

**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

**Will Community Oriented Policing Survive
The Twentieth Century?**

**An Administrative Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Institute**

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ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been growing support for a shift toward community based policing which has emerged as an answer to the challenge of delivering more effective policing services in the decade ahead. The heart of community policing is a unreserved commitment to a consultative process involving the police and the citizens they serve. Hence community policing is, perhaps best described as a partnership between the police and the community formed to identify, prioritize and solve local crime and disorder problems. This is a working philosophy with goals and vast array of strategies, programs and tactics.

The neighborhood oriented policing or Neighborhood Store front has had a long history in the Houston area. The program started in 1982 with the appointment of Lee P. Brown as Chief of Police. Chief Brown's effort at transforming the traditional law enforcement agency into one who was willing to reaching out into the community was well documented.

In 1983 Chief Brown created a series of programs designed to enhance communication between the community and police. Between 1982 and 1983 Chief Brown established the Neighborhood Storefronts.

This concept would bring the police back to the community by establishing buildings in different areas of the city. This would make it easier for communities to meet and talk to police. (NIJ Report, June 1995)

In order to assess the current feelings and possible impact of COP in the new millennium, a survey was taken using 10 community civic clubs. The survey addressed issues such as knowledge of the program, participation in the program, funds for the

program, and safety. The first stage of the survey was done via telephone calls to the presidents of each civic club.. The second was done at a regular meeting of the Council of Civic Clubs held quarterly in one of the neighborhoods. The same questions were asked to the participants. The only difference was at the second meeting, the presidents answered yes or no with explanations. This gave me a better insight as what they were really thinking. The result showed that every community does not have knowledge of COP program. However they did recognize the name Police Storefront. The survey also shows that the community would support any effort being made to make their communities safe.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this administrative paper is to study whether Community Oriented Policing has reached a point in our society where many feel that it has moved away from the positive affect it once was achieving. Many programs have turned into one of the "just good to have around type of programs" Crimes are still being committed, but attitudes have changed. Not those committing the crimes, but those who once pledged to fight it. Years ago, police officers walked beats, where they were in close proximity to the people they served. The officers and community members in their beats were often on a first name basis. The officers were an integral part of the local community. As time changed more people moved to rural areas, automobiles replaced the beat officers and personal contact was lost. Today officers are making an effort to return to the neighborhood but it is the community in some cases who are rejecting them. Some citizen have taken the attitude of just protect me and leave me alone to do my own thing. This gives them a false sense of security.

Many larger cities like New York and Houston have posted a reduction of crime; and has attributed this reduction in part to the COP program. (USA Today, Jan. 26, 1996) The negative attitude fortunately is not the statue quote. Where there are negatives, there are far more positives. Recent conversation with the public relations officer of the Houston Police Department stated that it was the positive attitude that has inspired Mayor Lee Brown to continue promoting the community programs. Will it survive into the next century? Only the citizens and police can answer that.

The intent of this research paper is to show that COP is an effective police program that will survive in the Houston area. The method of inquiry for this study will

be a survey. The survey will be sent or take by telephone to the Houston Police Department and 10 community organizations in the Houston, Texas area. Based on the results of the survey, the public will be able to look into their crystal ball and determine what the future hold for the Community Oriented Policing Program.

HISTORICAL REVIEWS

The concept of Community Oriented Policing in America is not new. The concept started in the early twenties and thirties with the beat cop. Most researchers will admit that the police and community were closer then than ever before. The officers were on first name bases with the people on their beat. As times changed and we wanted bigger and better, so did the relationship between the police and community. As the years pasted, the relationship became more adversarial. The situation remained until the late sixties. In 1979 Gary Hayes did a study that informed police chiefs that nothing they were doing putting more police on the street into random patrol, rapid response was working to fight crime. It wasn't until the strategy of problem-oriented policing conceived by Professor Herman Goldstein provided a new paradigm in which to focus innovation, regardless of any contact with the citizenry. Therefore, Community Oriented Policing is defined as a complete and unreserved commitment to a process involving the police and the citizens they serve. (Goldstein, 1982)

From the start, police and community saw this as a chance to solve many problems that were pledging communities all over the nation. By the 1980's programs were starting in cities nation wide. The results was a reduction in crime in many areas.

The program was not perfect, but it gave everyone hope.

METHODOLOGY

Will Community Oriented Policing survive the Twentieth Century? At this stage many feel that it will. However, some like Allan Jiao, feel that it has not been successful. (Jiao,1998) Individual success and failures have been recorded depending on the participation and needs of the community. However, for the purpose of this paper, The question will always be what is the price of safety?. Most people are concerned about the safety of their families and communities. Therefore, if you show them the light they will walk to it. Knowing that every case would not be successful, the question was how successful would it be in minority neighborhoods in Houston?

The purpose of this research paper is to demonstrate that the COP (Police Neighborhood Store front) is not the effective police program that it once was in the Houston Area. To test this question, a telephone surveys was used to call 10 participants. To identify these participants, a list of civic club presidents was obtained from the Houston Police Store Front offices and community leaders. The surveys would be done in two stages, the first by telephone, and the second by a joint meeting. The same questions would be used each time, but in a joint meeting, participants would be ask to go into detail. Due to the method of obtaining the information, all ten presidents participated in the first survey. At the joint meeting, eight of the ten were present. However, the two missing participants sent someone to represent them.

The communities involved are all middle or low-income areas, pronominally minority, and all located in the south part of Houston. The racial make up is 50% Black, 30% Hispanic, 10% Asian and 10% White. 65% of the homes have two parents, 25% are single parent, and 10% are single with no children.

The findings from the individuals who answered the survey will be reported.

The following is a sample list of the questions that were ask. The complete list and the results can be found in the appendices.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Do you know what Community Oriented Policing is ? Yes/No
2. Are you aware of the Community Oriented Policing program in your community? Yes/No
3. Has any law enforcement officer contacted you about the services provided by the COP program in your community. Yes/No

Findings

The results of this research study shows that the community has some knowledge of the Community Oriented Policing but there was indication of the participation level being down. In addition, the survey indicated that there was a lack of communication on the part of the police. Further, there was indication of no clear leadership willing to take the lead on the part of the community.

Discussion and Conclusions

The question of whether Community Oriented Policing would survive the 20th century can be answered. From the findings of this research study, Community leaders should be willing to discuss their program . Studies show that short surveys were the easiest way to accomplish this. Therefore, a 10 question survey was given to presidents of various civic clubs. The analysis clearly shows that many are aware of the Community Oriented Policing program, but have little knowledge of what the program was doing. The most surprising fact established was that community leaders had been informed about this type of problem. The data also shows that the public was aware of the program

and was willing to work with the program. A program of this nature is one where community and police have to work continuously on promoting. There is indication of complacency on both parts. Who is the blame? Any and everybody. Has crime decreased? Yes, but who is responsible? In the neighborhoods surveyed, most gave credit to the communities. In 1982 when the program was first started, there were issues in the community that pulled everyone together. There were officers and community leaders who understood and wanted to see a change. The problem is that many of those pioneers are no longer present.

This researcher finds this to be the key. Yes they are aware of the program, but who will take the lead? Are there not enough issues presents to warrant cohesiveness? As long as there communities are willing to work at making their communities safe, this program will continue to be an important part of law enforcement.

Regardless of how we feel, there will not be a 100% participation in this program. There will be efforts made on both sides but, not everyone will be satisfied. Those who are will to put forth the effort will see the most gains. After all has been said and done, this innovated program will success. As long as there are those who are willing to step forward to make changes for the good of the community, life will always be a little better for all of its citizens.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Do you know what Community Oriented Policing is? Yes/ No.
2. Are you aware of the Community Oriented Policing program (Neighborhood Store Front) in you community? Yes/No,
3. Has any law enforcement officer contacted you about the services provided by the program in your community? Yes/No.
4. If you have been contacted, have you attended any meeting? Yes/No.
5. If asked, would you serve on a committee to work with the program in your area? Yes/No.
6. Have you noticed what looks like a decrease in crime in your community since the establishment of the neighborhood program? Yes/No.
7. If the city could not fund the program in your community, would you vote in the next election to have it placed in your community? Yes/no.
8. Is community policing and the COP program having a positive affect in your community? Yes/No.
9. Please rate the neighborhood police program in your community.
Excellent/Good/Fair/ Poor
- 10 Do you think the Mayor has done everything he could to support the program in your community? Yes/No

Appendices 2

FINDING			
QUESTIONS YES	NO	PERCENTAGE	PLUS OR MINUS
1	4	6	-60%
2	10	0	100%
3	4	6	-60%
4	4	6	-60%
5	10	0	100%
6	3	7	-42%
7	10	0	100%
8	3	7	-42%
9	FAIR		FAIR
10	4	6	-60%
TOTAL	52	41	

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