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Law Enforcement and Community Relations with their Public

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Law Enforcement and Community Relations with their Public

Garrett M. Fleming

Department of Disaster Sciences and Emergency Services

Honors Research Project

Submitted to

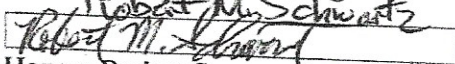
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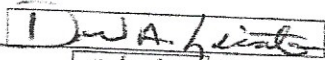


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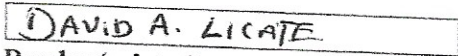


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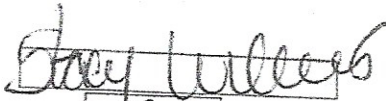


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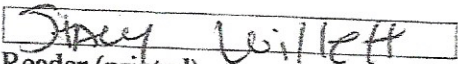


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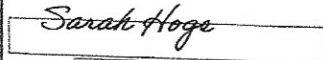
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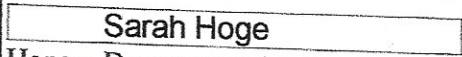
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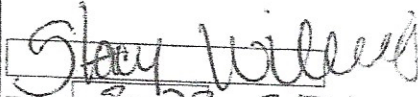


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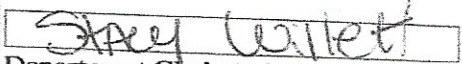


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Abstract

The Community Policing Model, despite being one of the most revered strategies used by police departments to interact with the general public, has presented several significant problems that trouble today's police officers. Its effectiveness toward improving the police-community relationship has come into question, justifying further research. However, this analysis must be completed in a multitude of geographical areas to show whether or not community policing is effective for the various demographics in those specific areas. This paper explores the effectiveness of the Community Policing Model as it is implemented by police departments in Northeast Ohio. An in-depth analysis on the history of community policing was used to identify its most significant downfalls and areas for potential improvement. Two surveys, one targeting community members and the other targeting commissioned police officers, were conducted and then compared to determine the effectiveness of community policing in Northeast Ohio from two different viewpoints. It was found that, while both community members and police officers feel that community policing is an effective law enforcement tool, there are still significant steps that police departments can take to help improve the police-community relationship as a compliment to having a community-based policing approach. In addition, participants in both surveys were given the opportunity to make suggestions on areas of improvement, which police departments can consider implementing to help improve their community policing strategy and better serve the citizens of Northeast Ohio.

Keywords: Abuse of power, community policing, corruption, criminal activity, police misconduct, use of force, Use of Force Continuum

Law Enforcement and Community Relations with their Public

The law enforcement profession has historically been subject to much scrutiny, primarily due to incidents involving a use of force. However, the law enforcement field, like any other profession, also faces unethical and improper behaviors that must also be addressed by supervisory personnel. Additionally, an increasing number of high-profile use of force incidents in the last decade have drastically affected the level of trust that the public has of those individuals who are tasked with protecting and serving them. To combat this lack of trust, many modern police agencies have taken specific actions to improve their relationships with their respective communities using a proven method that considers the long history of issues faced by police departments across the country. This Community Policing Model is often considered one of the most important tools used by police officers during the course of their daily duties because it allows them to build relationships with their community members – an action that is increasingly important in today's policing environment.

However, as Fisher-Stewart (2007) stated, “Research indicates that there are still questions about the effectiveness of Community Policing” (p. 11). Some critics argue that community policing may not be the most effective option in the long-term, as a use of force will likely reduce the trust that may have been built through community relations programs within that particular community. This is a valid argument that would likely make even seasoned law enforcement professionals question the effectiveness of community policing and further question how the model can be improved. To answer this, it is important to first answer exactly how the effectiveness of community policing should be measured. Since the Community Policing Model implies that a relationship must exist between police officers and the members of the community they serve, it is crucial that both demographic groups are included in this measurement. This study does exactly

that. By involving both police officers and community members in a measure of effectiveness, both groups can largely contribute to the improvement of the existing model or the development of an entirely new and better option. This study also aims at answering what some of the major problems with community policing are and any potential remedies that may exist, doing so by comparing the results of two separate surveys from the two target demographics. Ultimately, if any changes to the Community Policing Model will prove to be more effective at improving the police-community relationship, then they must take into account the long history of issues that may affect the feelings of an entire community towards the police force tasked with protecting it.

History of Law Enforcement in the United States

In order to understand how the Community Policing Model has grown to become the best modern method at improving relationships with community members, it is important to first understand the history of the law enforcement profession in the United States. The first police department was formed in 1829 in London, England by Sir Robert Peel, who believed that having a centralized command among the law enforcement agents would significantly reduce the city's soaring crime rates. Peel's model was used as a basis for the development of similar departments in major cities across Europe and eventually spread to the United States. By the end of the Civil War, most major cities in the U.S. had a centralized police force used to provide community service and control specific groups of people – most frequently slaves and immigrants. However, the American police forces were the only ones that carried firearms and served under an appointed government official. These differences from the early European police forces set the stage for a large amount of corrupt behavior and police brutality that occurred up until the early 1900s. During this time, physical coercion and violently controlling race riots were frequent occurrences in most urban police departments and became a core focus in daily activities (Fisher-Stewart, 2007, p. 2).

In the 1930s, a move was made to modernize police forces to help reduce the corrupt behavior of police officers and politicians alike. Hiring and management procedures were introduced and strictly followed, creating more professionalism and encouraging prospective officers to receive higher education degrees in newly formed law enforcement study programs. Similarly, the automobile, telephone, and radio emerged during this time and found a beneficial use in law enforcement, allowing for quicker response times and an increase in communication between individual officers. These steps to reduce corruption were short-lived, as the social unrest during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s again strained police-community relations. Incidents of police brutality ultimately resulted in more civil disorder and a large amount of discrimination in the course of daily law enforcement activities. Crime rates across the country were the highest they had ever been, and a lack of public trust prevented police officers from reducing them. As a result, the Community Policing Era, marked by an increase in efforts to build trusting relationships between police officers and the communities they serve, began in the early 1970s. It was during this time that the Community Policing Model was first introduced, and it still stands today as a representation of the long history of lessons learned from strains in the relationship between police officers and their communities (Fisher-Stewart, 2007, p. 3).

Community Policing Initiative

The Community Policing Model is one of the most common methods in the modern era at building a trusting relationship between law enforcement personnel and the members of the community they are tasked with serving. Unfortunately, there is a large amount of flexibility in the definition of the term because it is constantly changing as new and improved methods of improving police-community relationships are introduced. This means that it is important for police departments to continually redesign their community policing methods or their entire

strategy as a whole to best meet the needs of their community members. However, this flexibility also means that police departments are not limited in the number of potential methods for improving relationships with the community. Currently, the best definition of community policing comes from Fisher-Stewart (2007), who stated:

Community policing focuses on crime and social disorder through the delivery of police services that includes aspects of traditional law enforcement, as well as prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, and partnerships. The Community Policing Model balances reactive responses to calls for service with proactive problem-solving centered on the causes of crime and disorder. Community policing requires police and citizens to join together as partners in the course of both identifying and effectively addressing these issues. (p. 3-4)

This definition clearly shows that the Community Policing Model is all-encompassing for the primary purposes of most police forces. Additionally, it hints that the Community Policing Model has been developed over time by considering lessons learned throughout law enforcement history, as discussed previously, and incorporates the early community-service functions from the first police agencies with the same emphasis on education and training from the early twentieth century.

While much of its history is often associated with that of modern law enforcement, the event with the most significance to the Community Policing Model was the passage of the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. This legislation developed the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) within the U.S. Department of Justice, resulting in the Community Policing Model becoming a nationally accepted way of improving the existing police-community relationships across the country (Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, 1994). Individual police departments could then follow a national, unrequired standard that

recommended specific community policing activities that had shown the most potential at building trusting relationships. Today, the COPS Office focuses on informing local governments and police agencies about how to better implement community policing into their strategies and on developing more effective methods.

There are many ways that police departments can implement a strategy that focuses more on improving community relations. An important foundation of the Community Policing Model is that it does not specify how any particular method should be conducted, but rather provides a statistical basis on the proven effectiveness of various methods and recommends how they can be implemented by any police department. This means that each individual agency can adapt already proven methods to suit the needs of the community they serve and can opt against using certain methods for any reason. According to Watson, Stone, and DeLuca (1998), some of the most effective community policing methods include:

- Encouraging community members to assist in crime prevention through the creation of neighborhood watch groups to provide advice to police agencies;
- Increasing the use of foot or bicycle patrols in daily law enforcement activities;
- Creating a team of police officers whose specific responsibility is to interact with the public in a positive, community-oriented manner;
- Working to improve officer accountability;
- Hiring civilian employees as Reserve or Auxiliary officers to perform tasks essential to the functioning of the department and/or engage in community relations activities;
- Improving agency-to-public communication through a variety of outlets; and
- Creating partnerships with other organizations, including government agencies at all levels, nonprofit service providers, private businesses, and the local media.

Each of these methods supports the belief that positive and trusting relationships between police departments and their communities will reduce crime. This means that it is even more important for all police officers to have a positive attitude when they interact with the public because it can reinforce the ideology that strategies based on the Community Policing Model help create a working relationship.

However, if community policing is aimed at reducing crime, then there must be an important distinction made between the Community Policing Model and more traditional methods of policing. In the earlier years of law enforcement, the primary goal of police officers was to protect law-abiding citizens from criminals (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). This meant that officers would spend most of their time on-duty responding to incidents, resulting in very little, if any, action being taken to reduce or stop the occurrence of crime. With community policing, more emphasis is put on the crimes that citizens are concerned about. Community members are then more likely to support the efforts taken by their police force(s) and become involved in crime prevention. While protecting the public and solving crime remains a top priority, community policing relies on convincing the public that police officers can also reduce crime through various methods that statistically have worked in cities around the country. It is for this reason that building trust among community members is crucial to the success of any community policing strategy.

Problems with Community Policing

Despite seeming like a common-sense way to successfully reduce crime, there are several significant issues with community policing. Firstly, the Community Policing Model shows the most success at reducing the occurrence of low-level crimes. While several prominent criminal justice theories – most notably the Broken Windows Theory – suggest that any reduction in the occurrence of low-level crime will reduce that of more serious crime, there is little data showing

that this is true. This suggests that research on the effectiveness of community policing at reducing serious and violent crime should be conducted in the future. Secondly, many theorists suggest that the Community Policing Model does the opposite of what it advertises. One argument is that by involving the community in law enforcement, community members may gain a sense that they are the police and therefore possess the same authority and power as that of a commissioned police officer. This would subsequently increase the occurrence of crime when private citizens take the law into their own hands. Another more probable idea challenges the basis of community policing altogether, arguing that focusing more on crime prevention may result in police officers not focusing enough on protecting the public from criminals, which should be their primary purpose. Some experts even believe that this shift in focus may have inadvertently increased the amount of corruption or vigilantism that the Community Policing Model is trying to remedy (Skolnick & Bayley, 1988, 1-37). If this is truly the case, then the call for increasing the involvement of police forces in solving community-wide problems became the primary cause for a variety of issues that led to many citizens possessing negative attitudes toward the police.

In addition to these broader implications, individual police officers and entire departments are subject to other problems that inhibit their ability to participate in community policing efforts. Firstly, the majority of funding for community policing was raised back in the 1990s when the COPS Office was first formed in the Department of Justice. According to Walker (2012), "The initial enthusiasm [toward community policing] has long since passed. And while the concept survives as conventional rhetoric, there is no national assessment of the extent to which the key organizational aspects survive as an operational reality in various departments" (p. 62). This lack of enthusiasm – and particularly its resulting lack of funding – presents a serious dilemma. Large departments in cities with high crime rates, in particular, will struggle with obtaining funding

because their officers will often not have enough time to participate in community policing during their normal shifts. Having a dedicated Community Policing Unit with officers whose primary focus is to participate in community policing methods they are trained on would be ideal in these larger departments, but a lack of funding may often render this an impossibility. Smaller police departments may also want to train their officers on how to implement community policing in a way that best serves that particular community. However, according to Walker (2012), "... there is no evidence that, with a few exceptions, cities provided mandatory training of all officers regarding its goals and methods" (p. 80). Without the funding or enthusiasm to do so, officers may not be encouraged to participate and may not proactively participate on their own.

Use of Force Issues

One of the biggest challenges in policing is controlling when officers use force against subjects. This is an issue that has sparked a large amount of controversy across the nation, especially in recent years with the number of high-profile incidents. The problem with controlling the use of force is that the law enforcement field is the only profession that is legally permitted to use reasonable levels of force as a means of completing necessary duties. As such, if officers were limited by strict policy and laws that dictate when they are permitted to use force, their ability to complete their daily functions may be severely affected. However, if no such policy or law existed, law enforcement would likely use excessive or unnecessary force more often. This dilemma creates a large problem for law enforcement leadership, as they must develop policies that will not hinder the ability of their officers to use force but will not inadvertently encourage the use of unnecessary or excessive force. Therefore, it becomes important to consider the model that is taught in police training at the federal level in order to understand why police officers may use different levels of force in certain situations.

Use of Force Continuum

In the United States, all police departments follow some kind of use of force standard that dictates how much force is appropriate to use against a subject in any given situation. However, it is important to note that there is no universal standard for a use of force model. This means that individual police departments can develop their own model that better suits their policies and procedures, if necessary. Most models today closely resemble the standard previously taught by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Georgia when training new federal law enforcement officers. *Figure 1* shows a more descriptive version of this Use of Force Continuum. In the FLETC version, there are three important considerations that are important to note. Firstly, the mere presence of an officer is considered a use of force only because certain subjects may be more likely to cooperate and comply with reasonable demands given by an officer. This differs from verbal commands, which typically involve the mention of a consequence, namely the use of a higher level of force, against the subject if they do not comply. In other words, an officer must be present in order to use legally justifiable force. Second, the levels of force do not have to be followed in sequential order. Rather, only the amount of force that corresponds with the level of resistance from the subject is used. This means that levels can be skipped if the subject's behavior escalates more rapidly. Officers can also move downward on the continuum by using lesser amounts of force as the situation de-escalates. Finally, while the Use of Force Continuum identifies the highest level of force that may be reasonable in the given situation, it does not consider any additional factors that may have been present in that situation. This means that officers do not strictly have to adhere to the continuum, but rather are trained to abstain from using force until it is absolutely required by the subject's actions. However, their actions must follow the 'objective reasonableness' standard, which is detailed in later sections of this paper and with *Figure 1*.

When reviewing any use of force, the most important aspect of the incident that police supervision will consider is whether the force used by the officer is consistent with the behavior of the subject. For instance, an officer who used an impact weapon (such as a TASER) on a subject who was verbally resistant would likely receive internal discipline because the officer's response does not fit the Use of Force Continuum response for subject behavior. However, it is also important for departments to consider a variety of other factors in reviewing a use of force, including the age, gender, and physical size of both the officer and the subject, which all will inevitably play a role in an individual officer's decision to use force. One way this is frequently used by departments is with female officers who use force against male subjects. This is primarily because females are typically smaller in stature and may be unable to match the physical strength of male subjects without any assistance from other officers. In the previous TASER example, the officer may be justified using that level of force against a solely verbally resistant subject if that subject were physically larger than the officer. Considering any additional factors is important because it means that officers are permitted to bring situations under control in a way that prevents them from injuring themselves, without having to worry about violating department policy or procedure in using that level of force.

History of Incidents Involving a Use of Force

The United States Supreme Court has remained remarkably consistent over the years on when officers are permitted to use force. As such, the decisions in the two primary cases that determine the standard for using force were handed down over four decades ago and have been subject to little further interpretation. The Supreme Court has held that police officers may not use deadly force to prevent the escape of a fleeing subject unless the officer has probable cause to believe that the suspect poses a significant threat of death or physical injury to the officer or others

(*Tennessee v. Garner*, 1985). In a later case, the Supreme Court established an objective reasonableness standard for determining excessive force, which can be determined by the severity of the crime committed, the existence of any ongoing threat to officers or the public, and if the subject is actively resisting arrest (*Graham v. Connor*, 1989). An important similarity between any cases involving a use of force is that the police officer(s) involved are accused of using force that was arguably unreasonable or unjustified. This means that the court must examine the standards at that time and determine whether the officer's actions followed or met those standards. It is highly likely that this is the reason why most incidents of a use of force are ruled justified, as the courts must use the legal standards at that time and will typically follow the rulings of courts in other high-profile cases.

Another important consideration, especially in the modern law enforcement environment, is that police officers are usually found guilty in the court of public opinion. Even when officers have followed all of their training and department protocols for using force, the public is often very fast to criticize the officers and call for legal reprimand. For these reasons, the media has been one of the biggest players in exacerbating this issue because use of force incidents gain more popularity among the general public when they are portrayed as controversial. This unfortunate reality that police officers in today's society must deal with was best summarized in an interview with an unnamed homicide investigator, who said:

No matter what the police do, there's a voice saying 'You shouldn't have done that', or 'You should have done that'. Do I think it plays a role in or impacts our job? I don't think it does because no matter what they show on TV, or no matter what they portray the police as, the day-to-day policeman has a job to do and there are only certain ways you can do it. (Huey & Broll, 2012, p. 389).

However, there have been several high-profile incidents of a use of force with critical errors that should be avoided by law enforcement at all costs. As such, mistakes made by officers in previous high-profile incidents should always be carefully considered by all police departments so that steps can be taken to minimize the chances that steps can be taken to avoid making those same mistakes.

Tamir Rice. On November 22nd, 2014, a man called 911 to report a male walking in the playground area of a recreation center with a gun in Cleveland, Ohio. In his 911 call, the man told the dispatcher that the subject was 'probably a juvenile' and that the gun was 'probably fake', but this information was never relayed to the responding officers. Shortly thereafter, the first two responding officers entered the playground area from a back road, driving over grass and coming to rest between a gazebo and the recreation center parking lot. There, the officers encountered twelve-year-old Tamir Rice, who was walking near the gazebo. Less than two seconds after arrival, one of the officers had fired two shots, both of which struck Rice in the abdomen. It took the officers over three minutes after the shooting to request paramedics, and no first aid was taken by any of the backup officers who later arrived on scene. Officers subsequently located a BB gun that had the orange tip removed, hiding the fact that the gun was nonlethal. Rice died from his injuries sustained in the shooting the following afternoon (Mowatt, 2018, p. 54-55).

Primarily due to the nation-wide outrage behind it, both officers involved in the shooting were called to appear before a grand jury, but neither officer was indicted. Following an extensive investigation into the incident, the dispatcher was suspended in March 2017 for violating protocol by not relaying important information to the responding officers. The officer that fired the fatal shots was terminated in May 2017 for events unrelated to the shooting. He subsequently applied for a part-time police officer position at another department but later withdrew his application and allowed his Ohio Police Officer Certification to expire. The officer who was driving the patrol

vehicle at the time of the shooting was not disciplined and has retained his employment as a police officer for the City of Cleveland (Mowatt, 2018, p. 55). To this day, many argue that these punishments were not severe enough. Nevertheless, many departments in the United States have made significant changes to the hiring and training processes of both police officers and dispatchers. As more police departments across the country implement these changes, the likelihood that the same critical errors from the Tamir Rice shooting are repeated in these departments could significantly be reduced.

Eric Garner. On July 17th, 2014, two undercover NYPD police officers approached Eric Garner outside a beauty supply store on Staten Island in New York. The two officers had suspicions that Garner was selling cigarettes without tax stamps, which violates a state law. Garner immediately began arguing and verbally resisting the officers. When one of the officers walked behind Garner and attempted to handcuff him, Garner began physically resisting. The officer subsequently put Garner in a chokehold and was able to throw him on the ground with the help of responding backup officers. The officers held Garner on the ground despite his numerous remarks that he couldn't breathe. Paramedics were called but did not find it appropriate to place Garner on oxygen or provide any immediate medical aid. He was transported to the hospital where he died an hour after the incident initially began. The entire incident was captured on cell phone video, including the location of cigarettes without tax stamps in Garner's possession for which he was originally approached by the officers. The medical examiner later ruled Garner's death a homicide, resulting from the chokehold and subsequent compression of his chest from his positioning on the ground. However, the medical examiner also determined that the officer's actions likely would not have been fatal if Garner had not suffered from multiple pre-existing health conditions due to his size, as he weighed nearly four-hundred pounds (Marcus, 2016, p. 54-56).

Following Garner's tragic death and its thorough investigation, a grand jury was convened to determine whether the officer had used unnecessary force and whether it violated any criminal law. The grand jury ultimately declined to indict the officer, sparking a large amount of outrage and violent protests across the country. An internal disciplinary committee was subsequently launched in response to the unrest to determine if the officer's actions violated department policy. The committee concluded that while the officer did not violate any policy, his actions were reckless and not of common practice in restraining violent subjects, and it was therefore recommended that his employment be terminated. As a result, the officer was fired and has currently hired an attorney to fight for wrongful termination and to be rehired (Southall, 2019, para. 1-18). While many people argue that the officer should have been criminally charged, the officer's actions sparked a nationwide movement to specifically train officers against using chokeholds as a method of takedown or restraint. Additionally, Garner's death is often used as case for widespread police reform, especially following a controversial and high-profile use of force incident.

Challenges with Controlling Use of Force

Perhaps the biggest challenge with controlling when an officer uses force is department policy and procedure. As previously mentioned, the law enforcement field is the only profession that explicitly allows the use of force as a method to further its purpose. While it is important for individual departments to create policies and/or common practices for using force, they must be very carefully designed. If a policy were too restrictive, it would be more likely that an officer or civilian would get hurt by a suspect when a use of force could have prevented it. Conversely, if a policy were too lenient, officers may tend to use force more often and may be more likely to use excessive force to gain compliance. If either of these were to happen, the goal of law enforcement to reduce and prevent crime could drastically be affected. In addition, while a standardized policy

or practice between all departments may seem like a good idea, it is necessary for individual departments to develop their own policies or procedures that suit the needs of that department and its jurisdiction. However, because of this, issues with restrictive or lenient policies will typically only be seen on a jurisdictional basis.

One issue that has a more nationwide effect on limiting uses of force is that the objective reasonableness standard set forth in *Graham v. Connor* (1989) presents a gray area. While the three aforementioned criteria for determining objective reasonableness are clearly defined and seemingly common sense, the criminal procedure for determining justification makes these even more complicated. When a court is considering an incident of a use of force, it must determine if a reasonable citizen with no law enforcement experience would make the same decision if they were placed in that situation. Similarly, courts may also consider whether another police officer with the same levels of education and experience would make the same decision. Following the legal process, the court must also consider the facts of the case and any other relevant standards or statutes as they would have been understood at the time. According to Atherley and Hickman (2014), “This standard, in the context of a reasonable actor interpreting the facts in a ‘split-second’, presents tremendous latitude for the application of force” (p. 125). This implies that while the current criminal procedures for investigating police use of force may be the most effective, they also present some challenges that may need addressed by a multitude of governmental and judicial agencies at a later date.

One similar issue that may be the most frustrating is the large number of people that will inevitably play a role in the investigation of a controversial use of force case. Most often, an officer who uses force will have done so in the presence of other officers who responded as backup. These officers, if they did not use any force of their own, would be witnesses and would have to give

statements. The officer who did use force would be interviewed by supervisory officers and would undergo an internal investigation by their department or an external investigation by another agency. Attorneys and courts may get involved if a grand jury is convened and a trial may start if the officer is indicted. Police unions may also get involved to fight for the officer to keep their job if they are acquitted. With all of these people involved in the events following a use of force, it is easy to assume that not every individual will view the incident in the same fashion as the officer who used force. The officer may feel that they were justified, and this absolutely could have been the case. Other people involved following the incident, however, may feel that the officer used excessive force and may therefore push harder for criminal charges to be filed. This issue, however, may be unavoidable when it is necessary for use of force investigations to be lengthy and thorough.

Finally, one of the biggest players in changing how people feel about police officers who use force against a subject is the media. Media outlets tend to only portray incidents in a way that will increase the number of viewers, even if that means stretching the truth. According to Atherley and Hickman (2014), "In the 'video age' the public routinely views force incidents without the aid of expert guidance, as would accompany such exhibits in a court" (p. 125). Simply put, the outrage behind a use of force incident is most often premature, which often results in the involved officer(s) being found guilty in the court of public opinion before any potential criminal charges are filed. However, it is controversial on how to limit the media portrayals of and involvement in the events following a use of force because it is an activity protected by the First Amendment in the United States Constitution. As such, police departments may want to become more secretive in their investigations of a use of force incident to spare the dignity of the officer(s) involved. This may make it seem like the department is covering up the incident and therefore unintentionally create more issues with a general public who is concerned with protecting constitutional rights.

The Media's Influence on Use of Force. In today's society, the media often has a bad reputation for a variety of reasons. This is often especially true with the often-adversarial relationship between the media and the police. The media relies heavily on the police to release information in order to complete their duties. However, the police must be more concerned with gathering as much information and evidence as possible in order to obtain a conviction in court. This difference in objectives means that the time constraints of the two entities are vastly different, which is the primary reason why the police-media relationship has become strained in recent years. In order to meet the demands of the public, the media may often fabricate or exaggerate evidence and give that information to the public as quickly as possible, thereby not reporting the entire story. As a result, the police often feel as though involving the media in any investigation jeopardizes their ability to obtain a criminal conviction. According to Huey and Broll (2012), "... making certain facts public may jeopardize the investigation in both the short term (e.g. gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses) and the long term (e.g. if the case goes to trial, possible parole hearings in the future)" (p. 390). To combat this, police departments must often maintain secrecy in their investigations by withholding as much information as possible from the media until releasing that information is absolutely necessary to gain additional leads.

Similarly, media sources may often develop negative attitudes toward the police because police departments are not releasing as much information as the reporters feel is necessary. This negative attitude often results in more intense coverage on stories concerning police misconduct and a use of force. Stories about police wrongdoing may often be filled with more fabricated or exaggerated evidence than a normal story, as police departments typically remain even more secretive concerning their internal investigations of individual officers. The Community Policing Model would theoretically rely on police departments being more open about reporting the

wrongdoing of their officers because it would show that the problem was identified and is being properly addressed. Being more open would reduce the 'need' for the media to fabricate or exaggerate information, thereby improving both the police-community and police-media relationships. However, since internal investigations often require higher levels of secrecy, the media will likely be less truthful in their coverage of the story to fill in holes where information is missing or kept secret. Therefore, a working relationship between the police and the media is a necessary evil. Police departments must strictly limit what information is released to the media, thereby allowing both entities to do their necessary jobs without significantly inhibiting the other.

Potential Remedies

Unfortunately, there may be very little that can be done to limit the involvement of the media in a use of force investigation. Primarily because of the wording of the First Amendment, the U.S. government cannot make any law that restricts the media. This means that there is nothing that can be done to prevent the media from feeding false information regarding use of force incidents to the public. For this reason, the Community Policing Model could come into play. If people are going to rely solely on the information they get from the media to form their own opinions on the police, then it would make sense for police departments to take steps to improve their image to the community they serve. This could potentially build support for the police following use of force incidents, thereby limiting the amount of violent unrest that has frequently been associated with them in recent years. Similarly, the Community Policing Model shows potential at solving many other community-based issues, thereby reducing crime and hopefully the need for officers to use force. If the need for officers to use force could be reduced simply by taking a more community-based approach, then it is a method that should be implemented in police agencies across the country.

In order for police departments to understand how to reduce the need for officers to use force against subjects, it is important for them to consider the large number of studies that have been conducted on the topic in recent years. Previously, most of the research completed on the frequency of police officers using force was done so through observational studies in which trained observers rode side-by-side with police officers for a combined thousands of hours per study. However, as discussed by Atherley and Hickman (2014), the use of police-specific technologies such as Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Records Management Systems make it much easier to track the frequency of using force with the click of a button (p. 126). This means that studies can be completed much quicker through administrative review. Additionally, it can be inferred that departments can conduct their own research of their administrative records and can therefore internally decide the best approach to reducing the need for their officers to use force.

Implementing new technologies also shows some potential for reducing the occurrence of excessive or unjustifiable force. The police body camera is probably the best example of how the rapid advancement of technology can be beneficial for law enforcement. By requiring officers to wear cameras on their person and have them recording citizen encounters, it can significantly reduce the number of claims that officers used excessive force. If officers are recording any citizen encounter they have on a daily basis, every action of the officer and the citizen will be recorded and stored. This means that the footage can be used to prove or disprove a citizen who claims an officer used excessive force against them. The footage can be even more useful if the citizen's complaint was truthful and the officer were brought to court, as it would most likely be used by the prosecution as evidence against the officer. Even more promising is that the storage of the footage, combined with the use of the media, can be used for a multitude of purposes. Police departments can release the footage to news outlets to show why they may have found an officer's

actions justified. This transparency may also show potential at improving the relationship between the police department and its community members. Additionally, the public release of footage means that it can be used by police academies to give future police officers realistic scenarios and by police departments in the re-training of career police officers.

Similarly, by requiring police officers to continuously re-train on use of force topics, it may be more likely that these officers will restrain from using deadly force if a situation presented itself. Trainings could be designed from the results of administrative studies like those suggested by Atherley and Hickman (2014) and should rely on the use of modern technologies. The use of body camera footage in training is one of the best classroom-style options, as it would allow experienced police officers to critique the officer's actions in the footage. However, body camera footage as a training device should only be used in conjunction with simulation-based training. It is crucial that police officers also be immersed in realistic scenarios using training weapons so that their actions will mimic what they would be in the field. By mimicking real-world scenarios, training becomes more realistic and police administrative personnel can gain a better understanding of what corrective action may need to be taken. Additionally, involving supervisory personnel in training scenarios could allow them to address any other violations of policy that may be present in the training. One of the most common violations that could be seen is misconduct – an issue that can be found in many incidents involving a use of force but is not addressed enough.

Misconduct Issues Among Police Officers

While many people may think that incidences of a use of force are the biggest issue with law enforcement personnel, misconduct may be the more concerning underlying issue. Ranging from minor ethical violations to illegal activity and racial profiling, police misconduct can be presented in a variety of different ways and could appear in most situations police officers respond

to daily. This broad range of implications is why police misconduct statistically occurs so frequently and often accompanies an incidence of a use of force. If misconduct is not controlled, it may often present itself in any situation that law enforcement encounters, especially when that incident requires a use of force. However, by allowing misconduct among law enforcement to become such a widespread issue, it has become even more difficult to control. As such, it is important for departments to understand misconduct and how it impacts their community.

Definitions

Police misconduct is a relatively difficult term to create an all-encompassing definition for because there are many actions that can be taken by police officers that can be wrong but do not necessarily require significant disciplinary action or termination of employment. However, it is important to note that police misconduct is considered an overall category, with criminal activity, corruption, and abuse of power being subcategories. These subcategories are all very similar, but understanding their subtle distinctions is crucial to understanding disciplinary actions that are taken against officers. Criminal activity and corruption both involve the breaking of a law, but criminal activity results in criminal prosecution, whereas corruption involves lesser crimes that are investigated and handled internally within the department. Abuse of power is typically only handled internally unless the offense is found to violate a law, in which case it would be considered criminal activity or corruption. Each action taken by a police officer that is found to be misconduct is most often placed in one of these categories. There are, however, additional actions often classified as misconduct by departmental supervision that do not fit these categories exactly by their definition. Unconstitutional activities are perhaps the best and most common example of this. Officers may often violate laws protecting citizens against searches and seizures of property, whether knowingly or unknowingly. These examples are likely to be present during a use of force,

often contributing to the large amount of public outrage that will typically follow this occurrence. Other examples that more closely relate to the use of force arguments are racial profiling and any pre-existing bias issues. (Doherty, 2018, p. 1266-1277). This example is most often attributed to the modern Black Lives Matter Movement and its efforts for stricter punishments for law enforcement officials using unjustified or excessive force, despite a longer history of misconduct among individual police officers and entire departments.

History of Misconduct Issues Among Police Officers

While some form of law enforcement entity has been present in most civilizations dating back to the Eastern Zhou period in Ancient China, the first centralized police force wasn't formed until 1667 in Paris by King Louis XIV. Misconduct among law enforcement officials, however, can only be traced back to the early 18th-century, where a court ruled that "If a man be made an officer by Act of Parliament, and misbehave himself in his office, he is indictable for it at common law, and any public officer is indictable for misbehavior in his office" (Davids & McMahon, 2014, p. 92). Since this time, numerous rulings have been made by various courts around the world that correspond to the political environments of the times. However, these rulings often struggled to reach a universal definition of misconduct, as it would need to be wide enough that it would encompass all potential unethical acts an officer may take in the course of their daily duties. This level of uncertainty in a universal definition has frequently been used by defense attorneys as a counterargument in favor of public officials who were criminally charged for misconduct, resulting in the offense being rarely prosecuted (Davids & McMahon, 2014, p. 91-93).

In the United States specifically, the initial method of providing law enforcement was through a watch system that helped warn residents of impending dangers in their communities. This system was ineffective, however, as the watchmen often slept or drank while working. Even

though this falls under the modern definition of misconduct, the watchmen were private citizens and therefore not classified as public officials at the time. It wasn't until the late-1830s that the City of Boston developed the first centralized police force in the United States (Potter, 2013, para. 1-4). Misconduct among various agencies was relatively common from the mid-1800s through the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, primarily involving abuses of power and racially-based bias that led to gross abuses of use of force policies, if they even existed. While the Civil Rights Movement created numerous federal laws prohibiting discriminatory practices, the racial bias that existed among both law enforcement officials and the general public took even longer to dissipate. Discriminatory actions were continually made by law enforcement officers who were in the field during the time period after the Civil Rights Movement. It wasn't until these people started retiring or leaving the field altogether and were replaced by a newer generation did the racial bias slowly begin to become an oddity among police officers and their agencies.

In the modern policing era, misconduct has been thrown back into the spotlight, especially when it can be attributed to a use of force incident. Many major cities across the country have conducted studies on their police agencies that look at the various misconduct issues that may exist and how they can potentially be remedied. These studies primarily result from use of force incidents that bring national media attention. The Ferguson Report, which was conducted in response to the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown, is one of the most recent and more popular examples that also identifies issues faced by other police agencies across the country. According to Patton (2017):

The Ferguson Report described a broad array of unconstitutional police practices that roughly mirror the findings in Baltimore, including unlawful stops and searches, First Amendment violations, use of excessive force, and discrimination against Ferguson's

African American residents. The Ferguson report also focused on the particular problem of Municipal Court where revenue generation from fines and fees “to advance the City’s financial interests” was supported by the overuse and discriminatory issuance of tickets by police officers, practices that violated the equal protection and due process requirements of the Fourteenth Amendment and imposed “unnecessary harm, overwhelmingly of African American individuals”. In a particularly telling exchange quoted in the report, the city Finance Director wrote to the City Manager: “Court fees are anticipated to rise about 7.5%. I did ask the Chief [of Police] if he thought the PD could deliver 10% increase. He indicated they could try”. (p. 1437)

The Ferguson Report provides a good summary of the issues faced by many modern police departments because each of their officers can all easily commit the various violations or practices mentioned in the Patton article, leaving them liable to lawsuits and criminal prosecution. To avoid this, police departments typically create a disciplinary procedure for any wrongful action with a specific focus on acts that loosely fall under the department’s definition of misconduct. It is equally important, however, for departments to understand the difficulties associated with controlling officer misconduct, as these challenges will likely always be present, making any potential remedies a difficult change to implement.

Challenges with Controlling Misconduct

One of the most difficult aspects about controlling police misconduct is the mere political nature of the law enforcement field itself. As discussed by Patton (2017), governments and their leaders can often have a major role in the way that their police departments conduct their daily activities. While Patton’s example indicates that the City Manager did not tell the Police Chief exactly how to increase by at least ten percent, the pressure from political leaders and supervision

can cause police officers to resort to unconventional and perhaps illegal methods. This means that in many cases of police misconduct, the police officers are not necessarily the only individuals at fault. One natural solution to this is that political environments on all governmental levels change frequently. Regardless, any solution(s) that are proposed cannot be solely limited to controlling misconduct among police officers but must also consider the various levels of governments and the political pressures they may put on their police departments, whether it's done purposefully or inadvertently.

Despite these political pressures and the various laws and departmental policies that are aimed at preventing misconduct, it is very difficult to actually hold individual officers accountable because "In the domain of policing, the process ... is set against a complex background of formal disciplinary and regulatory frameworks, various laws, rules, and regulations, and myriad practices of informal social control that exist within the cultural milieu of police organizations" (Davids & McMahon, 2014, p. 90). With the large number of factors that play a role in identifying and prosecuting police misconduct, it becomes so difficult to prove that it was committed that any action further than an internal investigation is rarely taken. Unfortunately, when combined with the political nature of police work, this plays a role in the "... isolation from the surrounding community, loyalty towards colleagues, and a tendency to emphasize independent, 'heavy hand' measures in everyday work" (Kääriäinen, Lintonen, Laitinen, & Pollock, 2008, p. 87). As a result, most incidents of police misconduct go unreported unless a citizen complaint is received. Countless studies indicate that a large number of police officers have witnessed a coworker commit misconduct on at least one occasion, with only a handful of officers reporting the behavior to superior officers. This could be made even more problematic if a superior officer were the one acting in an inappropriate or illegal manner and a citizen did not witness the act or did not know

how to report it to the department. Such examples are commonly used in ethics trainings for new police recruits and pre-employment interviews, but the problem still persists in many departments.

In the United States specifically, it is difficult to gain access to the disciplinary records of police officers in some states because laws seal these documents from public records. These laws are primarily the result of police unions taking steps to protect the privacy rights of the officers within their departments. Despite this legal reasoning, it is argued that "... providing public access to personnel files not only promotes public confidence in the ability of the police 'to police themselves' but also builds greater trust and mutual respect between the officers and the community they have sworn to serve" (Bies, 2017, p. 117-118). Regardless of this argument, the current laws that give accused officers confidentiality make it even more challenging to determine exactly how many officers have been accused of misconduct and how many were ultimately proven to be true. These laws, however, are meaningless when today's societies rely so much on technology that many police officers are required to wear a camera to hold them and their public accountable.

Potential Remedies

While its intended purpose may be to document a use of force incident, the police body camera has shown some promise at remedying public distrust that results from misconduct. There have been multiple studies proving that body cameras have lowered the rates of police misconduct, lower the number of citizen complaints against officers and resolve complaints more effectively, and increase officer accountability ("Considering Police", 2015, p. 1800-1803). These benefits, however, may only accompany the use of body cameras if departments are willing to spend extra money. Some body cameras only record when an officer presses a button, while other more expensive options are constantly recording but recycle unwanted footage at the discretion of

supervisory or administrative personnel. Most departments may only be able to afford the manual activation models, which means that the individual department must design a policy that determines when officers must activate their cameras. One place this could present an issue is when officers are not initiating citizen contacts but may still be doing necessary work. For example, an officer could be closely watching an intersection where drivers are known to run stop signs, but a citizen could file a false complaint that the officer was sleeping in the car. If the department only mandates that officers activate their camera when they are talking to a citizen, the camera would not be recording while the officer is sitting at the intersection, and there would therefore be no evidence that could prove or disprove the citizen complaint. As such, additional steps to controlling misconduct become necessary.

Police departments also need to focus more on revising the recruitment and hiring processes for new officers. Unfortunately, television and movies glorify the policing profession by showing footage of high-speed pursuits, foot chases, and SWAT callouts. This, in turn, attracts a select group of people to the field who will be disappointed to find that the majority of tasks police officers do on a daily basis involve simple calls for service (“Accountability”, 2015, para. 4-5). While there may not be a lot that can be done about this glorification, police departments can change their hiring process so that it both eliminates these hopefuls from consideration and prevents previously troubled officers from being hired. The latter is more difficult with the existence of police unions because “... [they] have used their power to influence state and local politicians to enact laws that help cover up evidence of police misconduct” (Doherty, 2018, p. 1280). In some places, these laws require that records of previous misconduct be sealed or completely destroyed after a given period of time. For experienced officers making a lateral move to a new department, this is a huge advantage. Prior departments may not be allowed to discuss

records of previous employees, and, although applicants are required to be truthful about previous disciplinary action throughout the hiring process, officers could lie and say they have no record and the hiring department would not be able to prove that the applicant was being deceptive. This means that regardless of how extensive the hiring process may be, prior misconduct can be more easily covered up than used as a reason for terminating the hiring process. While it is difficult to recommend a specific remedy or change to the hiring process, it is clear that changes need to be made across the board, especially when the public has such high expectations of their police force.

Finally, it is important to again consider that policing revolves around the political environment of the time. Since law enforcement and politics often work hand-in-hand, a complete revision of the entire system may be necessary. Doherty (2018) suggests that cooperative federalism is the most practical solution to reducing police misconduct in the long term.. Currently, other than any individual department policies that may exist, the only standards for preventing misconduct among public officials is at the national level. Instituting cooperative federalism would mean that the federal government would create minimum policy standards and the states would be responsible for ensuring that departments meet these standards or create more stringent ones if necessary. This idea "... reflects the federal government's understanding that not all states are the same, and thus it allows each state latitude to determine which policy works best for that state" (Doherty, 2018, p. 1291). Additionally, a cooperative federalism approach would enhance the involvement of the Department of Justice in the hiring process of new police officers because it would be responsible for maintaining a database of individuals who have been decertified by the new minimum standards with records that cannot be sealed or erased. This is a rather daunting task because it would have to involve the unification of all local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies under similar standards when each jurisdictional level relies on the

differences that exist in the various aspects that may be required of their employees. This method, however, may work best if used in conjunction with the other suggested methods, if it can even be considered an option by the government at all.

Research Justification

While the Community Policing Model can be effective at controlling the misconduct that often occurs in police departments across the country, it was primarily developed to improve the police-community relationship following a controversial use of force. Media sources seem to highlight only the most problematic issues with police departments across the country, bringing about negative attitudes from the public towards law enforcement. This implies that the Community Policing Model has become outdated, as it appears that it has not adapted to better suit the culture of modern societies. In addition, although the Community Policing Model allows police officers to both positively interact with the public while still relaxing from the stressors of their job, its effectiveness at improving the police-community relationship has come into question. Furthermore, not all police departments implemented the Community Policing Model when it was first developed, and there are some departments that have since opted against using it during their day-to-day operations. This question of effectiveness, as well as the gradual decline in the use and implementation of the Community Policing Model, means that its effectiveness after over twenty years of use across the United States must be re-examined.

Methods

Participants

This research aims to answer the question of the effectiveness of the Community Policing Model, specifically as it is implemented in Northeast Ohio communities. Two target demographics, community members and commissioned police officers, were identified as potential participants.

Commissioned police officers were recruited by distributing study information to police chiefs from Northeast Ohio and asking them to share the study with the road patrol members of their department. Community members were recruited by contacting random students at The University of Akron and asking them to share the study with two friends or family members who also reside in Northeast Ohio communities. All participants were volunteers and were not compensated in any way for their participation in the study. Although participants in this study were geographically limited to Northeast Ohio, anyone who met the target demographics was able to participate. As such, similar studies could potentially be conducted in other geographical areas, especially on a larger scale, for more accurate and widespread implications.

Materials and Procedure

Informed consent forms containing information on the purpose of the study, procedures, benefits and risks, and contact information for the researcher were distributed to participants via email. Police officers and community members each completed separate computer-based surveys that were specifically designed for that target demographic. Survey links for the target group being contacted was included at the end the informed consent form, and each target group only received the link to the survey that was designed for that particular demographic. The police officer survey consisted of twenty-two questions about the perceived effectiveness of the Community Policing Model as it is implemented in that specific department. The community member survey consisted of seventeen questions about the perceived effectiveness of the Community Policing Model as it is implemented by the police department(s) that serve the particular community. Survey questions were specifically designed for the particular target demographic to allow participants to provide input on the effectiveness of the Community Policing Model as perceived by members of that demographic. Surveys were made available for completion for two weeks from the date they were

distributed to potential participants and could be completed at any point within that time frame. Additionally, survey questions were intentionally worded to not be location-specific so that similar research could be repeated at a future date or in another geographic area with different participants to obtain more accurate and widespread results. The results of both surveys in this study are to be compared to better understand the effectiveness of the Community Policing Model as it is implemented in Northeast Ohio from two different viewpoints.

Results

Community Survey

The link to the community member survey was distributed to 185 students at The University of Akron. A total of 182 people, consisting of a wide variety of age groups, educational levels, and racial and ethnic backgrounds, participated in the survey. Participants were first asked a series of questions to gain a baseline understanding of their knowledge of their local police department(s). 66.48% of respondents indicated that they know someone who is currently or has previously been employed as a police officer (*Table 1*). Participants who indicated that they did know someone with law enforcement experience were not excluded from consideration in this study, as their personal relationship with a police officer could make them more knowledgeable about their local police department(s). 80.77% of respondents stated that they did not know what the Community Policing Model was (*Table 2*). *Table 3* illustrates some of the various community policing methods used by police departments in Northeast Ohio, as known by the community members who participated in the study. Additional community policing methods that were not mentioned in the survey but were mentioned by respondents included Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) and School Resource Officers (SROs). Respondents were also asked two questions about the perceived effectiveness of the Community Policing Model. 73.17% of

respondents believe that the Community Policing Model is effective at improving the police-community relationship, and an additional 23.20% believe that community policing has neither a positive nor negative effect on this relationship (*Table 4*). This indicates that the majority of community members believe that the Community Policing Model is an important tool for modern police departments, even if it may or may not have an effect on the police-community relationship. In addition, 97.80% of respondents believe that police officers must take an active role in helping to better the communities that they serve (*Table 5*), indicating that community members have high expectations of the police officers who serve their communities

Participants were then asked a series of questions related to the perceived amount of community support for the policing profession. 70.17% of respondents believe that other members in their community are generally supportive of police officers, whereas 13.81% explicitly stated that members of their community tend to be unsupportive of the policing profession (*Table 6*). Concerning the media's portrayal of law enforcement, the majority of community member respondents (62.98%) believed there to be a negative portrayal, 22.10% stated the media generally remains neutral, and the remaining 14.91% believe there to be a positive portrayal (*Table 7*). Similarly, the majority (89.50%) of community member participants believe that the way the media portrays police officers affects the way community members feel about the policing profession in general (*Table 8*). Additionally, 87.29% of respondents believe that a use of force, when it gains media attention, can have exponentially higher negative effects on the way the public views policing (*Table 9*). Respondents were then asked to suggest additional ways that police officers could help improve the police-community relationship. Suggestions included interacting with the public through social events, increasing the amount of quality training, being more positive and visible while on patrol, being more transparent about police procedure and policy,

and widespread criminal justice system reform. While not necessarily methods of community policing, these suggestions are perhaps more important for police departments to consider, as listening to the needs of the community would significantly improve the relationships they build.

Police Survey

The link to the police officer survey was distributed to 275 police chiefs for various police departments in Northeast Ohio. A total of thirty-five commissioned police officers, consisting of a wide variety of age groups, educational and training levels, and racial and ethnic backgrounds, participated in the survey. Multiple police departments chosen to participate were unable to receive the survey information due to email filtering issues. Police departments that currently or have previously employed family members, friends, or acquaintances of the investigator were not considered for participation in the survey to reduce the potential appearance of bias.

Police respondents were first asked a series of baseline questions to understand the various community policing methods that are used in their respective departments, if any are used at all. Two respondents (5.71%) indicated that their police department does not use a community policing approach in its daily activities, whereas the remaining 94.29% of respondents indicated that their department specifically encourages it (*Table 10*). The majority (54.29%) of respondents indicated that their department implements community policing by leaving the decision to individual officers during their shifts (*Table 11*). *Table 12* illustrates some of the various community policing methods used by participating police departments in Northeast Ohio. Additional community policing methods that were not mentioned in the survey but were mentioned by respondents included Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), School Resource Officers (SROs), home security surveys and business checks, self-defense classes, Coffee with a Cop, and encouraging citizens to participate in ride-alongs with their local department(s).

Participants in the police officer survey were asked more detailed questions about the perceived effectiveness of the Community Policing Model than the participants in the community member survey. It was assumed that, relative to the particular community policing methods that may have been implemented in that specific police department, police officers would be able to provide a more accurate account of how the perception of the police-community relationship has fared since the implementation of the Community Policing Model in that specific department. The majority (77.14%) of respondents believe that the Community Policing Model is effective at improving the police-community relationship, and an additional 20.00% believe that community policing has no significant effects on this relationship (*Table 13*). Respondents were also asked whether there had been any changes made in their department to better adopt the Community Policing Model. In addition to the changes mentioned in *Table 14*, respondents indicated that the use of social media accounts and websites, becoming more transparent with the community, and the implementation of regular performance evaluations were some notable differences. 85.71% of police respondents indicated that their department's implementation of the Community Policing Model has shown some level of improvement in the police-community relationship, whereas the remaining 14.29% indicated that community policing neither worsened nor improved this relationship (*Table 15*). It was assumed, however, that despite any notable changes that may have been made in departments and whether or not those changes were effective, some police officers would still opt against participating in various community policing methods. As illustrated in *Table 16*, 11.43% of respondents explicitly stated that they do not participate in community policing, even if their department as a whole does not.

Like the participants in the community survey, participants in the police officer survey were asked a series of questions on the perceived amount of community support for the policing

profession. When respondents were asked if they believed that the majority of their interactions with community members are positive or negative, 82.85% believed the majority of interactions are positive and 8.57% believed the majority are negative. Three additional respondents (8.57%) believe that about half of their interactions are positive and half are negative (*Table 17*). 88.57% of respondents believe that the majority of people in their community are supportive of police officers, whereas the remaining 11.43% believe that the majority of people remain neutral about the policing profession (*Table 18*). This suggests that police officers do not perceive most people as having persistent negative attitudes towards law enforcement. When asked if an incident of a use of force has a negative effect on the way community members view police officers, the majority (54.29%) stated that it might or might not, whereas 34.28% believe that a use of force does not affect this viewpoint. Only 11.43% of police respondents believe that a use of force has a negative effect on the police-community relationship (*Table 19*). The majority (82.85%) of respondents believe that the media typically portrays law enforcement in a negative light, whereas 5.71% believe that the media tends to remain neutral. Only 11.43% of respondents indicated that the media portrays law enforcement positively (*Table 20*). Similarly, all but one respondent indicated that the media's views of the policing profession are a major influencer in the way the public view law enforcement. The one remaining respondent stated that the media might or might not influence the public's viewpoints (*Table 21*).

Police officers who participated in the study were also asked where they believe their department can improve on its community policing strategy. This question was arguably the most important question of this study, because regardless of how effective or ineffective the Community Policing Model is at improving the police-community relationship, police officers can provide the best input on what may be the most effective method for their particular community. Additional

suggestions for areas of improvement mentioned by participants included hiring additional officers to increase manpower, having bike or foot patrol officers be the major contributors to the community policing strategy within the department, increasing the amount of quality training programs, and remaining transparent and positive with all citizen interactions. These ideas could be done on their own or in conjunction with an existing community policing strategy and have the potential to be easily adapted to fit the needs of any department in almost any community.

Discussion

One of the most interesting trends from the data in the community survey was that while the slight majority of community members indicated that they know someone who has experience in the law enforcement field, the majority of respondents had never heard of the Community Policing Model. This could be for a variety of reasons. Firstly, police officers may not feel inclined to discuss many of the aspects of their job with their family and friends. Community members may also not feel inclined to ask the police officer what their daily responsibilities are or may feel that they already have a good understanding of what police officers do. Secondly, community members can be heavily influenced by the media's portrayal of daily law enforcement activities. Most television shows glorify the policing profession by only showing the aspects of policing that will attract the greatest number of viewers. Community policing is not normally one of those activities that the public will generally find entertaining, and it therefore is not often portrayed in the media. Further research could be done on this topic in the future, which could potentially shift the media's portrayal of law enforcement to show more community involvement. Additionally, daily acts by police officers that fall under the category of community policing and gain media coverage typically do not gain as much widespread attention as a use of force or an act of police misconduct. This is because these two categories, especially when they become high-profile incidents, easily

grab the attention of viewers by creating outrage. Since community policing does not do this, it likely will not be highlighted as much in the media. Finally, it could also be implied that community members do understand that police officers are expected to do many other activities during their shift that help them build relationships with their community, but the participants may have been unaware what this exact model was called.

It is important to note that a smaller number of police officers participated in this study than was anticipated.. Multiple police departments that were randomly chosen to participate in this study were unable to be reached due to email filtering issues, and many others opted against participating in the study. This means that the results of the police survey could be slightly impacted by a lack of significant participation. However, the accuracy of the results in the community member survey should be weighed more heavily, as the Community Policing Model ultimately revolves around the community's needs and expectations from its police department(s). For this reason, the larger amount of participation in the community survey was satisfactory enough to supplement the potential inaccuracy of the police survey. However, repeating this study with more participation could potentially solve this issue and improve the accuracy of the results.

Despite the lack of satisfactory participation in the police survey, there were several interesting relationships that emerged in the data when comparing the two surveys. Arguably the most expected result was the relationship between the data concerning the community policing activities of local police departments, found in *Table 3* and *Table 12*. The respondents in the community member survey tended to answer 'Not Sure' in each category in larger numbers than did police officer participants, indicating that community members are not fully aware of the various community policing methods and opportunities that have been implemented by their local police departments. This result is not surprising, as police officers will inevitably have a greater

amount of knowledge about the various community policing activities their individual department participates in. However, this result also supports the statements made by both community members and police officers about transparency in police departments. In both studies, respondents indicated that police departments can become more transparent about their daily activities and operations. This could be remedied through the use of social media and websites, as well as providing crime information through news outlets that reach that department's community members. Departments could also look for additional ways to remain transparent with their public, such as interacting with them in a positive manner on a more frequent basis. This is the sole purpose of the Community Policing Model, implying that if a department uses a community policing strategy more frequently, more people within that community will be able to acknowledge the various activities that department uses.

Another relationship that emerged in the data was that police officers and community members disagreed on the way a use of force affects the police-community relationship. Whereas the majority of community member participants believed that a use of force will most often spark outrage against and distrust of police officers, the majority of participants in the police survey believed that a use of force will not affect the police-community relationship. This may have been because community member participants were not instructed on the Use of Force Continuum prior to completing the survey. This means that community member participants may not have understood exactly what actions by police officers can constitute a use of force. Similarly, since police officer participants have most likely undergone use of force training, they likely had a different understanding of what constitutes a use of force than that of the community member participants. The media may also have an underlying influence in these results. Community members may be more likely to conclude that a use of force always has negative effects on the

police-community relationship because of how that incident is portrayed in the media. The media will likely only show the circumstances of the event that will grab the attention of potential viewers, even if it means dramatizing, exaggerating, or falsifying the exact sequence of events. If community members who participated in this study were relying on this bias, then the media, along with the lack of knowledge on the Use of Force Continuum, would explain this disparity.

In addition to this, the majority of both police officer and community member participants agreed that the way the media portrays the law enforcement profession has a significant negative effect on the way the public perceives police officers in general. The media seemed to be the most common underlying influence throughout most of the questions for both demographics. This suggests that regardless of the community policing methods that are used and the intensity of those methods, the media will continue to counteract those efforts. Future studies should be conducted on this relationship to verify the correlation, if any exists. However, if the majority of police officers believe that the media typically portrays law enforcement in a negative light, then this belief should be used as the basis to significantly increase community policing efforts. While the majority of community member participants believed that their fellow community members are generally supportive of police officers, the majority also believed that the media is a significant contributor to this negative attitude. Since most of the community member participants also agreed that it is important for police officers to take an active role in bettering their communities and that the Community Policing Model is effective at countering these negative attitudes, the only logical way of countering the negative media portrayal is to increase departmental participation in the various community policing activities. In doing so, it is important that officers remain positive and enthusiastic about building a relationship with their community members, as only a positive interaction or impact with a community member will counter the perceived negative portrayal.

On open-ended questions where respondents were asked to make suggestions on areas of potential improvement, both community members and police officers seemed to make similar suggestions. Some of the most significant similarities included the amount of quality training programs and remaining transparent and positive on all aspects of daily police operations. This similarity suggests that police officers are aware of exactly what needs to be done to help improve the police-community relationship. However, for a variety of reasons, police officers may not be able to meet these needs. For example, supervisory personnel in the department may not fully support remaining transparent with community members, and funding may not be readily available for improving training programs. Just as increasing the frequency of the various community policing methods can combat the negative media portrayal, doing so could also combat the inability to meet the exact needs of community members. Simply making it appear as though the police department as a whole is remaining transparent can be enough to satisfy that need until being more transparent actually becomes feasible. However, as mentioned previously, meeting the needs of community members is one of the most foundational concepts of the Community Policing Model, so not exactly meeting the needs of the community will leave some citizens unsatisfied.

Finally, the sole purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the Community Policing Model is effective at improving the police-community relationship in Northeast Ohio. In both surveys, the majority of participants indicated that they believed the Community Policing Model is an effective way of combating any negative attitudes that may arise toward police officers. While these results may be true for Northeast Ohio, they may not remain statistically similar in other studies of a larger scale or in different geographical or demographic areas. Similarly, the inability to gain the desired number of police participants in this study may have slightly skewed the data. Regardless of this, the results of the study suggest that the community

policing methods in Northeast Ohio are effective at improving the police-community relationship. While there may be some various problems and areas that can be improved on, the current methods used by Northeast Ohio police departments are slowly building rapport with the citizens who call those communities home. As individual departments continue to adapt their community policing strategy to meet the needs of their community members, the Community Policing Model will continue to help the police-community relationship grow, both in Northeast Ohio communities and in other communities across the United States.

Summary

The Community Policing Model, despite being one of the newest ways of building a trusting relationship between community members and police officers, has a long history that is rooted in the entire history of the law enforcement profession. It considers the various problems concerning the policing profession as a whole that community members have long expressed their frustrations about and attempts to remedy them by encouraging police officers to interact with the public in a positive manner. Community policing, despite seeming like a surefire way of improving the distrust that exists towards police officers, has drawn significant controversy concerning its effectiveness, both from community members and law enforcement personnel. For this reason, numerous studies have been conducted to test whether or not the Community Policing Model remains to be the most effective relationship-building tool among law enforcement over twenty years after it was first introduced. These studies, however, have been spread over a variety of geographical areas and have brought mixed results.

This study aimed at answering the question of whether the Community Policing Model was effective at improving the relationship between community members and police officers, with a primary focus on Northeast Ohio communities. The results of this study supported the belief that

the Community Policing Model is still one of the most effective tools that law enforcement personnel will use on a daily basis. While community members may generally not be aware of the multitude of activities that make up community policing, or the Community Policing Model itself, the results clearly show that the methods used by Northeast Ohio police departments are clearly improving the police-community relationship. Additionally, while this study does not answer the question of the effectiveness of the Community Policing Model at improving the relationship between police officers and community members in communities across the United States, it does shed some additional light on its effectiveness as a whole. Similarly, this study does not address the concerns that many community members may have about the Community Policing Model, but rather shows that there are some areas of the Community Policing Model that could be improved to improve its potential for effectiveness in all geographical areas. Unfortunately, the Community Policing Model remains the primary way for police officers to combat the negative views of their profession, meaning that its problems must be addressed at some point. Until another, more effective method is created or significant changes are made, the Community Policing Model will continue to remain the most effective method of building rapport with the police for years to come.

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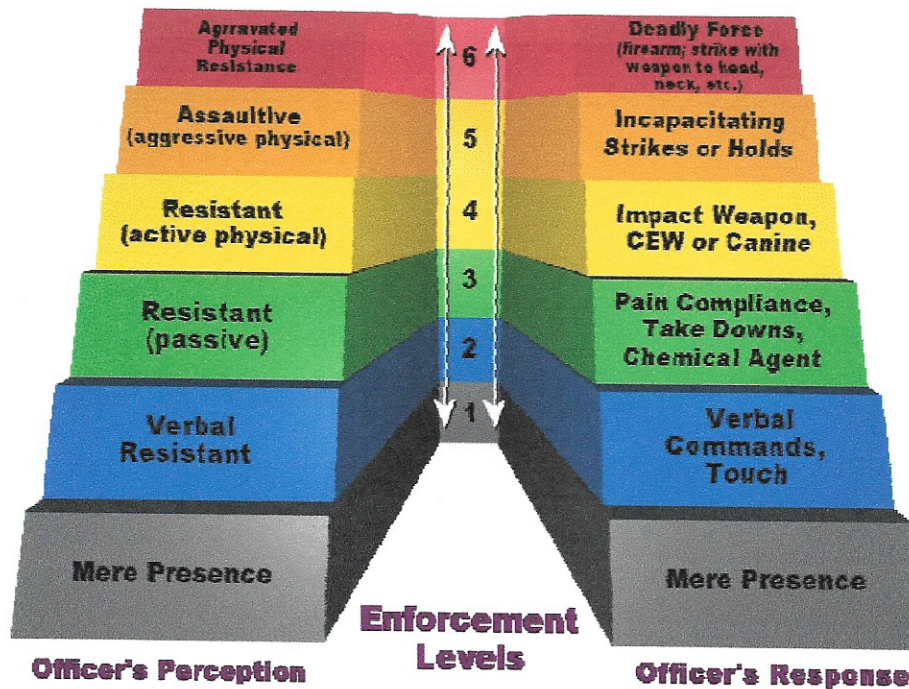


Figure 1. The Standardized Use of Force Continuum. This figure illustrates the various levels of resistance offered by subjects on the left and the corresponding amount of force that would be considered appropriate when used by responding police officers on the right.

Note. Police departments and courts do not have to strictly hold their officers to this guideline following a use of force incident. Under *Graham v. Connor* (1989), officers must only be held to the new objective reasonableness standard. This means that police departments and courts only have to consider how any other reasonable person would have acted if put in the exact same situation with the same amount of knowledge that the officer had. If any 'reasonable' person would have made the same decision that the officer did, it can be determined that the officer made a reasonable decision, and therefore did not use excessive force. Thus, the determination that an officer used excessive force means that any other reasonable person would not have acted in a similar manner with the same amount of knowledge the officer had. As long as a 'reasonable' person would have made the same decision, breaking the use of force continuum is permissible.

Table 1

Do you personally know someone who is currently or has previously been a police officer?

Answer	%	Count
Yes	66.48%	121
No	33.52%	61
Total	100%	182

Note. Participants who responded that they knew someone who is currently or has previously been a police officer were not excluded from participating in the study. This question was specifically designed to gain an understanding of how well these people understand the concepts and additional responsibilities of police officers.

Table 2

Have you ever heard of the “Community Policing” Model?

Answer	%	Count
Yes	19.23%	35
No	80.77%	147
Total	100%	182

Table 3

To the best of your knowledge, does the police department for the city in which you reside in participate in the following community policing activities?

Question	Yes		No		Not Sure		Total
Citizens Police Academies	9.94%	18	10.50%	19	79.56%	144	181
Community Service Activities	52.75%	96	4.40%	8	42.86%	78	182
Bike or ATV Patrols	23.08%	42	30.77%	56	46.15%	84	182
Hosting or participating in athletic events or other similar fundraisers	41.67%	75	10.00%	18	48.33%	87	180
Neighborhood Watch programs	47.25%	86	14.29%	26	38.46%	70	182
Reserve/Auxiliary Officer employment	13.48%	24	8.99%	16	77.53%	138	178
Shop with a Cop	29.28%	53	16.02%	29	54.70%	99	181
Operating social media accounts	53.30%	97	2.20%	4	44.51%	81	182
Operating booths at community events (showcases/festivals)	47.80%	87	3.85%	7	48.35%	88	182
Community Forums	27.78%	50	6.11%	11	66.11%	119	180
Youth Diversion Programs	29.12%	53	9.34%	17	61.54%	112	182
Safety School	55.80%	101	4.42%	8	39.78%	72	181
Walking Patrols	29.12%	53	13.74%	25	57.14%	104	182

Note. Not all potential community policing methods were included in this study. Individual police departments will often implement their own strategies or methods, and it is therefore not possible to include all possible methods. Participants in this study were also asked to explain any additional community policing methods that their local police department(s) may use that they know of.

Table 4

How effective do you believe that these methods are at improving the relationship between police officers and community members?

Answer	%	Count
Very ineffective	1.10%	2
Mostly ineffective	5.52%	10
Neither effective or ineffective	23.20%	42
Mostly effective	56.91%	103
Very effective	13.26%	24
Total	100%	181

Table 5

Is it important for police officers to take an active role in helping to better the community that they serve?

Answer	%	Count
Yes	97.80%	178
No	1.10%	2
Not sure	1.10%	2
Total	100%	182

Table 6

Do you feel as though the majority of the members of the community you live in are supportive of police officers?

Answer	%	Count
Definitely not	2.21%	4
Usually not	11.60%	21
Might or might not be	16.02%	29
Usually yes	54.70%	99
Definitely yes	15.47%	28
Total	100%	181

Table 7

Please rank the way you feel the media tends to portray police officers.

Answer	%	Count
Negative	11.60%	21
Mostly negative	51.38%	93
Neutral	22.10%	40
Mostly positive	12.15%	22
Positive	2.76%	5
Total	100%	181

Table 8

Do you think that the way the media portrays police officers has a major influence on the way the public views law enforcement?

Answer	%	Count
Definitely not	0.55%	1
Probably not	3.87%	7
Might or might not	6.08%	11
Probably yes	38.12%	69
Definitely yes	51.38%	93
Total	100%	181

Table 9

Do you think that an incident of a police officer using force against a person has a negative effect on the way the public views law enforcement?

Answer	%	Count
Definitely not	0.00%	0
Probably not	1.66%	3
Might or might not	11.05%	20
Probably yes	39.78%	72
Definitely yes	47.51%	86
Total	100%	181

Table 10

Does your department currently use a community-based policing approach?

Answer	%	Count
Yes	94.29%	33
No	5.71%	2
Total	100%	35

Table 11

How does your department implement community policing?

	Answer	%	Count
	Has a separate Community Policing Unit	0.00%	0
	Left to individual officers to use on their own during their shifts	54.29%	19
	Only used during certain events (Shop with a Cop, festivals, sporting events, etc.)	11.43%	4
	Other (please explain)	34.29%	12
	Total	100%	35

Table 12

Which of the following activities does your department participate in, if any?

Question	Yes		No		Not Sure		Total
Citizens Police Academy	65.71%	23	31.43%	11	2.86%	1	35
Community Service Activities	84.85%	28	15.15%	5	0.00%	0	33
Bike or ATV Patrols	82.35%	28	17.65%	6	0.00%	0	34
Community Relations Officers	62.50%	20	31.25%	10	6.25%	2	32
Hosting or participating in athletic events	33.33%	11	63.64%	21	3.03%	1	33
Neighborhood Watch Programs	54.29%	19	40.00%	14	5.71%	2	35
Reserve/Auxiliary Officer Employment	54.29%	19	42.86%	15	2.86%	1	35
Shop with a Cop	68.75%	22	31.25%	10	0.00%	0	32
Operating social media accounts	100.00%	35	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	35
Operating booths at community events (showcases/festivals)	82.35%	28	14.71%	5	2.94%	1	34
Community Forums	68.75%	22	18.75%	6	12.50%	4	32
Youth Diversion Programs	58.82%	20	38.24%	13	2.94%	1	34
Safety School	67.65%	23	32.35%	11	0.00%	0	34
Walking Patrols	48.48%	16	51.52%	17	0.00%	0	33

Table 13

How effective do you believe the Community Policing Model is at building trusting relationships with community members?

Answer	%	Count
Extremely ineffective	5.71%	2
Somewhat ineffective	14.29%	5
Neither effective or ineffective	2.86%	1
Somewhat effective	45.71%	16
Extremely effective	31.43%	11
Total	100%	35

Table 14

What changes, if any, have been made in your department because of its community policing approach?

Answer	%	Count
New methods of training	29.09%	16
Creation of a Community Policing Unit	10.91%	6
Partnering with the public for law enforcement (such as Neighborhood Watch programs or Citizen's Police Academies)	40.00%	22
Other (please explain)	10.91%	6
None of the above	9.09%	5
Total	100%	55

Table 15

Has the relationship between your department and community members improved or worsened because of your department's community policing methods?

Answer	%	Count
No real improvements and there are significant problems	0.00%	0
Created or worsened existing problems but there are some minor improvements	0.00%	0
Neither improved or worsened	14.29%	5
Some remaining problems but has mostly improved	45.71%	16
Significant improvements with no major problems	40.00%	14
Total	100%	35

Table 16

Do you personally participate in any community policing activities, even if your department as a whole does not?

Answer	%	Count
Yes	88.57%	31
No	11.43%	4
Total	100%	35

Note. Officers who responded that they do not personally participate in any community policing activities were not excluded from consideration in this study. As community policing is still a relatively new concept in law enforcement history, this question was aimed at analyzing the percentage of officers who still do not participate in community policing activities.

Table 17

Do you feel as though the majority of your interactions with community members are positive or negative?

Answer	%	Count
Mostly negative	2.86%	1
Usually negative with some positive	5.71%	2
About 50/50	8.57%	3
Usually positive with some negative	37.14%	13
Mostly positive	45.71%	16
Total	100%	35

Table 18

Do you feel as if the majority of the members in your community are supportive of police officers?

Answer	%	Count
Definitely not	0.00%	0
Usually not	0.00%	0
Neutral	11.43%	4
For the most part	48.57%	17
Definitely yes	40.00%	14
Total	100%	35

Table 19

Do you think that an incident of a use of force by any officer in your department has a negative effect on the way your community members view police officers in general?

Answer	%	Count
Definitely not	8.57%	3
Probably not	25.71%	9
Might or might not	54.29%	19
Probably yes	8.57%	3
Definitely yes	2.86%	1
Total	100%	35

Table 20

Please rank the way you feel the media typically portrays police officers.

Answer	%	Count
Most often negative	37.14%	13
Usually negative, sometimes positive	45.71%	16
Neutral	5.71%	2
Usually positive, sometimes negative	11.43%	4
Most often positive	0.00%	0
Total	100%	35

Table 21

Do you think that the way the media portrays police officers has a major influence on the way the public views law enforcement?

Answer	%	Count
Definitely not	0.00%	0
Probably not	0.00%	0
Might or might not	2.86%	1
Probably yes	31.43%	11
Definitely yes	65.71%	23
Total	100%	35