

# Professional Standards are Political Strategy: A Theory of Local Bureaucratic Professionalization

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## Abstract

Professional associations of bureaucrats coordinate members that control agencies across many state and local governments, but political scientists have not studied them as an independent political force. Using historical sources I show police professional associations crafted model policies and a collective public image in order to win greater collective independence from local governments. I then analyze a game theoretic model of how an association defines professional standards for local bureaucracies, showing the effect of association preferences on policy depends on the disagreement between local governments. When local governments agree a national association can choose the direction of policy in all jurisdictions, but when local governments polarize an association's commitment to broad membership constraints their choices to the political middle-ground.

Keywords: professionalization, bureaucracy, policing, local politics

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## List of Abbreviations

IACP: International Association of Chiefs of Police

MYB: Municipal Year Book

PACH: Public Administration Clearing House

PYB: Police Year Book

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In 1960 Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley appointed a committee of experts and community leaders to find a new chief for the city’s scandal-plagued police department. They recommended O.W. Wilson, one of the most prominent members of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), concluding that his integrity, experience, and professional expertise made him the best qualified person for the job (Balto, 2019, 152-55). Daley accepted their recommendation and Wilson accepted the position, but only after assurances that he would have “a free hand and a complete divorce of the force from politics” (United Press International, 1960). Similar scripts played out in Boston (1961-62), Los Angeles (1950), Washington, DC (1951), and New York City (1954): concern about police corruption and ineptitude prompted local leaders to appoint a new chief committed to political independence and bringing the department in line with professional standards (Fogelson, 1977, 173-75).<sup>1</sup>

As its name suggests, the IACP’s US membership consists primarily of city police chiefs, along with high ranking officials from county, state, and federal police agencies. Its members wield formal policy making authority in departments across the country, deciding on policies including the creation of specialized units, the deployment and tactics of officers, and the training officers receive (Teodoro, 2009; Lewis and Ramakrishnan, 2007; Hunt and Magenau, 1993). By deciding how police deploy their coercive powers, IACP members shape the lived experience of government for many Americans (Soss and Weaver, 2017), socializing citizens in their democratic role (Lerman and Weaver, 2014), and so reinforcing or reducing racial, political, and economic inequalities (Western, 2006; White, 2019; Burch, 2013; Harris, 2016; Walker, 2020).

The IACP calls itself a *professional* association. It serves as a network of exchange and conducts research on policing practices, formulates policy guidance, and coordinates

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<sup>1</sup>Boston, Chicago, and fifty-five other cities hired the IACP to study their departments and recommend reforms as part of this process in the first five years the organization offered that service (Leonard, 1964).

members' efforts to sway governments and the mass public (IACP, 2023). This phenomenon of local bureaucrats forming associations and seeking professional status for their position is not unique to policing: it occurred in city management, public health, and city planning, to name a few (Arnold and Plant, 1994, Ch1-2). The proliferation of these associations across different types of bureaucracy raises the question: does local bureaucratic professionalization just mean giving these particular interest groups greater policy control? Should we think of police policy change or continuity as a reflection of what the IACP wanted? Political scientists have not asked this question, but provisional expectations can be drawn from studies of local politics and bureaucracy.

Many professional associations of bureaucrats (hereafter "professional associations") were closely aligned with municipal reform movements, so the clearest prediction about their influence is reduced electoral responsiveness. This is a concern that has been central to public administration studies of professionalism (e.g. Mosher 1968). Although the idea that local institutional characteristics can reduce electoral responsiveness is well established (see Trounstine, 2010; Clark and Krebs, 2012), scholars have devoted less attention to theorizing the different interests to which democratically insulated local policy making *will* respond. The most common theories from scholars of local politics are the interests of a ruling political coalition's supporters (e.g. Trounstine, 2009), organized interests (e.g. Anzia, 2022), or elites within the jurisdiction (e.g. Hunter, 1953), but I argue that professionalization also introduces a form of responsiveness to governments outside the jurisdiction.

Scholars of the bureaucracy have argued that increasing professional influence on public agencies leads to more predictable and consistent policy making (Moe, 1987; Miller and Whitford, 2016). In particular, we should expect professionalization to make policy respond to bureaucratic standards or preferences rather than actors within the jurisdiction. The logic of my argument builds on these insights, but previous bureaucratic theories consider neither environments with multiple governments wanting the same service, a hallmark of

local politics in the US, nor the strategic selection of professional standards.

I argue that professional associations offer governments a choice: accept the benefits of having an expert run your department under pressure to follow association standards, or avoid the influence of those standards along with the aid of the association's expertise. However, local governments have leverage: they can refuse to appoint professionals whose standards are too far from their own ideal. This creates a trade-off for the association: do they set standards that reflect their preferences or tailor standards to be acceptable across many different governments? When there is consensus among local governments about the ideal outcomes of a public policy, professional associations can set standards to shift outcomes in their members' preferred direction and maximize membership. In contrast, when local governments have very different policy goals, an association can only maximize membership by proposing standards that produce outcomes between the extremes desired by its market. Thus with local government polarization, associations can change policy but their preferences will have little effect on the kind of change they make to local policy.

To make this argument I use a formal model in which two governments decide whether to appoint bureaucrats that share their goals or who adhere to professional standards set by a single association. The professionals have an expertise advantage over their more political competitors so the governments must trade-off the information benefits of a professional with the preference-divergence chosen by the association. I show that whether the association can choose an standard amenable to both governments, and the leeway they have in determining that standard, depends on the polarization between the governments and the association's information advantage. Furthermore, the occurrence of professionalization depends on the association being sufficiently committed to gaining membership over setting the standards it prefers.

This paper's primary contribution is a theory of when professional association preferences can guide policy making at the local level. Such organizations have been a ubiquitous feature

of local governance since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and clearly aligned with the reform side in political struggles against urban machines, but their significance as independent political actors has not been considered. The formal model demonstrates that the influence tactics available to professional associations do not give them unrestricted control over local policy-making, nor do their tactics limit associations to making policy only for governments that share their political agendas. It is a distinct form of influence that empowers professional associations when local governments are aligned but leaves associations selling compromises on polarizing issues.

In addition to this theoretical innovation, I marshal historical evidence of the organizational and political strategies of police associations from World War Two through the civil rights movement; a period in which US policing underwent a wave of professionalization (Fogelson, 1977, Ch 9). Through attention to this case I demonstrate that theories of professionalization that omit these actors or treat them as above politics will leave their conditional influence either unexplained or mis-attributed.

To begin I characterize existing scholarship on professionalization and what influence this literature would predict professional associations to have. I then present two kinds of historical evidence to establish the stylized facts from which I theorize. First, on the structure of and membership in police professional associations through the 1960s, and second, on how leaders of the IACP conceived of and pursued their objective to professionalize policing. Finally, I present a reduced form game theoretic model to represent the strategic constraints on an association of bureaucrats trying to professionalize agencies in two cities.

## **1 What Does Local Bureaucratic Professionalization Do?**

Miller and Whitford (2016) argue that professionalizing a bureaucracy has two key effects: first, friction within an organizational hierarchy because professionals demand discretion

within their specialty, and second, it embeds decision makers in the agency with strong incentives to follow norms and standards set outside the agency (Ch 7, see also Carpenter and Krause, 2012). As a result, bureaucratic actions are harder for politicians to control, more predictable, and responsive to the standards set by professional groups. However, Miller and Whitford stop short of theorizing what will determine these standards, beyond asserting professional associations jealously guard their authority to do so.

Conceived in this way, professionalization is similar to what scholars of the bureaucracy have studied as delegation and bureaucratic autonomy (Carpenter and Krause, 2012; Carpenter, 2001). Two notable differences are that the entity receiving policy control is a collective (Miller and Whitford, 2016, 154) and that professional communities exercise oversight through a peculiar mix of mechanisms. These lines of scholarship emphasize variation in the legislative environment (Moe, 1989; Epstein and O'Halloran, 1999; Huber and Shipan, 2002), a reputation for competence and political neutrality (Carpenter and Krause, 2012; Carpenter, 2001), and similar political objectives (Bawn, 1995; but see Calvert, 1985; Gailmard and Patty, 2012; Turner, 2019) as essential conditions for autonomy and delegation. All of these lines of scholarship leave unexamined whether or how professional groups are constrained in their standard setting.

Thus, existing research predicts that professionalization of should result in greater autonomy, increased expertise in policy making, and policy outcomes constrained by standards set by professional groups. However, it takes the influence and standards of professional associations as given, and offers no theory for how standard-setting may be constrained by campaigns for greater influence.

Research on professionalization in private industries provide a guide to the strategic initiatives a professional association might deploy in making an occupation more like a profession (i.e. to professionalize it). First, this requires the definition of a distinctive 'commodity', which in the case of service providers can be a characteristic of practitioners. Second, practi-

tioners must stabilize a market for professional services, which involves convincing consumers of their superiority, or convincing legislators to ban practitioners who lack certain credentials (Ibid.). Finally, professionalization requires some mechanism to standardize practice, and was often implemented through new training programs or harmonizing existing ones (Larson, 1977, Ch 2).<sup>2</sup> As I show in section 2.2, IACP leaders conceived of professionalization in exactly this way.

Studying professionalization as a series of market changes centers the actions of professional associations like the IACP.<sup>3</sup> To be more precise, these are voluntary membership organizations composed primarily of bureaucrats employed in similar positions, that seek to make their occupation more like a profession.<sup>4</sup> This focus on professionalization distinguishes such groups from public sector unions, whose primary goals are economic or other labor-related benefits for their members.<sup>5</sup>

Political scientists have discussed professional associations across several different literatures, but have not examined their role defining standards for local bureaucracies. Lisa Miller's path-breaking work on federalism and crime policy notes that professional associa-

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<sup>2</sup>Larson's study defines a market for services as more or less professional, not individual practitioners. Some scholars of the bureaucracy use 'professionalism' to mean an attitude or commitment of individual bureaucrats to the ideals or standards established by their occupational group or organization (e.g. Patty and Penn, 2020). For example, Brehm and Gates (1999, Ch 8) use police officer professionalism to explain their decision whether or not to brutalize residents. They treat these ideals and standards as fixed, or at least independent of political competition.

<sup>3</sup>This analogy to private industry does not guide where in a public bureaucracy professionalization might occur, or its relation to existing professions, leaving three possibilities. Positions within an agency could be filled from an existing professional labor market; this is the setting Miller and Whitford consider (2016, e.g. 161-66). Alternatively, the market for agency executives could be professionalized. This is what the IACP was formed to do, but most of their efforts focused on all police. Finally, the market for rank and file bureaucrats within a kind of agency could be professionalized, such as the market for police officers. Rank and file professionalization has the potential to strengthen public employee unions by making positions harder to fill. However, if professionalization inculcates a strong public service orientation, this increased bargaining leverage may not translate to higher compensation or more favorable employment conditions. Further research should explore this connection in policing.

<sup>4</sup>This definition picks out a subset of the 'public official associations' studied by (Arnold and Plant, 1994).

<sup>5</sup>In the case of police unions, in particular, membership is also often restricted on the basis of employer. Historically, many police associations engage in some activities designed to elicit economic benefits and others designed to make their occupation more like a profession, so intermediate cases exist. In this paper I focus on the effects of professionalizing activities of such organizations.

tions routinely lobby state and federal legislatures (Miller, 2008, 62-79, 95-113). Scholars of policy diffusion have noted that meetings and association publications are one vector through which local bureaucrats might learn about and are pressured to adopt similar policies (e.g. Volden et al., 2008; Teodoro, 2009; Lewis and Ramakrishnan, 2007). Scholars of interest groups have offered theories of when professional associations tend to arise and their role coordinating local policy implementation (e.g. Walker, 1991, 30-32). Carpenter's theory of bureaucratic autonomy includes a prominent role for associations as recruitment networks for agency heads trying to build a reputation for effectiveness (Carpenter, 2001, e.g. 191-198), but focuses on the federal level and so does not consider how these associations might change the decisions and circumstances of state and local bureaucrats.<sup>6</sup> None consider the possibility of policy influence through standard setting.

The most sustained political science inquiry into efforts to change the quality of services provided by local government has focused on civil service systems. One line of research has examined why state and local governments chose to establish civil service systems, giving up the benefits of being able to staff agencies with obedient supporters (Tolbert and Zucker, 1983; Ruhil, 2003; Anzia and Trounstein, 2022). As with studies of the federal bureaucracies, this literature has conceptualized civil service enactment as a process occurring in isolated units, or determined entirely by features within a jurisdiction. Further, models of this process have treated policy diverging from the government's ideal as an exogenous effect of the transition (Ting et al., 2013; Huber and Ting, 2021), without considering the strategic definition of professional goals and standards relative to ongoing political competition.

In addition to conceptual similarity, the establishment of municipal civil service systems is historically related to the professionalization of city agencies. Urban reformers during

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<sup>6</sup>Greg Huber argues that bureaucratic agency heads can engage in "strategic neutrality", where they implement procedures to standardize the behavior of front-line decision makers while tailoring the features of this decision-making process to produce politically beneficial outcomes, in the aggregate (Huber, 2007). This is similar to how professional associations of bureaucrats operate in defining standards, but they must do so with an audience of thousands of local governments rather than a single legislature.



and after the Progressive movement used civil service systems to insulate the actions of trained bureaucrats from electoral disapproval, just as they changed the dates of elections and district boundaries, removed party labels, and transitioned to council-manager systems to insulate governing coalitions from electoral instability (Anzia, 2013; Trounstone, 2009; Banfield and Wilson, 1966). Researchers in the 1930s noted that professional associations played a significant role developing training and new techniques that their members could put into practice with the independence granted by civil service protection (Committee, 1939, 240). In practice, civil services systems stopped a particular vector of political influence on bureaucracies, but by the mid 20th century some advocates of professionalization saw them as an impediment for constraining the personnel decisions of expert chiefs (including O.W. Wilson, see Wilson, 1963, 130-33). Thus understanding the strategic calculus of these associations gives us a more complete picture of the effect these familiar institutional reforms had on local policy.

Some historians, criminologists, and scholars of policing use ‘professional’ to indicate the set of practices advocated by the IACP and allied groups during the mid-20th century (e.g. Fogelson, 1977; Schrader, 2019a). Many of these practices aimed to centralize decision making in the department, and reorient department resources toward aggressive crime suppression tactics that were implicated in fueling many of the urban uprisings of the 1960s (Hinton, 2021).<sup>7</sup> This ignores the governance structure implied by conceptualizing police as professionals, and does not consider the policies advocated by police professional associations as the product of strategic calculation.

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<sup>7</sup>Backlash against these tactics motivated successive reform movements intended to align enforcement priorities more with community preferences: Team Policing in the 1970s and Community-Oriented Policing beginning in the 1990s (Walker, 1993; Sklansky, 2011).

## 2 Police Organizing for Professionalization

I present historical evidence to establish the stylized facts from which the model proceeds. While police associations have featured in historical accounts of police reform and policy change (e.g. Walker, 1977; Fogelson, 1977; Schrader, 2019a), a scholarly description of police chief organizing has not been published. Therefore I briefly characterize the network of police associations collaborating with the IACP up through the 1960s, when the largest recent wave of professionalization occurred. I show the IACP had broad membership by the mid-20th century, cooperated with state-level associations across the US, and developed a reputation for expertise. These contributed to it being the leading professional association for police through the Post-War period.

Second, I show how IACP members conceptualized professionalization by recounting some of their efforts to change the market for policing services (2.2). They drew on the experience of other occupations, especially medicine and law, to make changes explicitly designed to increase the distinctive knowledge of police, raise their status in society, and instill a common ethical framework among practitioners. In line with expectations from studies of other occupations, police chief associations devoted significant effort to defining what professional policing should be and standardizing its practice through training programs, and then invited state regulation and certification through laws establishing police training councils.

### 2.1 The IACP Network

Municipal police chiefs founded the IACP, and its voting membership remained mostly municipal police leaders from the US through the 1960s (IACP, 1971d, 128; IACP, 1970, 207-08).<sup>8</sup> The IACP's constitutionally articulated goals included "to encourage adherence of

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<sup>8</sup>The IACP became 'International' in 1901 when they opened membership to chiefs outside of the US and Canada, but the vast majority of membership and focus of the organization was in the US (see rosters cited in online appendix). On the consequences of this cross-boarder association for the development of policing tactics, see Kuzmarov (2012) and Schrader (2019a). Various categories of private police were allowed to join

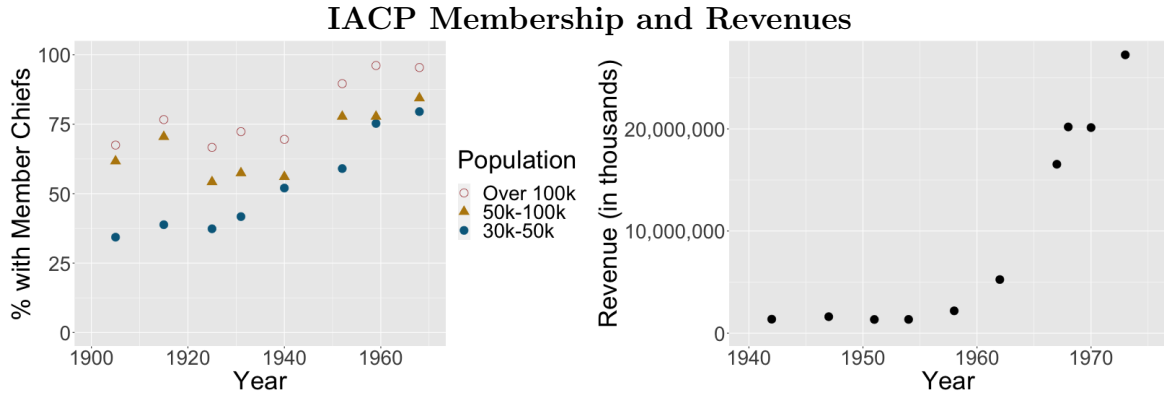


Figure 1: L: percent of police chiefs with IACP membership by population group, from US cities over 30,000. R: IACP total revenues in 2022 dollars. Source details in online appendix.

all police officers to high professional standards of conduct” from the 1930s through the 1960s (PYB 1938, 219; PYB 1970, 267). The organization acted through an executive board elected from the membership, committees assigned to study and report on specific topics, and resolutions passed at its annual conventions (Smith, 1978). It held annual meetings and published their proceedings from its founding, started a separate monthly publication in 1934, and began offering consulting services to local police departments by the late 1930s (Committee, 1939, 224-25).<sup>9</sup> It first hired full-time staff in 1938, and by 1973 had a staff of 125, many of whom worked in its divisions that consulted for local departments and state policy makers (PYB 1939, 224-25; Latka, 1973, 18).

IACP membership was common among police chiefs from major cities in the 20th century, and by the 1960s was near universal among chiefs from cities over 100,000. The left panel of figure 1 shows IACP membership rates among chiefs from cities larger than 30,000 periodically from 1904 to 1968. The point styles indicate rates among cities of different sizes. It shows that IACP membership included the majority of chiefs from cities over 50,000 by

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from 1900 until the 1960s, and membership was opened to sheriffs and state police by 1937 (PYB 1900, 35; PYB 1938, 219-20; PYB 1970, 267).

<sup>9</sup>This set of activities was typical of professional associations of bureaucrats that started across many service areas in the first decades of the 20th century (Committee, 1939, 224-25), part of a broader wave of civic organizing in the period (Gamm and Putnam, 1999).

1905, and over 75% by 1952. It also shows membership was less common among chiefs from smaller jurisdictions, but membership among chiefs from cities between 30,000 and 50,000 passed 50% by 1940 and over 75% by 1959. The right panel shows inflation adjusted IACP revenues (in 2022 dollars), from their treasurers reports. It shows that their financial resources increased significantly during the 1960s, passing twenty million dollars per year in 1967. Most of this increase came through consulting for city and state governments, which accounted for nearly 75% of their total revenue in the first seven months of 1971 (IACP, 1971e).

The legislation most relevant to police chiefs is passed at the state level, and their organizing efforts reflected this. At the IACP's inaugural meeting, members discussed the importance of forming parallel state-level associations to further their goals, and by 1895 there were 13 active state chiefs associations and members charged with starting them in 28 more (IACP, 1971a, 18; IACP, 1971b, 10-11).<sup>10</sup> IACP members worked to strengthen coordination with state associations again during the 1960 and 70s, formalizing this effort in a State Associations of Chiefs of Police committee in 1972, and the Division of State Associations of Chiefs of Police within the IACP in 1977 (IACP, 2022).<sup>11</sup> Every US state had a police association affiliated with the IACP by 1974 (PYB 1975, 283-84).

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<sup>10</sup>This pattern of a national organization then founding state-level affiliates was common among civic organizations in the period (Skocpol et al., 2000).

<sup>11</sup>Although they had no formal affiliation process for other police associations prior to the 1970s, the IACP constitution contained a commitment to work in tandem with these many other professional associations (PYB 1938, 223), and some IACP presidents were former presidents of broader-membership state groups, such as John D. Holmstrom. Association rosters also show significant overlap in membership.

In contrast to their close cooperation with police associations they considered to be professional, the IACP opposed the formation of labor unions for police before the 1960s. The association produced two pamphlets on police unions, in 1944 and 1958, both of which surveyed their extent and impact, and concluded that unionization should be banned by departments (IACP, 1944; Wilke, 1958). Once their formation could no longer be prevented, the IACP shifted to producing research aimed at helping chiefs operate as effectively as possible in spite of their unions (e.g. Gentel et al., 1980). This anti-union position is perhaps not surprising, given that the IACP only allowed membership to the highest level executives within each police department. Notably, the political strategies of rank and file organizations diverged significantly from command-level associations after the civil rights movement, relying increasingly on tactics borrowed from labor unions (Schrader, 2019b; Bopp and Unkovic, 1971), and therefore becoming more disruptive to chiefs' control than before.

The IACP enjoyed access to policy-makers through the 1960s that was unparalleled by other police associations. The Public Administration Clearinghouse published a *Directory of Public Administration Organizations* intended to guide city leaders in seeking policy advice, and they recommended the IACP for advice on policing in every edition (see online appendix). This reputation for offering good policy advice was not confined to the north and west: directories produced by southern universities to assist cities in their states also recommended the IACP (see online appendix). In addition to possibly low-profile advice to individual cities, the IACP was given a seat at the table in federal efforts to reshape law enforcement nationally. When President Johnson appointed the Katzenbach and Kerner Commissions, he chose one representative on each panel to speak for all law enforcement: Herbert Jenkins (Atlanta) and Chiefs Thomas Cahill (San Francisco). Both were vice-presidents of the IACP when they were appointed (Kerner Jr. et al., 1968, 299; Katzenbach et al., 1967, 309).

## **2.2 Professionalization Efforts of the IACP and its Affiliates**

As early as the 1930s, IACP members started identifying steps the organization should take to make policing more professional. In the record of these efforts, we can see that members understood ‘professionalization’ as defined in section 1 above. They worked to change their labor market by defining professional policing as a distinctive commodity, building demand for it, and standardizing police expertise and practices.

The IACP’s definition of and approach to professionalization was made explicit in 1938 by the first report of its Committee On Professionalization of Police Service. The committee listed features of a professional occupation, characterized how law, medicine, and teaching maintained their standards, noted several obstacles police faced in professionalizing, and then recommended steps the IACP should take to turn policing into a profession (PYB 1939, 20-25). The report’s definition of a profession emphasized the possession and transmission of

specialized knowledge, a mechanism to enforce standards that practitioners control, and a public-service oriented code of ethics. Their recommendations focused mainly on the development and establishment of training, testing, and promotion procedures, but also included the adoption of a code of ethics by the IACP (Ibid., 31-32).<sup>12</sup>This was not a one-time discussion: throughout the 1950s and 60s, articles in the IACP's monthly publication and addresses at the annual conference routinely discussed what would need to occur for policing to achieve professional status (see online appendix).

Defining what professional policing meant was one of the core activities of the IACP. Meetings included presentations and discussions on aspects of police administration and practice that were published in order to provide a resource to those not in attendance (PYB 1937, Forword). Similarly, the purpose of publishing articles by chiefs in the monthly magazine was so that members could collectively work out what professional policing should be (Tamm, 1961). Finally, providing consulting services to individual departments allowed the organization to offer tailored advice between annual meetings (Leonard, 1964).

IACP members understood that successfully professionalizing police required stimulating public demand for what they offered. Chief William Parker of Los Angeles, an unsuccessful nominee for the IACP presidency, wrote that “[a] condition precedent to the establishment of efficient, professional law enforcement in a community is a desire and a demand on the part of the residents for that type of service” (Parker, 1954, 6). In framing public demand as a necessary condition for a type of police service, he went beyond arguments that police would be more effective if residents cooperated, which were often deployed in discussions of public relations for departments. Parker also used the language of ‘creating a market’ for professional policing: “[a]... lesson the police administrator can draw from industry is that markets are created. They seldom spring full-blown from the unshaped desires of the people”

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<sup>12</sup>The IACP formally adopted a "Law Enforcement Code of Ethics" in 1957 (Kleinig and Zhang, 1993, 91).

(Ibid., 6). He went on to offer advice on how chiefs could succeed in “creating demand for professional law enforcement” (Ibid., 6). Clearly he believed the IACP and its members should work to stabilize a market for professional police, and he was not alone in this (see online appendix).

Market stability for professional police chiefs is not just a question of public popularity; it requires that city leaders *not* remove chiefs for implementing policies the chiefs think best. The IACP Professionalization Committee’s first report listed “interference of politics with practice of the profession” and “uncertainty of tenure in office” for police chiefs as obstacles to professionalization in policing (PYB 1939, 21). An interest in limiting “interference” from elected officials persisted through the post-war period (see online appendix).

Some of the IACP’s most sustained efforts at professionalization were devoted to standardizing police services through selection, training, and certification mechanisms. In addition to regularly appointing committees on education or training, most annual meetings featured discussions on the subjects, and nearly every issue of the *Police Chief* carried announcements about training opportunities (see online appendix). Some state chiefs associations started cooperative training programs so departments without the money for their own academy could still train their officers (see online appendix). Some state associations also lobbied for states to subsidize or directly provide training for local officers (see online appendix).

From the late 1950s through the ‘70s members of the IACP and its state-level counterparts lobbied state legislatures to establish novel systems to regulate the selection and training of local police officers. California and New York became the first states to establish police training councils in 1959, empowering them to establish standards for the selection and training of all municipal police officers. These and similar efforts in other states were covered in the *Police Chief* and discussed at IACP annual meetings (see online appendix). The IACP took a more active role promoting this legislation by including a seminar at the 1965 annual

meeting on how state chiefs associations could successfully write and lobby for such a bill in their state (PYB 1966, 395-407), then in 1966 the IACP published model state legislation on the topic (Taskforce 1967, Ch 8).<sup>13</sup>

The IACP model police training council bill clearly advanced their aspiration to professionalize policing. It established an appointed council with the power to set mandatory standards for police recruitment and training, and to certify officers as meeting those standards (Taskforce 1967, 219-20). One third of the council's fifteen seats would go to local police executives, according to the theory that these are the people best qualified to regulate the behavior of police. The rest of the seats were divided between local governments, state officials with relevant expertise, and two members of the general public. More symbolically, the IACP bill included an enacting clause that endorsed the proposition that policing should be a profession. It read in part "that police work is ... of such a nature as to require education and training of a professional character" (Ibid.). Similar language became law in several states (see online appendix).

Debates about police training laws within the IACP provide further evidence of the political importance association leaders ascribed to police standard setting. In the 1950s and early '60s members expressed opposition to state mandated training, preferring subsidies without mandates (e.g. IACP, 1960). By 1963 the IACP moved from providing a neutral forum to discuss these alternatives to attacking the view that training mandates were objectionable, calling it damaging to the profession because the public needed to see police maintaining standards they could support. For example, the executive director wrote an editorial entitled "Police Training: An Expense - or an Obligation?" that opined:

"Police chiefs have been heard to say training costs so much in man-hours they

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<sup>13</sup>Twenty-one states passed laws dealing with police training from 1959 to 66, and in some cases the chiefs association drafted the legislation that was eventually passed (Kassoff, 1966; PYB 1966, 395-407). The Katzenbach Commission's report recommended that all states without a police training council establish one (Katzenbach et al., 1967, 123), and its Task-force on Police printed the IACP's model bill as a suggestion (Cahill et al., 1967, Ch 8).



cannot afford it... Such reasoning, of course, detracts from the professional status which law enforcement is achieving more and more each day.” (Tamm, 1963).

Tamm and other proponents of training mandates saw it as a means to increase the competence and public image of police, based on the notion that the existence of lower-quality policing anywhere was a threat to the status and political independence of police everywhere.

### 3 A Model of Local Bureaucratic Professionalization

I present a sequential game of imperfect information between a professional Association ( $A$ ) and the police Executive ( $E_b, E_c$ ) and local Governments responsible for appointing them ( $G_b, G_c$ ) in two cities. In the game  $A$  chooses the standards of professional  $E$ s, and then both  $G$ 's choose between a professional  $E$  or one aligned with their objectives ( $\theta_i \in \{1, 0\}$ ).<sup>14</sup> After the  $E$ s are selected, random chance determines the mapping from department action to crime reduction in each city, which the  $E$ s observe with some probability before choosing how to allocate department resources ( $x_i \geq 0$ ). This structure builds on a variant of the model in Bawn (1995), embedding it in a bargaining framework with fixed proposal rights to consider the strategic position of professional associations attempting to convince multiple local governments to delegate policy making authority.<sup>15</sup> My analysis will identify constraints on the association's choices.

The central decision in each city is the allocation of resources to a task, which I represent as a non-negative real number ( $x_i$ ). The effect on crime of shifting resources to a task ( $y_i$ ) is determined by a random variable not observed by the  $G$ s, so the most effective allocation

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<sup>14</sup>This model does not address when and whether an association will choose to establish a standard, or how prescriptive that standard will be. Previous scholars have shown that coalition formation considerations can influence both (e.g. Huber and Shipan, 2002; Clark and Patty, 2022), but for simplicity I do not examine these dynamics internal to the association.

<sup>15</sup>The dynamics of the model are also related to the ‘cheap talk with agents’ model in Gailmard and Patty (2012, Ch 5). The model here differs in that it does not consider the communication problem, focusing on the ideal point selection problem.

of resources depends on information that professionals have better access to. For each city  $i \in \{b, c\}$ :  $y_i = \alpha_i x_i - \frac{x_i^2}{2}$ , where I assume  $\alpha_i \sim \mathcal{U}(0, 1)$  for convenience. The quadratic loss term represent the reduction in effectiveness from diverting resources away from other activities, as well as any reduction in resident cooperation that is caused by their disliking the change.

Policing strategies have externalities, and often competing political groups will favor or oppose a policy because of its impact on outcomes other than crime rates. I represent this feature by assuming policy utility comes through two pathways: the effect on crime and the distribution of punishment.<sup>16</sup> Formally,  $u_{G,i} = y_i + \delta_i x_i$ , where the department's effect on crime is  $y_i$ , and  $G_i$ 's relative concern for the distributional effects of policing are captured by the parameter  $\delta_i \geq 0$ . I assume  $\delta_c > \delta_b$ .

Each  $E_i$ 's utility depends on their type: aligned ( $\theta_i = 0$ ) or professional ( $\theta_i = 1$ ). An aligned  $E_i$ 's ideal allocation is identical to  $G_i$ 's, while a professional  $E$ 's concern for distributional effects is chosen by  $A$  ( $s \geq 0$ , the *professional standard*). Their utility is:  $u_{E,i} = y_i + (1 - \theta_i)\delta_i x_i + \theta_i s x_i$ . Thus the size of the preference divergence between the  $G$ s and the professional  $E$ s is determined by  $A$ 's choice of  $s$ .<sup>17</sup>

I represent  $A$  as benefiting from professional  $E$ 's being appointed, but also caring about the standard they choose. Formally,  $u_A = \beta(\theta_b + \theta_c) - (1 - \beta)(s - \delta_A)^2$ , where  $A$ 's distributional ideal point is set by  $\delta_A \geq 0$ , and their concern for membership is the parameter  $\beta \in (\beta_{min}, 1)$ . This utility function expresses  $A$ 's trade-off: under certain parameters persuading both  $G$ s to delegate requires choosing a standard far from their ideal. A higher  $\beta$  represents

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<sup>16</sup>Note, I assume  $G$ 's costs and benefits from appointing a professional come indirectly through their impact on department action, not directly from the act of appointment. There are many examples of city governments appointing a professional chief in response to scandal that threatened their electoral prospects (as in Chicago in 1960), suggesting some governments anticipate direct electoral benefit from appointing a professional. Including such a term does not change the substantive interpretation of the model, so I have omitted it here for simplicity.

<sup>17</sup>This assumes  $A$  has maximal control over members, for convenience. A less strict formulation would have  $E_i$ 's ideal move toward  $A$ 's choice.

an association more concerned with expanding membership relative to the standard they adopt.<sup>18</sup>

The  $E$ s observe the parameter  $\alpha_i$  with positive probability that depends on their type, and I assume the professional is more likely to learn the truth ( $\pi_{\theta_i}$ , where  $\pi_1 > \pi_0 > 0$ ). This produces the  $G$ 's strategic tension. When choosing  $E_i$ 's type,  $G_i$  must choose between one with their ideal point or one with the professional information advantage but a policy ideal set by  $A$ . The probabilities of their being informed are common knowledge parameters.<sup>19</sup>

To summarize, the game proceeds as follows:

1.  $A$  chooses the professional standard ( $s \geq 0$ )
2. Each  $G_i$  chooses an aligned or professional  $E_i$  ( $\theta_i \in \{0, 1\}$ ).
3.  $N$  chooses the effectiveness of the task in each city ( $\alpha_i \in (0, 1)$ )
4. The  $E_i$ s observe  $\alpha_i$  with probability  $\pi_{\theta_i}$  and choose local allocation of department resources ( $x_i \geq 0$ )

### Parameter restriction

I assume  $\beta$  is large enough that  $A$  is unwilling to trade-off membership for policy change. That is, if it would be possible to choose  $s$  to get both cities to select a professional  $E$  rather than just one,  $A$  will do so no matter how much it moves the policy choices of either jurisdiction. I identify a sufficient condition for this in the online appendix. This assumption is designed to represent an association with distinct policy objectives, but in a circumstance

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<sup>18</sup>For simplicity, I assume organizational preferences are not influenced by membership decisions, which is plausible in the short-term but not over decades.

<sup>19</sup>This information structure is fully invertible, so observing  $E$ 's choice of their equilibrium policy is enough for  $G$  to become an expert. As Callander shows, modeling uncertainty in complex policy areas with invertible functions generates a commitment problem for an uninformed principal that does not exist when more complicated functions are used (Callander, 2008). In order to avoid this, I assume  $G$  cannot change policy after  $E$  has enacted it, representing a situation where gaining sufficient expertise would take long enough that the underlying circumstances determining the effect of policy might change.

In addition, by omitting the  $E$ s' decisions to learn, I assume the aligned  $E$ s are able to make a binding commitment that solves the collective action problem identified by Bendor and Meirowitz (2004).

where those objectives are subordinate to 1) organizational maintenance (Wilson, 1995) and 2) defensive concerns. IACP members often wrote of the importance of unity in order to pass legislation they wanted and prevent legislation detrimental to policing, clearly operating under the premise that unified action from police would make it easier to advance their shared interests (e.g. Wilke, 1954).

### **How the Model Fits Policing**

Perhaps the central problem of police administration is the allocation of limited resources: money, officers, and equipment. Money spent on SWAT gear cannot be used for community outreach; officers who are stopping and frisking pedestrians for illegal guns cannot simultaneously be tracking suspects in a homicide case. Cars parked to deter speeding cannot be used to patrol. Any new policy requires committing resources that could be used elsewhere, which I make the core decision in each city ( $x_i$ ).

My representation of political disagreement in the model is also rooted in an enduring feature of policing: punishing people for breaking the law has externalities. The central mechanisms through which police reduce crime are deterrence and incapacitation: to lower the expected rewards from crime and incarcerate people with a high propensity of offending (National Research Council, 2004, ch 6). Police protection saves some from harm by harming others, specifically those arrested, families that have members incarcerated, and communities that lose members (and therefore economic and political power) to the carceral system (Burch, 2013; Western, 2006). Thus, actors that place different weight on the well-being of different elements of the population will have different ideal policing strategies.

I represent governing coalitions as having preferences over these negative externalities of enforcement that are independent of their effect on crime. A simple version of this distributional concern is a political coalition's utility increasing in the number of Black people arrested. Such a coalition would evaluate any enforcement allocation in part on the basis of how many Black people it will ensnare in the criminal justice system, and so all-else

equal, prefer an enforcement strategy that increases the total arrest burden faced by Black people. Where optimal crime control and this racial domination objective do not coincide, their most preferred choice will balance pursuit of these two competing objectives. Political machines also famously had such preferences, wanting less enforcement against supporters of the machine and more against its opponents (e.g. Balto, 2019, Ch 2). I represent the governing coalitions' distributional objectives with the parameters  $\delta_b, \delta_c$ , and let the professional association decide how professional executives will address this contentious issue.

This formulation does not address a related question professional associations must deal with: how hard should standards be to meet? In policing, this might be asked related to how many hours of pre-service training to require, or years of education.

I represent the police executive as making a choice their government cannot reverse because professional standards are not invertible. They are a mapping from a complex set of local circumstances into policy responses, and so the effect of changing a policy the chief has enacted cannot be predicted without understanding those factors. This could be modeled using a non-invertible disturbance term, as in Callander (2008), but for simplicity I use an invertible function without  $G_i$  having the chance to change  $x_i$  once it is selected.

Each time a local government appoints a new police executives they face the same choice, so the model captures the strategic setting of the initial decision to professionalize and subsequent appointment decisions after a new dimension of policy becomes salient. Ordinarily, associations would not reset standards regularly, so subsequent appointments would occur with the same chosen professional standard. However, when new dimensions of policy become salient, associations can be forced to adopt new standards or revisit old ones. For example, protests during the summer of 2020 may have had this effect.

This simplified model only includes two cities and treats their preferences as exogenous. This allows the model to represent a case where there are two dominant sets of political objectives, and the professional association wants to attract membership from both camps.

This could represent racially conservative and liberal cities during the civil rights movement, or the Democratic and Republican parties today.

### 3.1 Analysis

I use backward induction to characterize the Subgame Perfect Nash Equilibria of the game. Player  $A$ 's strategy is a choice of professional standard ( $s$ ) that can depend on their preference. The  $G$ 's strategies are decisions to appoint an aligned or professional  $E$  ( $\theta_i$ ) and can depend on  $A$ 's choice of  $s$ . Finally, a strategy for  $E_i$  is a choice of allocation ( $x_i$ ) that can depend on their type,  $s$ , and the effectiveness of the task if they learn it ( $\alpha_i$ ).

My analysis focuses on two equilibrium features: when both  $G$ s are willing to appoint a professional  $E$  and the effect of  $A$ 's preference on equilibrium values of  $s$ . I call a SPNE where both  $G$ s are willing to appoint professional  $E$ s a **Professional Equilibrium** (PEqm), because both cities defer to the expertise of association members. To identify when this is possible, I find each  $G$ 's set of **acceptable standards**: the values of  $s$  for which they are willing to hire a professional. I call their intersection the Jointly Acceptable Set (JAS). When the JAS is non-empty the unique equilibrium is professional. When the acceptable standard sets are disjoint, only **Local Consultant Equilibria** exist, wherein the association acts as an expertise subsidy to one city. Throughout the analysis I assume that the  $G$ s choose to hire a professional when indifferent. The lemmas are proven in text.

#### 3.1.1 City Choices

I identify both types of  $E$ 's ideal allocation choices, with and without information about the true value of  $\alpha_i$ . When  $E_i$  is aligned,  $EU_{E,i}(x_i|\theta_i=0) = E(\alpha_i)x_i - \frac{x_i^2}{2} + \delta_i x_i$ , so the partial derivative of their expected utility with respect to  $x_i$  is  $\frac{\partial EU_{E,i}(x_i|\theta_i=0)}{\partial x_i} = E(\alpha_i) - x_i + \delta_i$ . Setting this equal to 0 and solving gives the first order condition for their best response as:  $x_i = E(\alpha_i) + \delta_i$ . Since  $E(\alpha_i) = \frac{1}{2}$ , and  $\frac{\partial^2 EU_{E,i}(x_i|\theta_i=0)}{\partial x_i^2} < 0$ , without observing  $\alpha_i$  their unique

best response is  $\frac{1}{2} + \delta_i$ . By the same logic, the unique best responses for a professional  $E_i$  are  $x_i(\alpha_i|\theta_i = 1) = \alpha_i + s$  when they observe  $\alpha_i$  and  $x_i = \frac{1}{2} + s$  when they do not.

**Lemma 1.**  $E_i$  will choose their ideal allocation in any SPNE.

$$\text{Their unique equilibrium strategy is: } x_i^*(\theta_i, s) = \begin{cases} \alpha_i + \delta_\theta, & \text{if } E_i \text{ observes } \alpha_i \\ \frac{1}{2} + \delta_\theta, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases},$$

where  $\delta_\theta \in \{\delta_i, s\}$  depends on  $E_i$ 's type.

The  $E$ 's allocation choices determine the sets of professional standards to which the  $G$ s will to delegate. The acceptable standard sets around each  $G$ 's ideal point  $(\delta_b, \delta_c)$  are the points for which  $s$  is close enough that the benefit of professional expertise outweighs the cost of an agent's ideal moving away from their own. When the  $G$ s' sets overlap, a PEqm can exist because there is a choice  $s$  such that  $A$  can convince both cities to hire a professional. The width of the acceptable sets will depend on the information difference between professional and aligned  $E$ s.

I identify the acceptable standard sets next. Given the choices in Lemma 1,  $G_i$ 's expected utility from either type of  $E_i$  observing  $\alpha_i$  is  $\int_0^1 \left( (\alpha_i + \delta_\theta)^2 - \frac{(\alpha_i + \delta_\theta)^2}{2} \right) d\alpha_i = \frac{1}{6} + \frac{\delta_i}{2} + \delta_i \delta_\theta - \frac{\delta_\theta^2}{2}$ . When either type does not observe  $\alpha_i$ ,  $G_i$ 's expected utility is  $\int_0^1 \left( (\frac{1}{2} + \delta_\theta)(\alpha_i + \delta_i) - \frac{(\frac{1}{2} + \delta_\theta)^2}{2} \right) d\alpha_i = \frac{1}{8} + \frac{\delta_i}{2} + \delta_i \delta_\theta - \frac{\delta_\theta^2}{2}$ . Since  $E_i$  observes  $\alpha$  with probability  $\pi_{\theta_i}$ ,  $G_i$ 's expected utility from either type is:

$$EU_{G,i}(\theta_i|\delta_{\theta_i}) = \frac{1}{8} + \frac{\delta_i}{2} + \delta_i \delta_{\theta_i} - \frac{\delta_{\theta_i}^2}{2} + \frac{\pi_{\theta_i}}{24} \quad (1)$$

Substituting in  $\pi_1, \pi_0, \delta_i$  and  $s$  this simplifies to  $\frac{1}{8} + \frac{\delta_i + \delta_i^2}{2} + \frac{\pi_0}{24}$  when  $E_i$  is aligned and  $\frac{1}{8} + \frac{\delta_i}{2} + \delta_i s - \frac{s^2}{2} + \frac{\pi_1}{24}$  when they are professional. Solving  $EU_{G,i}(\theta_i = 1) \geq EU_{G,i}(\theta_i = 0)$  shows choosing a professional  $E_i$  is a best response for  $G_i$  if and only if  $|s - \delta_i| \leq \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}}$ . This gives the width of the acceptable sets:  $\sqrt{\frac{\pi_1 - \pi_0}{3}}$ , and since  $\frac{\partial \sqrt{\frac{\pi_1 - \pi_0}{3}}}{\partial \pi_1} = \frac{1}{4\sqrt{3(\pi_1 - \pi_0)}} > 0$ ,

the sets widen as  $\pi_1$  increases.<sup>20</sup>

**Lemma 2.**  *$G_i$  will choose a professional  $E_i$  in equilibrium if the professional standard is close enough to their own. The difference they are willing to tolerate increases with the professional information advantage.*

$$\text{For } i \in \{b, c\}, G_i \text{'s unique equilibrium strategy is: } \theta_i^*(s|\delta_i, \pi_1, \pi_0) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } |s - \delta_i| \leq \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} \\ 0, & \text{if } |s - \delta_i| > \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} \end{cases}$$

Lemma 2 identifies the values of  $s$  that are acceptable to each  $G_i$ . Examining the size of the sets as a function of the difference between  $s$  and  $\delta_i$  shows the association between preference divergence and the information advantage that professionals must have to be appointed in equilibrium. Convincing either  $G_i$  to choose a professional whose ideals are further from their own requires a higher information advantage over the aligned alternative. Note, since  $\pi_1 > \pi_0$ , each  $G_i$  always has a non-empty set within which they will choose a professional.

### 3.1.2 Professional Standards as Political Strategy

When selecting a professional standard  $A$  must balance competing incentives: a membership benefit,  $\beta(\theta_b^*(s) + \theta_c^*(p))$ , and a policy benefit,  $(1 - \beta)(s - \delta_A)^2$ . The  $G$ s' strategy from Lemma 2 structures  $A$ 's expected utility function by dividing the possible values of  $s$  into up to three intervals where they receive membership benefits: one  $JAS$  where both  $G$ 's hire a professional, and the disjoint elements of the two acceptable sets which I call **Locally Acceptable Sets** ( $LAS_b, LAS_c$ ). The discontinuous change in membership benefit  $A$  receives by choosing  $s$  in these intervals makes their expected utility a piece-wise function of  $s$  with five sub-functions.

The  $G$ 's ideal points and the professional information advantage determine whether a  $JAS$  is non-empty. This requires the lower bound of  $G_c$ 's acceptable set to reach the upper

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<sup>20</sup>For simplicity I have assumed both cities have 1) the same information without a professional, and 2) no taste for a professional  $E$ . Letting either vary by city would produce different size acceptable sets.



bound of  $G_b$ 's, or  $\delta_c - \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} \leq \delta_b + \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} \implies \delta_c - \delta_b \leq \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{\sqrt{3}}$ .

**Lemma 3.** *A JAS exists iff the  $G$ 's preferences are similar enough relative to the professional information advantage:  $\delta_c - \delta_b < \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{\sqrt{3}}$ .*

When it is impossible to convince both  $G$ s to choose the same professional, how will  $A$  respond? In this case the two acceptable sets are disjoint, so the maximum possible membership benefit is  $\beta$ , and the same in either  $LAS$ . However,  $A$ 's policy benefit is a continuous function of  $s$  that decreases with distance from  $\delta_A$ , so  $A$ 's best response within each  $LAS$  and the three disjoint intervals outside of them are the points closest to  $\delta_A$ . Furthermore,  $A$ 's utility will be strictly higher from their optimal point in the closer of the two  $LAS$ . Thus, as long as  $\beta$  is high enough that they prefer added membership to choosing their ideal policy,  $A$ 's best response is in the closest  $LAS$ .

The lower and upper bounds of the  $LAS$ s ( $\underline{LAS}_i, \overline{LAS}_i$ ) will depend on whether a  $JAS$  exists. When it does,  $\underline{LAS}_i = \begin{cases} \delta_c + \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} & \text{for } i = b \\ \delta_c - \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} & \text{for } i = c \end{cases}$  and  $\overline{LAS}_i = \begin{cases} \delta_b + \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} & \text{for } i = b \\ \delta_b - \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} & \text{for } i = c \end{cases}$ , because the acceptable sets overlap. When no  $JAS$  exists,  $\overline{LAS}_i = \delta_i + \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}}$  and  $\underline{LAS}_i = \delta_i - \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}}$  for both  $i \in \{b, c\}$ . With these it is straightforward to characterize  $A$ 's equilibrium strategy.

**Lemma 4.** *In parameters where no  $JAS$  exists,  $A$  will act as a local consultant for the  $G$  with whom they agree most. They choose  $s$  in the nearer acceptable set, as close to  $\delta_A$  as possible.*

Formally, if  $\delta_c - \delta_b > \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{\sqrt{3}}$  and  $\beta > \beta_{min}$ ,  $A$ 's equilibrium strategy is:

$$s^*(\delta_A) = \begin{cases} \underline{LAS}_i, & \text{if } \delta_A < \underline{LAS}_i \\ \delta_A & \text{if } \delta_A \in [\underline{LAS}_i, \overline{LAS}_i] \\ \overline{LAS}_i & \text{if } \delta_A > \overline{LAS}_i \end{cases}, \quad \text{where } i = \begin{cases} b, & \text{if } \delta_A \leq \frac{\delta_b + \delta_c}{2} \\ c, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

When a  $JAS$  exists, the maximum possible membership benefit is  $2\beta$  from  $s \in [\underline{JAS}, \overline{JAS}]$ . Choosing  $s$  in either of the  $LAS$  earns a membership benefit of  $\beta$ , and outside the union of the acceptable sets results in no membership. Again,  $A$ 's policy benefit makes their preferred point within each of the five intervals the point closest to  $\delta_A$ , and again  $\beta > \beta_{min}$  guarantees that  $A$  will choose  $s$  in the  $JAS$  rather than their best response in the other four intervals.

**Lemma 5.** *In parameters where a  $JAS$  exists,  $A$  will choose a professional standard within the  $JAS$  as close to their own ideal as possible.*

Formally, if  $\delta_c - \delta_b \leq \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{\sqrt{3}}$  and  $\beta > \beta_{min}$ ,  $A$ 's unique equilibrium strategy is:

$$s^*(\delta_A) = \begin{cases} \delta_A & \text{if } \delta_A \in [\underline{JAS}, \overline{JAS}] \\ \overline{JAS}, & \text{if } \delta_A > \overline{JAS} \\ \underline{JAS}, & \text{if } \delta_A < \underline{JAS} \end{cases}$$

Lemma 5 expresses the constraint on  $A$ 's influence in equilibrium. When the  $G$ s acceptable sets intersect,  $A$  has the ability to determine the policy choices in both cities, but only within that interval. When they value building a professional consensus, they will follow those constraints and choose  $s$  as close to their ideal point as possible *within the  $JAS$* .

The  $G$ s hiring strategy provides the necessary parameter condition for the existence of a PEqm: the two city ideal points must be close enough, relative to the professional information advantage. If the  $G$ s are too polarized, their acceptable sets are disjoint so only Local Consultant Equilibria exist.

**Proposition 1.** *For parameters with sufficient consensus between the  $G_b$  and  $G_c$ , the unique equilibrium is a PEqm. In parameters with sufficiently polarized  $G$ s, all equilibria are Local Consultant Equilibria. As the professional information advantage increases, PEqm can exist with greater disagreement between the  $G$ s.*

*Proof.* Lemmas 1, 2, and 5 describe strategies that are mutual best responses when  $\delta_c - \delta_b \leq$

## When $G$ s Will Choose Professionals

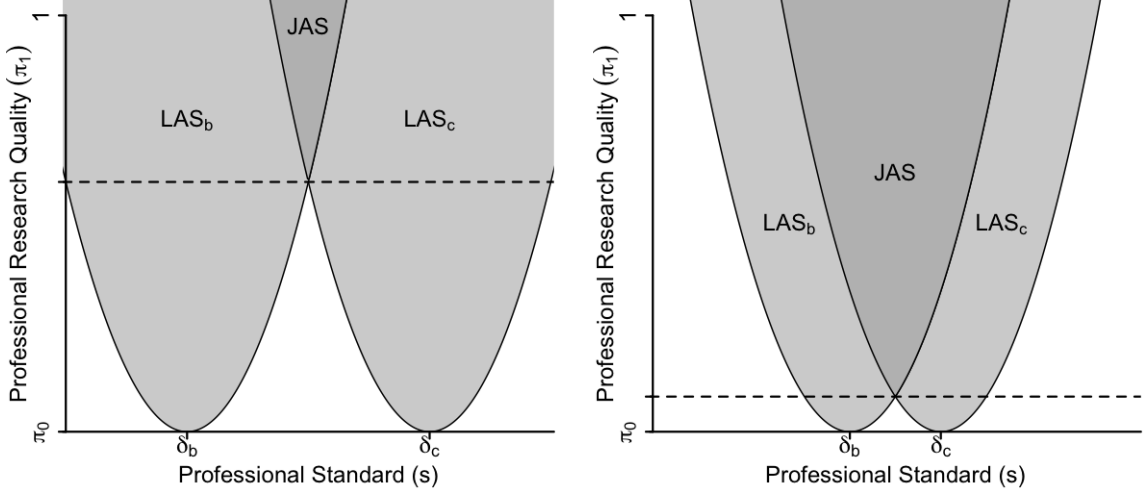


Figure 2:  $G$ 's will hire professional in shaded regions. X-axis: A choice of professional standard ( $s$ ); Y-axis: probability professional  $E$  learns state. PEqm only exists above dashed line. Left:  $G$  polarization; Right:  $G$  consensus.

$\frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{\sqrt{3}}$  and  $\beta > \beta_{min}$ . Since this strategy profile includes  $s^* \in JAS \forall \delta_A$ , a PEqm exists for these parameters. Since the best responses are unique, so is the equilibrium.

Lemmas 1, 2, and 4 describe strategies that are mutual best responses when  $\delta_c - \delta_b > \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{\sqrt{3}}$  and  $\beta > \beta_{min}$ . Since by Lemma 3 no  $JAS$  exists in these parameters and Lemma 4 includes  $s^* \in LAS \forall \delta_A$ , Local Consultant Equilibria exist for these parameters. Since the best responses are unique when  $\delta_A \neq \frac{\delta_b + \delta_c}{2}$ , the equilibrium is unique for those parameters. When  $\delta_A = \frac{\delta_b + \delta_c}{2}$  multiple Local Consultant Equilibria exist which differ in whether  $s^*(\frac{\delta_b + \delta_c}{2}) = \overline{LAS}_b$  or  $\underline{LAS}_c$ .  $\square$

The panels of figure 2 illustrate the logic of Proposition 1 through the strategic circumstance faced by  $A$  when they choose  $s$ . The x-axis of both panels represent  $A$ 's possible choices of  $s$  while the y-axis is the probability  $E$  observes  $\alpha_i$  if they are professional ( $\pi_1$ ). The shaded parabolas represent the parameters within which each  $G$  will delegate to a professional, and the dashed horizontal lines represent the minimum professional expertise to

sustain a PEqm. When the professional information advantage is great enough, the two  $G$ s will be willing to appoint  $E$ s with identical goals, so a Professional Equilibrium can exist (above the dashed lines). The left panel represents local government polarization while the right illustrates consensus.

This figure also illustrates the model's predictions about the relationship between professional association expertise, city preferences, and the emergence and maintenance of professional bureaucracies. Increasing their information advantage enables an association to win independence for its members across a wider range of local government preferences. Thus, with very little information advantage we would only expect to see professionalization among bureaucracies with sufficiently narrow preference divergence among local governments, such as water works. However as associations increase their expertise relative to local governments, it becomes possible for professional delegation to be sustained in policy areas with significant local disagreement, such as policing. This provides a possible explanation for why professionalization in policing occurred later than in some other local bureaucracies. It also allows us to think of professionalization in local bureaucracies as the outcome of actors working to change parameters of the model, and thereby making new equilibria possible.

The equilibrium conditions give an indication of when  $A$ 's preferences are able to influence equilibrium policy choices. In a PEqm  $A$  chooses  $s^* \in JAS$ , an interval of width  $\delta_b + \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} - (\delta_c - \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}}) = \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{\sqrt{3}} - (\delta_c - \delta_b)$ . This is decreasing in the difference  $\delta_c - \delta_b$ , and increasing in the difference  $\pi_1 - \pi_0$ .

As a benchmark, consider the conditions required for  $A$  to be able to move policy the same direction away from both  $G_i$ 's ideal points. This is a case where we might say  $A$  can control the direction of policy. This holds if, for some pair  $\delta'_A, \delta''_A$ ,  $s^*(\delta'_A) < \delta_b$  and  $s^*(\delta''_A) > \delta_c$ . This requires  $\delta_c < \delta_b + \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} \implies \delta_c - \delta_b < \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}}$  and  $\delta_b > \delta_c - \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} \implies \frac{\sqrt{\pi_1 - \pi_0}}{2\sqrt{3}} > \delta_c - \delta_b$ , so this is the necessary and sufficient condition.

**Corollary 1.** *The interval of  $A$ 's preferences that influences policy in a PEqm depends on*

### Equilibrium Professional Standard

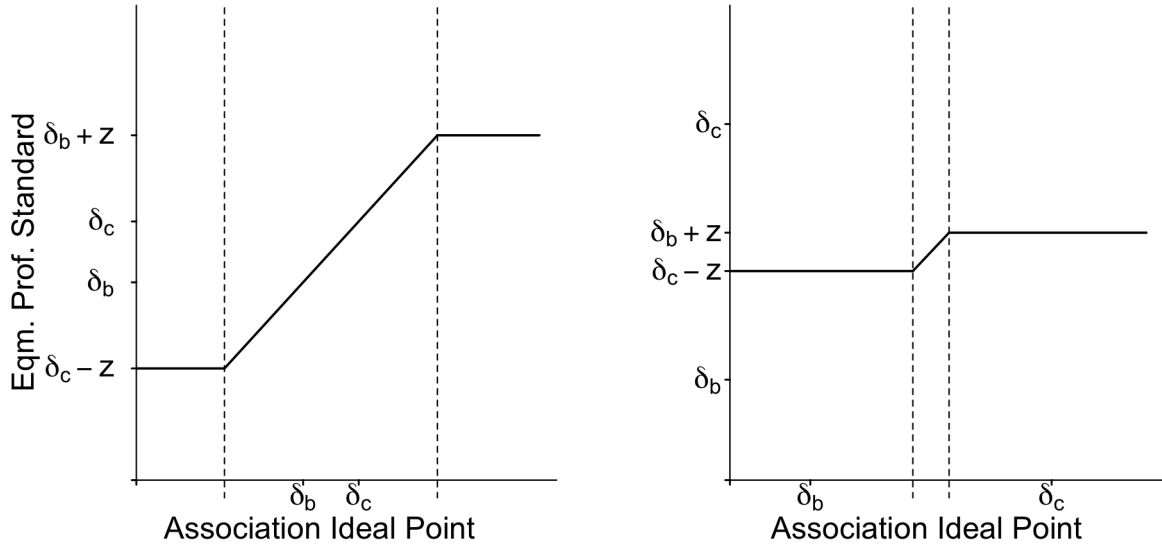


Figure 3:  $A$ 's equilibrium choice of professional standard as a function of their ideal point:  $s^*(\delta_A)$ . Dashed lines boundaries of jointly acceptable set.  $\delta_c$  and  $\delta_b$  are  $G_b$  and  $G_c$ 's ideal points, and  $Z$  is the radius of the acceptable sets. Left:  $G$  consensus; Right:  $G$  polarization.

*their expertise advantage and the disagreement between the  $G$ 's. The interval is wider when the  $G$ s agree more and when the professional information advantage is larger.*

*When the two  $G$ 's goals are similar enough, a PEqm can move both cities' policy in either direction away from the  $G$ 's ideal points. When the  $G$ 's ideal points are farther apart, a PEqm will move policy in each city toward the others' ideal.*

*Proof.* See text. □

The intuition for Corollary 1 follows from a PEqm requiring  $A$  to place their ideal within the acceptable sets of both  $G$ 's simultaneously. The more similar the two ideal points are, the more these intervals overlap, creating a wider interval within which  $A$ 's preferences can move equilibrium policy.

The implications of Corollary 1 are illustrated in the panels of figure 3. The solid lines of each represent  $A$ 's equilibrium choice of professional standard as a function of their own goals, and the dashed lines mark the boundaries of the JAS.  $A$ 's preference only changes the

professional standard they choose within the JAS. The panels assume identical parameters except the distance between  $\delta_b$  and  $\delta_c$ , which is greater on the right, illustrating that the interval within which  $A$ 's preferences influence outcomes narrows as the  $G$ 's polarize. Notice on the vertical axis, the possible professional standards extend above and below the two  $G$ 's ideal points in the left panel, but on the right  $A$  chooses a standard between the two cities no matter it's preference.

## 4 Implications

Contrary to previous theoretical understandings professionalization in policing meant making the market for bureaucrats more like professions. This included establishing minimum entry requirements and more standardized training, as well as increasing the role of professional associations in guiding policy. It was a process aided by reformers with various agendas and institutional positions, but designed to empower these police associations.

Rather than the neutral application of apolitical expertise, professionalization rested on the strategic selection of standards that anticipated potential political opposition. Police professional associations selected standards to gain the confidence of local governments and the mass public. My model of this process indicates an inverse relationship between local government preference dispersion and association freedom to guide policy. When local governments have polarized objectives, associations that prioritize building the profession will set similar standards regardless of their policy goals. When local governments largely agree, associations have the chance to determine the direction of policy so their preferences can help explain outcomes. This represents a limit on the kinds of policy change that can be achieved through professionalization.

Over 40 years ago, Paul Peterson argued that the limited resources of city governments require that scholars consider the place of a city in national political and economic con-

text to explain its policy decisions (Peterson, 1981). In emphasizing the limits of cities, he passed over opportunities within that delimited context that national governments do not enjoy. Cities compete against one another, but they can also learn from each other (Volden et al., 2008), lobby together (Payson, 2021), and in this paper I show their bureaucrats can form associations to professionalize together. All under the stability of a single national government. The existence of these collaborative possibilities demands that scholars of the bureaucracy bring a new theoretical lens to local politics. This paper is just a first step, raising questions about what makes professional associations successful, their relationship with public employee unions, and how representative police organizations are of the phenomenon in other policy areas. In addition, it raises the possibility that these associations help defend professional independence for bureaucracies following the election of new coalitions. Within the study of policing, specifically, it also raises questions about the relationship between professional associations and police militarization, accountability, and the racial consequences of American crime control.

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