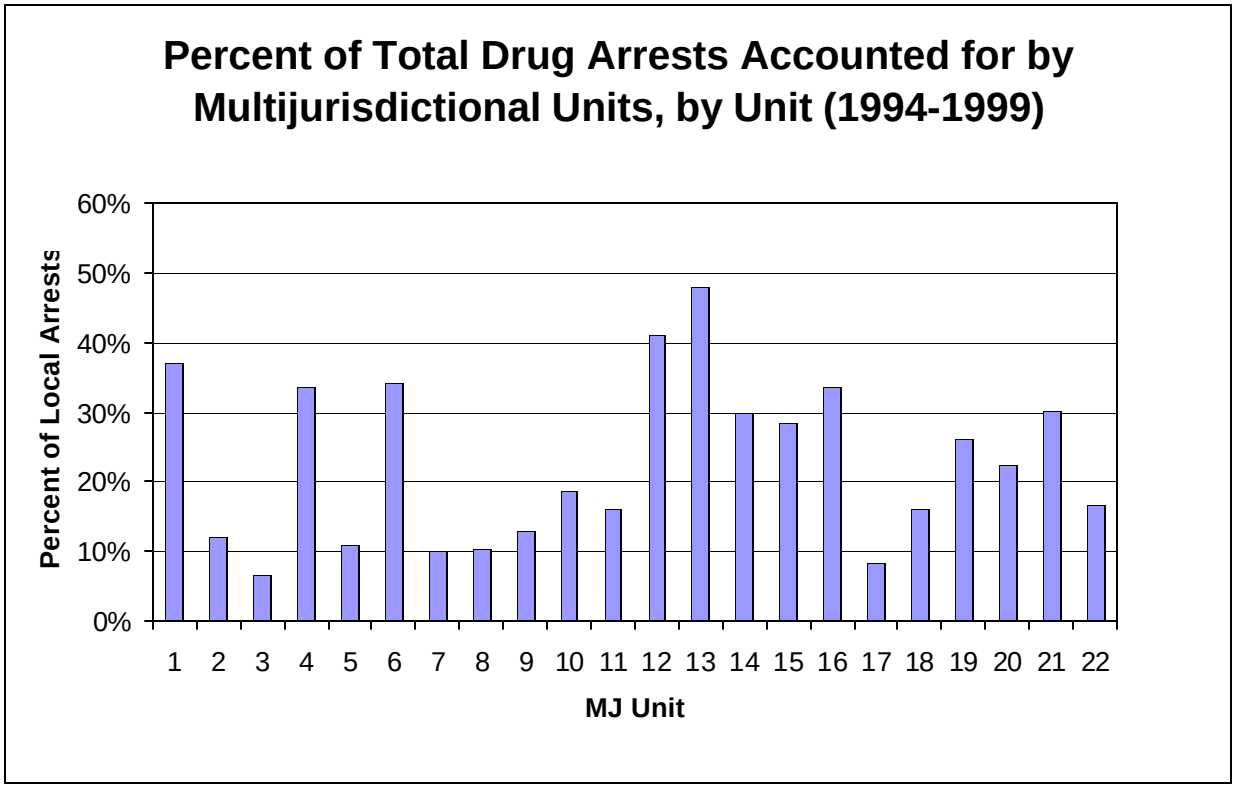
Results

Comparison of Drug Task Force and Local Police Arrest Volume: Total Drug-Law Violations

The first set of analyses examined the volume of drug arrests made by drug task forces relative to local police departments. One pattern that was almost universally true across all regions covered by multi-jurisdictional drug task forces was that *local police departments* tend to make many

more drug arrests than do the drug task forces. This is not necessarily surprising. Given the relatively limited resources allocated to these units, as compared total law enforcement expenditures, the task forces tend to be more selective in the cases they accept, and also are directed through legislation and policy to target more serious drug offenders. Thus, when we consider the total number of arrests made for violations of drug laws in Illinois, we must keep in mind that the arrests made by local police departments is what drives much of the trends. Across all of the jurisdictions covered by multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Illinois combined, the units accounted for 17 percent of the drug arrests during the period between 1994 and 1999. However, as can be seen in Figure 1, the extent to which this statement holds varies somewhat across the individual units and the regions they cover.

Figure 1



Comparison of Drug Task Force and Local Police Arrest Volume: Violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act

Arrests for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act accounted for the single largest category of drug arrests across almost all of the law enforcement agencies operating in Illinois. Illinois' Cannabis Control Act (720 ILCS 570) prohibits growing, selling or possessing marijuana. Based on surveys of Illinois' household population and school-aged children, marijuana is also the most frequently used illegal drug in the state. When we examined the volume of Cannabis Control Act arrests and the proportion of unit and local police arrests accounted for by Cannabis Control Act violations, it was clear that local participating police departments made the majority of drug arrests involved marijuana in the regions covered, and most of local drug arrests were accounted for by these offenses. On the other hand, a relatively small proportion of the arrests made by Illinois' multi-jurisdictional drug task forces involved Cannabis Control Act violations.

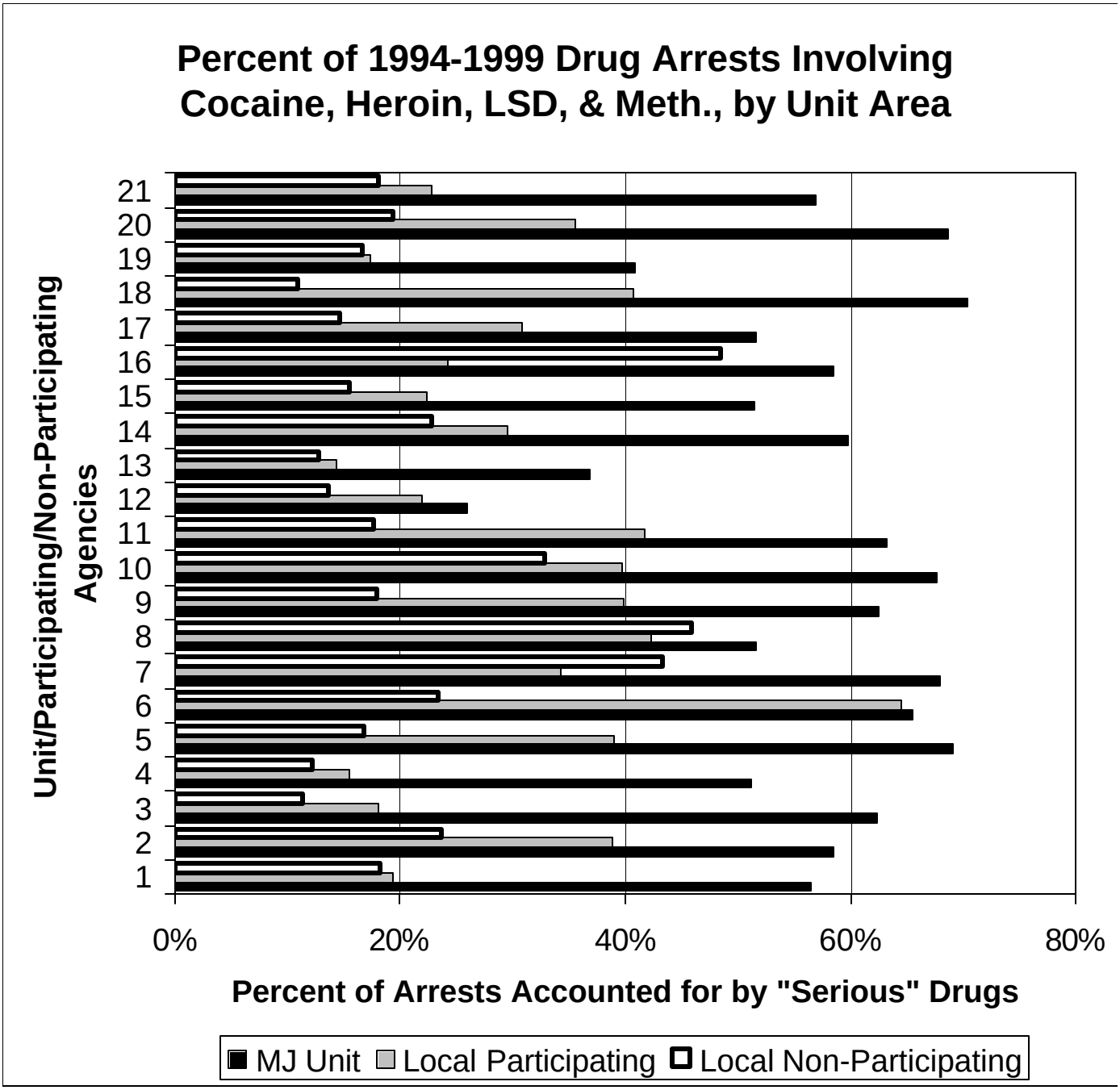
Specifically, during the period from 1994 through 1999, marijuana offenses accounted for 40 percent of all of the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces combined, compared to a combined 66 percent of all of the local participating agency arrests during that same time period. When each individual MEG or Task Force was examined separately, and compared to the participating agency arrests, a consistent pattern emerged: in every region where these units were operating, cannabis offenses accounted for a larger proportion of local police arrests than they did of multi-jurisdictional drug task force arrests. Thus, local police departments are much more likely than multi-jurisdictional units to make arrests for marijuana-related offenses, which would be expected, since marijuana is the drug most frequently used in Illinois. The fact that multi-

jurisdictional unit arrests are less likely to involve marijuana offenses speaks to the targeted nature of their cases and investigations. Put another way, while marijuana may be the drug most frequently used and most readily available, multi-jurisdictional units focus on the drugs offenders that aren't as easy to find or as large in volume.

Comparison of Drug Task Force and Local Police Arrest Volume: Violations of Illinois' Controlled Substances Act

In general, the sale, delivery and possession of drugs like cocaine, crack, heroin and LSD tend to be viewed by both the public and elected officials as much more serious than marijuana offenses. One indication of this belief is the fact that in most states, including Illinois, offenses involving marijuana tend to be classified as misdemeanors, whereas illegal delivery or possession of other drugs are categorized as felonies. Thus, another way to compare the arrests of multi-jurisdictional units to those of local departments is to examine 1) the proportion of arrests for serious drugs (e.g., cocaine, heroin, LSD) accounted for by task forces (task force arrests for these offenses/total regional arrests for these offenses), and/or 2) to compare the proportion of arrests accounted for by these offenses between task force and local departments (multi-jurisdictional arrests for these offenses/total multi-jurisdictional drug arrests versus local arrests for these offenses/total local arrests for drug offenses). Doing so reveals that in some jurisdictions the MJ units account for the majority of arrests for drugs involving cocaine, heroin and LSD, and also that the majority of their arrests are for these offenses (Figure 2).

Figure 2



Specifically, during the period from 1994 through 1999, violations of the Controlled Substances Act accounted for 60 percent of all multi-jurisdictional drug task force arrests combined,

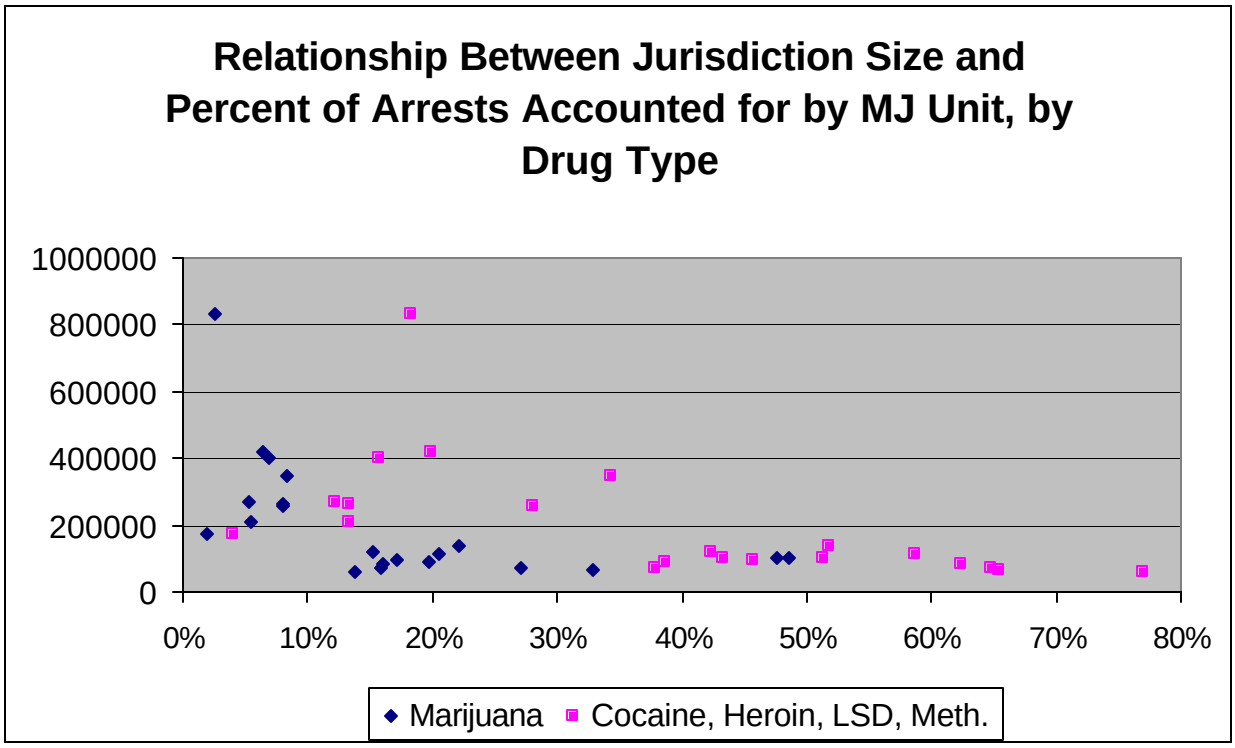
compared to a combined 33 percent of all of the local participating agency arrests during that same time period. When each individual MEG or Task Force was examined separately, and compared to the participating agency arrests, a consistent pattern emerged: in every region where these units were operating, Controlled Substances Act offenses accounted for a smaller proportion of local police arrests than they did of multi-jurisdictional drug task force arrests. Further, with the exception of three of the units, violations of the Controlled Substances Act accounted for the majority of all drug arrests by the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces. In addition, it is also clear that a larger proportion of participating agency drug arrests involve the Controlled Substances Act than do arrests made by non-participating agencies. In all but three jurisdictions, a larger percentage of local participating agency drug arrests involved Controlled Substances Act violations than did local non-participating agency drug arrests.

Thus, through analyses of existing UCR and unit drug arrest data, the following conclusions can be made. With respect to volume of arrest activity, while multi-jurisdictional drug task forces do not account for the majority of arrests for drug-law violations in the regions that they serve, it does appear that they play a more significant role in making arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act (cocaine, heroin, methamphetmine, etc.) than those involving cannabis. In addition, it also appears that the individuals targeted by the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces are different from those identified by local police departments, again, with the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces focusing more on those violating the Controlled Substances Act and local police departments being much more likely to make arrests for Cannabis Control Act violations.

There were, however, variations in the degrees to which these conclusions held across the individual units. There are also a number of other patterns that emerged in the analyses. First was the slight relationship between the proportion of cannabis arrests accounted for by the multi-jurisdictional drug task force and the proportion of Controlled Substances Act arrests accounted for by the task forces: those units that accounted for a large proportion of regional Controlled Substances Act arrests also tended to account for relatively higher proportions of cannabis offenses as well. One interpretation is that where these units operate, and when they focus on Controlled Substances Act offenses, they also get more involved in cannabis investigations.

Another pattern that was uncovered was the apparent inverse relationship between the size of the jurisdiction covered and the role the units played in regional drug enforcement. The smaller the jurisdiction covered (in terms of population), the higher the proportion of regional drug arrests accounted for by the units, particularly when it came to arrests for Controlled Substances Act violations (Figure 3). For example, in all of the jurisdictions with a population of 100,000 or fewer, the multi-jurisdictional drug task force accounted for 40 percent or more of the regional arrests for Controlled Substances Act violations. Within larger jurisdictions (e.g., those with populations of 200,000 or more), unit arrests for Controlled Substances Act offenses tended to account for 20 percent or less of the regional arrests for those offenses.

Figure 3



Comparing the Nature of Drug Task Force and Local Arrests to Drug Treatment Admissions

Another way available aggregate data were used to understand the nature of the drug problem, and targets of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, was to compare the nature of drug arrests with the nature of drug treatment admissions. Specifically, we examined the extent to which the drug arrests made by multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, local participating agencies and local non-participating agencies were consistent or different from drug treatment admissions in the jurisdictions served by the task forces.

When the percent of drug arrests involving the more serious substances of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, etc. (e.g., violations of the Controlled Substances Act) by task forces,

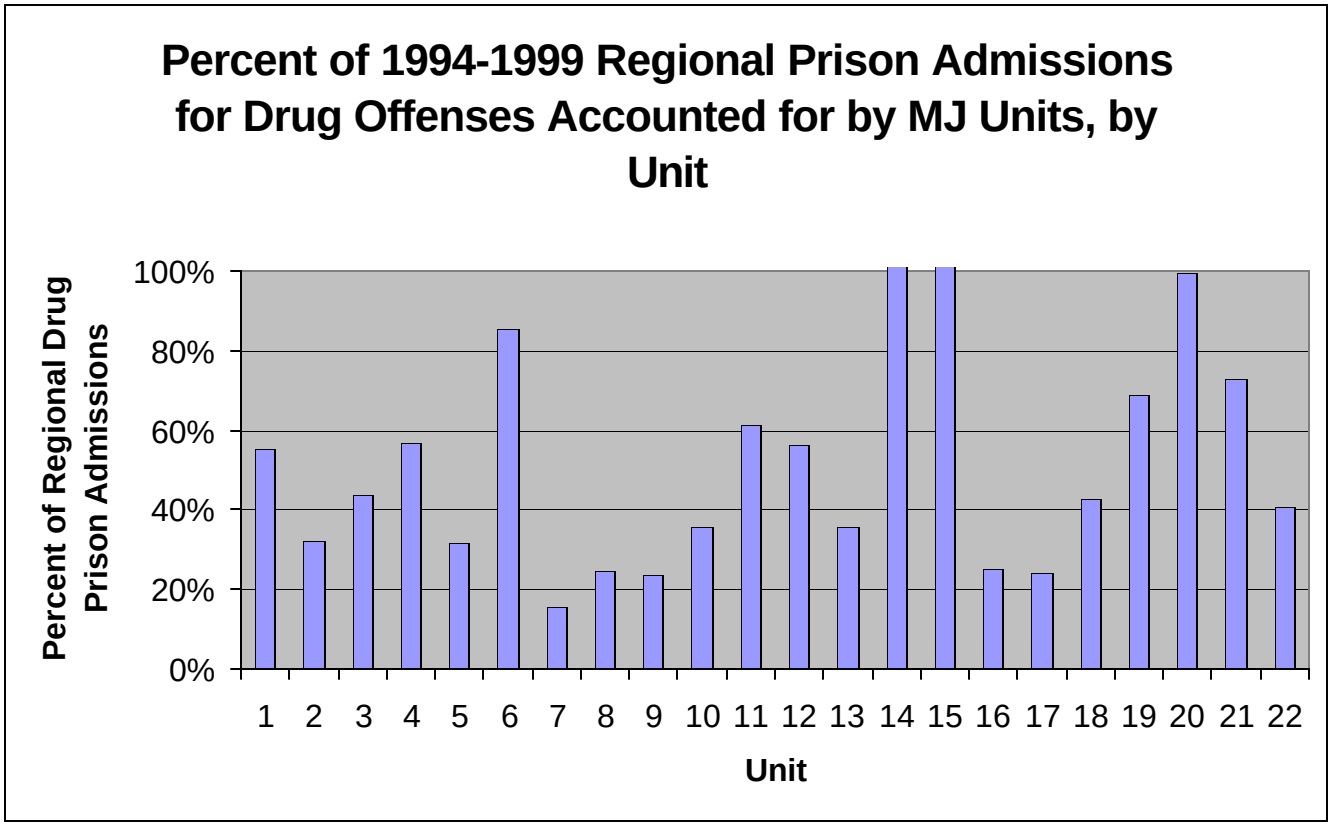
participating and non-participating agencies were compared to the proportion of drug treatment admissions in the regions served accounted for by those same substances, a number of patterns were clear. First was the fact that the drugs involved in multi-jurisdictional drug task force arrests tend to mirror more closely the drugs for which people admitted to substance abuse treatment appear to be abusing: most task force arrests were for drugs defined in Illinois' Controlled Substances Act, as were most treatment admissions. By comparison, local arrests (both by participating and non-participating agencies) were much more likely to involve cannabis, which does not account for a substantial proportion of the treatment admissions in the regions they serve.

Comparison of Prison Sentences for Drug Offenses Accounted for by Multi-jurisdictional Units and Proportion of Multijurisdictinal Unit Arrests Leading to Prison

Another indicator or way to assess the role of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in the local drug enforcement environment is to examine the proportion of prison admissions for drug offenses within the region accounted for by task force cases. Using data reported to the Authority by the task forces regarding the sentences imposed on convicted offenders, and comparing that to data provided by the Illinois Department of Corrections on drug offenses admissions within the regions served by task forces, it was revealed that a relatively large proportion—40 percent of the 1994-1999 admissions from the regions for drug offenses—were the result of drug task force cases (Total identified as unit "22" in the figure). Also evident from Figure 4 is that the proportion of drug admissions to prison accounted for by the task forces varied considerably across the state, from under one-quarter in some task force regions (e.g., task forces 7, 8, 9, 16,

and 17) to more than 100 percent (14, 15, and 20). This latter pattern raises the potential that some units may not be reporting *defendants* sentenced to prison, but rather, *sentences* (e.g., one defendant with multiple sentences to prison for different offenses) or that for some of the units many of the sentences to prison reported by task forces may be for non-drug offenses. Regardless, the data reported by the units for drug offenders sentenced to prison needs to be examined more closely to ensure that it is comparable, and also to allow for it to be compared with other sources of information (e.g., IDOC admissions data).

Figure 4



Use of Offender-level Data to Assess Task Force Targets and Impact

Theory/Purposes

While the analyses of aggregate data regarding drug task force targets and outputs provided a number of unique perspectives on the units, there are also a number of limitations to using only these data to gauge and compare targets. First of all is the question as to whether or not the arrests made by drug task forces operating in Illinois are included in the Uniform Crime Report data submitted by local police departments. Based on conversations with task force and local police department personnel, it appears that the answer to that question not only varies across units and police departments, but also may vary across time and agency/unit administrator. In addition to this limitation, it is also impossible from existing aggregate data in Illinois to examine the specific nature of drug arrests made by local police departments (e.g., possession versus delivery/sale), offense class, and the result of the arrest (e.g., charges filed, conviction, and sentence imposed). Also, one of the important questions that has been asked regarding task force targets is how does the nature of their prior criminal history compare to those arrested by traditional local police departments. Are those targeted/identified by multi-jurisdictional task forces more careful and sophisticated offenders, who have been successful at avoiding detection/arrest by traditional police strategies? Or, are these offenders who are known to local police, but have not been arrested for drug sale/delivery offenses before?

Thus, from the collection and analyses of arrestee-level data, we sought the answer to three specific research questions:

1) What is the difference in the nature of drug arrests (e.g., types of drugs involved, sale versus delivery, and offense class) between drug task forces, participating, and non-

participating police departments? Thus, we will be able to determine the extent to which drug task forces identify or target different *types* of drug-law violators than local police departments.

2) What is the difference in the outcome of the drug arrests between those made by task forces versus those made by local police departments, including the filing of charges, charge reduction, conviction rates, and the types of sentences imposed?
3) Finally, to what degree do the demographic characteristics and criminal histories of drug task force arrestees differ from those arrested by local police departments, including the volume and nature of prior arrests for drug, violent and other types of offenses.

Methodology

The study design that was employed for this phase of the research was unique, given that no study in Illinois has attempted to use criminal history record information to answer the types of questions we were interested in. As a result, we identified a number of critical issues regarding how drug task force arrests are reported to the state's central repository for criminal history record information, and also identified a number of strengths and limitations with using this type of information source for research purposes.

In order to examine the similarities and differences between offenders targeted and arrested by multi-jurisdictional drug units in Illinois and local police departments we obtained and coded criminal history records of these different groups of offenders. Specifically, we obtained information about people arrested during 1997 by five specific multi-jurisdictional units in Illinois, which allowed us to generate criminal history records of these offenders. These units were selected to ensure different types of units were included (e.g., Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Drug Task Forces) and that units serving different types of jurisdictions were examined (e.g., rural and urban). We then obtained a file from the Illinois State Police (ISP) with information about all people arrested in Illinois for a drug-law violation during 1997. From this

file we created sub-files containing only those individuals arrested within the geographic regions covered by the five drug units we were examining for this study. From these files were removed those individuals who were arrested by the drug unit, which left only those arrests made by local police department which participated or did not participate in the drug task force. Counties were used to identify the general area of task force operations.

Table 2

	Rural or Urban	Number of Participating Agencies	MEG or Task Force	North, Central or South
Unit 1	Rural	7	Task Force	Central
Unit 2	Urban	12	MEG	North
Unit 3	Urban	17	MEG	South
Unit 4	Mix	4	MEG	North
Unit 5	Rural	13	Task Force	South

Once the criminal history records of the task force, local participating and local non-participating arrestees were generated by the Illinois State Police, we then coded them to summarize the nature of the 1997 drug arrest selected for the sample, the outcome of that arrest, and the extent and nature of the arrestees' criminal history. Once these data were coded, entered and cleaned, we performed analyses to compare drug task force arrestees with those of local participating and non-participating agencies. Given that many of the analyses were based on samples of arrestees, we performed appropriate tests of statistical significance (e.g., Chi-square and Analysis of Variance, or ANOVA). Also, given that we wanted to compare our results from the aggregate analyses/typologies with those generated from the offender-level data, we performed separate analyses for each unit.

Results

Comparison of the Nature of the Drug-Law Violations

One of the patterns found in the analyses of UCR data was that multi-jurisdictional unit arrests were more likely than local police department (participating and non-participating alike) to involve violations of Illinois Controlled Substances Act. As can be seen in Table 3, this difference in the distribution of offenses was also frequently found when the information for the specific qualifying offenses was coded from the criminal history record information, but not to the same degree. For example, analyses of criminal history record data for Unit 1, and the participating and non-participating agencies, revealed that unit arrests were more likely to involve violations of the Controlled Substances Act (53.5 percent) than participating (36.4 percent) and non-participating agency arrests (13.8 percent), and that participating agency arrests were more likely than non-participating agency arrests to involve these offenses. This pattern was consistent across almost all units examined, with the differences being statistically significant at or below the $p<.05$ level for all but Unit 3. Also included in Table 3 are the percentages of arrests accounted for by violations of the Controlled Substances Act when only aggregate reported data (by the Unit to the Authority or by local departments to the Illinois State Police through the UCR program). These percentages are noted in parentheses. As can be seen, a much larger percent of local arrests involve the Controlled Substances Act when the source is criminal history record information than when UCR data are considered. This may be due to violations of the Cannabis Control Act (or misdemeanor offenses) not being reported through the criminal history record information (arrest cards) as frequently as Controlled Substances Act (or

felony-level offenses). It may also reflect a large number of Cannabis offenses involving juveniles, which have not historically resulted in criminal history records/arrest cards.

Table 3

Percent of 1997 arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act, by Unit and Participating versus Non-Participating Agencies (Percents in Parentheses are from Aggregate Reported and UCR data)

	Multi-jurisdictional Unit Arrests	Local Law Enforcement Agencies	
		Arrests by Participating Agencies	Arrests by Non-Participating Agencies
Unit 1 [1]	53.5% (42%)	36.4% (12%)	13.8% (15%)
Unit 2 [2]	65.9% (68%)	60.4% (35%)	44.4% (15%)
Unit 3 [3]	66.7% (53%)	60.9% (45%)	64.7% (42%)
Unit 4 [4]	71.9%	51.4%	N/A
Unit 5 [5]	55.2% (61%)	31.6% (29%)	31.9% (14%)
Total [6]	61.4%	50.7%	47.7%

[1] $\chi^2 = 11.7$, 2 df, $p \leq .01$, [2] $\chi^2 = 6.4$, 2 df, $p \leq .05$, [3] $\chi^2 = 1.0$, 2 df, $p = .62$, [4] $\chi^2 = 6.9$, 2 df, $p \leq .05$, [5] $\chi^2 = 15.1$, 2 df, $p \leq .001$, [6] $\chi^2 = 12.8$, 2 df, $p \leq .01$

Due to the means by which drug arrest data are reported by local police departments in Illinois through the UCR program, it is not possible to determine the number of arrests for drug-law violations that involve drug sales versus drug possession offenses. Thus, in order to determine the proportion of drug arrests involving drug sale/delivery versus drug possession offenses, analyses of criminal history record data is one of the few readily available sources. When the percent of unit, participating and non-participating agency drug arrests involving drug sale/delivery were examined, a clear and dramatic pattern emerged: a large majority (58%-84%) of unit arrests involve drug sale/delivery, whereas a relatively small proportion (9%-35%) of local law enforcement agency arrests are for drug sale/delivery (Table 4). For example, 58 percent of all Unit 1 arrests were for drug sale/delivery, compared to less than 20 percent of the

arrests by the local police departments that participate in Unit 1 and fewer than 10 percent of the arrests by agencies which are within the geographic region where Unit 1 operates, but which do not participate. Thus, as they were intended to do, the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Illinois appear to be targeting drug sellers/distributors, whereas local police departments tend to make arrests primarily for drug possession.

Table 4
Percent of 1997 Drug Arrests for Sale/Delivery, by Unit and Participating versus Non-Participating Agencies

	Multi-jurisdictional Unit Arrests	Local Law Enforcement Agencies	
		Arrests by Participating Agencies	Arrests by Non-Participating Agencies
Unit 1 [1]	58.1%	18.2%	6.9%
Unit 2 [2]	79.5%	24.3%	23.8%
Unit 3 [3]	82.1%	9.8%	16.8%
Unit 4 [4]	84.4%	34.8%	0.0%
Unit 5 [5]	84.4%	27.2%	29.8%
Total [6]	79.2%	23.3%	19.6%

[1] $\chi^2 = 28.8$, 2 df, $p \leq .001$, [2] $\chi^2 = 53.2$, 2 df, $p \leq .001$, [3] $\chi^2 = 154.7$, 2 df, $p \leq .001$, [4] $\chi^2 = 28.7$, 2 df, $p \leq .001$, [5] $\chi^2 = 84.4$, 2 df, $p \leq .001$, [6] $\chi^2 = 326.2$, 2 df, $p \leq .001$

Thus, analyses of the individual-level criminal history record information regarding the current offense revealed that arrests made by the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces were consistently more likely to involve violations of Illinois' Controlled Substances Act (e.g., involved cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine) than were arrests by either participating or non-participating agencies, much more likely to involve drug sale/delivery offenses rather than possession, and, thus, more likely to be for felony-level offenses.

Comparison of the Outcome of Drug Arrests

One of the goals of the research was to determine whether drug arrests resulting from multi-jurisdictional task force efforts were more likely to result in prosecution, less likely to have the charges reduced, and more likely to result in a conviction. However, collection and analyses of the criminal history record information revealed that for a relatively large number of the arrests, information regarding the charging and disposition of the drug arrest was missing. While the prevalence of this problem—missing filing and disposition information—has been known to be associated with a significant portion of arrests originating in Cook County (a consistent finding from prior audits of the criminal history record information), it appears that this is also a problem in other parts of the state. Thus, the degree to which we were able to examine the "strength" of multi-jurisdictional task force drug cases relative to local police arrests were somewhat limited. Still, there was sufficient data to make some tentative conclusions regarding the likelihood of drug arrests to result in charges being filed, reduced and defendants being convicted. Below are the unit by unit comparisons of the percent of arrests resulting in a prosecution (charges being filed), the likelihood of prosecutions resulting in convictions, and percent of convictions resulting in prison for *those cases were there was complete data/information on the criminal history record*.

As seen in Table 5, among those cases that included specific information regarding the filing of charges (e.g., information included on the criminal history record indicating that charges were filed or that charges were not filed), across three of the five units the likelihood of charges being filed were quite high (near 90 percent or greater) for unit, as well as local arrests. However, one

of the substantial limitations to the information presented in Table 5 is the fact that it only includes those cases that included filing information on the criminal history record for that arrest. There also appears to be a clear pattern when the reporting of filing information was compared between multi-jurisdictional units and local arrests: multi-jurisdictional arrests were consistently more likely to not have the filing decision information (e.g., charges filed versus not filed) included on the criminal history record for the drug arrest than were local departments.

Table 5
Percent of 1997 Drug Arrests Leading to Charges Being Filed, by Unit and Participating versus Non-Participating Agencies

	Multi-jurisdictional Unit Arrests	Local Law Enforcement Agencies	
		Arrests by Agencies Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit	Arrests by Agencies Not Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit
Unit 1	94.1%	100.0%	100.0%
Unit 2	89.5%	92.4%	94.9%
Unit 3	87.0%	100.0%	96.1%
Unit 4	76.9%	82.9%	N/A
Unit 5	62.9%	96.1%	94.3%
Total	79.4%	93.4%	96.0%

Similarly, the number of drug arrests that included information through to disposition of the case were limited, and varied considerably not only between unit arrests and local arrests, but also geographically across the sample jurisdictions (e.g., in some jurisdictions all filings—unit, participating local and local non-participating were all unlikely to have dispositional information included), which would tend to indicate some type of jurisdiction-specific effect/reporting problems. Still, there were some patterns that support anecdotal accounts of multijurisidictional unit case strength. In four of the five jurisdictions covered by the multijurisidictional units, unit

cases were more likely to result in a conviction than were either participating or non-participating department arrests (Table 6).

Table 6
Percent of 1997 drug filings resulting in a conviction, by Unit and Participating versus Non-Participating Agencies

	Multi-jurisdictional Unit Arrests	Local Law Enforcement Agencies	
		Arrests by Agencies Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit	Arrests by Agencies Not Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit
Unit 1	95.0%	82.5%	85.7%
Unit 2	72.7%	72.9%	81.3%
Unit 3	97.1%	80.8%	69.8%
Unit 4	75.0%	68.9%	N/A
Unit 5	93.7%	81.5%	87.1%
Total	90.0%	77.1%	78.9%

Comparison of the Criminal History of Drug-Law Violators, by Unit and Participating versus Non-Participating Agencies

Another dimension we were able to examine using the criminal history record information for multi-jurisdictional drug task force targets and the comparative groups was the extent and nature of their criminal history record prior to their 1997 drug arrest. Specifically, we examined the distribution of prior arrests for all drug-law violations, drug sale/delivery offenses, and other, non-drug, offenses. Two different methods of analysis were performed: first, the distribution of prior arrests was considered to identify those with no prior arrests, 1 prior arrest, 2-5 priors, and 6 or more priors. The second set of analyses examined the average number of prior arrests.

As presented in Table 7, there was no clear, discernible difference across the units when prior drug arrests were examined. In some areas covered by the drug units, local police department

arrestees had, collectively, more prior drug arrests than did the task force arrestees (e.g., Unit 1, Unit 3 and Unit 5), whereas the Unit 2 and 4 arrestees had more prior drug arrests, on average, than did the local drug arrestees. There were also some interesting patterns when the distribution of prior drug arrests was examined. For example, more than one-half (54 percent) of arrestees by two of the units (1 and 5) had no drug arrests prior to the unit arrest. The implication of these patterns is that many of those arrested by these task forces were not "known" or had nothing in their criminal history to indicate that they were involved in drug distribution. One frequently cited advantage to the use of the drug task forces is their ability to identify and target drug-law violators who have been able to avoid detection and attention by local police departments. On the other hand, some have also suggested that the task forces are able to focus more intensively on the "known" drug offenders, and work the cases up to delivery/sale offenses. This may be illustrated by the distribution of prior drug arrests among the Unit 4 targets: almost three-quarters (74 percent) of the arrestees by Unit 4 had prior drug arrests, indicating that most had been previously arrested by local police for drug-law violations.

Table 7
Distribution of Prior Drug Arrests, by Unit and Participating versus Non-Participating Agencies

	Multi-jurisdictional Unit Arrests	Local Law Enforcement Agencies	
		Arrests by Agencies Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit	Arrests by Agencies Not Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit
Unit 1:			
0	54.2%	34.1%	23.5%
1	33.3%	36.4%	52.9%
2-5	12.5%	24.9%	23.6%
6 +	0.0%	4.6%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	0.63	1.25	1.35
Unit 2:			
0	31.4%	31.3%	23.7%
1	25.7%	29.3%	39.5%
2-5	37.1%	33.4%	26.3%
6 +	2.9%	4.0%	7.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	2.00	1.84	2.00
Unit 3:			
0	45.8%	40.7%	44.2%
1	28.8%	32.2%	23.3%
2-5	23.8%	22.0%	26.8%
6 +	1.7%	1.7%	3.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	1.08	1.40	1.42
Unit 4:			
0	26.3%	32.5%	0.0%
1	26.3%	34.1%	100.0%
2-5	42.1%	25.9%	0.0%
6 +	5.3%	6.5%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	1.89	1.57	1.00
Unit 5:			
0	54.4%	34.4%	51.6%
1	26.3%	41.9%	38.7%
2-5	19.4%	21.5%	6.4%
6 +	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	0.77	1.16	0.84

In general, the prevalence and distribution of prior arrests specifically for drug sale/delivery was quite low across unit and local police department arrestees (Table 8). The majority of arrestees across all units, as well as all local police departments (participating and non-participating) had never before been arrested for drug sale/delivery. Similarly, the *average number* of prior arrests for drug sale/delivery was relatively low: ranging from a high of 0.6 prior drug sale/delivery among the Unit 4 targets to an average of 0.1 across many of the units/participating agencies.

Table 8
Distribution of Prior Drug Sale Arrests, by Unit and Participating versus Non-Participating Agencies

	Multi-jurisdictional Unit Arrests	Local Law Enforcement Agencies	
		Arrests by Agencies Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit	Arrests by Agencies Not Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit
Unit 1:			
0	87.5%	88.6%	76.5%
1	12.5%	6.8%	17.6%
2 +	0.0%	4.6%	5.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	0.13	0.18	0.29
Unit 2:			
0	68.6%	72.0%	65.8%
1	25.7%	16.0%	23.7%
2 +	5.7%	12.1%	10.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	0.37	0.48	0.55
Unit 3:			
0	74.6%	85.6%	80.2%
1	20.3%	13.6%	15.1%
2 +	5.1%	0.8%	4.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	0.32	0.16	0.24
Unit 4:			
0	57.9%	70.7%	100.0%
1	26.3%	22.0%	0.0%
2 +	15.8%	7.3%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	0.63	0.41	0.00

Unit 5:			
0	77.2%	75.3%	83.9%
1	15.8%	20.4%	16.1%
2 +	7.1%	4.4%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	0.32	0.33	0.16

When the distribution and average number of prior arrests for all types of crimes combined (e.g., drug-law violations and other offenses) were examined, a number of patterns were evident (Table 9). First was the fact that almost all arrestees (including those by the units as well as local police departments) had arrests prior to their 1997 drug arrest. Further, the *average number* of prior arrests exceeded five across eight of the units of analysis (e.g., unit or local department).

Table 9
Distribution of Total Prior Arrests, by Unit and Participating versus Non-Participating Agencies

	Multi-jurisdictional Unit Arrests	Local Law Enforcement Agencies	
		Arrests by Agencies Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit	Arrests by Agencies Not Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit
Unit 1:			
0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1	50.0%	38.6%	23.5%
2-5	33.3%	36.4%	52.9%
6 +	16.7%	25.1%	23.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	3.38	4.77	4.00
Unit 2:			
0	5.7%	0.0%	0.0%
1	14.3%	20.7%	34.2%
2-5	31.4%	38.6%	31.6%
6 +	48.7%	40.8%	34.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	6.57	6.81	6.63
Unit 3:			
0	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%

1	22.0%	22.0%	22.1%
2-5	57.7%	49.2%	44.2%
6 +	18.7%	28.4%	34.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	3.81	6.08	7.15
Unit 4:			
0	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%
1	10.5%	24.4%	0.0%
2-5	31.6%	42.3%	100.0%
6 +	52.8%	33.4%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	6.11	5.61	4.00
Unit 5:			
0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1	29.8%	23.7%	35.5%
2-5	50.9%	46.3%	38.7%
6 +	19.5%	30.4%	25.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean	3.75	5.89	4.55

When the demographic characteristics of multi-jurisdictional unit drug arrestees and local police drug arrestees were compared, some differences were found for some of the jurisdictions (Table 10). In terms of arrestee gender, there was one unit (Unit 1) where a smaller percent of the arrests involved male offenders than did arrests by local police departments. On the other hand, arrests by Unit 4 were more likely than local arrests to involve male offenders (90 percent versus 77 percent, respectively). Across the other units, the gender of the unit arrestees was similar to that of drug-law violators arrested by local police departments. Similarly, when the racial distribution of drug arrestees was examined, some differences emerged. For example, about two-thirds of the arrests made by Unit 1 involved white offenders, compared to 80 percent of the arrests by local departments. On the other hand, almost 70 percent of the arrestees by Unit 4 were white, compared to 55 percent of the local drug arrestees.

Table 10
Distribution of Demographic Characteristics, by Unit and Participating versus Non-Participating Agencies

	Multi-jurisdictional Unit Arrests	Local Law Enforcement Agencies	
		Arrests by Agencies Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit	Arrests by Agencies Not Participating in Multi-jurisdictional Unit
Unit 1:			
Male	69.8%	89.4%	82.8%
White	62.8%	80.3%	100.0%
Mean Age	28.1 yrs	26.7 yrs	27.1 yrs
Unit 2:			
Male	93.0%	90.1%	79.4%
White	52.3%	42.6%	61.9%
Mean Age	28.2 yrs	27.0 yrs	27.6 yrs
Unit 3:			
Male	85.9%	77.7%	80.7%
White	44.9%	64.7%	45.4%
Mean Age	29.6 yrs	28.2 yrs	29.1 yrs
Unit 4:			
Male	90.6%	76.6%	100.0%
White	68.8%	54.9%	100.0%
Mean Age	27.9 yrs	27.7 yrs	32.5 yrs
Unit 5:			
Male	72.9%	78.5%	76.6%
White	87.5%	81.6%	91.3%
Mean Age	30.0 yrs	30.0 yrs	31.0 yrs

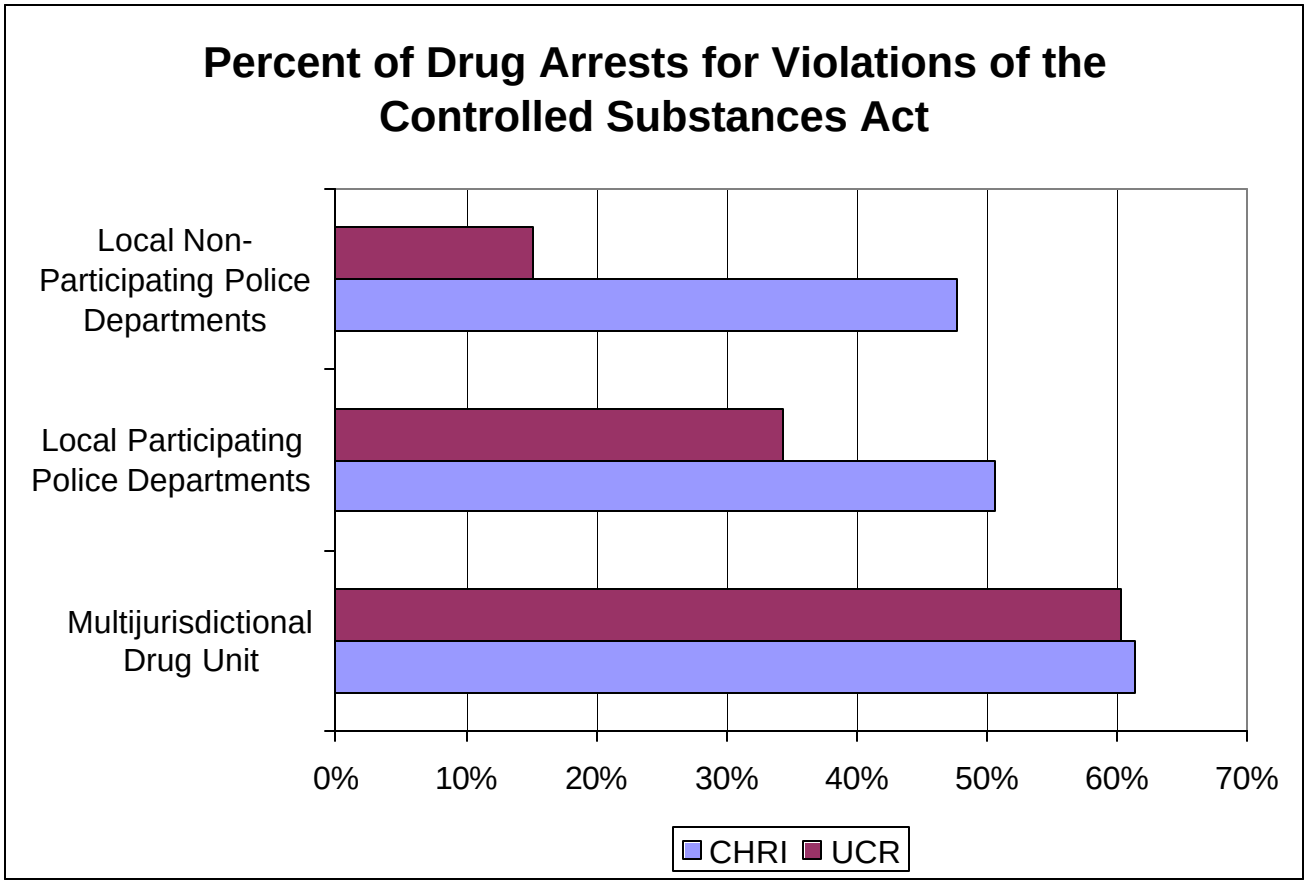
Conclusions

Nature of Arrests

Based on analyses and comparisons of the current (1998) drug arrests for multi-jurisdictional task forces and local police departments, one general conclusion was that multi-jurisdictional drug task force arrests were consistently more likely than local department arrests to involve violations of Illinois' Controlled Substances Act (e.g., involved cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine), whereas local department arrests were more likely to be for violations of

Illinois Cannabis Control Act, which prohibits the production, sale and possession of marijuana. However, one important pattern was that the degree to which there were these differences varied across units (Figure 5) and also differed from arrest data submitted through Illinois' Uniform Crime Report (UCR) program. Specifically, in some jurisdictions there was not as large a difference between multi-jurisdictional task force and local department arrests in the proportion accounted for by violations of the Controlled Substances Act, while in others the differences were extremely large.

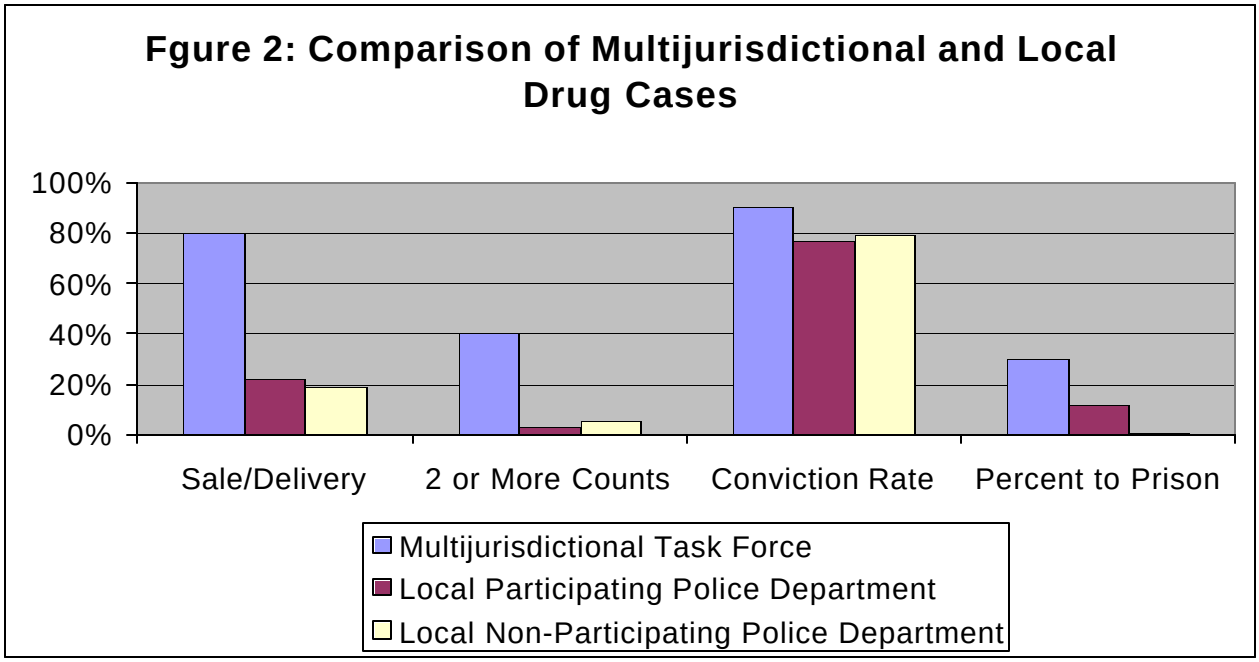
Figure 5



Another pattern that was consistent across all units examined was that the clear majority of multi-jurisdictional drug task force arrests were for the sale/delivery of illegal drugs, whereas the

majority of arrests by local police departments were for drug possession (Figure 6). Specifically, approximately 80 percent of multi-jurisdictional task force drug arrests were for drug sale/delivery, compared to just *over* 20 percent of the drug arrests made by participating police departments and just *under* 20 percent for the drug arrests made by non-participating local police departments. As a result, the majority of multi-jurisdictional task force arrests were felony-level offenses, whereas one-half or fewer of the local department arrests were for felony offenses. Finally, multi-jurisdictional task force arrests were also more likely than local arrests to involve multiple "counts" or charges. In aggregate, 40 percent of the multi-jurisdictional task force arrests involved two of more counts, compared to fewer than 5 percent of the local department drug arrests (Figure 6). This most likely reflects the nature of task force cases, where they may make numerous undercover purchases from targeted dealers before making an arrest, whereas local arrests are more likely to involve "on-view" arrests of specific incidents.

Figure 6



Thus, multi-jurisdictional drug task forces clearly target a different type of drug-law violation than do local police departments: they are more likely to involve drugs that are viewed (by the public and Illinois' laws) as more serious (e.g., cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine) and are almost all for the sale/delivery of drugs. By comparison, local police department drug arrests were more likely to involve cannabis and possession offenses and be for single charges. The research also found that multi-jurisdictional task force arrests were much more likely than local department arrests to involve and mirror the types of drugs being seen by substance abuse treatment agencies serving individuals in the communities where the task forces operated.

Prosecution, Conviction and Sentencing

Through examination of each of the arrests and the subsequent information contained on criminal history records we also sought to determine the degree to which there were differences between multi-jurisdictional task force drug arrests and local department drug arrests in the likelihood of prosecutorial filings, charge reduction, and conviction. However, one problem encountered that limited our ability to be conclusive in our examination was the extent to which this information was missing from large numbers of the criminal history records examined. As a result, the conclusions made from these analyses were somewhat more cautious than were those associated with the nature of the arrests. Still, the patterns in the data do support, to some degree, anecdotal comments made by those involved in task force operations. With respect to charges being filed as a result of the arrest, overall approximately 90 percent of both multi-jurisdictional task force drug arrests and drug arrests by local departments resulted in charges being filed by the respective County State's Attorneys. There was also no substantive difference between task

force and local department cases when reductions in charges were examined: approximately 15 percent of the cases, both from task forces and local departments, had the initial arrest charges reduced when the case was filed with the court. However, one important thing to keep in mind is that the majority of local arrests was for drug possession, and involved only a single charge, leaving little room to have charges reduced in the first place. On the other hand, multi-jurisdictional cases, which were more likely to involve sale/delivery and include multiple charges, had a greater potential to have charges reduced, but they were not.

When conviction rates were examined, across almost every unit and as a whole, task force cases were more likely to result in a conviction than local department arrests, although the majority of all prosecutions resulted in a conviction. When all units were examined collectively, they achieved a 90 percent conviction rate, compared to just below 80 percent for local participating and non-participating police department cases (Figure 6). This may point again to the amount of time, effort, and targeting put into the task force cases. Many have suggested that because of the use of hand-to-hand buys, wiretaps, and carefully planned and executed arrests that characterize multi-jurisdictional task force cases they are more likely to result in convictions and the data appear to support this perspective. On the other hand, no difference was noted between task force and local department cases in terms of the amount of time to case disposition when case type was taken into account: on average, sale/delivery cases took an average of 150 days from arrest to disposition for both task force and local participating department cases.

Finally, when the sentences imposed on those convicted of sale/delivery of cocaine, heroin or methamphetamine were compared between task force and local department cases, multi-

jurisdictional task force cases were much more likely to result in a sentence to prison (Figure 6). Specifically, one-third of those involved in the sale/delivery of drugs identified in Illinois' Controlled Substances Act and convicted as a result of a multi-jurisdictional task force arrest were sentenced to prison, compared to less than 15 percent of participating agency cases for the same type of offense and less than 5 percent of local non-participating agency cases for these offenses.

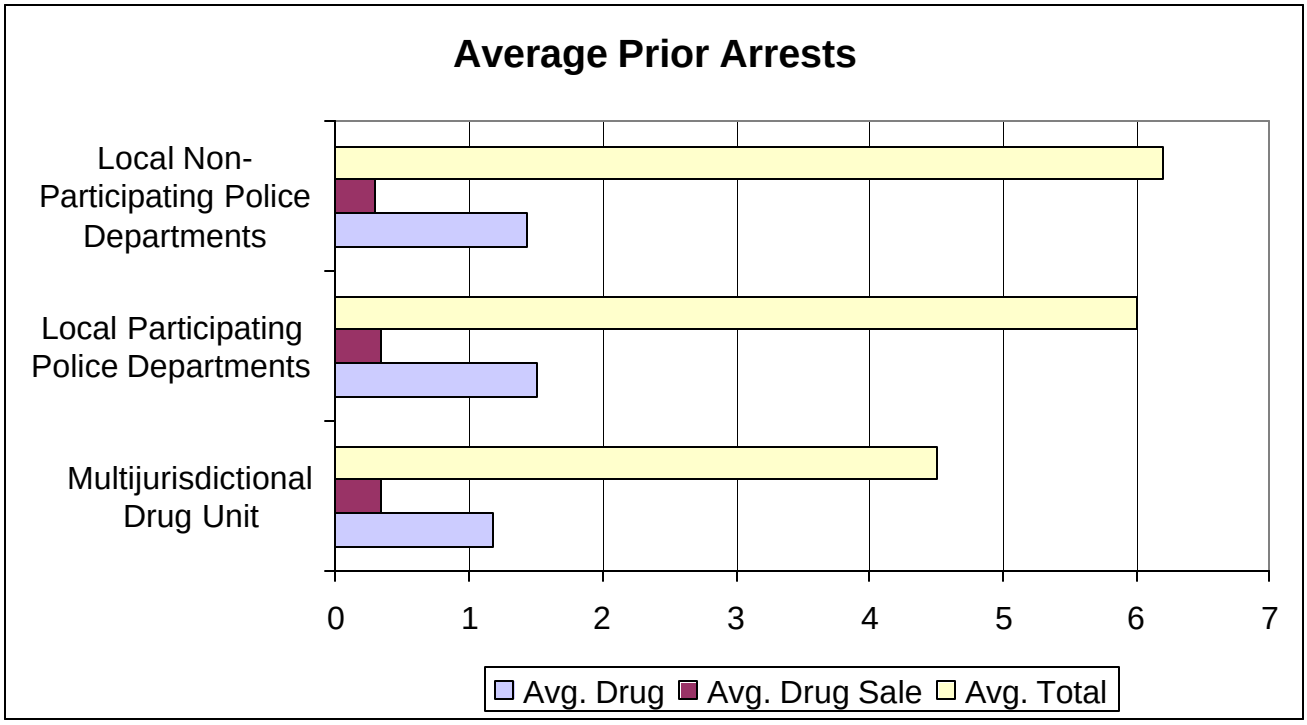
Thus, multi-jurisdictional task force cases were just as likely as local department cases to result in charges being filed and were not any more likely to have the charges reduced, despite the fact that the task force cases left more room for this type of charge reduction/plea bargaining. Also, task force cases accepted for prosecution were more likely to result in a conviction than were local department arrests accepted for prosecution, and were also more likely to result in a sentence to prison when the most serious types of offenses were considered.

Extent and Nature of Arrestee Criminal Histories

Finally, criminal history records were examined for task force and local department drug arrestees to determine if there were any clear patterns that differentiated task force targets from local department drug arrestees. In general, those individuals arrested by multi-jurisdictional drug task forces tended to have slightly less extensive criminal histories than those arrested by local departments (Figures 7-8). For example, across all the task forces combined, the average number of prior arrests (for drug and non-drug offenses combined) was 4.5, compared to an average of 6 prior arrests among the local department arrestees (Figure 7). This pattern was

consistent across four of the five individual units examined. When prior drug arrests were examined, a number of interesting patterns were found. First was that there was relatively little difference between task force arrestees and local department arrestees when the average number of prior drug arrests were compared.

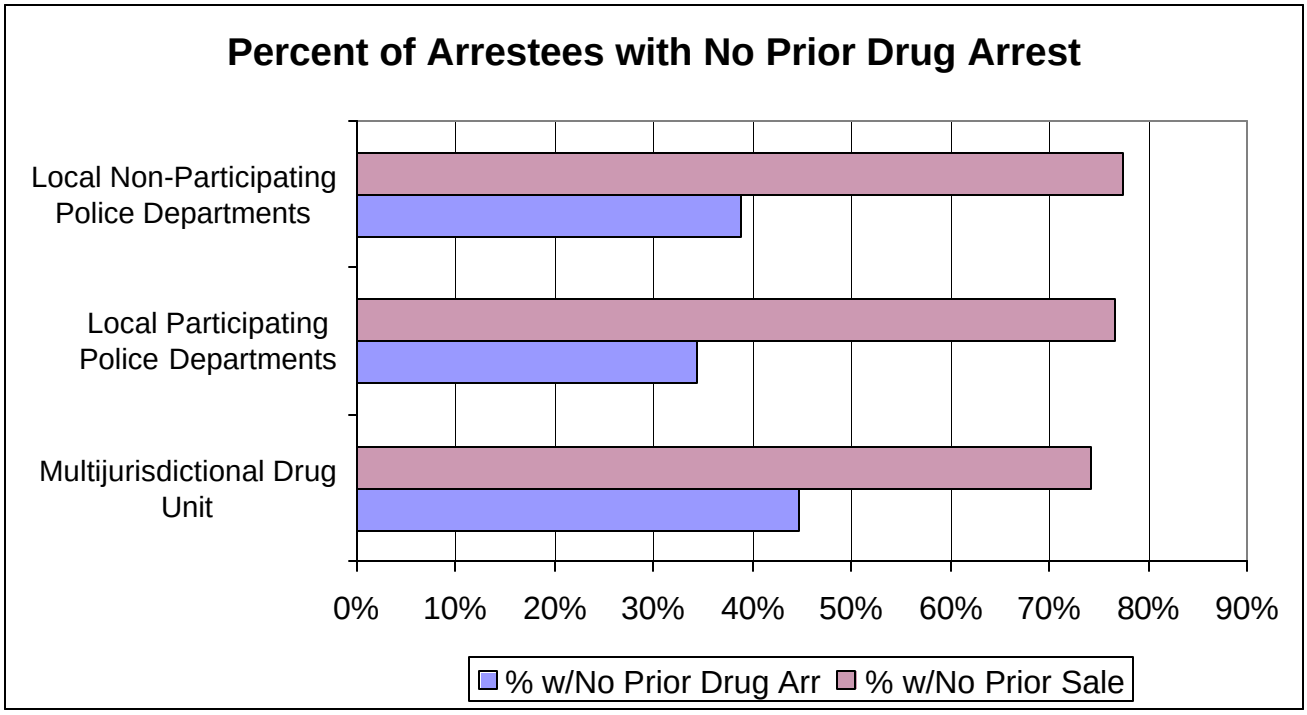
Figure 7



Second was the surprisingly low prevalence of prior drug arrests for the task force targets: across all units combined, the average number of prior drug arrests was just over 1. Further, more than 40 percent of the task force arrestees had never before been arrested for a drug-law violation (Figure 8). Thus, despite the fact that the majority of task force targets were arrested for felony-level sale/delivery offenses involving cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine, from a law enforcement/justice system perspective they were not "known" as involved extensively in drug-

law violations. This is not to say, however, that they were not known by the justice system at all: as noted earlier, task force and local arrestees averaged 4.5 to 6 prior arrests and one-quarter of all the arrestees included in the study (task force and local agency arrestees) had been sentenced to prison in Illinois prior to their 1998 drug arrest.

Figure 8



As a result of the research supported through the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority has been able to achieve a number of important goals. First was opportunity to develop, test and refine a methodology that can be used to better gauge and monitor the activities and impact of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces operating in Illinois. Second were the research findings themselves: through analyses of the data collected it was affirmed that Illinois' multi-jurisdictional drug task forces target more serious

drug-law violators than local departments have the capacity to do alone (e.g., felony-level, sale/delivery offenses involving cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine), and those less likely to be known to law enforcement (as indicated by the low prevalence of prior drug arrests) as being involved in drug distribution. Further, the research also documented that the cases presented for prosecution by multi-jurisdictional task forces are slightly more likely to result in convictions, without having charges reduced, and are considerably more likely to result in a sentence to prison when compared with similar types of arrests made by local police departments. However, it is also important to note that individual multi-jurisdictional task forces vary considerably from one another. In some jurisdictions there is a clear and dramatic difference between multi-jurisdictional task force cases relative to local department efforts, whereas in other regions these differences are not as dramatic. Thus, while it is important to draw some general conclusions regarding the operations and targets of multi-jurisdictional task forces, it is also important to note the individuality of these units and the unique environments within which they each operate.

Finally, the research also identified and affirmed a number of issues related to using criminal history record information for this type of research. First was the fact that in many instances the multi-jurisdictional task force arrests indicated a local police department as the arresting agency on the criminal history record. Subsequent conversations with task force administrators revealed that arrestees are oftentimes processed through local police departments, which are then listed on arrest/fingerprint cards as the arresting agencies. In other instances, local departments assist the task forces in making arrests, particularly when the task forces are serving warrants on multiple offenders simultaneously. Regardless, one problem which this gives rise to is that without the multi-jurisdictional task force listed as the arresting agency is it impossible from reviewing

criminal histories to identify these arrests unless one knew, as we did, the specific arrest date of the multi-jurisdictional task force arrest. This poses not only a problem for researchers, but practitioners as well, who may utilize criminal history records for decision-making purposes (e.g., prosecution, sentencing, etc). In addition, if there are problems or errors associated with the submitted arrest card, and the Illinois State Police contact the arresting agency listed on the arrest card when in reality the arrest was made by a multi-jurisdictional task force, it may slow or prohibit the corrections needed to complete the transaction/posting of information to an individual's criminal history record. Again, this problem varied from task force to task force. For some multi-jurisdictional task forces, the majority of arrests listed the task force as the arresting agency, while in others only a very small proportion of the arrests identified the task force as the arresting agency. Another issue identified through analyses of the criminal history records, which has been noted previously, is the extent to which information regarding prosecutorial decisions and case dispositions were missing from criminal history records (sample attrition is described in Appendix I). Obviously the lack of this information makes some of the conclusions regarding case outcomes somewhat tenuous.

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Appendix I

Sample Sizes and Attrition from the Sample at Various Points of Analysis

	Sample Size	Received CHRI	Drug Arrest Indicated	Filing Information Indicated	Disposition Information Indicated
Unit 1	71	56	46	17	20
Local Part	145	141	66	47	40
Local Non	62	61	29	23	21
Unit 2	185	122	57	19	11
Local Part	286	263	202	144	59
Local Non	93	93	63	39	16
Unit 3	212	136	82	23	35
Local Part	304	255	184	125	99
Local Non	181	157	119	76	53
Unit 4	191	88	41	13	20
Local Part	293	271	175	129	106
Local Non	13	7	2	2	2
Unit 5	212	145	113	35	63
Local Part	266	252	158	128	119
Local Non	89	74	47	35	31