Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

5-16-2003

A case study of the efficacy of community policing in Camden, New Jersey

Sophia L. Peele
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd

Part of the Public Relations and Advertising Commons

Recommended Citation

A CASE STUDY OF THE EFFICACY OF COMMUNITY POLICING IN CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY

by
Sophia L. Peele

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Public Relations
Graduate Division of Rowan University
2003

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved _May 16, 2003_

ABSTRACT

Sophia L. Peele

A Case Study of the Efficacy of Community Policing in Camden, New Jersey. (2003) Dr. Suzanne Sparks-Fitzgerald. Rowan University, Graduate Public Relations Program.

Community policing initiates a valuable relationship between police and residents. It is often viewed as a problem-solving method of policing. Many police departments across the country have instituted this philosophy into one unit. However, some police administrators have found ways to implement community policing throughout the department.

This study was developed to determine the attitudes of both the patrolling community policing officers and the residents to evaluate the efficacy of community policing. The study was also used to determine if the uses of public relations skills increase the officers' ability to communicate effectively with residents of the community. Patrolling officers in the Camden Police Department's Community-Oriented Policing unit were surveyed. Thirty-five surveys were distributed with twenty-five returned and useable. Community members' responses were obtained from a community meeting in one section of the city. Thirty-five surveys were completed and useable.

Some findings indicated the officers believe they have increased their ability to effectively communicate with residents. The residents also believe the officers have increased their ability to effectively communicate with the residents. It was also found that the use of public relations practices would improve the relationship between the police and residents.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Sophia L. Peele

A Case Study of the Efficacy of Community Policing in Camden, New Jersey. (2003) Dr. Suzanne Sparks-Fitzgerald. Rowan University, Graduate Public Relations Program.

Police managers around the country have recognized and incorporated community-oriented policing into departments as a strategy to draw the community and the police closer together. The community members have an opportunity to express their concerns and fears about problems that plague the neighborhood. This study was completed to determine the attitudes of both the police officers and residents of Camden, New Jersey, toward the efficacy of community policing and what impact effective public relations skills could have on its success.

Table of Contents

Chapter Five

        Survey cover letter
        Police Survey
        Community Survey

List of Figures

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my son Justin, who has been my undying strength and motivation while continuing my studies, my mother Dorothy, and my sisters for always supporting me and taking care of Justin while I attended classes.

Chapter One

Introduction

Policing procedures have undergone rapid changes in the past several years. Police departments around the United States, regardless of size, no longer rely solely on traditional police models to reduce crime. A new philosophy known as community policing has been developed to improve relations between police officers and citizens. This form of policing uses creative problem-solving techniques to address community concerns. However, community policing means different things to different people. According to Trojanowicz (1990), community policing, in its ideal form is not merely a means to address community concerns, but is a philosophy that turns traditional policing on its head by empowering the community rather than dictating to the community. Oliver (1998) defines it as police and community working together, creating solutions to the indigenous problems that plague their community, and implementing programs to solve these problems. Overall, this system takes the officers out of the police cars to return them to walking the beat, using bicycle patrols, interacting with children in city schools and working with the elderly.

Community policing has also significantly changed and raised public expectations of what the police can and should do, when it comes to the old concepts of serving and protecting (Lyons 1999). Public relations and good communication skills play a large part in the training of the officers and the overall success of the program.

Americans are reminded each day of the increasing amount of crime related to drugs and gangs. Police departments now face the task of training officers to enforce the law as well as developing partnerships with the citizens of the community. This sometimes creates a frustrating situation between the police officers and the community. When implementing this

program, a police chief must consider training the public as well. One of the first steps according to Oliver (1998) should be to increase citizens' knowledge of police operations, particularly regarding the limited resources police have at their disposal. Involving the community in criminal and order maintenance problems that plague their neighborhoods is critical to the success of community-oriented policing.

The Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (D.A.R.E.), neighborhood watches, community meetings and youth programs such as the Police Athletic League (P.A.L.) are all programs that have been formed to enhance the working partnership between the police department and citizens and to solve some of the community problems. Therefore, the community-policing officer and community members play an important role in the problem-solving process.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the efficacy of community policing. This case study will determine the effectiveness of community policing according to police officers assigned to the community-oriented policing unit and residents in the city of Camden, New Jersey. Camden is an urban, police department consisting of approximately 425 full-time offices. The city has now enlisted the help of 100 State Troopers to patrol the streets. The city is divided into four major patrolling districts with approximately fifty officers assigned to the community-oriented policing unit. Police officers involved in community policing should have certain communication skills to be able to respond effectively to challenges. Police officers must be able to objectively perceive their environment, use good judgment in deciding to execute their authority, and carry out required tasks effectively (Field, 1993). Officers who have strong interpersonal skills can see where others are "coming from" and

know that not all situations can be handled in the same way (Trojanowicz and Bucquerox, 1994).

Numerous studies have been conducted on community policing issues since its widespread popularity over the past ten years (Finnimore, 1999, Oliver, 1998, Krocher, 1996, Kratcoski, 1995, Trojanowicz, 1990). Ian Finnimore (1999) conducted a study on police officers in Gloucester County, New Jersey. His study analyzed the officers' perceptions of themselves as good problem solvers in the community and how the residents perceived the officers. He also studied how public relations techniques could improve the relationship between the officers and residents. Charles Kocher (1996) completed a study of officers' attitudes toward community policing in Camden, New Jersey. His study was limited to the officers' views and did not encompass the views of residents in the city. His findings suggest that officers are fairly comfortable with the community-policing program and that the officers viewed communication skills as key factors to a successful program. However, it must be noted that the study was conducted in 1996 and that the Camden Police Department has implemented new changes in the community-policing unit.

Delimitations

This researcher chose to limit the study to the views of only the officers in the community policing unit. The study was also limited to include the perceptions of the residents in only one section of the city, about the officers in the community policing unit. The latest crime statistics for the city were not used in this study. This researcher also did not attempt to determine if community policing reduces the level of reported crimes. It would

first have to be determined if traditional policing ever reduced reported crimes. Because of

this fact, this research also chose not to compare traditional policing to community policing.

Purpose

This researcher will test the following hypotheses.

- H1: It is expected that perceptions of police

  officers effectively communicating with residents

  have moderately increased in the past eight years.

According to Kocher (1996) both police officers and sergeant/administrators agreed

that the citizens would feel safer with community oriented policing philosophies and related

styles. Finnimore (1999) concluded that 49.3% of the community members surveyed agreed

that police officers effectively communicate with the residents.

- H2: It is expected that police officers assigned to the

  Community-Oriented Policing unit have increased their

  ability to effectively communicate with the residents in

  the community.

Communication is a key ingredient for any successful organization and this is

no different in the traditional police-department versus the community-oriented police

department. Each one becomes a determinant factor in the success of achieving the next

stage and implementing all of the policies and programs under community-oriented

policing (Oliver, 1998).

- H3: It is expected that relationships between the

  Community-Oriented Policing unit personnel and

residents would improve from the use of public

relations practices.

Informing the community about all of the programs and methods of policing utilized

under community-oriented policing not only keeps the public informed and educated, but it

breaks down many of the barriers between the police and the community (Oliver, 1998).

Procedure

This researcher will use the local newspaper to conduct a content analysis. Articles

from 1992 to 2002 found in the *Courier Post* newspaper that refer to community policing

will be collected. This researcher hopes to gain information about the program and the

reactions of residents toward community policing programs. From the content analysis, this

researcher will create a survey that will be distributed to police officers in the Community

Oriented Policing Unit at the Camden Police Department. This researcher will also select

residents from a section of the city to survey for opinions about officers and the Community

Policing Program. This particular section will be chosen at random due to the limited time

and resources of this researcher to survey all residents of the city. SPSS will be was utilized

to analyze data provided by the officers and residents.

Chapter II will review relevant literature about community policing that emphasize

the importance of effective community and police relations to improve the quality of life in

neighborhoods.

The information obtained by this study may be useful in future research for police

administrators to help evaluate attitudes of officers toward residents, residents' attitudes

toward officers and the implementation of future programs. The research obtained also could

be used as a public relations tool to construct an effective communication plan between the police and residents.

Glossary Terms

Community-Oriented Policing (COP) – a philosophy of full service personalized policing, where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis, from a decentralized place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems.

Community – a group of people who live in a geographical area in which they share cultural characteristics, attitudes and lifestyles; and they interact with one another on a sustained basis.

Community-Oriented Police Officers– those officers who are assigned to the Community-Oriented Policing unit and who have been trained in a certified program to partner with community members and leaders to address issues that plague the neighborhood and the quality of life of its members.

Community-police relations – a philosophy of administering and providing police services aimed at involving the community and the police working together to determine problems and issues in a neighborhood and how to resolve these problems.

Public relations practices or techniques – techniques used to communicate specific ideas or concerns using available print, electronic or direct communication methods.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Community policing has been recognized as one of the most popular methods used by police departments nationally. Over the past eighteen years, researchers have examined this form of policing and its efficacy. Researchers such as Robin, Kelling, Tojanowicz, Rosenbaum and Toch and many others are well known for their studies on this widespread topic. Locally, Kocher and Finnimore conducted studies on the attitudes of police officers assigned to the Community Oriented Policing unit as well as the attitudes of the residents toward the community police officers.

Although many police departments around the country have adopted this "new" form of policing, it has been proven that many police officers do not agree with the program believing that their job is to enforce the laws and not to act as a public relations officer in the community. While it is important for police to maintain order and enforce the laws, it is essential for those officers to recognize that safe and secure neighborhoods require the collaboration of citizens and officers. Whether described as community partnerships or community involvement and empowerment, the police are no longer considered the only agency or group uniquely qualified (or accountable) for maintaining law and "order."(Robin, 1998) Good communication skills are vital tools for police officers in these units to form an effective partnership with community members. This partnership may be an essential link to safer neighborhoods.

Community Relations

Community relations seeks to involve the citizen *actively* in determining what (and how) police services will be provided to the community and in establishing ongoing mechanisms for resolving problems of mutual interest to the community and the police (Mayhall, 1985). Therefore, community-relations is not a new concept to policing and has been in existence for years. In the 193's, when uniformed officers visited schools to assure the children that "the policeman is your friend," they were practicing police/community relations in its most basic form (Wasserman, 1973). Police/community relationships have improved over the past 70 years mostly due to training programs and reforms adopted by police departments. Wasserman, (1973) suggests an improvement process must go through the following three specific stages to be effective:

1) The police administrator makes an objective assessment of police/community relations in his city.

2) The administrator provides for the coordination of the necessary improvement program – frequently accomplished through the formation of a specialized Community Relations Unit.

3) Under the guidance of this central unit, the department adopts methods of police operation that have been proven effective and constructive.

This assessment can be used to provide a clear picture of existing problems in a community and allow the police agency to develop strategies to confront these problems and prevent others from developing. The department's improvement program must have the support and commitment of its administrators (Wasserman, 1973).

Quality police service requires that officers be skilled in a wide variety of tasks.

Officers need to be trained in community relations. This training involves the officers

learning to become sensitive to different cultures and the needs of certain neighborhoods.

They also have to be trained to know their limits and the use of police discretion. Wasserman

(1973) concludes that to be effective, then, training must support the concept that community

relations is not vested in a special program, but is grounded in the total quality of police

service.

Community Policing

Over the years Community-Oriented Policing has become a much talked about

subject that many have explored in an attempt to define this philosophy and how it rates and

compares to the traditional form of policing. One question many attempt to answer is, "Has

community policing replaced traditional policing?" Peak (1996) concluded community-

policing builds on the basic virtues of traditional policing by its strong support for basic

policing mandates, such as rapid response to emergency calls, enforcement of prevailing

laws, and promoting public safety. Peak (1996) also reports community policing recognizes

that the police alone cannot do the job, especially now that the job demanded of them

requires trying to reverse the upward spiral of violence and drugs that threatens to explode

into communities that previously viewed themselves as immune. This theory has been a

leading source of the implementation of community policing in many departments

throughout the world. Police administrators recognize that neighborhoods and residents have

changed and the police departments must do so as well to continue to maintain order and

reduce crime and fear.

Each police department must conduct independent research to evaluate the effectiveness of this program for their departments. Certain factors such as the needs of the neighborhoods, development of strategies and available resources must be identified. Community policing plans are devised to suit the needs of each department although most reflect a common philosophy. Police departments across the country have identified with the plan devised by Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1994) commonly referred to as the Big Six. The Big Six pinpoints six necessary factors to make a community policing program successful: (1) The Police Department, (2) The Community, (3) Elected Officials, (4) Business Community, (5) Other Public Agencies and (6) The Media. These six entities must work together to form a partnership to empower the neighborhood. Police departments such as Portland, Oregon, Montgomery County, Maryland, Seattle, Washington and Tempe, Arizona have used the above six elements to construct a community policing plan that identifies the needs of their departments and the needs of the citizens.

As mentioned above, the first step in problem solving is identifying the problem. Community policing officers must identify what problems plague the neighborhoods they patrol. These officers have a number of resources to recognize the problems such as, data of calls for service, or if a number of repeat calls are coming from a particular neighborhood about similar incidents. Problems are also recognized through citizen complaints, census data, newspapers and media coverage, community surveys and observations made by the patrol officers.

Once the problems are identified, an analysis is performed and a solution is determined. Officers often determine arrest as the only response to a problem. According to (Peak, 1996), arrest is often part of the solution to a crime or disorder problem, but in most

cases arrest alone is not sufficient to provide long-term resolution. Community policing involves the citizens, businesses and private and social service organizations to assist in solving the problems of the neighborhoods.

Attitudes and Education of Police Officers

Implementation of a community policing program can among other things become a challenge for police administrators. Police officers must be reprogrammed from the traditional form of policing to learning to use effective public relations techniques not formally taught in the police academy. Because of the changes many officers do not indicate positive feelings toward a community policing program. This is usually indicative of an unclear understanding of the definition and philosophy of the program.

Charles Kocher (1996) concluded in the *Study of Attitudes of Police Officers and Police Managers Toward Community Oriented Policing*: police officers in Camden, New Jersey showed a moderate level of uncertainty regarding the philosophy and effectiveness of community-oriented policing. It was stated in the discussion of these findings that the answer to this ambivalence may be training. It must also be noted that Kocher (1996) concluded that a good deal of officer ambivalence may be removed if the department makes efforts to precisely and objectively define the goals and objectives associated with their community policing program and the duties of officers in relation to it.

Police officers are not usually assigned to the community policing unit. The officers must complete an application and interview to be considered for this program. No prior training is necessary to apply to the unit however; certain skills such as positive attitudes and strong communication abilities are essential. Kocher (1996) deduced from his survey that

police viewed community oriented policing officers as possessing a strong desire to serve the community, the desire to be a role model, the ability to communicate and socialize with people in general and community members in particular. Another conclusion that must be noted from this survey is that the police officers did not believe that officers assigned to the community oriented policing unit should be responsible for the removal of graffiti, working with children or required to live in their work jurisdiction.

Ian Finnimore (1999) researched *The Efficacy of Community Policing* based on all of the police departments in Gloucester County, New Jersey. His study concluded 93.5% of all the officers surveyed felt they effectively communicated with the public. Police officers need to make a commitment to gain the support and participation of the entire community. Community policing changes how police deliver service to the community, by encouraging a partnership between people and their police based on a mutual respect and cooperation (Peak, 1996).

Researchers have also conducted studies to analyze the relationship of higher education and the likelihood of officers and police personnel to possess important qualities such as motivation, discipline, good communication skills and positive attitudes. With the enhancement of modern technology and the expansion of duties placed on police officers, many police departments around the country only require a high school diploma for applicants for police officer although some departments do administer reading, writing and comprehension exams to assess appropriate levels of communication and organizational skills. Kocher (1996) reported that 19% of the police officers surveyed had obtained a college degree and also cited a conclusion from a study performed by N. K. Ferrell. Ferrell (1993) concluded based on information obtained from his study that rank and education were

two factors that had a significant effect on whether police officers responded favorably or unfavorably to community policing. Based on Ferrell's (1993) study, Kocher (1996) inferred that police officers with at least a college education were found to respond more favorably toward community policing than officers without a college degree.

Finnimore (1999) concluded from his findings that 52% of the police officers surveyed listed they had an associate or bachelor degree. It was also concluded by Finnimore (1999) that only 7.5% stated they had either courses or a degree at the graduate level, and 32% stated they had some college. It is important to restate that Finnimore (1999) based his study on all of the police officers in all of the police departments in Gloucester County, New Jersey while Kocher (1996) based his findings on only the 25 officers assigned to the Community Oriented Policing Unit. Therefore, a fair comparison based on education levels could not be made by this researcher.

Residents' Attitude Toward Police Officers

One of the main concerns police departments face when initiating a Community Oriented Policing Unit is the community and the extent of the fear, disorder and crime in the neighborhood. A cohesive farming community of 5,000 people, an industrial city, a capital city, a university town, a metropolis—all differ radically in terms of crime rate, types of crime, the degree of cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity, financial and organizational resources, political conditions, and fear of crime (Trojanowicz, 1972). Police must be committed and able to conform to the needs of the communities in which they patrol. Community Oriented Policing places the police at the center of a community network, with primary responsibility for identifying community problems and energizing community

resources toward the eventual solution of these problems (Peak, 1996). It is the responsibility of the police to make residents an important aspect in solving problems that plague their neighborhood. Research has found that when police officers identify and partner with the key community leaders, a line of communication to the other community members is established. The officer can stimulate interest, identify leaders, and help solve problems in the community, therefore reducing crime and fear.

There is a large gap in communication between police officers and residents of the community. Involving the community in more problem-solving issues could play an essential role in closing this gap. The community's input has been cited as valuable and it is important to involve them in the planning stages so they feel their voice is heard (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1994). Researchers have found that attitudes of residents toward the police will vary significantly by residential settings. Finnimore (1999) quotes Pace (1989) as concluding that until economic, educational, cultural, and social parity exists among members of communities, necessary cohesiveness to create a unified community is unlikely. Kocher (1996) concluded from his study that the officers and sergeant/administrators agree that the citizens they serve feel safer with community-oriented policing philosophies and related styles. Finnimore (1999) concluded that 49.3% of community members feel police officers effectively communicate with community members.

Public Relations Strategies and Techniques

According to (Mayhall, 1985), public relations activities are designed to create a favorable environment for agency operations by keeping the public informed of agency goals

and operations and by enhancing the police image; the target is a citizen who *passively* accepts (and approves) what the police department is doing.

Citizens rely on information received from the police department just as the police department depends on certain information obtained by citizens. For example, if a serial rapist is terrorizing a neighborhood the citizens expect to be updated on the latest developments just as the police department usually requires the assistance of residents to report any useful information. Therefore, incorporating public relations strategies and media resources can stimulate support and enhance the image of trust towards the police officers patrolling the neighborhoods.

Community Oriented Policing has greatly advanced over the last eighteen years and with past, current and future research will continue to move forward. Public relations tactics such as communicating with community leaders and community residents are key factors in developing community partnerships. Kocher (1996) concluded that responses by officers to questionnaire items indicated that the police officers felt the role required knowledge, skills and ability (KSA), the ability to effectively patrol a defined beat area, being able to work with the elderly as well as give talks on drug abuse, and at least some willingness to attend social activities in their jurisdiction. Finnimore (1999) conducted a focus panel study of community members and found that community members believed that officers should become better at communicating, formulating plans, and in contacting the public on a regular basis.

Camden City and Community Policing

It is important to note that because there are approximately 83,000 Camden city residents, this researcher chose the Parkside section of the city to study the efficacy of the community policing program. Surveying the attitudes and opinions of residents in one section will allow this researcher to reasonably examine, compare and contrast data provided. However, the results may be used to assist police management in the selection and training of future community-oriented police officers nationwide.

The community policing program in Camden has expanded over the past eight years. This researcher will enhance on the study conducted by Kocher (1996) of the attitudes of the officers assigned to the community-oriented policing unit. Kocher (1996) determined that social interaction and communicative skills of police officers were important, not only in terms of theoretical postulates of the community oriented policing model, but also in the perceptions of the police officers themselves.

Camden City has incorporated programs such as D.A.R.E. into its community policing program. D.A.R.E. attempts to work with the youth of the community to develop a special partnership. The D.A.R.E. program assigns an officer to a specific classroom to work with the students throughout the year discussing matters relating to drugs. The media has ranked Camden as the city with the highest crime rate in New Jersey. This program uses certain strategies and techniques to deter students from using or selling drugs. This study will not attempt to determine the influence of the D.A.R.E. program on the increase or reduction of drug use among school aged children.

Although the COPS in Schools program is a separate unit of the Camden Police Department, it works simultaneously with the community policing program, coordinating

events that involve officers from both units. COPS in Schools assigns a police officer to a specific school for an entire school year. This officer is a liaison between the school administrators and the police department. The officer is assigned to maintain order in the school, however from a public relations perspective the officer is placed in the school to encourage the youth to develop trust toward police officers.

Specialized training and the incorporation of public relations techniques can be important factors in the success or failure of a community policing program and reducing the fear of crime. Camden City, as well as any other city utilizing a community policing program, needs to solve community problems as well as react to them. Therefore, strategies should be implemented according to the specific needs of a neighborhood or community.

This researcher will conduct a study of the perceptions of community policing by the patrolling officers assigned to the community-oriented policing unit. The community members' attitudes about community policing and the officers will also be studied. Both groups will be studied through the use of surveys, which will be explained in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Data Needed

This project focused on the Camden City Police Department's Community Policing Unit and how effectively the assigned officers interact with their respective communities, what opinions the residents have of the officers' performance and how well public relations techniques are utilized.

Data Sources

This researcher conducted a content analysis of articles found in the *Courier Post* newspaper from 1993 to 2002 referring to community policing in Camden City. Data were also collected through in-depth interviews and surveys. This researcher interviewed the commanding officers of the community-policing unit, to obtain preliminary information to construct a proficient survey. This researcher also collected data through resident surveys at a monthly community meeting in the Parkside section of the city.

Upon completion of the in-depth interviews, surveys were drafted for both the members of the community-policing unit and the residents of the community. Each member of the community-policing unit completed the surveys and returned them to the commanding officer. The residents completed surveys at the monthly community meeting.

Research Methods

Information obtained through the content analysis allowed this researcher to form preliminary questions for the in-depth interviews for both the commanding officers and residents. Samples of questions included, "What specialized training if any, is provided to the officers assigned to the Community Policing Unit?" and "What public relations training is provided to the officers?" Upon completion of the interviews, all of the community policing officers were surveyed to determine how knowledgeable they are about the needs of the community and what public relations skills are utilized in achieving these results. Community members in one section of the city were surveyed to obtain their opinions of the Camden City Community Policing Unit officers. These questions included, "I agree with community oriented policing?" and "Community oriented policing officers interact well with the citizens?"

Information obtained from the content analysis was entered and tabulated to produce a percentage analysis of the articles about community policing in Camden. The articles were coded: 3-Positive, 2-Neutral, and 1-Negative.

Sample Selection

All of the 35 officers assigned to the Community Policing Unit who actively patrol the community or are assigned to designated offices or buildings in the city were surveyed.

This researcher also surveyed 35 residents of the city. The city is divided into four districts however; only one district was selected. This district was selected at random. No preliminary research was conducted to select this area.

Data Collection Method

A former Lieutenant in command of the Camden Community-Policing Unit was interviewed in February 2003 to obtain preliminary information to draft a survey for the officers. Permission was then granted by the present Lieutenant to survey each member of community policing unit. The surveys were presented to the officers to obtain information in March 2003.

This researcher personally distributed surveys to residents in the Parkside section of the city in April 2003.

Data Analysis Method

I will use the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) to tabulate the results from the surveys. Two tupes of information were obtained. One type of information was based on the results gathered from the police officers. Another was based on the results obtained from the residents' surveys. All questions on the surveys used a Likert Scale.

A cross-tabulation of the police and community surveys was performed to determine the degree of agreement between the police and residents.

Chapter Four

Results

The following results were obtained through surveys completed by patrol officers in the community-oriented policing unit of the Camden City Police Department in Camden, N.J. Thirty-five surveys were delivered to the police department. Twenty-five were completed and returned as useable. Thirty-five of the fifty resident surveys distributed at the community meeting held in Parkside were completed and useable.

A content analysis was also completed using the *Courier Post Newspaper*. Twenty eight articles were located from the period of February, 1992 through February, 2003.

Findings

Hypothesis I

- H1: It is expected that perceptions of police officers effectively communicating with residents have increased in the past eight years.

This hypothesis was supported. Community members were asked to evaluate how well the police officers interact with the residents. Community members (**51.4%**) revealed that they agree the officers communicate well with the members of the community. This researcher found that **68%** of the officers revealed they enjoy communicating with the citizens as well.

F.1 Responses of Officers and Community Members on

How Well Police Interact With Citizens
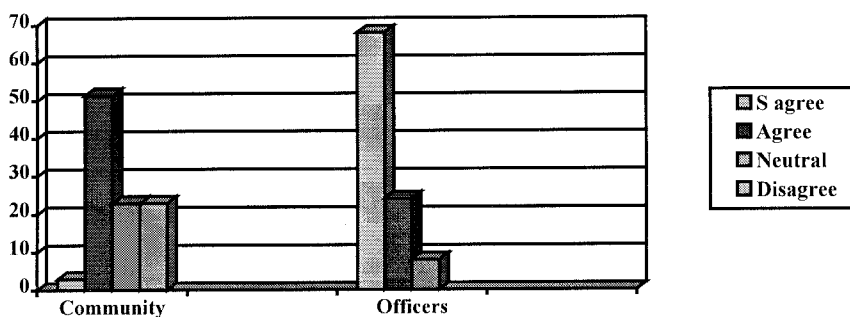
Seventy-two percent of the police officers surveyed revealed they strongly agree with community policing. This researcher found that **60%** of the community members strongly agree with community policing.

F.2 Comparison of Police Officers and Residents That Agree With Community Policing
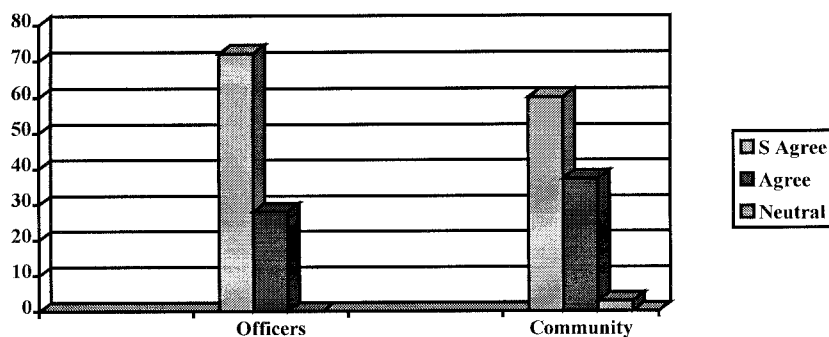
Approximately **66%** of the community members strongly believe that community

policing is greatly needed in Camden. Eighty percent of the officers also agree with the need

for community policing.

**F.3 Percentage of Community Members and Officers Who Feel Community
Policing Is Needed in Camden**
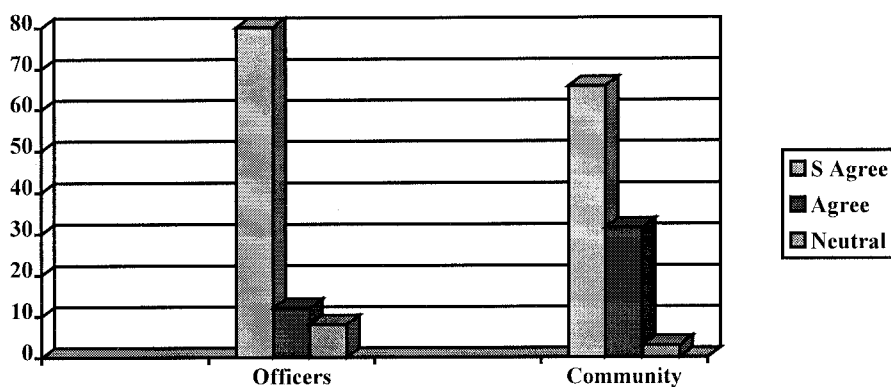
Hypothesis II

- H2: It is expected that police officers assigned to the Community-

  Oriented Policing Unit have increased their ability to effectively

  communicate with the residents in the community.

This hypothesis was supported. Research found that **80%** of the officers either strongly

agreed or agreed that adequate training has been provided for them to effectively

communicate with the residents. As formerly stated by this researcher in Hypothesis I (H:1),

51% of the community members agreed the officers communicated well with citizens.

F.4 Responses on Increased Ability of Officers to Communicate With Residents
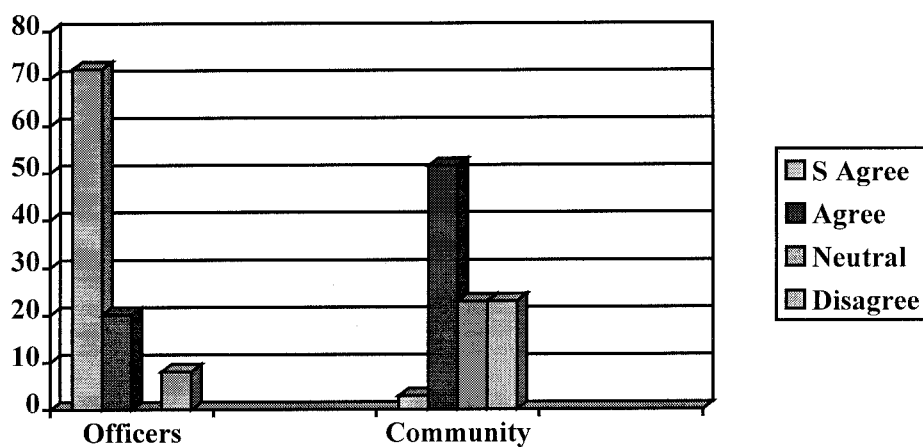

Hypothesis III

- H3: It is expected that relationships between the Community-Oriented

  Policing Unit personnel and residents would improve from the use of

  public relations practices.

Research supported this hypothesis. Approximately 72% of the officers strongly agreed,

while 20% agreed they recognized the importance of good public relations skills while only

eight percent disagreed. The community (60%) strongly agreed that the uses of public

relations practices are important.

F.5 Responses on The Importance of Public Relations Practices
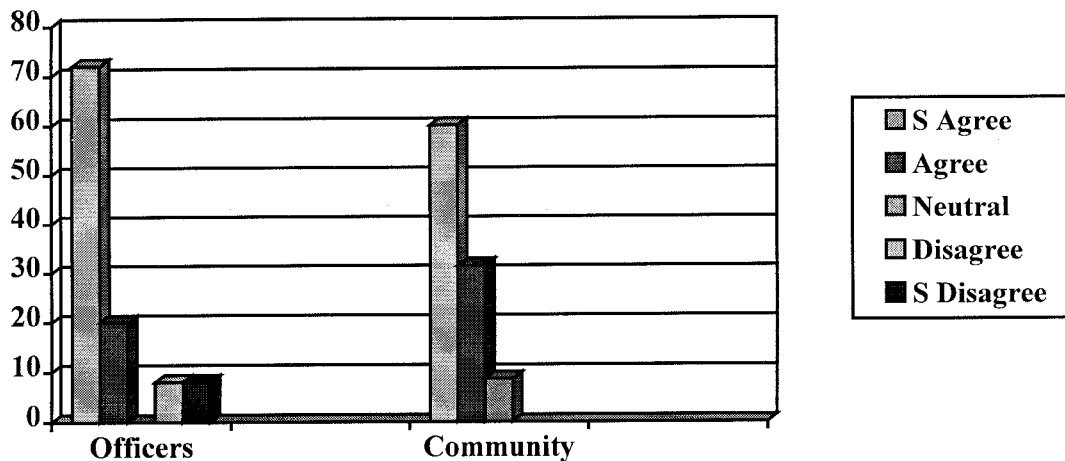
General Findings

This researcher compared responses of both the officers and community members

regarding the importance of community oriented policing officers to be involved in other

events in Camden outside of work. There was a close correlation between the two groups.

The officers (48%) feel it is important to participate in events outside of work compared to

31% of the residents.

F.6 Responses of Officers and Residents Who Feel It's Important for Officers to Become Involved in City Events Outside of Work
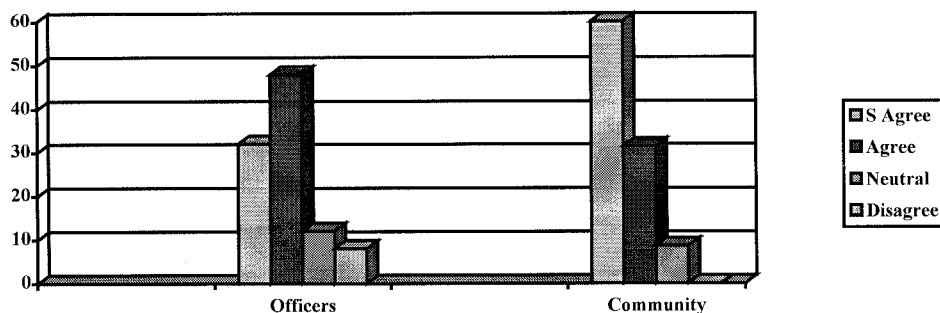
The community (45.7%) strongly agreed and (42.9%) agreed that if

community policing were no longer available because of budget issues, there would be a

great impact on the neighborhood.

F.7 Percentage of Community Members Who Believe There Would Be A Great Impact on The Neighborhood If Community Policing Was No Longer Available
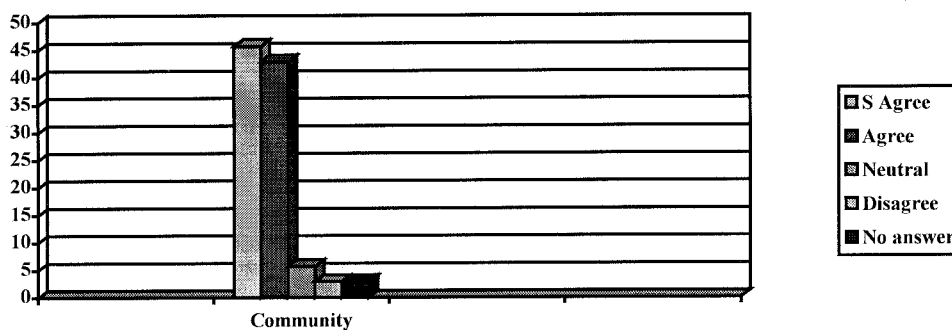
Description of the Sample and Surveys

The following information was requested from both the community members and the

police officers: age group, gender, race and education level. The officers (56%) surveyed

reported having some college background while 40% of the community members reported

the same. The community (11.4%) members reported having obtained a Bachelors Degree

compared to 8% of the officers surveyed.

There was an 84% response from male officers recorded, compared to 16% female

officers. Fifty-four percent females responded from community members compared to 45.7%

male respondents.

F.8 Education Levels of Officers and Community
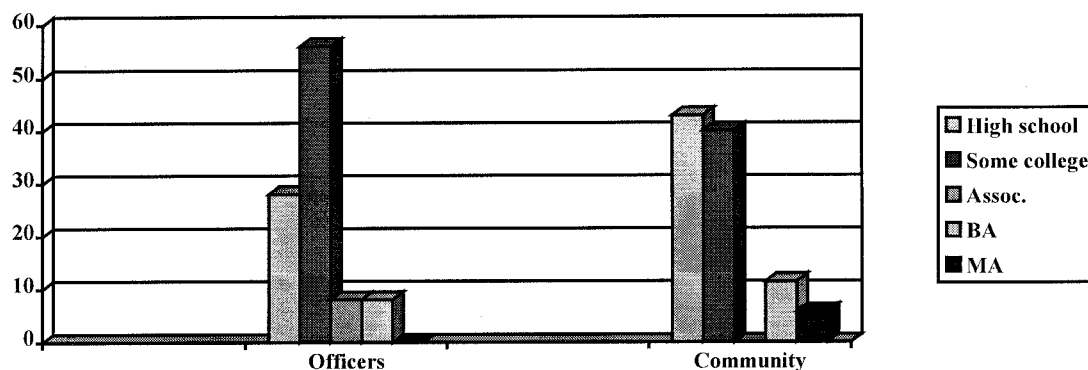
The majority of community members were African American (85.7%) compared to 14.3% Hispanics. The majority of police respondents were Hispanic (48%) followed by 28% African American.

F.9 Race of Community Members and Officer Respondents
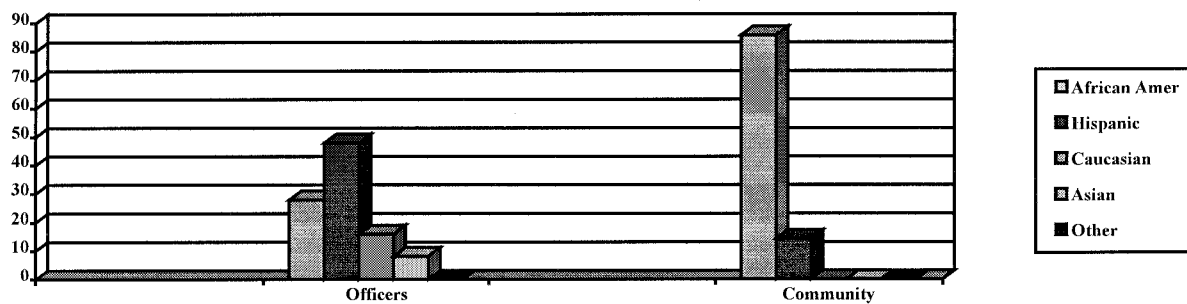
The following comparison reveals that both community members (34.3%) and police officers (44%) agree that community policing in Camden has progressed over the past five years.

F.10 Officers and Community Members Who Feel Community Policing Has Progressed in Camden in the Past Five Years
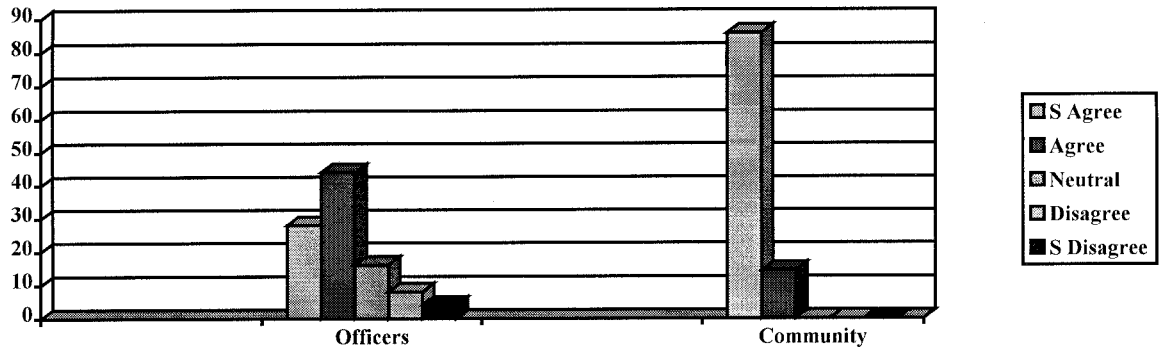
This researcher utilized the responses obtained by the community oriented policing officers and the community members to conduct comparisons.

A content analysis was also completed using the *Courier Post Newspaper* as the primary source. The results of the articles revealed nineteen- positive, six-negative and three-neutral. Chapter Five will discuss these findings in greater detail.

F.11 Content Analysis Results
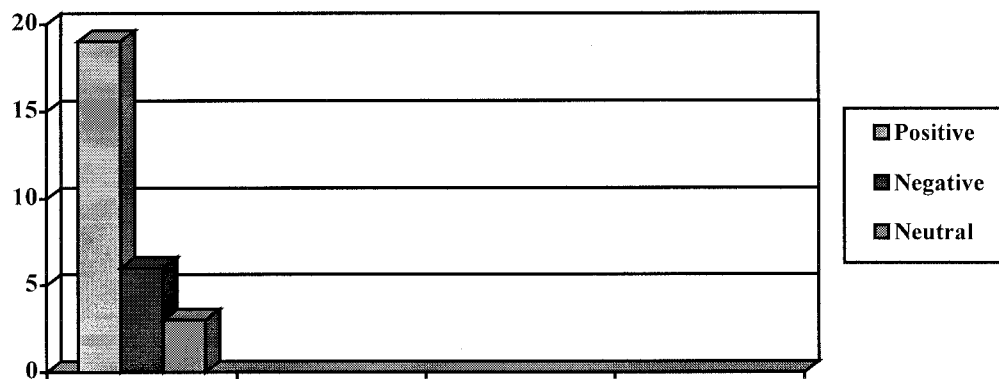
Chapter Five

Summary and Discussion

The data and findings support this all three hypotheses. Information was obtained from both community policing officers and community members from one section of Camden. Only the officers who actively patrol the streets were surveyed. Supervisory personnel were not included. Each group responded to specific questions asked of both groups and certain questions that were group specific. The responses obtained from the groups were evaluated and compared. A content analysis was also performed to evaluate articles written in the local newspaper about the community-oriented policing program.

Demographic Information

The study interestingly revealed that 56% of the officers had completed "some college" compared to 40% of community members. Only 8% of the officers responded they had obtained a Bachelor degree compared to 11.4% of the community members. Finnimore's (1999) study revealed it is a requirement for police officers to minimally have a high school diploma and many departments now require a college degree before hiring. It was also revealed that 5.7% of the community members surveyed had obtained a graduate degree. No officers responded as having obtained a graduate degree. Meese (1993) pointed out from his findings that those officers who were college educated were more likely to respond favorably to community policing. Kocher (1996) cited a finding by Ferrell (1993) in which he concluded that rank and education were two significant factors that affected a favorable attitude toward community policing. The same analysis could most likely be used to evaluate

the attitudes of the community members' responses in this study. A combined total of 56% of the residents reported having completed some college studies or having obtained a degree.

The police officers (72%) strongly agreed with community-oriented policing while 60% of the community members surveyed also strongly agreed. This would suggest that both groups strongly agree with the community policing concept. Kocher (1996) concluded in his study of officers' attitudes about the community policing philosophy that there was a likelihood that the officers did not fully embrace the philosophy. The more traditional view seemed to be preferred because the majority of respondents selected patrol as the most important factor in their work.

Both groups were asked about the need for community policing in Camden. The results interestingly revealed the officers (80%) strongly agreed there was a need and approximately 66% of the community respondents strongly agreed. This could indicate that the residents' perceptions of the safety of the community are slightly higher than those of the officers.

The officers were asked if they personally found community policing rewarding and 68% strongly agreed, 24% agreed and only 8% were neutral. These facts alone could suggest that the officers enjoy communicating with the members of the community which could prove vital to the success of the program. Kocher (1996) found that the officers mildly agreed and concluded that more work should be completed to help the officers feel strongly about the rewards of their work.

The results regarding training were very interesting. The officers (40%) strongly agreed and agreed (40%) that they had received adequate training in community-oriented policing. There was another split of 8% disagreeing and 8% strongly disagreeing with the lack of adequate training. The findings clearly show that the majority of the respondents are

comfortable with the training provided to the unit. However, the officers were also asked if they believed more training should be available to the unit. Fifty-six percent strongly agreed and 44% agreed. This could suggest that although the officers feel comfortable with their training, they would like to receive more information and training on this subject.

The officers were asked if they enjoy communicating with the citizens of Camden and 68% strongly agreed, 28% agreed and 4% were neutral. The community members were asked for their perceptions of how well the community policing officers interact with the citizens. Approximately 51% agreed, 22.9% disagreed and 22.9% were neutral. This could indicate that while more than half of the respondents agreed favorably, future research could be completed to address the factors leading to the negative response.

Officers responded that they strongly agree (56%) and agree (40%) that they enjoy working with children in the neighborhood. A comparison can be made to the officers' attitudes to this question in Kocher's (1996) study. His findings showed that the officers tended to agree and concluded that police candidates should have personality traits suitable for dealing with children. Based on findings from both studies, it can be perceived that the officers' enjoyment to working with children has remained consistent.

Each group was asked for its perceptions as to the requirement of officers to attend activities outside of work. The study revealed the officers strongly agree (32%) and agree (48%) compared to the residents strongly agreeing (60%) and agreeing (31.4%). Therefore, it can be concluded that both groups believe it is necessary for officers to attend activities outside of work and participate in community events.

The officers (72%) strongly agreed that good communication skills are important. However, when asked if the department recognized the importance of good public relations skills, only 28% strongly agree and 40% agreed. Although the majority of the officers

responded as knowing the importance of possessing good communication skills to effectively communicate with the residents, responses to the department's knowledge of the importance of good public relations skills could signify a need for department-wide training.

Practical Influence In the Field

One area that could be a primary concern for the police departments is training. Police officers should be properly trained to communicate with community members and to respond effectively to their needs. To create a successful partnership between the police and residents, a level of communication needs to be in place so that residents will feel they can trust the officers and the officers will feel they can obtain necessary information. Therefore, it is important to identify key communicators in the community to help form this bond or relationship. The officers also must stay abreast of the latest information concerning community policing through trainings and current journals. These tools provide necessary information to help the officers deal with a crisis or various problems that plague a neighborhood and find possible solutions.

Police departments need to periodically evaluate the community responses to the progress of the community policing program. As witnessed in this study, sometimes the department believes a certain program is working well in the community, but the residents feel differently. Therefore, again good communication and public relation skills play a necessary part in the success of any program. Community members want to feel involved in the process of policing the neighborhoods. The residents feel they are more knowledgeable about what is needed in the community than the police department. Hence, the police department should include the residents on policing plans for the community in order to obtain information that could enhance the success of the program.

Overall, the study found highly positive perceptions from both the police officers and residents about community policing. Both groups agree with the concept and believe that there is a need in the neighborhood. Although Kocher (1996) only surveyed the attitudes of the police officers, this research seems to indicate that the officers' attitudes have improved toward community-oriented policing.

Further Research

This researcher suggests distributing surveys to residents of all sections of the city to gain a more thorough perspective of this philosophy. However, the data obtained in this study could serve as a guideline to evaluate the remaining patrolling sections of the city and could be useful in constructing or re-constructing appropriate plans. Each neighborhood has specific needs and plans should be need-specific for the respective areas.

This study could also serve as an informational tool for police departments to help gather information from the community to assist in the development of a neighborhood plan. The citizens should be asked for their opinions and insight of the current conditions of the neighborhood, the police officers and what police practices could improve the community. A communication relationship must be developed before any future plans can work effectively.

More than half of the police officers responded that they had some college background, but a very small number had actually obtained degrees. Police officers could improve their communication and public relations skills through proper education. Therefore, it could be advantageous for officers working in the community-oriented policing unit to pursue a higher degree that includes communication courses. Learning and utilizing good public relations skills could bridge the communication gap between police and citizens.

Although this study did not attempt to determine if community policing reduces crime, it would be interesting to research and evaluate necessary data to study the effects community policing does have on crime.

Bibliography

Alpert, Geoffrey P. (1997). Policing Urban America. (3rd ed). Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press.

Brown, Michael K. (1981). Working the Street: Police Discretion and the Dilemmas of Reform. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Cooper, Christopher, Dr. (1999). Mediation and Arbitration by Patrol Officers. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Cooper, John L. (1980). The Police and the Ghetto. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press.

Cox, Steven M. & Fitgerald, Jack D. (1996) Police in Community Relations: Critical Issues (3rd ed.). MadisonL Brown & Benchmark.

Ferrell, N.K. (1994). Police Officers' Receptivity to Community Policing. Doctoral Dissertation. East Texas State University

Friedmann, Robert R. (1992). Community Policing: Comparative Perspectives and Prospects. New York: St Martin's Press.

Gallagher, D., Bagin, D., & Kindred, L. (1997). The School and Community Relations (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacom

Geller, William A. & Toch, Hans. (1996). Police Violence: Understanding and Controlling Police Abuse of Force. New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press.

Hunt. T. & Grunig, E.J.(1994. Public Relations Techniques. Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Lundman, Richard J. (1980). Police Behavior: A Sociological Perspective. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lyons, William. (1999). The Politics of Community Policing: Rearranging the Power to Punish. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Marans. Steven & Adnopoz, Jean. (1995). The Police Mental Health Partnership: A Community-Based Response to Urban Violence. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Mazerolle, Lorraine Green. (1997). Policing Places with Drug Problems. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

McElroy, Jerome E., Cosgrove, Colleen A., Sadd, Susan.(1993). Community Policing: The CPOP in New York. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Meese, E. (1993). Community Policing and the Police Officer. Perspective on Policing, vol.15, 1-13. Washington, D.C., National Institute of Justice.

Muhlhausen, David B. (2001). Do Community Oriented Policing Services Grants Effect Violent Crime Rates?. Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation.

Peak, K.J., Glensor, Ronald W. (1996). Community Policing and Problem Solving Strategies and Practices. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Robin, Gerald D. Community Policing: Origins, Elements, Implementation, Assessement. Criminology Studies.

Rosenbaum, Dennis P. (1994). The Challenge of Community Policing: Testing the Promises. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Schobel, G.B., Evans, T.A., & Daly, J.L.(1997). Community policing: does it reduce crime or just displace it? The Police Chief.

Skogan, Wesley G. & Hartnett, Susan M.M. (1997) Community Policing, Chicago Style. New YorkL Oxford University Press

Strechor, Victor G. (1997). Planning Community Policing: Goal Specific Cases and Exercises. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press.

Stevens, Dennis J. (2001). Case Studies in Community Policing. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Toch, Hans & Grant, Douglas. (1991). Police as Problem Solvers. New York: Plenum Press.

Tory, Michael, & Morris, Norval. (1992). Modern Policing. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Trojanowicz, R.(1990). Community Policing: A Contemporary Perspective. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Press.

United States Commission on Civil Rights. New Jersey Advisory Committee. (1994) <u>The Use and Abuse of Police Powers: Law Enforcement Practices and the Minority Community in New Jersey/ New Jersey Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Civil Rights</u>. Washington, D.C.: US Commission on Civil Rights, Eastern Regional Officer

Vinzant, J. & Crothers, L.(1994). Street-level leadership: the role of patrol officers in community policing. <u>Criminal Justice Review</u>.

Watson, Elizabeth M., Stone, Alfred R. & De Luca, Stuart M. (1998). <u>Stategies for Community Policing</u>. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

<u>APPENDIX</u>

Dear Officer:

I am currently a Graduate student completing my Thesis as one of my program requirements. Your assistance is requested in completing the attached survey, which is an important component of my research. I have chosen to conduct a Case Study on the "Efficacy of Community Policing in Camden City." Your answers to the following questions will offer an officers' perspective.

Your names and answers will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used as research on this project. I thank you in advance for your cooperation. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me at Camden County Probation Division at (856) 379-2200 ext. 5099.

Sincerely,

Sophia Peele
Public Relations Graduate Student
Rowan University

Please circle your appropriate response to the following questions

1. **You agree with community oriented policing**

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2. **Your police administration supports community oriented policing**

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3. **There is a great need for community oriented policing in Camden**

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4. **You find community oriented policing personally rewarding**

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5. **You have received adequate training in community oriented policing**

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

6. **You believe more training should be available to the community oriented policing unit**

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

7. **Fellow officers outside of your unit agree with community oriented policing**

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

8. **You enjoy communicating with the citizens of Camden**

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

9. **Neighborhood Watch programs are important to the police department**

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

10. **You have identified key communicators to obtain information when required**

    Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

11. **It is important for community oriented policing officers to be involved in other events in Camden outside of work**

    Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

12. **You enjoy working with children in the neighborhood**

    Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

13. **Your community oriented policing unit has significantly progressed over the past 5 years**

    Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

14. **Your department recognizes the importance of good public relations skills**

    Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

15. **You recognize the importance of good communication skills**

    Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

---

Please check your appropriate age group   You are: ____male   ____female

_____ 18-24   _____ 35-44

_____ 25-34   _____ 45-54   Your race: ____African American   ____ Hispanic   ____Caucasian ___Asian

___other

_____ 55 and older

Highest education level completed

_____ High School   _____ Bachelors Degree

_____ some college   _____ some Graduate study

_____ Associate Degree   _____ Graduate Degree

Please circle your appropriate response to the following questions

1. I am aware of community oriented policing in my neighborhood.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2. I agree with community oriented policing

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3. There is a great need for community oriented policing in my neighborhood

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4. It is important for community oriented policing officers to be involved in other events in Camden outside of work

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5. I feel the community oriented policing officers interact well with the citizens

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

6. If community policing were no longer available because of budget issues, there would be a great impact on my neighborhood.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

7. Community policing has progressed in my neighborhood over the past five years.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

8. Please check your appropriate age group   9. Gender: ____Male   ____Female
_____ 18-24   _____ 35-44
_____ 25-34   _____ 45-54
_____ 55 and older

10. Race: ____African American   ____ Hispanic   ____Caucasian   ____Asian   ____Other

11. Highest education level completed
_____ High School   ____ Bachelors Degree
_____ Some College   ____ Some Graduate study
_____ Associate Degree   ____Graduate Degree