**Title: A Literature Review**

Community Policing

Caterina Krusas

The Honors Program, Anna Maria College

HON 490: Honors Senior Thesis

Dr. Craig Blais

May 3, 2025

**Table of Contents**

**Title: A Literature Review**

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

Some significant discoveries are that community policing does not always help with reducing crime rates, but depending on what types of crimes committed, they can be lowered. It does help police officers build positive and trusting relationships with the citizens with whom they work. I believe that even if it does not help the crime rates, it should still be a thing because it is helping police officers and community members meet each other and be more trusting of each other.

I think that some further research should be done. For example, maybe a ride along with a police officer to see what their approach to community policing is, what the citizens think of it, and if it needs to be changed. I think the more information that they get from people who take part in community policing, the better the research would be, because they would get stats from the field. The more research done on the topic, the more effectively officers can do community policing. It is also hard to find data that helps to support or deny the claim because most of the articles written about it do not have data to go with it.

**Specific Research Questions**

- How do departments implement community policing?
- Does community policing prevent crime?

**Purpose of the Study**

The research questions are important to the larger community of law enforcement officers as well as community members, so they can work together to keep everyone safe. The research question affects the larger community because, oftentimes, there is a lack of trust and respect

between the community and the police. The community and police must work together and have trust to be able to keep the community safe. If the police officer knows the people in the community and has good relationships with them, it would lower crime rates. Ekici et al. (2022) wrote, "We found no evidence suggesting that CP has an impact on reducing disorders, drug sales, or property crime, but it does have an impact on reducing crimes such as burglary, gun use, drug use, Part I crimes, and robbery, as well as fear of crime. Depending on crime type, CP can be a promising policing strategy to reduce crimes" (pg. 1). Not all crime rates are directly affected by community policing in every area, but in some areas that have more crime, the police presence makes people think that police are always there, so they will be caught if they do something. If citizens know officers will be in the area, it is a way to deter people from committing crimes because they know their chances of being caught are higher than if officers were not in the area.



*Figure 1:The above visual shows the top three things community policing is used for. Them being trust in police, citizen-police cooperation, and crime reduction. All of these things are very important and covered in this paper.*

(Blair et al., 2021)

This thesis will be a deep dive into the effects that community policing has on communities. I have used a lot of resources from Google Scholar, Academic One File, and the

Gale Criminal Justice database to gather the resources. My research has both supported community policing and its effectiveness and also shown how it cannot work if there is not the proper funding and training. Some existing articles could not help my hypothesis because they were over ten years old. Overall, I believe that community policing should be implemented in all departments, and they should have the proper funding and training to be able to do it effectively.

**Definition's**

*Crime Rate:* The number of crimes reported in a given population or area, per 100,000 people. It's used to measure the frequency and severity of crime, and to compare crime rates across different areas over time.

*Community Policing:* A collaborative approach between law enforcement and the community to address safety and security. It aims to build trust and cooperation between police and the communities they serve.

**Limitations**

Some limitations that I had were that there were not a lot of articles that I could use for my paper because they had not been published in the last ten years, and Anna Maria College library does not have full access. Another limitation I had was finding articles coming directly from people who have used community policing in their departments. I managed to find one scholarly source and one non-scholarly source that talk about people's experiences.
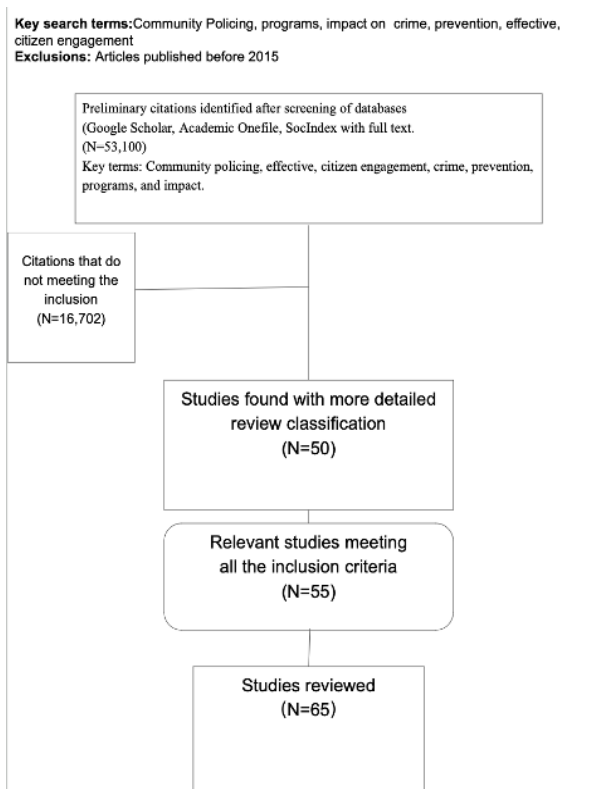
**Chapter 2: Methodology**

I gathered my sources for this paper through databases that Anna Maria College has access to and some police department websites. The three databases I primarily used were Google Scholar, Academic OneFile, and GALE Criminal Justice. I decided to use these three

because they had the most sources with scholarly articles written in the last ten years. The reason I decided to use police department websites is because they talk about how they implement community policing. The search terms I used were community Policing, programs, impact, community policing, crime, prevention, community policing, effective, and citizen engagement. I think that there are not a lot of articles written in the last ten years that are about community policing, but the ones that are out there helped with this paper. Some pitfalls with this paper were that there needs to be some more recent sources about this topic with statistics about whether it works or not, and give reasons either way.

**Some keywords that guided my research:**

- Community policing, programs, and impact, Community policing, crime prevention.

**Chapter 3: Results (Literature Review)**

*Introduction*

      Community policing is a philosophy and strategy emphasizing proactive problem-solving and building partnerships between law enforcement and the community to improve public safety and trust. The broad problem is community policing and its effects on police officers and community members. The three main research questions are as follows: 1.) How do departments implement Community Policing? 2.) Is community policing effective? These two questions are essential when it comes to community policing because they give an outline of how it is implemented and how effective it is, as well as its effects on crime. Many articles helped when looking for this information. Community policing plays a big role in ensuring police and citizens have mutual respect and trust in each other.



*Figure 2:This chart shows the four sections of community policing. They are increasing police presence in high-crime areas, training police officers in community relations, establishing partnerships, and emphasizing accountability.*

(Capital, 2020)

The two main areas of focus are the same as the research questions: how do departments implement community policing? and Is community policing effective? Learning about the ways different departments implement community policing is important to understand that what works in some departments may not work in others. The effectiveness of community policing is a big factor because if it does not help, then the departments need to change things to make sure it is effective. Community policing's effects on crime rates are also important because if it deters people from committing crimes, then it is a good thing. If departments have the proper funding for community policing, then it can help the department train staff properly to participate in community policing.

**Area of Focus 1: The Implementation of Community Policing**

Every department has different ways of implementing community policing. Some departments may send officers to community meetings to engage with people, and some may have officers on foot patrols in neighborhoods to get to know people in the areas they work in and build relationships. If people trust the people they are keeping safe, then they are more likely to report things when they happen because they know who will be responding and trust them. If officers have time during their shift, and they can interact with the public outside of their patrol car, it could show the citizens that officers are humans just like them.

A local perspective on community policing is from the Worcester Police Department: "The Worcester Police Department is a strong advocate of community policing and the problem-solving strategies embraced by this philosophy. We believe that a police department will never be truly successful without lasting, trust-based partnerships within the community it serves" (Worcester, 2024). Trusting relationships between police officers and community members is an

important factor in a successful community policing program. According to the "Community Policing" page on the Worcester Police Department website,

> Over the years, the women and men of the Worcester Police Department have developed strong working relationships with local community-based organizations, neighborhood associations, faith-based groups, business owners, private citizens, and other government agencies. By working together, the Worcester Police and these community stakeholders can provide long-term solutions to the quality-of-life issues facing neighborhoods throughout the City of Worcester. (Worcester, 2024)

Overall, the Worcester Police Department does a good job of implementing community policing. They have the proper funding and training to succeed.

> On the Worcester Police Department Facebook page, it states Worcester Police Officer Trevis Coleman was recognized by College of the Holy Cross during their First Responders Day men's basketball game over the weekend. He was honored for his work helping and motivating children in the WPD PAAL basketball league. The league provides a positive and safe environment where young people aged 12-18 can network and play basketball. It's also a way for young people and the police to interact positively and build friendships with each other (Police, 2022).

The PAAL league is focused on giving children a safe place to go to play sports and make friends. Many families do not have the money to pay for camps for all their children, and this league runs camps in the summer, free of charge, for children to go to. This is an example of positive community and police relationships because it shows parents and children that officers can have fun with them and prioritize the citizens' safety.

On the department's Facebook, it states Happy Halloween, Worcester! What a night at the Worcester Police Department's Hill-O-Ween celebration at Worcester Academy. 'A HUGE thank you to everyone who came out for our 10th annual Hill-O-Ween last night! The turnout was incredible, and we loved seeing everyone's costumes! Thank you to members of the Worcester community who took the time to make sure everyone had a Happy Halloween (Police, 2022).

Hill-O-Ween was created for children to have a safe place to go with their families to trick or treat because the Vernon Hill area is highly populated and has high traffic. Many law enforcement agencies, fire departments, EMS departments, and other businesses all set up tables in the Worcester Academy parking lot and give out candy provided by Worcester Police to the children who are trick or treating. This is an example of a community police event because everyone there interacts with police officers, and it shows citizens that police care about their safety.

On the Worcester AMPP Facebook page, it states, "AMPP Worcester is a partnership with members of the Worcester Police, local musicians, and artists, forming relationships and helping local youth" (Worcester, 2022). This is another example of how the Worcester Police Department implements community policing with the younger community who are still in school. This helps police officers and students build relationships and trust.

Community policing started being implemented in the 1970s: "Since the 1970s, police agencies around the globe embraced the idea of community policing and tried to implement this new approach within their jurisdictions" (Namgung, 2018). During this period, trust between the police and citizens was at a low point. Having officers involved in community activities and allowing them time outside of their cruisers to interact with the public helped the community

realize that police officers were there to assist them. With departments implementing community policing, they must train their officers on how to do it effectively.

Departments started implementing community policing in the 1980s and it has drastically changed since then: "The increased focus on community policing in the past few decades represented a fundamental shift in the 'operational mission' of policing, in the relationship between citizens and police officers, and their respective roles in the production of public order" (Randol & Gaffney, 2013). Implementing community policing in departments helps officers, community members, and businesses make positive relationships. Officers interacting with citizens show them that officers are people as well, and they are doing a job and keeping everyone safe. Community policing helps curb the efforts that people make in trying to portray police officers as bad people. It also helps with showing that police and citizens they serve work as a cohesive team and are going after the common goal of everyone's safety.

Every department has a different way of having its officers implement community policing: "For instance, rather than riding in a patrol vehicle for a long time, officers would work hard to get a "cushy" job or to be involved in more focused tasks. For police administrators, assignment of officers to specialized units (e.g., narcotics, homicides, juveniles, etc.) is used to allow developing officers' careers within their organization" (Namgung, 2018). Having officers assigned to different units or specialties can make sure that those officers assigned to community policing get the correct training to help them be successful in their jobs.

A big part of community policing is creating trusting relationships between police officers and all citizens of communities and departments need to make sure that officers are trained properly before implementing it: "The challenge facing the United States and its European counterparts is developing strategies whereby law enforcement can build trusting

relationships with immigrant community stakeholders that support information sharing without the fear of being targeted as supporting terrorists or apprehended due to illegal immigration issues"(Goldberg & Christopher, 2019). People may think that the officers or other people are targeting them because they are not from the United States, and this is one of the things community policing tries to show everyone that they belong in the community, and the officers are just trying to keep everyone safe. With the proper training, officers can realize if there is bias in a situation and try and resolve it, so everyone is treated equally with respect.

Each department tries to create an effective community policing part for the department, so there are trusting relationships between police and citizens: "In addition to sharing this common overarching theme, community policing programs also tend to share several guiding principles. First, these programs agree that the effectiveness of policing can be enhanced by the active participation of citizens" (Pfeifer, 2006). All community policing programs have the same set of guiding principles, but each department takes a different approach to achieving the goal. Implementing the themes of safety and trust is very important because the citizens need to know they are safe and can trust the police, and the police need to know they can trust the citizens.

According to Masterson, "Contemporary community policing involves three important components: reactive, coactive, and proactive" (Masterson, 2009). Reactive community policing components can mean being ready to react if something happens and make sure the people get the help they need. Coactive community policing is when the police and citizens work together to make sure they have good relationships and know that they can go to each other for help if needed. Proactive community policing intends to produce good results or avoid problems rather than sitting around waiting for something to happen. They try to figure out what is going to happen and prevent it from happening.

*Area of Focus 2:* **Community Policing Effectiveness**

Community policing being effective is the main goal of departments implementing it because they are trying to create mutual trust and respect so that citizens know that if they commit a crime, police officers will solve it and hold them responsible. If it is effective, the trust will always be there between police and citizens, as well as lowering crime rates. It is more effective if people have positive relationships with the police officers.

As referenced in part one, "First, these programs agree that the effectiveness of policing can be enhanced by the active participation of citizens" (Pfeifer, 2006). This shows us that community policing is more effective when citizens actively participate in things with police; this could be a community event like National Night Out or just interacting with officers who are assigned to their neighborhood. If more people in the neighborhoods see people interacting with police and having positive relationships, they will be more prone to forming relationships. This may also cause people to stop committing crimes because they know that people have relationships with the officers, and they could help them with information they may need. In an *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* article, Namgung states, "Community policing demands that police agencies take citizens' concerns and needs into account in their daily policing activities. Thus, community policing considers the community as a co-producer of police services as well as a recipient, not as a target of policing tactics." (Namgung, 2018) Community policing helps police agencies take citizens' concerns into account, and they can try and fix problems that the police are in control of. If police officers attend community meetings and report back to their supervisors about the issues the public has with police, then they can work together to try and make a more trusting relationship as well as fix problems.

Trust is a big part of community policing; people need to be able to trust the police

officers who keep them safe. According to Lee, "Building long-term trust between the police and community residents is an essential component of public safety" (Lee et al., 2023). If people do not trust the police, then they will be less likely to report things as well as help them out. By police officers being trained in community policing, they can build relationships with citizens, and they will be more likely to go to the police if something happens, as well as feel comfortable going to them. Citizens are the most important part of public safety because they know what goes on in their neighborhoods.

According to Randol, "This study has two goals. First, this study measures the impact that a variety of theoretically hypothesized factors, including demographics, community context, and crime-related variables, have on two dependent measures: citizen volunteerism in Block Watch programs and volunteerism in COP (community-oriented policing) programs in the Western Region of the USA."(Randol & Gaffney, 2013) With all departments implementing community policing, there are many different ways they train officers to do it. For example, having officers on foot patrol interacting with the community, as well as officers going to schools or different community businesses to build relationships with citizens. There could be a difference in the effectiveness depending on the neighborhood someone lives in. If they live in a more crime-prone neighborhood, and citizens know the police are there, a lot of people may decide to go to a different area to commit a crime.

Police officers must have positive relationships with everyone in the community, not only the people who have lived their entire lives: "There is a rich discussion on the role trust and transparency play in law enforcement and immigrant community relationships." (Goldberg & Christopher, 2019) More and more departments are trying to create positive relationships between immigrant communities and police.

In an *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* article, Namgung states, "Community policing demands that police agencies take citizens' concerns and needs into account in their daily policing activities. Thus, community policing considers the community as a co-producer of police services as well as a recipient, not as a target of policing tactics." (Namgung, 2018) Community policing helps police agencies take citizens' concerns into account, and they can try and fix problems that the police are in control of. If police officers attend community meetings and report back to their supervisors about the issues the public has with police, then they can work together to try and make a more trusting relationship as well as fix problems.

There are many different approaches departments take in terms of community policing; some may have all officers participate in community policing, and some may only have a handful of officers partake in it. "Although these programs vary in approach, they share a common theme. That is, attempting to develop an effective working relationship between the police and the community concerning the detection and prevention of crime" (Pfeifer, 2006). Although the community may take better to having the same officers always being there to talk to, more officers should participate and communicate with citizens.

> In his article Masterson writes, The reactive response is highly visible and evident to our public--the uniformed officer on patrol; the plainclothes detective conducting case follow-up investigation; and the community service specialist taking cold crime reports, recovering found bikes, and photographing and processing evidence The coactive component is symbolized in Neighborhood Watch programs, educational partnerships with schools and community groups, or working with businesses to lessen workplace violence, vandalism, thefts, and robberies (Masterson, 2009).

All of these responses are important in police work, but officers having positive relationships with citizens is very important because citizens need to trust those who are protecting them and know that they are there to help them no matter what.

People who live in immigrant communities may be scared of the police and not want to be involved with them so if officers go and build relationships with those people it could promote trust: "Beyond community policing: centering community development in efforts to improve safety in Latinx immigrant communities" (Lung-Amam et al., 2021, pg5). Helping all people feel safe in the communities they live in is a very important role when it comes to trusting the police to keep them safe.

Even though community policing and crime rates do not always help each other, if people know officers are always in certain areas interacting with the public, they will be less likely to commit crimes in that area. Police officers having a presence in the community outside of their patrol cars and responding to calls can positively affect the crime rates because they build relationships with people in the neighborhoods, and they will not want to break the trust. Also, if people know officers will be in a certain area, they will be less likely to commit a crime because they know there is a higher percentage of them being caught.

## Benefits of Intensive Community Policing



*Figure 3: This chart shows how increasing a police force by 10% can have between a 3%-10% drop in crime rate, and having $5 billion in additional officers results in a $25 billion in benefits. This supports the thesis about community polling being effective.*

(Guze, 2022)

### *Conclusion*

Throughout my research on this topic, I have been able to find supporting evidence that community policing is effective when the departments have proper funding and training. Funding is a big part of community policing to make sure that the officers have the proper training needed to be successful. I believe that if there were more research done on this topic that more departments could get funding and properly train their staff. The relationship between police officers and citizens starts with talking and building trust between them, then they can have open conversations regarding problems or things that both sides think should be changed.

**Chapter 4: Discussion**

The topic I chose to research was community policing. I used many databases to find credible sources that were not extremely old to gather data. I used some departments' websites to learn how they implement community policing and its effectiveness in that particular community. Community policing is a very important part of policing because it promotes positive relationships between police and citizens and can also help when police officers need help obtaining information, because if the public trusts them, they will be more likely to give them information if they know any.

The purpose of this study was to determine if community policing is effective, if it lowers crime rates, and how departments implement it. Another purpose of choosing this study is that after I graduate, I plan on becoming a police officer, and community policing is a big part of the department I plan to go to, and having this knowledge will help me. Through my research, I have found that it is more effective in certain places than others and can lower crime rates in those specific areas. After doing research, I concluded that community policing is an important part of a police officer's job. The main lesson learned from the research is that community policing is effective if the departments have the proper funding and training. A procedure that may be taken is that departments have time during officers' shifts to get out of their cruisers, walk around neighborhoods, and interact with citizens. I think that if there were more of that, they could form positive relationships with citizens.  Also, if community policing were something that was implemented as a consistent thing, then it may be more useful. I also learned that it can be more effective in more crime-prone areas because if people know the police frequent the area, then they will be less likely to commit a crime in the area where they know the police will be.

Some limitations I faced were finding scholarly sources with people's opinions that have worked for departments, so there is more research from people who do the job. If I had more time, I would be able to obtain more research from different databases, as well as maybe talk with police officers who do the job and see if they believe it was effective or not. The biggest limitation that I had was the time frame, if we had more than one semester to complete it, I most likely would have been able to complete more research.

Some significant discoveries are that community policing does not always help with reducing crime rates, but depending on what types of crimes committed, they can be lowered. It does help police officers build positive and trusting relationships with the citizens with whom they work. I believe that even if it does not help the crime rates, it should still be a thing because if it helps police officers and community members meet each other and be more trusting of each other.

I think that some further research should be done. For example, maybe a ride along with a police officer to see what their approach to community policing is, what the citizens think of it, and if it needs to be changed. I think the more information that they get from people who take part in community policing, the better the research would be, because they would get stats from the field. The more research done on the topic, the more effectively officers can do community policing. It is also hard to find data that helps to support or deny the claim because most of the articles written about it do not have data to go with them.

# References

Blair, G., Weinstein, J. M., Christia, F., Arias, E., Badran, E., Blair, R. A., Cheema, A.,

    Farooqui, A., Fetzer, T., Grossman, G., Haim, D., Hameed, Z., Hanson, R., Hasanain, A.,

    Kronick, D., Morse, B. S., Muggah, R., Nadeem, F., Tsai, L. L., & Nanes, M. (2021).

    Community policing does not build citizen trust in police or reduce crime in the Global

    South. *Science*, *374*(6571). https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abd3446

Capital, F. (2020). *Promoting Community Policing* . Faster Capital .

    https://fastercapital.com/topics/promoting-community-policing.html

fiveable , library. (2024). *Implementation of community policing programs*. Fiveable.me.

    https://library.fiveable.me/police-and-society/unit-8/implementation-community-

    policing-programs/study-guide/N9Pd3rS86DLbZfVd

Goldberg, K., & Christopher, K. (2019). Community-oriented policing: Security in the domestic

    counter-terrorism environment. *Journal of Business and Behavioral Sciences*, *31*(1), 114–

    124. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2248942522?sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals

Lee, J., Lee, H. D., & Zhao, J. S. (2023). *Community-oriented policing (COP): An empirical*

    *study of its effectiveness on fear of crime*. Dntb.gov.ua.

    https://ouci.dntb.gov.ua/en/works/4bEdbja7/

Lung-Amam, W., Alvarez, N., & Green, R. (2021). Beyond community policing: centering

    community development in efforts to improve safety in Latinx immigrant communities.

    *Journal of Community Practice*, *4*(4), 1–16.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2021.1997850

Masterson, M. F. (2009). Contemporary Components of Community Policing . *FBI Law*

    *Enforcemnet Bulletin*, *78*(12), 12. HEINONLINE.

Namgung, H. (2018). How can police agencies implement community policing? Create

    specialized units! *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, *52*, 144–154.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcj.2017.11.002

POLICE DEPARTMENT, F. (NC). (2022). *Rebuilding Local Trust Through Community*

    *Policing | IDEA Analytics*. My Website. https://analyticsbyidea.com/resources-case-

    study/

Police, W. (2022). *Worcester Police Department (Official)*. Facebook.com.

    https://www.facebook.com/WorcesterPolice

Randol, B. M., & Gaffney, M. (2013). Are Block Watch volunteers different than volunteers in

    community-oriented policing programs? Findings from a mature COPS setting. *Police*

    *Practice and Research*, *15*(3), 234–248. https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2013.815386

Worcester, A. (2022). *AMPP Worcester*. Facebook.com.

    https://www.facebook.com/AMPPWorcester/

Worcester, C. of. (2024). *Community Policing | City of Worcester, MA*. Worcesterma.gov.

    https://www.worcesterma.gov/police/about-us/community-policing