USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO CONNECT WITH THE PUBLIC: AN EXPLORATORY CASE

STUDY OF A POLICE DEPARTMENT USE OF FACEBOOK

By

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of Radford University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the Department of Criminal Justice

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August 2017

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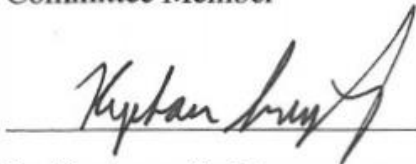Dr. Nicole Hendrix   4/26/2018
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ABSTRACT

The use of social media has become a widespread phenomenon among individual users and organizations alike. Unique organizations such as police departments now use social media platforms in their everyday functions. Specific types of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are used by police departments. An exploratory case study was conducted to analyze how a single police department utilizes Facebook. In order to understand how the analyzed police department uses and implements Facebook into its everyday functions, a content analysis was conducted. The content analysis evaluated an interview transcript with the Chief of the examined police department, a social media policy for the department, a job posting description for the Public Information Officer who runs the Facebook account for the department, and Facebook data collected from the department Facebook page.

The premise for the underlining research suggests that Facebook may be a tool for police departments to expand upon traditional methods of community-oriented policing. The researcher framed the content analysis with three main themes found within community-oriented policing: problem solving, organization transformation, and community partnerships. The findings from this study suggest that Facebook is used as a tool for community-oriented policing practices by the examined police department. Through using Facebook to connect with the public, community partnerships, problem solving, and organizational transformations were all present in the collected data. Policy, research, social media, community policing, and departmental implications can further be made from the results of this study.

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Department of Criminal Justice, 2018

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DEDICATION

For mom:

I am sorry for when I wrote that essay in 6th grade stating that dad was my hero. I hope the

dedication of this 125-page document makes up for my waywardness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Facebook is a social media networking website with over 2 billion users worldwide (Statista, 2017). This broad use of social media websites allows individuals from around the world to interact and communicate with one another at the touch of a screen. Social media users not only consist of individual people, but also organizations, groups, and companies (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). One specific organization that uses Facebook are police departments. However, little research exists on how police departments are using Facebook in their day-to-day operations. To better understand how a police department uses Facebook, this study provided an in-depth analysis of how a police department makes use of Facebook. This study utilized an exploratory case study to examine how a single, medium-sized police department utilizes Facebook.

First developed in the late 1960s, the Internet had the goal of allowing people to communicate with one another in the case of a nuclear attack or another disaster (Pattavina, 2005). After the creation of the Internet, Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis created a system that allowed internet users from across the world to publicly post messages in the year 1979 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Online communities began to form over the Internet as a way for individuals to openly and directly talk with one another. Online forums where people were able to blog, or participate in informal conversations, began to become more widespread. As high-speed Internet began to grow over the next few decades, the concept of being able to talk online became widely popular (Kaplan et al., 2010). The creation of social media websites, such as Myspace and Facebook, finally coined the term "social media" and contributed to the essence of what social media is today (Kaplan et al., 2010). Various places like non-profit organizations, marketing

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companies, and even police departments use social media since the term has been coined

(Kaplan et al., 2010).

As Internet-based applications, social media allows exchanges of user-generated content

between individuals and groups (Yoo & Gretzel, 2016). These applications allow communication

to take place between individual users through direct messaging, commenting, and/or streaming

of live videos (Kane, Labianca, & Borgatti, 2014). Scholars have classified social media into six

distinct types of media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Content disclosed to users and how the

media platform is designed to be used impacts the classification of the social media website

(Kaplan et al., 2010; Yoo et al., 2016). The classifications of social media include "blogs and

social networking websites, virtual social worlds, collaborative projects, content communities,

and virtual game worlds" (Yoo et al., 2016, p. 3). Facebook falls under the classification of blogs

and social networking websites. Many individuals who use social media use it to consume

content, participate in online applications, or to produce content (Yoo et al., 2016). Most social

media users do not create online content such as videos, photos, or textual posts. Most social

media users only consume online content (Yoo et al., 2016; Van Dijck, 2009).

The creation of the high-speed Internet, mobile (smart) phones, laptops, and tablets has

enabled individuals to access social media with almost no limitations (Kaplan & Haenlein,

2010). Users can download social media applications directly to their electronic devices. A wide

array of individuals can download social media websites, such as Facebook, and create accounts

within minutes. People and organizations freely access social media websites and connect with

millions of other users within a brief time span (Kaplan et al., 2010). However, with the easy

availability of social media also comes the downside of having an open market of

communication between people. Previous research found that social media usage by younger

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generations may lead to a decrease of attention spans and distract from education (Bolton et al., 2013). Other negative impacts derived from social media usage are that content can be used as a form of blackmail, privacy concerns, and cybersecurity issues (Bolton et al., 2013).

Despite some shortcomings of social media, government agencies, such as police departments, are visibly present on various social media platforms. Police departments, like other groups and organizations, have accessibility to devices that can access social media applications easily and freely. Additionally, police departments are using social media as a common way to communicate with the public (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiyama, 2013). To better understand how police departments communicate over social media, this study provided a content analysis of community-oriented policing (COP) themes found within a medium-sized police department Facebook website. An interview with the chief of police of the department, who is familiar with the social media accounts, also provided insight into the how the department uses Facebook. A job description for a newly hired Public Information Officer position was also analyzed to determine the role of social media in the department. Lastly, an analysis of the police department's social media policy was conducted.

COP is a philosophical ideology that focuses on police-community relations (Palmitto, 2011). COP is not a new phenomenon but has been widely promoted in the 21st century (Palmitto, 2011). The connection between a police department's use of Facebook and COP lies in the interactions between online users and the police. Perhaps social media can be used to establish relationships with individual users and allow police departments to reach out to community members through a tactical form of communication. However, public perception of police in the surrounding community, belief in the police legitimacy, and characteristics

surrounding community environment may impact how a department can interact with online users (Palmitto, 2011).

The analytical results of this study indicated that COP themes were all present throughout the examined interview transcript, Public Information Officer job posting, the social media policy document, and the Facebook data. The theme of community partnerships was found to be the most prominent theme throughout the analyzed data sources. Conclusions from this study indicate that perhaps the examined police department relies more heavily on community partnerships and public relations with surrounding community members. Implications in this study indicate that in order for COP to be successfully implemented by the examined police department, more efforts of utilizing organizational transformations and problem solving would be beneficial. This qualitative study helps contribute to what scholars know about how police departments are using Facebook to interact with community members in an online setting.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the development of personal computers, individuals have been able to promptly communicate online with one another (Cross, 2014). Personal computers helped develop what is now known as the World Wide Web (Van Dijck, 2013). The World Wide Web was invented by Tim Berners-Lee (Van Dijck, 2013). The Web was developed as a form of machine-readable text that enhanced what tasks the Internet could perform (Van Dijck, 2013). Instant messaging, emails, weblogs, and list-servers were a result of the development of the Web (Van Dick, 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The development of instant messaging and email provided a way for people to instantly send and respond to individual, private messages with other individuals around the world (Kaplan et al., 2010). The ability to be able to talk with other online users freely and quickly became a widely popular idea. Scholars believe that there was also a need for connectedness among people (Van Dijck, 2013). As the World Wide Web became frequently more used over the decade after its creation and people thrived for connectedness, the Web became more social (Van Dijck, 2013).

As the Internet became more focused on social aspects of interaction, social media platforms began to develop in the late 1990s (Van Dijck, 2013). Starting with the website of Blogger in 1999, popular social media platforms began to become widespread. Wikipedia was developed in 2001, Myspace in 2003, Facebook in 2004, Flickr in 2004, YouTube in 2005, and Twitter in 2006 (Van Dijck, 2013). The Internet and the World Wide Web have provided a means for people to access volumes of information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Most police departments set posts to a public setting (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiyama, 2013). Public settings allow anyone to view the post who has access to the Internet and the social media platform. Public posts serve as a way for content to be seen by anyone, anywhere.

Allowing anyone access to a social media web page indicates an openness to communicate in some manner (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Specifically, methods of communication can be done through a private or public message, an interaction (e.g., giving a post a thumb down or a thumb up), or something other form of indication that a person has seen that public post. These types of interactions usually vary by the social media platform. Twitter allows someone to retweet a post, while Instagram allows someone to post a heart on a post. Analyzing the content that is open to the public on a police department Facebook web page allows researchers to evaluate what information the department is offering to the public.

Social Media

As previously defined, social media is an Internet-based application that allows online users to generate content for social and networking purposes (Yoo & Gretzel, 2016). After the development of the Web 2.0 in the early 2000s, individuals began shifting their everyday activities to an online environment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Van Dijck, 2013). Platforms began to develop that had the specific goal of allowing online users to interact in these online environments (Van Dijck, 2013). The development of the Web 2.0 made the Internet easier to use, and companies began to build through the online platforms (Van Dijck, 2013). The objective of such companies (i.e., Myspace, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), or how they advertised themselves at least, was to reform online social networking in a virtual environment (Van Dijck, 2013).

As social media evolved, the objective of many companies began to change (Van Dijck, 2013). Specifically, companies began to want their brand names associated with specific online interactions. YouTube became known for microblogging with videos, Google became another synonym for Internet searching, Instagram became associated with only photographs, and so

forth (Van Dijck, 2013). As the objective of the online companies began to change, so did the online social interactions between users (Van Dijck, 2013).

Between the years of 2000 and 2006, a claim that the Web 2.0 increased the human desire for online social interactions was made (Van Dijck, 2013). Social interactions are "networking, information exchange, collaboration, and deliberation between people on the web" (Brainard & Edlins, 2015, p. 730). Online users began to respond to other users on the online platforms. These individuals felt a need to share their personal information publicly with the other users (Van Dicjk, 2013). People became increasingly more participatory in their online activities (Brainard et al., 2015). Since the early 2000s, social media has continued to change, and users have increasingly shared personal information over social media platforms (Brainard et al., 2015).

Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are a few of the current most popular media websites used around the world (Brainard & Edlins, 2015). In 2015, 90% of 18- to 29-year-old American adults used some form of social media (Pew Research Center, 2015). Surveys also showed that in 2015, 77% of 30- to 49-year-old adults and 51% of 50- to 64-year-old adults used some form of social media (Pew Research Center, 2015). The research also found that 35% of adults, who were 65 years of age or older, used some form of social media (Pew Research Center, 2015). Interestingly, researchers found that 58% of people who live in a rural area have some form of social media account, as compared to 64% of people who live in an urban environment (Pew Research Center, 2015). As of April 2017, approximately 2 billion people use Facebook, 1 billion people use YouTube, and 319 million people use Twitter (Statista, 2017). Social media is an opportunity for people to participate in civic engagement discussions with other people around the world (Warren, Sulaiman, & Jaafar, 2014).

The methods in which people communicate over social media also vary. Communication between individuals over social media websites may come in the form of interactions where individuals can directly or indirectly talk to one another (Hayes, Carr, & Wohn, 2016). Individuals can directly talk with someone by using private messaging. Indirect communication can come in the form of sharing a post (Facebook) or retweeting a post (Twitter). Furthermore, communication on social media may come in the form of aimless communication or direct, meaningful communication (Hayes et al., 2016). Phatic, or aimless communication, is less about wanting to know the state of another person's welfare or personal affairs (Hayes et al., 2016). Hayes et al. (2016) also indicated that social media websites offer rewards for communicating with others. Specifically, Facebook now incorporates emojis, or small digital pictures, when another person wants to like or react to a post. Communication and interactions between individuals contribute to the popularity and the utility of social media (Hayes et al., 2016). The formatting and layouts of various social media websites also incorporate unique utilities.

Two years after the launch of Facebook, Twitter was then created (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiyama, 2013). Twitter is used by celebrities, politicians, organizations, and the general public. Since the development of Twitter, the social media platform has only allowed users to post tweets in 140 characters or less (Lieberman et al., 2013). However, after Twitter recently changed its server contents, users can post content of 280 characters or less (Meyer, 2017). The company claims that 140 characters was an arbitrary number, unfair, and did not consider that some languages need more characters to rely on a message (Meyer, 2017). Facebook, on the other hand, allows up to 63,206 characters to be posted in one post (Lieberman et al., 2013). YouTube is an application that mainly is composed of videos that vary in length. YouTube does not support any other form of direct communication, other than comments posted on videos

between users. Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter all provide the ability for users to like or favorite content (Hayes, Carr, & Wohn, 2016).

Social media allows people to connect and form social ties online (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Researchers indicate that these online connections may form into an online community (Ellison et al., 2007; Van Dijck, 2010). Social media users share their unique interests, opinions, and ideas with other people within their social community. The idea of social media and the creation of social connections is unique because geography does not play a role in who is connected online (Ellison et al., 2007). For some individuals, it is logical to embrace social media because it is usually free to create accounts for users, millions of people are already using social media, and it is almost effortless to post content to websites.

After exploring the distinct history of social media, it is important to understand the impact social media has on cultural norms. Scholars indicate that social media has developed its own culture (Van Dijck, 2013). Culture, or the certain beliefs of a group of individuals, is becoming apparent in online website applications (Van Dijck, 2013). Specifically, sociality in online websites is being considered to profoundly alter the norms of connections, creations, and interactions between people (Van Dijck, 2013, p. 20). This is important in understanding the impact that online social media platforms have towards the norm of personal interactions. Only voices on radios and television shows (non-amateurs) were heard by the public before social media websites became popular (Van Dijck, 2013). However, social media now allows almost any individual who has a social media account (amateurs) to publicly voice his or her opinions (Van Dijck, 2013). Allowing amateurs to voice their opinions publicly is conducted through online microsystems (Van Dijck, 2013). These microsystems and online culture of sociality are dominated by four major online platforms: Google, Amazon, Apple, and Facebook (Van Dijck,

2013). By using the platform of Facebook, this study shows how police departments can also form a subculture and community online.

Sociality of Social Media

Many scholars have asked the question of whether the usage of social media is a form of civic engagement (Van Dijck, 2013). Perhaps social media is now looked upon as a form of connectivity (Van Dijck, 2013). Research needs to understand if social media is currently the first choice for individuals to communicate with someone else. Sociality aims to understand how a certain population associates in a social group (Van Dijck, 2013). However, there is a difference in implicit sociality and explicit sociality. Implicit participation in sociality stems primarily from the usage of the platform engineer and shows up through coding mechanisms (Van Dijck, 2013). Facebook sends users personalized text posts (i.e., "you and another individual have been friends for 1 year!"), which is pre-calculated through the platform's built-in algorithms. Explicit participation stems from how users interact with social media and the other users (Van Dijck, 2013). This study only analyzed content that is explicit between online users and the police department examined.

Sociality over online networking platforms also incorporates the change of that social media platform over time. Facebook recently implemented new reactions that users can use to like posts. Due to the increasing use of different faces that can express how someone is feeling (called emojis) on smartphones, Facebook also incorporated this type of reaction into its platform (Facebook, 2017). If users are not content with changing their usage habits of a social media website, they will quit using the website altogether or join a rivaling website (Van Dijck, 2013). In turn, the explicit participation and the engineers behind the social media platform must conform to the implicit users' wants (Van Dijck, 2013).

The content of a social media platform also plays a substantial part in the sociality of an online environment (Van Dijck, 2013). Specifically, distinct types of social media platforms provide unique types of content elements. LinkedIn shows user resumes on their homepages, Myspace allowed users to express what type of music they favored freely, and YouTube allows users to preference their favorite videos. This type of content not only allows social media platforms to attract a certain crowd, but also allows users to generate their own social groups who favor their same interests (Van Dijck, 2013). The virtual setup (i.e., format, what content can be uploaded, etc.) of a social media website also may influence the prosperity of that social media company (Van Dijck, 2013). Facebook has one of the largest platforms in terms of variety of what content may be posted. Facebook allows videos, shares, comments, live videos, reactions, private messaging, selling advertisements, and much more for its users to see and access.

Negative Outcomes of Social Media

To fully analyze social media and its content, the arguments of why social media may be an undesirable cultural norm must be understood. Some social media websites such as Facebook have often been described as a public diary (Wittkower, 2010). The negative connotations behind relaying personal information constantly on social media stems from a privacy concern. Individuals who consistently spew their personal lives to the public may develop cyber-stalkers (Wittkower, 2010). The social media application of Snapchat now has a feature where a user location is pinpointed on a map (Snapchat, 2017). Stalking, kidnapping, or other issues concerning such privacy matters may become a future concern with this new advancement in Snapchat. Furthermore, privacy concerns on other social media platforms are also an issue.

Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram allow individuals to enable location services and permit other users to see their location (Facebook, 2017; Wittkower, 2010).

Another issue with the use of social media and modern technology is cyberbullying (Wayne MacKay, 2015). It is indicated that modern technology and social media websites are altering how individuals in society communicate (Wayne MacKay, 2015; Wittoker, 2010). Additionally, cyberbullying takes place amongst both teenagers and adults in the cyber world (Wayne MacKay, 2015). While cyberbullying existed since the web first allowed exchanges to take place in the form of online messages, it has progressed with the advancement of social media websites. As stated previously, individuals, especially youths who do not necessarily know about the dangers, are sharing massive amounts of personal information online. This sharing of information plays hand-in-hand with cyberbullies gaining access to a victim's personal information (Wayne MacKay, 2015). Online users may also be an easier target to attack if they are more accessible through an online platform (Wayne MacKay, 2015).

Social media is also linked to various health problems amongst users (Wayne MacKay, 2015). Constant contact with cell phone screens or computer screens has indicated a strain on a person's eyes and hands (Wayne MacKay, 2015). Other views argue that people suffer stress from the detachment of cellphones and other technologies (Wayne MacKay, 2015). Scholars also believe that when individuals constantly engage in online interactions, they lack skills to interact personally with people in real life (Wayne MacKay, 2015). While social media does possess both positive and negative influences on society, it is still being used widely today.

Police Utility of Social Media

Even through the negatives of using social media, organizations such as police departments have implemented some form of social media into their department. Over 75% of

the 61 largest police departments have at least one form of social media associated with their

police department (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiyama, 2013). The manner in which police

departments use social media varies from department to department. Agencies can broadcast

safety warnings to the public, ask the public for information about wanted criminals, and convey

police-related stories to the public through social media (Lieberman et al., 2013). Police

departments also use social media for recruiting new police officers, increasing public input in

criminal investigations, and gaining outside input on policy decision making (Meijer & Thaens,

2013).

Social media may also be useful for police departments to allow individual officers to

become familiar with members of a community (Davis III, Alves, & Sklansky, 2014). Surveys

have shown that 25% of police officers use some form of social media daily (Clancy, 2016). In a

sample of 800 police departments in the United States, 75.5% of police used Facebook, 33.6%

used Twitter, and 18% used YouTube (Ruddell & Jones, 2013, p. 64). An open line of

communication is vital in allowing social media to work for police departments and the public if

it is going to play a role in current policing styles (Ruddell et al., 2013). Social media platforms,

such as Facebook, also allow a broad range of interactions to take place between users.

Sir Robert Peel once stated that police should always maintain a relationship with the

public (Oliver, 2000). Maintaining a relationship with the public allows the police to become the

public and the public to become the police (Oliver, 2000). Social media, at the heart of it, was

made so social interactions could take place amongst various people (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010;

Van Dijck, 2013). Consequently, the logic behind the birth of social media leads to the idea of

maintaining interactions and relationships amongst its users. This plays into Sir Robert Peel'

ideologies of the police needing to keep a relationship with the public (Oliver, 2000). This paper

gauges Sir Robert Peel ideology behind modern policing and how it has expanded into interactions that now take place through social media.

Facebook

In 2004, Facebook was created as a social media website (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). By the year 2007, Facebook had more than 21 million users (Ellison et al., 2007). As stated previously, Facebook now has around 2 billion users worldwide (Statista, 2017). Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, states that his intentions for his company are to make the world more open and connected (Wittkower, 2010). Convergence of different audiences is at the root of Facebooks ideologies (Wittkower, 2010).

To have a convergence between vast audiences, several types of content have been incorporated into Facebooks platform (Wittkower, 2010). Content such as private messages, public messages and posts, videos, photos, advertisements, likes, and comments are all included into Facebooks framework (Mochon, Johnson, Schwartz, & Ariely, 2017). Private messages on Facebook are similar to the Google email system and are only seen by the individuals involved in the group message (Wittkower, 2010). Facebook then has an option to "update a status" or form a public post (Wittkower, 2010). This option allows an individual or organization to share a typed text message, video, and/or photograph with friends or anyone who has a Facebook profile. A user friends list normally consists of people who they know closely, barely know, have met only online, or people they do not know at all (Wittkower, 2010). Facebook users can also follow organization pages, celebrities, entertainment pages, stores, and so on (Facebook, 2017).

Social media websites like Facebook also allow communication to take place in real time (Zhang & Yi Hsin, 2015). Specifically, messages and posts are sent to another individual (or timeline) immediately. These messages and posts are also usually timestamped (Facebook,

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2017). Having an open communication line permits relationships to take place between businesses and/or individuals (Zhang & Yi Hsin, 2015). Facebook also allows a user to react to a post on Facebook (Facebook, 2017). These reactions can come in the form of a like (or thumbs up figure) or through the newly created emojis. Facebook implemented the reactions, or emojis, into its liking system in the year 2016 (Facebook, 2017). The emojis allow users to be more expressive in how they feel about someone else's post and/or message on Facebook. The emojis are strictly gesture-based and come in the form of a thumbs up (like), a heart (love), a laughing face (haha), a surprised face (wow), a crying face (sad), or an upset, red face (angry) (Facebook, 2017). The reactions physically move their facial features (if available) when a user goes to react to a post (Facebook, 2017). This seemingly helps users fully understand what reaction they are using to engage with a post.

Statistics have also shown that about 47% of Facebook users have private messaged another person (Statista, 2016). Private messages are not public and cannot be seen by anyone other than the users in the group message (Facebook, 2017). In terms of this study, private messages were not available to the public and were not be used to measure the interactions between a police department and Facebook users. The posts (textual, videos, and photographs), comments, shares, and reactions (likes and emojis) were measured in this study to gauge the interactions between the police department and the public.

Public Perception of Social Media

Public support is vital in allowing police agencies to function within a democratic system (Jackson & Bradford, 2009). Researchers argue that public support can also show over social media, even to police departments. The use of social media by the public is on the rise (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008). Furthermore, one study found that public relations professionals are

using social media tools frequently to connect with online communities (Eyrich et al., 2008).

Many individuals view social media as a way of receiving and collecting vital information such

as news, political information, and entertainment needs (Eyrich et al., 2008). Overall, individuals

use social media as a form of social means to connect with others and promote certain ideas or

topics. The perception of social media is fairly positive in the eyes of the public, or the number

of users would not be on the rise (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiyama, 2013).

A vast number of individuals use some form of social media application as analyzed by

the Pew Research Center (2015). However, some may not know why individuals are using social

media. Research has shown that most adults use social media websites such as Facebook,

Twitter, or LinkedIn to connect with family members and old/new friends (Pew Research Center,

2015). More specifically, about two-thirds of adults who use social media want to stay in touch

with family and friends, while only half of the individuals have social media to reconnect with

old friends (Pew Research Center, 2015). There are also numerous other reasons why adults

would have social media accounts. About 14% of users want to connect with other individuals

due to shared interests or hobbies and about 9% of users want to make new friends online (Pew

Research Center, 2015). However, only about 5% of users have a social media account to

connect with public figures (Pew Research Center, 2015). This data may substantially impact the

number of interactions that individuals may have with authoritative figures, such as the police.

Police Perception of Social Media

To better understand how police departments are using social media to engage with

communities, understanding how the police perceive social media is vital. Research indicates

that if communication between the public and the police exist, each party will be more apt on

sharing information with one another (Pattavina, 2005). This is beneficial to the police and is an

overall beneficial resource for the public also. Many police websites allow the public to view and access posted information, file complaints, offer advice, and access crime alerts (Pattavina, 2005). Interestingly, many social media websites, such as Facebook, can directly link a police department Facebook "page" to their website.

A study conducted by Imke, Wilbert, and Emile (2017) analyzed a police department's use of Twitter to better understand how the police believed social media had an impact on their communities. The study assessed 11 tweets that were originally created to reach out to the community for help in criminal cases. Each tweet was either measured as explicit (loss/gain) or implicit (loss/gain). Surveys were also handed out to Government officials asking questions related to if the police were approachable, involved in their community, and so forth. The results of the study indicated that police officers who tweeted with posts concerning matters that involved community members received a higher amount of responses. The results also indicated if police officers put in the time to reach out to community members and add personal touches to their posts, the public perceived the officers more positively. Perhaps if police officers take the time to engage with community members online, there will be an improvement in community relations.

Research indicates that 83.5% of police departments believe that an improvement in community relations has occurred due to their social media use (Clancy, 2016). Another study indicates that meaningful interactions over social media, which includes interactions with the public, is the best use of social media for police departments (Imke, Wilbert, & Emile, 2017). Additionally, others argue that if police departments have a positive perception of social media and its impact on communities, social media may be used more often in that department (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiyama, 2013).

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Community-Oriented Policing

"The quality of life in our communities depends on us all. That is what community policing is

about: we can do it together." -Tammy De Weerd

Fundamentals of Community-Oriented Policing

Previous research indicates that traditional methods of policing, ones that aimed to

control crimes, were substantially limited (Goldstein, 1987). Traditional methods of policing did

not allow relationships to form among the police and community members. Traditional methods

of policing implemented a form of military-style policing (Ponsears, 2011). Police were expected

to react against political corruption and keep a degree of professionalism in their actions

(Ponsears, 2011). Additionally, hierarchical ranking systems within a police department were

also influenced by how the military similarly ranked personnel (i.e., lieutenants, captains, etc.)

(Ponsears, 2011). This military influence in police departments left the police impartial to the

individuals who resided in surrounding communities.

Traditional policing relied on responsive tactics to deal with issues and focused on

arresting the criminals (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). Police departments began to realize

that enforcing laws was no longer as important as forming connections with the community

(Goldstein, 1987). Functions that did not involve enforcing laws became important to connect

with individuals in a community (Goldstein, 1987). Inspired by the concept of connecting with

individuals in a community, community-oriented policing (COP) was developed.

The creation of COP has been credited to Sir Robert Peel of the London Metropolitan

Police Department (Cordner, 2014). Peel instilled in his police officers that foot patrols were

important to engage with citizens on a personal level. His ideology is still embraced by modern

police departments in the United States. However, other scholars argue that COP is a concept

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that has developed over time and does not possess a clear-cut definition (Ponsears, 2001).

Community policing may also be a concept that has spread throughout police departments over a

lengthy period of time. Despite the lack of clarity revolving around the history of COP, many

scholars acknowledge that COP was adapted into many police departments around the 1980s in

the United States (Greene, 2011; Ponsears, 2011; Skogan, 1990).

COP has been described as an umbrella term (Goldstein, 1987). An umbrella term

associates several smaller elements with the overall concept of community policing. Police

departments have several unique elements to incorporate into their ways of policing for COP to

work. COP needs police departments to incorporate community involvement in aiding with

investigations, permanent assignment of police officers to a community to strengthen

relationships with the community, and the police assisting to meet the needs of the community

(Goldstein, 1987). Community policing also offers a chance for the police to personally work

alongside youth in a community (Ponsears, 2011). Youth are often deemed as highly influential

and COP gives police officers a chance to positively influence the youth (Ponsears, 2011). The

basis behind working with the youth is that through developing individual relationships, criminal

behavior may be easily deterred (Ponsears, 2011).

COP has been shaped throughout history to ensure that law enforcement officers are held

accountable (Greene, 2000). Operating in this manner is effective and more considerate towards

the public (Greene, 2000). One fundamental and important aspect of community policing is

effective communication between the public and police (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiyama,

2013). Through better communication, citizens can offer potential resolutions for issues in a

community (Greene, 2000). Better communication between law enforcement and the public

offers more community engagement as well (Lieberman et al., 2013). Social media may be one way in which law enforcement officers and the public can better communicate.

      Citizen input also serves an influential role in COP (Greene, 2000; Cordner, 2014). Citizens should be able to have a say in how they are being governed. This also includes the governing by police departments (Cordner, 2014). Citizen input can come from social media websites, talk shows, community meetings, or community surveys (Cordner, 2014). The fundamentals of COP may also involve the police working with elders, youth, minorities, the homeless, or the disabled (Cordner, 2014). The police may also help reduce fear in a community, solve problems in a community, resolve conflicts, implement prevention programs, or carry out search and rescues (Cordner, 2014). While COP is a broad umbrella term, the foundations of the policing style still allow police to have goals in bettering their communities (Greene, 2000). Citizen outreach is an important aspect of COP and social media outreach plays an intricate part in allowing police to build relationships with the surrounding communities.

      Some benefits of COP may include educating the public on the day-to-day operations of police, putting the community first, and promoting officer relations with the public outside of work (Clancy, 2016). Specifically, if police become more involved in their communities, they may attend more local events and visit more schools (Clancy, 2016). If police are active in communities, the public may feel safer, be more comfortable around the police, and get to know the officers on a personal level (Greene, 2000). Trust is also another important concept in COP (Clancy, 2016; Greene. 2000). In order to build trust, communication must be present between police officers and community members (Corsianos, 2011). Community members want to know that police departments are proactively fighting crime and listening to the issues surrounding that community (Corsianos, 2011). Collaboration between the police and the community is key.

COP involves the general public in helping solve issues in a community to obtain an overall higher quality of life (Goldstein, 1987). Police discretion is also a large aspect of COP. Discretion allows an officer to have more freedom in making individual decisions on certain situations. Allowing discretion in the COP model allows an officer to make positive decisions for his or her community (Goldstein, 1987). Discretion also allows peace-keeping in a community and gives discretionary powers to the officer. This type of policing allows room for reforms to take place within a community. The legitimacy of police in COP is also a large concern (Goldstein, 1987). Legitimacy of the police is linked with the overall interactions that the police have with community members. The police need to have continuing interactions with communities to ward against alienation from individuals in those communities (Goldstein, 1987). Furthermore, police are expected to fulfill a community expectation of fixing problems and remaining in contact in an organized manner. Interestingly, COP poses the idea that the actual process of remaining in contact with a community and the process of democratic decision-making is more important that the results of solving problems (Ponsaers, 2011).

Community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving are three major elements in the fundamentals of COP (Gill, Weisburd, Telep, Vitter, & Bennett, 2014). Very little research focuses on just communication between police departments and social media users (Gill et al., 2014). Citizen input and engagement (partnership) is needed for COP to be implemented. Findings on community partnerships allowed the researcher to determine how police departments are developing relationships with community members and how it is beneficial for an array of reasons, not just for problem solving.

The criminal justice system has historically been reprimanded for being "out of touch" with citizens and COP aims to change that outlook (Gill, Weisburd, Telep, Vitter, & Bennett,

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2014). Getting to know community members on a personal level is important in helping to reduce crime. Skogan and Hartnett (1997) also found that implementing crime prevention programs and neighborhood organizations will help COP achieve its goals. Implementation of community policing is also enabling police officers to become community problem solvers (Rohe, 2001).

Implementation of Community-Oriented Policing

Implementing modern policies of COP is also a large concern for police departments (Liou & Savage, 1996). The implementation of COP has shaped how the police act when in the public view (Bates, Antrobus, Bennett, & Martin, 2015). It may also be assumed that a goal of community policing is citizen satisfaction (Liou et al., 1996). Citizen satisfaction is a concept that may be able to be accomplished for COP through social media. However, more research needs to be conducted to justify this argument.

Historically, the implementation of COP has flourished in the United States over the past few decades (Greene, 2000). COP should be a well-known concept for many police officers who have been active in recent years. A study conducted by Gill and his colleagues (2014) found through the implementation of COP and door-to-door visits to community members, fear of crime and crime were decreased.

The overall goal of implementing any policing method into a police department is to reduce crime (Ponsears, 2011). Implementing COP into a police department still has the goal of reducing crime in a community; it may just do so in a unique way as compared to traditional methods of policing. COP was not only implemented in the United States, but around the world (Cordner, 2014). Historically, police departments had developed a professional model of policing in the early 1900s, but it was revised once it was known that not all issues surrounding policing

were being solved (Cordner, 2014). Issues surrounding the professional model of policing consisted of the police being distant from the public and isolated (Cordner, 2014). Furthermore, COP research has expanded from small studies on foot patrols to a large concept that required over 100,000 new police officers to engage in community policing in 1994 (Cordner, 2014).

COP arose from poor community relations with police officers (Cordner, 2014). The implementation of COP sought to better the public perception of the police through improving relationships within communities. Improving relationships within communities begins with the formation of trust. A cycle begins to take place within the concept of COP. If the citizens and the police begin to form relationships amongst each other, more trust between the two may take place. Out of trust and building relationships, communication between the two will become more frequent. If police officers need a tip on a wanted criminal, they may theoretically reach out to the people with whom they have built a relationship and get that information.

The role of police officers has changed from task-oriented policing techniques, to identifying a wide array of problems experienced within a community, to working alongside community members to fix issues identified throughout a community (Rohe, 2001). Working alongside community members may be in the form of foot patrols, community activities, or community outreach. The goal of COP is for the police to help community members with issues, and also for the community members to have a say in what the police do in everyday operations (Greene, 2000). Task-oriented policing techniques may be less personal and do not usually involve the community. Trust and relationships between the police and the community are hardly present in task-oriented policing techniques due to the military-style policing. In other words, developing relationships with community members were not a substantial part of policing with this method, unlike COP.

Criticism of COP

COP is often criticized for not having one, specific definition (Cordner, 2014; Gill, Weisburd, Telep, Vitter, & Bennett, 2014; Skogan & Frydl, 2004; Weisburd & Eck, 2004). However, the COPS Office offered this definition:

> Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. (2009, p. 3)

This issue of COP being fully implemented and embraced by police officers is still a concern for police departments. In other words, changing from a task-oriented way of policing to a community-oriented way of thinking has been described as a different way of life for police officers (Sparrow, 1988).

Another criticism of COP is that some scholars believe that community policing lacks substance. Other scholars believe that COP is easily misunderstood because one of the goals of COP is to develop community relationships while combating crime and disorder (Trojanowicz, & Carter, 1988). This misunderstanding derives from previous policing techniques that have failed to instill community relationships. However, over time, it has become apparent that police officers must work harder in their role of providing community-oriented services (Trojanowicz, & Carter, 1988). Scholars have recently argued that police officers have become more educated and trained in their jobs due to the new approach of fighting crime while providing a philosophy that is goal-oriented in helping community members (Trojanowicz, & Carter, 1988).

Utility of Social Media and COP. Forms of communication have increased along with the development of modern technology. Individuals can communicate with others through email,

websites, instant messaging, and social networking sites (Liberman et al., 2013, p. 441).

Communication begins when an individual reaches out to a police department through some

form of messaging over a social media website. Individuals can post directly to a police

department, private message, or comment on the police department social media account. This

communication plays into the overall concept of COP. Specifically, COP wants to have an

extensive effect on a community. Social networking sites provide a broad platform to reach

many individuals at once. The utility of social media also allows anyone to be active in social

engagements while online (Warren, Sulaiman, & Jaafar, 2014). Unique to social media usage,

the police do not have to be physically present in a community to still communicate and engage

in policing strategies. The utility of social media may also have a complex role in how it is used

by police departments.

COP may also play a role in how police utilize social networking websites to

communicate with others. Social media may be a form of COP for police departments and used

as a strategy to engage with the public. While police may be physically present in a community,

they may also become visibly present over the Internet. Common knowledge about the everyday

operations of police departments is very limited for the public (Lieberman et al., 2013; Loader,

2006). Through the virtual presence of the police online, the knowledge about police functions

may increase. Possessing knowledge about the functions of the operations of police may also

increase the public understanding of the police and their motivations behind their actions

(Lieberman et al., 2013). An increase of trust might result from the knowledge gained over social

media. However, an implementation of COP over the Internet will not replace the traditional

methods of COP. Door-to-door visits by police consist of police officers visiting homes and

people in their communities to have face-to-face interactions. These personal interactions cannot be done in virtual form completely.

Public Perceptions of Police

COP and the use of social media can help dismiss the mystery of the operations of some police departments for social media users (Clancy, 2016). The publicity and openness of using social media websites allows users to stay up to date with the operations of police departments (Clancy, 2016). Social media can also highly impact the public perception of the police through various videos, photos, or stories about the police. It may be argued that if social media users can easily stay up to date with police departments, the perceptions of the police may positively change (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiyama, 2013). Additionally, if police departments can regulate their own news and personally update posts on social media, individual perception of those police may also positively change (Clancy, 2016). If police can advocate for themselves in the public eye, the public may better understand the goals of the police.

The utility of social media also influences the day-to-day operations of police. Few citizens have direct interactions with the police, but the utility of social media is changing the frequency of the interactions (Dowler & Zawilski, 2007). Specifically, a police department can reach out to the public over social media for input on current investigations. Theoretically, if individuals can aid the police in investigations, they may gain insight into the operations of police departments and become more trusting. A study conducted in Great Britain found that if the public is more informed about operations of police, they are more trusting of police (Mason, Hillenbrand, & Money, 2014). The utility of social media by police can also impact both community policing and public perceptions.

The new utility of social media suggests the importance of understanding how the public perceives the police using social media (Spizman & Miller, 2013). Historically, police were only able to communicate with citizens by face-to-face interactions on the street or over phone calls. However, now police departments have virtual access to anyone who has a social media account and can directly communicate via the Internet (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiyama, 2013). How well a police department is organized may also influence how the public perceives that police department (Spizman et al., 2013). If a police department can monitor social media accounts frequently, respond to messages and comments quickly, and post content frequently, the public may perceive that police department in a positive manner.

It may also be important for police departments to have positive perceptions from the public so communication can still occur. If communication still exists between the public and the police, COP can continue to occur, and society as a whole will benefit (Clancy, 2016). This study gauged the public perception of police departments through the interactions between Facebook users and police departments that have Facebook pages. The police participation on Facebook increases the chances of Facebook users being able to virtually interact with the police.

Conclusion of Literature

Social media is a concept that has rapidly grown over a brief period of time (Brainard & Edlins, 2015). Due to the rapid growth of technology, various platforms of social media now exist. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and other websites contain content that allows individuals to communicate with one another (Brainard et al., 2015). Due to this widespread use of technology and social media platforms, communication is becoming a widespread normality among Internet users. The importance of individuals seeing daily communication online as a normality infers that an extensive amount of communication on a global, national, societal, and

individual level is taking place (Van Dijck, 2010). If more communication is taking place

amongst more individuals, a better chance for police departments to also communicate with

individuals on a global, national, societal, and individual basis exists (Lieberman, Koetzle, &

Sakiyama, 2013).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Theoretical explanations seek to explain why a concept may have a certain outcome (Creswell, 2007). These outcomes can be affected by significant factors that need to be measured and conceptualized (Creswell, 2007). In relation to this study, there are several outcomes that may be found after the data is collected. When studying how a police department uses Facebook, it may or not be found that COP is used by the police department over social media. Other variables such as how the surrounding community views and interacts with the police department, the socioeconomic status of the area, and the community size may influence the results of the study. Furthermore, the theories in this section justify a pattern of actions. However, this paper relies heavily on the framework of COP.

Community-Oriented Policing

COP is notably a philosophy (Oliver, 2000). Furthermore, a police department must recognize that COP is a philosophical idea and that it is something that must change how policing is looked upon (Oliver, 2000). Many departments have looked to COP as a new way to redefine how they are combating crime (Palmiotto, 2011). This new outlook on policing may reference the potential missed opportunities in fighting crime (Oliver, 2000). These missed opportunities in helping fight crime may include the involvement of the community (Oliver, 2000; Palmiotto, 2011; Ray, 2014). Specialized units began to be implemented into police departments that helped fight crime as well (i.e., child sexual abuse units) (Oliver, 2000). In recent years, many police departments began to implement units that strictly focus on social media connectivity.

Through implementing units and ideologies that focused more on community relations, police departments began to enhance their presence in communities (Oliver, 2000). Methods

such as patrolling communities on foot and knocking on doors were used by many police

departments to engage with community members (Oliver, 2000). COP also relies on the premise

of allowing police officers to have regular contact with community members (Oliver, 2000). If

regular contact is made between community members and the police, perhaps social media is a

starting point to maintain regular contact through consistently updating the community with

posts. This is not to say, however, that traditional methods of COP cannot still be used today.

Social media can perhaps be an extension of reaching a larger audience to better enhance police-

community relations.

  Police-Community Relations. Scholars have indicated that there needs to be a

strengthening of relations between police departments and communities (Cromwell & Keefer,

1973). This philosophy and outlook still holds true today (Palmiotto, 2011). Most of society calls

for a need to feel fair treatment and equal opportunities from police officers (Cromwell et al.,

1973). Through police-community relations, a large and lasting impression may be left on the

public (Cromwell et al., 1973). This can be done through COP (Cromwell et al., 1973; Oliver,

2000; Palmiotto, 2011; Ray; 2014).

  However, scholars have argued that to fully understand a police department's role in COP

and police-community relations, the ideals of a police officer should be understood (Cromwell &

Keefer, 1973). A survey given to approximately 500 police officers presented the results that the

number one answer of the ideal of a police officer was "to improve the community" (Cromwell

et al., 1973, p. 6). This theoretically brings a hope to communities that police officers are

working to serve and improve their surrounding communities (Cromwell et al., 1973). Another

study indicated that the public should be considered the consumers of police services (Mengyan,

Wu, Xin Tian, Giraldi, & Feng, 2017). This offers a new way for police departments to think

about how they want to communicate with the public, especially over social media (Mengyan et al., 2017). Through using social media, police departments implementing COP need to structure interactions with community members in a way that achieves improving police-public relations (Mengyan et al., 2017). However, while improving police-public relations through social media and COP, there are many reasons why police departments would not implement these ideals.

Issues of Implementing COP

The organization of police departments may now pose an issue on how COP is implemented into that department (Oliver, 2000). Specifically, COP wants officers to operate on a decentralized basis (Oliver, 2000). Furthermore, scholars argue that COP is not technologically driven (Oliver, 2000). In other words, COP involves police officers directly communicating with community members in person, not through technology (Oliver, 2000). If social media is used to keep consistent contact with community members, providing face-to-face interactions may be lacking for that police department (Oliver, 2000). If face-to-face interactions are being overlooked, and face-to-face interactions are the basis of COP, it may be understood why some police departments fail to implement social media into their department as a form of COP.

Another issue with implementing COP into a police department is role confusion (Oliver, 2000). Role confusion by police officers mainly stems from police discretion (Oliver, 2000). Not only were police officers historically wary of adopting the idea of COP, they were unsure of their role in the philosophical stance (Oliver, 2000). Role confusion was found to be apparent in a study that used field interviews to ask police officers about their role in COP (Oliver, 2000; Willis, Mastrofski, & Kochel, 2010). The study concluded that there was a significant cultural divide between individuals who were confused on their role as either a crime fighter or as an advocate for COP (Willis, 2010). This may also play into the argument of decentralization for

police departments. Specifically, COP needs the organization of police departments to be willing

to change and adhere to a different organizational outlay (Ray, 2014). When an organization is

changed drastically, there can be a resistance to change (Oliver, 2000; Ray, 2014). Drastic

changes such as introducing social media to a police department may cause role confusion and

resistance (Willis, 2010). The use of social media may also be an unnecessary expense for a

police department. The costs of updating modern technology and paying police officers for their

time of updating social media may be unbeneficial for some police departments (Ray, 2014).

Furthermore, the role of police legitimacy plays an extensive role in how likely community

members would be in willing to engage with police departments (either in the real world or

online).

Police Legitimacy

As policing began to reform into the modern era and COP, police legitimacy was a vital

component in an agency's existence (Cooper, 2014). This may have an impact on how a

community interacts with police (Cooper, 2014). Police legitimacy is often viewed as the police

having the right to exercise power (Tankebe, 2013). The concept of police legitimacy if often

analyzed by criminologists. However, criminologists want to differentiate the concepts of police

legitimacy and obligation in the context of how individuals interact with the police (Tankebe,

2013). Obligation is a feeling of needing to obey and interact with the police because of fear

(Tankebe, 2013). Scholars make note that police departments would hardly be able reform

police-public relations by using the concept of obligation (Tankebe, 2013). The concept of police

legitimacy can better develop police-public relations without causing fear among communities.

To conceptualize police legitimacy, it must first be recognized that legitimacy requires

morals to be grounded in the people who hold power (Beetham, 1991). This concept is widely

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seen in COP. The ones in charge, or the police, have a prominent level of discretionary power in community policing. The discretionary power usually requires a higher level of moral standards, as compared to traditional methods of policing. If legitimacy and morality go hand-in-hand, perhaps COP and legitimacy have a direct link. It is also pointed out that for those in power to gain cooperation, they must also be willing to cooperate (Tankebe, 2013). Community relations in COP must rely on the cooperation from both the public and the police.

One previous study examined the communication between Muslims in New York City and the police. The Muslims were willing to communicate with the police about terrorist activities in the area once they were treated with morality and fairness by the police (Huq, Tyler, & Schulhofer, 2011). Another study found that distributive fairness by police has an impact on how citizens cooperate with the police (Tankebe, 2013). The importance of these findings suggests that citizens are more likely to interact and cooperate with the police if they are treated with dignity and fairness. COP plays a role in allowing police officers to develop these types of relationships with individuals and, thus, can increase interactions from the public. If police are also found to be legitimate, without causing fear through obligation, individuals will theoretically interact with police in a way that gives the police vital information while also building positive relationships.

Morals of Legitimacy

All organizations require some form of legitimacy to exist and operate (Cooper, 2014; Suchman, 1995). Police departments often turn to a source of legitimacy called institutional environment (Cooper, 2014, p. 10). In this form of legitimacy, the functions of the organization are dictated by the leading authorities of the organization (Cooper, 2014). Furthermore, the authorities and the police officers in the organization form their behavior around the various

areal units that make up the organization (Cooper, 2014). These units can have a substantial impact on how the police officers operate in that organization. Furthermore, the authorities of the organization are the ones who control what units are infused into the design of the department (Cooper, 2014). Specifically, some police departments may have some units (i.e., a social media unit) in their department because the authority (more than likely the chief of police) wanted that unit to be present in the operations of that department.

Moral legitimacy may also be present in some police department operations (Cooper, 2014; Kleinig, 1996). Moral legitimacy can inherently affect what an organization does in terms of what is wrong and what is right (Cooper, 2014). Morality oftentimes indicates that a person is making decisions based off intentions and motives (Kleinig, 1996). Morality, or believing what is right or wrong, can affect how police officers conduct their policing duties (Cooper, 2014). This often comes in the form of discretion. Furthermore, organizational authorities can play a direct role in the morals of the entire organization (Cooper, 2014). If a chief of a police department holds an ethical standard of not accepting any gratuities for him or herself, he/she may have a trickle-down effect and cause everyone else in the organization to also not accept gratuities, or at least be held accountable if they did.

Legitimacy also proposes that social harmony cannot exist without a form of authority (Kleinig, 1996). With a form of authority in place, like the police, some form of cultural progression can take place (Kleinig, 1996). Additionally, moral legitimacy implies that while police officers do take place in cultural traditions, they need to participate in ongoing and progressive societal traditions (Kleinig, 1996). Such progressive tactics may rise from newer cultural traditions, such as the growing online environments stemming from social media.

Diffused Support

The overall public attitude towards police departments in the United States may affect how individual communities perceive their local police departments. A theoretical framework was developed by David Easton in 1965 that illustrated the differences between specific and diffuse support (Kaminski & Jefferis, 1998). Diffuse and specific support are two forms of support shown by the public for political systems (Kaminski et al., 1998). Diffuse support is more relevant to how the public perceives police departments, even when social media is thrown into the mix. Diffuse support is a type of collaboration that continues to be shown when individuals feel as if they belong to that system (Kaminski et al., 1998). Individuals are usually bound to that system through strong ties of loyalty (Kaminski et al., 1998). Diffuse support is established over an extended period of time and adds to a political system legitimacy (Kaminski et al., 1998).

Theoretically, backing for the police should be relatively consistent for the police regarding diffused support. This type of support is accountable for the positive attitudes that most individuals consistently have for the police (Kaminski et al., 1998). Previous research has also indicated that the general public is positively supportive towards the police (Kaminski et al., 1998). David Easton theory also argues that the general public believes that police officers are generally honest (Kaminski et al., 1998). Recognizing that the public supports the police is important when wanting to measure the public perception of the police. Results from the study previously mentioned may indicate that there is a high, universal support for police departments over social media, but the support is generally high all the time.

The Role of Community Size

As discussed in the literature review, rural areas do not use social media to the same extent as suburban or urban environments. The Pew Research Center (2015) found that individuals who live in a rural area are significantly less likely to use social media as compared to urban areas. When put into context of individuals who live in rural areas and use social media, the likelihood of those individuals communicating with police departments through social media is less than individuals in urban or suburban areas. When considering who the police potentially communicate with over social media, rural areas can skew the results when measuring the concept.

One study sought to compare the difference between urban and rural areas and their use of media. The researchers surveyed and interviewed members of communities in two rural communities and two urban communities (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004). The population levels were extensively different; both urban communities had over 1 million individuals and the rural areas had about 25 thousand residents (Beaudoin et al., 2004). Through using a Pearson correlation test, results indicated that there was not a significant difference in how rural communities and urban communities use social networking (Beaudoin et al., 2004).

Other research brings to attention the accessibility of Internet or social networking sites in rural areas. Some social media websites, like YouTube, require high-speed Internet to use and this may not always be accessible to rural areas (Bertot, Jaeger, & Hansen, 2012). The higher-speed Internet may also be more costly and inaccessible due to expenses (Bertot et al., 2012). However, research has found that 56% of the world does not have access to the Internet (Zegura, Grinter, Belding, & Nahrstedt, 2017). If access is unavailable for the Internet, accessing social media websites will inevitably be non-existent as well.

While Internet accessibility is an issue for some individuals who live in a rural environment, access to mobile cellular technology is also an issue (Zegura et al., 2017). It was found by researchers that cellular technology was mainly created for urban environments (Zegura et al., 2017). This is due to rural areas having low user populations and lesser revenues for cell phone companies to profit. Due to the low revenue, various cellular technology companies do not cover some rural areas, which leaves a gap in some rural vicinities (Zegura et al., 2017). If some individuals live near a satellite coverage hole, using a mobile phone will be less frequent, if it is used at all. If coverage for both Internet and cellular technologies is nearly non-existent in rural areas, social media will be on a decline.

Researchers also imply that a significant gap between rural and urban areas exists in terms of technological advances (Correa & Pavez, 2016). Rural areas have an overall higher level of poverty and poorer educational resources (Correa et al., 2016). It is argued that widening the infrastructure of Internet access to all areas in a rural environment can strengthen the economic development of such communities. Researchers also indicate that the concept of isolation of individuals in rural areas is extremely high (Correa et al., 2016). Social media and Internet outreach is designed to inform people and allow them to communicate with other people. However, this concept may not happen if Internet resources are not available to these environments. Community attachment and social interactions may increase if such resources are able to spread throughout entire rural environments.

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status of an individual or household may have a substantial impact on how many people use social media websites. Previous research has found that socioeconomic status influences the type of content posted/created by individuals and the frequency of use of

social media websites (Correa, 2016). Research indicates that lower income households view less content on Facebook that is politically related (Correa, 2016). Perhaps this research can also influence content that may be police-related and how often lower socioeconomic households will view content posted by the police. Previous research also indicates that socioeconomic status may also play a role in general attitudes towards the police. However, even if an individual who does not have the resources to access social media online has a low connotation towards police already, communication towards the police online would be minimal.

Attitudes towards police have intrigued scholars because attitude can directly impact how people interact with the police, view police legitimacy, and willingness to participate in COP (Schuck, Rosenbaum, & Hawkins, 2008). In 2008, research found that about 64% of Americans have some type of positive attitude towards the police (Schuck et al., 2008). However, the researchers also indicated that numerous people do not have overall positive attitudes towards the police (Schuck et al., 2008). COP seeks to change these negative outlooks by developing more tight-knit relationships with individuals. However, because traditional community policing has only previously existed in a physical context (i.e., on foot patrols in neighborhoods), social media may have been a new method of reaching a broader population via the Internet and social media.

Conclusion of Theoretical Foundations

COP is a philosophical idea that aims to allow police to focus more on community relations (Oliver, 2000; Ray, 2014). Community relations pose numerous benefits to police departments (Oliver, 2000). These benefits may include reducing crime rates, reducing fear of crime, controlling crime, and giving police officers more discretion (Oliver, 2000). However, some police officers and departments have been reluctant in adhering to this new outlook on

policing. Multiple theories of why police departments do not fully, or altogether, implement COP into their practices have been studied (Oliver, 2000; Ray, 2014; Willis, Mastrofski, & Kochel, 2010). However, even if a police department has implemented some form of COP into its organizational structure, it may be unknown in what ways it has been used (Oliver, 2000). For instance, this paper aims to project the idea that COP may be used in the form of social media in a medium-sized police department. However, it may be theorized that there are multiple reasons why COP may or may not appear in the use of social media.

Other factors that may influence the engagement of community members over social media to a police department can affect the findings of this study. The public perception of the police department legitimacy, the community size, the socio-economic status of the surrounding community, and the diffused support for the police department may also factor in to how the community engages with the police department over social media. The next chapter in this study clarifies how Facebook was conceptualized and measured to better understand the role of social media in a medium-sized police department.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Previous research indicates that social media (i.e., Facebook) can be used to reach a broad range of audience members (Brainbard & Edlins, 2015; Clancy, 2016). Facebook now has around 21 billion individuals who have a profile (Statista, 2017). Due to the increased number of online Facebook users, the social interactions taking place online have also increased (Clancy, 2016). Due to the increase of social interactions taking place online, social media has begun to form online communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Van Dijck, 2010). Online communities may take place over social media platforms such as Facebook. These online community members commonly share interests, follow the same websites or pages, and usually engage in some type of communication with other online users (Van Dijck, 2010). These online communities may also form through law enforcement Facebook pages.

Through the formation of online communities over a police department Facebook page, a police department can implement a form of community-oriented policing (COP) into its department. Social media acts as a tool for COP to be used to connect with online communities (Lieberman, Koetzle, & Sakiama, 2013). Due to the formation of these online communities, police departments may be able to implement a unique form of COP into their departments to reach these online communities. However, this idea about COP should not disregard traditional policing methods. Police departments can use COP as an expansion of traditional policing methods to reach out to online communities. Previous research has not fully explored one specific police department and its use of social media (in this case, Facebook) and how COP can be used as a tool to reach online communities (Lieberman et al., 2013).

Previous research has also not explored the potential uses of Facebook by police departments in an in-depth manner. Likewise, case studies that analyze a single police

department's use of Facebook have not previously appeared in academic research. To answer the question of how a police department utilizes Facebook, an exploratory case study analysis has been conducted. This study incorporated an interview, primary data collection for a police department Facebook page, and policy analysis to better understand how a police department utilizes Facebook. A content analysis was also used to analyze how a police department utilizes Facebook.

The Current Study

For this study, a medium-sized police department was identified to understand how Facebook is used by that agency. The methodology used for the study incorporated an exploratory case study. Exploratory case studies lack hypotheses that can be tested (Yin, 1984). A case study "investigates a present phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin, 2984, p. 23). A case study also uses multiple sources of evidence (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 1984). The multiple sources of evidence examined in a case study are normally explored in an in-depth manner (Creswell, 2007).

There are multiple benefits of using a case study approach in research. A case study can provide researchers a full analysis of real-time events (Creswell, 2007), whereas previous research examining police use of social media can only make a broad, sweeping statement about how police potentially use social media (Lieberman et al., 2013). This research study allows a more in-depth analysis of how social media is being used by a police department. This analysis also provides specific details about how Facebook is being used by that department. An in-depth case study is able to provide researchers a full timeline of when social media was first implemented into the department to its current use (Creswell, 2007). This provides researchers with a bigger picture of how that police department's policies and actions have changed with the

advancement of social media. Furthermore, case studies are beneficial in providing a basis for understanding why a phenomenon is occurring, especially in exploratory research (Creswell, 2007). Due to the lack of previous research on police department use of social media, this study helps identify the benefits of researching this phenomenon.

There are, however, challenges to conducting a case study (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 1984). The researcher must decide what bounded system needs to be studied, whether to study one case or several, the generalizability of the case, and the boundaries (timeline) of the case (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research ensures that through exploring a bounded system (or case), an in-depth analysis can be conducted (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). This in-depth analysis then helps report themes and descriptive, analytical conclusions made about the bounded system (Creswell, 2007).

Interview Challenges. Much like any case study or qualitative study usually faces, interviewing an individual can be a challenging and difficult process. Gaining access to an organization or a specific individual can be difficult in itself (Creswell, 2007). However, not only is gaining access to an organization or a person to conduct an interview difficult, but gaining the trust and credibility with that organization or person can also be a challenge (Creswell, 2007).

Unstructured interviews can also pose a problem for researchers. Specifically, an unstructured interview can take an extensive amount of time to process the data and string together the important information that was collected during the interview (Doody & Noonan, 2013). It is also indicated that a researcher should know how to listen well and ask the proper questions to help guide the interview to stay on point with the research topic (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Participants who easily get off topic in an interview can also cause the data to be difficult to decipher and code during the analysis phase (Doody & Noonan, 2013).

While interviews can be difficult to decipher and time-consuming, the narrative format of an interview can be very beneficial in a research study. An unstructured interview can allow the researcher to gain an inside perspective into a situation or organization. Furthermore, an interview can allow a researcher to gain more meaningful information in the form of a narrative from an individual as compared to quantitative research. However, the proper interviewing techniques, skills, and questions must be asked for the interview to be beneficial for a researcher.

The Bounded System

Case studies, through a qualitative approach, analyze a bounded system through the examination of specific forms of evidence (Stake, 2005). A case in a bounded system is not able to be removed from its natural content without disturbing the inherent nature of the case (Stake, 2005). The case can only identify specific instances that can be connected to a bounded system; it cannot, however, be removed from its surrounding environment (Stake, 2005). In this research study, a bounded system of a police department was analyzed. The extent of this research project does not expand past the scope of a single police department as it cannot be generalized to a larger population of multiple police departments. More specifically, the sample of the research project examined the social media unit implemented by the medium-sized police department. The social media unit's use of Facebook, in return, reflects the entire police department's use of Facebook.

Boundaries of the Study

Boundaries of the study refer to the timeline in which data was analyzed to better answer the research question (Creswell, 2007). Due to the qualitative and in-depth nature of a case study, there is a large timeline present in this study. To best answer how the police department is utilizing Facebook, the timeline for the content analysis was around a full year. The researcher

first collected primary data from the police department's official Facebook page. The researcher started from the first public post posted on Facebook by the police department in November of 2017. The data was then collected to the last day of November 2016. This was a full year of data from the police department's Facebook page that was collected.

The policy analysis then also covered a large timeline to provide an in-depth analysis of this study. The first policy to be reviewed by the researcher was the policy that was first implemented in 2009 by the police department. Any other social media policies that were implemented by the police department between 2009 and present time were also analyzed. The last policy to be analyzed was the current policy used (as of 2017) by the police department. The timeline of 8 years total intends to provide an in-depth analysis of the police department. Lastly, the interview covered a large timespan as well. Several of the interview questions asked the chief of the police about the history of the social media unit and its use of Facebook through the department.

Generalizability

Generalizability is not commonly an advantage in a case study and qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2007). Due to the nature of only sampling one unit of analysis, it is nearly impossible to apply results of the study to a larger population (Stake, 2005). Due to this study only utilizing a single-sample case study, the results of the study are not generalizable and are a limitation of this study. It is nearly impossible to externally generalize that how one police department uses Facebook is similar to how other police departments also use Facebook. However, even if the results are not generalizable to a large population of police departments, numerous findings from the research provides a basic understanding of how this police department utilizes Facebook.

The Sample Unit

The sample used in this study is a medium-sized police department located in a mid-sized city. The surrounding city has a population of around 100,000 people. Nationwide, there are over 700 mid-sized cities located in the United States (Weber, Brooks, Leeper, & Piquero, 1998). Most of these mid-size departments have surrounding populations of around 50,000 to 500,000 people (Weber et al., 1998). The police department itself was first developed in the late 1880s and only had several patrol officers. As the surrounding city grew, so did the police department. The police department first started using Facebook in the year 2009. In 2011, the police department officially established its presence on social media. The chief of police implemented what is now known as the Community Integration and Services Unit.

Concepts

To explore how a police department utilizes Facebook, several characteristics of social media need to be conceptualized. The concepts of social media that are found by analyzing Facebook help gauge social media as a tool for COP. The frequency of posts, the type of posts, types of interactions, who makes the posts, policies surrounding social media, and the changing of social media platforms play a role in analyzing social media content.

Frequency of Posts. The frequency of posts, or how often social media posts are published online, can impact how a social media website is viewed by other online users. The frequency of posts can also impact how online users interact with that social media page (Lieberman et al., 2013). A study conducted by Lieberman and colleagues (2013) found that the frequency of posting social media messages was not dependent upon the size of the police department. However, the frequency of posts by the police department was found to be related to the type of message that is posted online. Overall, the study conducted by Lieberman and

colleagues (2013) indicated that police departments who posted frequently were more likely to post crime-related posts as compared to the police departments who posted less frequently.

Police departments who post frequently also allow online users to encounter their content more often. For instance, if a police department often posts safety tips on its Facebook page, there is a greater chance that online users will see at least one post about a safety tip from that department. If a police department is infrequently posting, online users are less likely to see a post from that department. Furthermore, the frequency of posts and the type of posts published can affect how often the public interacts with a police department through social media (Lieberman et al., 2013).

Types of Posts. The types of post that a police department may post to a social media website can vary. The study conducted by Lieberman and colleagues (2013) indicated that there are multiple types of posts online that can be categorized. Lieberman indicated that police departments can publish crime, public relations, officer injured, alerts, direct communication, tips, DUI, missing persons, directions to services, recruitment, and other types of posts online. Videos and photographs are also commonly posted on police department social media accounts. The results of the study found that around 50% of the total posts published by the largest 61 police departments in the United States had crime-related posts. These types of posts consisted of information from a recent crime that had occurred or that a successful arrest had taken place. Public relation types of posts were the second largest category of posts to be posted. These types of posts were categorized as posts that relayed community interest stories that were not related to a police department's traditional mission of policing (Lieberman et al., 2013, p. 450).

Other types of posts analyzed by Lieberman and colleagues (2013) involved posts that served as a memorial or in memory of posts for injured officers. Alerts usually involved real-

time warnings of situations happening in a community (i.e., traffic accidents, lockdowns, or evacuations). Posts labeled as "tip" usually informed community members on how to prevent crimes or use self-protection. Missing person posts were very infrequent according to Lieberman and his colleagues (2013) as they were found to only make up around 1.6% of all posts. Missing person posts generally involved Amber Alerts or missing person stories. Lastly, the other category of posts involved information that did not fit into any other category.

　　　　Types of Interactions. The types of interactions that occur between online users on Facebook may include textual posts, comments on posts, likes, shares, and reactions. Likes conceptually represent a user feeling positive towards the subject matter that was posted on Facebook. A like is represented by a thumb up symbol that was created by Facebook. Online users can use the like symbol to let the user who posted the content know that they have acknowledged the post and that they typically have a positive perception of that post. The share option on Facebook allows users to share, or distribute, that post to their own personal friends and followers on Facebook. This typically introduces the idea they want their own followers to be aware and see the content that was shared. In addition, reactions were recently introduced to Facebook in February of 2016 (Facebook, 2017). The reactions come in the form of a wow, sad, laughing, or crying face, and a heart-shaped reaction. The reactions are meant to represent basic human emotions and mirror those emotions onto a Facebook post. The heart-shaped reaction implies that a user loves a post more so than just liking a post.

　　　　Lieberman and colleagues (2013) examined the number of likes and comments on the largest 61 police department social media accounts. The results of their study indicated that a large percentage of users is more likely to like and comment on an injured-officer and direct communication post. However, the results also hinted that crime-related posts are the least likely

to receive interactions from users. Results furthermore indicated that other posts that go against traditional law enforcement missions of policing receive high numbers of comments from online users. Overall, the results of the study indicated that injured officer posts, direct communications posts, and other posts receive the highest number of interactions from online users.

Staff Members. Types of posts may also be correlated with who is posting the content online and the level of professionalism used in a post (Schneider, 2016). Police professionalism online is usually associated with how a message is conveyed to an online audience (Schneider, 2016). This usually includes leaving personal biases out of messages and remaining an a-political organization (Schneider, 2016). It is usually the role of the staff member or supervisor who posts content to Facebook to decide what degree of professionalism will be used. In terms of this study, the staff member who is most familiar with the posted content on Facebook is the chief of Police. The chief has been present in the department since the department first implemented its social media officer.

Platform Changes. Social media is constantly changing as technology advances (Facebook, 2017). Facebook changes often in both overall design of the platform and new options for users. When Facebook was first introduced in 2004, only college students had access to the platform (Facebook, 2017). As Facebook then began to gain popularity, more and more colleges were given access for their students to access the website (Facebook, 2017). By the year 2007, Facebook was open to any person who was above the age of 13 and had an email account (Facebook, 2017). In 2011, the design of Facebook drastically changed again. This new design allowed users to add a cover picture to their personal profile and the timeline was introduced (Facebook, 2017). A timeline allows users to see content their online friends post and share with them and their other friends. A timeline is a visual representation of photos, videos, textual posts,

and comments that a friend has created him or herself or has shared from someone's else profile.

The timeline shows content that was posted in a reverse-chronological order (Facebook, 2017).

Facebook began to change how people could interact with another online user's content

as well. As previously discussed, Facebook developed the reactions to a post in 2016 (Facebook,

2017). Facebook also incorporated a live video option so that users can broadcast or stream video

directly from their phone to other Facebook users in real time (Facebook, 2017). Facebook's

design does not remain stagnant for long. Due to the frequently changing nature of Facebook,

new features provide new ways for users to interact with one another. More so, the police

department in this study has used Facebook since the year 2009. Since the police department in

question has used Facebook since 2009, the layout of how Facebook used to be compared to how

it is now may impact how the police department has changed how it interacts with online

communities. Furthermore, the policy analysis and interview provided more insight into how the

police department's online interactions have changed with the design of Facebook.

Policy Guidelines. Police departments require specific guidelines to be followed for

social media to be posted online. Policies are usually implemented as a protocol or procedure to

be followed to achieve a rational outcome for an organization (Courts Find Police Department,

2017). Many social networking policies exist to make sure that public content is kept

professional and represents their department accurately. The Public Concern Provision insinuates

that police officers can post comments on social media that address public concerns as long as

the comments do not disturb the workforce or organization (Courts Find Police Department,

2017). The policy also indicates that whatever public content is posted by the police department

should not undermine the public confidence in the police officer (Courts Find Police Department,

2017). This study examined the policies of the mid-sized police department and how it has changed over time.

Data Collection

Primary data for this study includes data from Facebook and the interview. The first piece of data collected was the police department's Facebook information. To correctly identify the medium-sized police department's official Facebook page, the official website must be distinguished through Facebook's official check-mark, or badge symbol. Facebook identifies official public figures, companies or brands, and celebrities with blue badges (Facebook, 2017). Facebook also recognizes and confirms an official page for a business or organization through a gray badge (Facebook, 2017). The police department that was examined possesses a gray badge next to the name of its organization at the top of its profile page. The data collected from the official police department Facebook page consisted of posts created from November 2017 to November 2016.

The Facebook posts included content such as pictures, videos, and textual posts (that only included words and dialogues). From each post, the researcher counted the number of likes (blue thumb emojis), the number of shares, the number of reactions (wow, sad, laughing, and crying face emojis and heart-shaped reactions), and the number of comments by other Facebook users. These different types of reactions are shown in Appendix A. The researcher developed a Microsoft Excel sheet to document the number of interactions on each Facebook post created by the police department. Each post was numbered, and the date that the police department posted each post to Facebook was documented on the Excel sheet as well. The distinct types of posts were also recorded by the researcher and the criteria for each post type can be found in Appendix

B. Each post was categorized as either a public relation, crime alert, crime safety tip, missing persons, memorial, general alert, or other type of post.

The researcher also collected the description of each post from Facebook. The descriptions consisted of short fragments pulled directly from the textual portion of each post. From the descriptions pulled, the researcher was also able to categorize the posts into themes. The different posts were categorized into three different themes: community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving. To categorize these themes, the researcher used the definitions provided by the COPS office. Community partnerships are defined as the collaboration between an agency and the individuals or organizations in the community to build trust and develop solutions to issues in that community (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, p. 2). Organizational transformations consisted of posts that the departments management and personnel used to support partnerships and problem solving within the community (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, p. 2). Lastly, problem solving consisted of posts that engaged in the proactive identification of issues within the community and developed a way to resolve those issues with community members (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, p. 2). All of the themes, interactions, photos/video, and post types were columnized separately and coded appropriately. The post was coded with a "0" if it did not contain any of the relevant information. The post was coded with a "1" if it did contain the relevant information.

Next, the researcher interviewed with the chief of police at the medium-sized police department. The chief of police oversees posting content to the police department's official social media websites. The interview used open-ended questions in an unstructured form, as to make the interview more conversational. Open-ended interview questions are the most common type of questions used in case studies (Yin, 1989). Furthermore, open-ended questions allow an

interviewee to provide an opinion-based answer to a question (Yin, 1989). Close-ended questions may not be able to provide this type of insight when dealing with experienced law enforcement personnel.

The chief of police was interviewed by only one person. Answers were documented by writing down the content of the responses to the questions. The interview was also voice recorded during the interview after gaining the permission of the chief to do so. All of the interview questions can be found in Appendix C. Furthermore, the interview questions solicited insight from the police department on the use of Facebook to piece together any information that shows the police department may be using some form of COP through Facebook.

The final portion of data collection for this research study consisted of reading over the previous social media policy implemented by the medium-sized police department. Due to the overall importance, documents play a critical role in any data collection in case studies (Yin, 1989). It is advised by scholars that access should be arranged for examining the files of documents promptly (Yin, 1989). The social media policies used in the study were accessed through permission of the chief of police at the medium-sized police department. The documents were compared in a manner that allowed the researcher to note the changes of social media use over time.

The police department examined also had some recent organizational changes. The police department had a Public Information Officer (PIO) who was mainly in charge of updating the Facebook page for the department. However, the PIO left the department and a new PIO was recently hired to take over the position. The researchers felt it was necessary to also examine the job posting for the hired PIO. This gave an insight into what the department what was looking

for in the duties to be performed by the PIO. A document containing this information was

released by the chief of the department to the researchers.

Content Analysis

   This research study used a content analysis to analyze the information gained through the

interviews, policy, and Facebook data collection from the mid-sized police department. A

content analysis is a methodological examination of a body of writings (Creswell, 2007; Yin,

1984). The goal of a content analysis is to allow the researcher to make inferences from a body

of qualitative data (Creswell, 2007). The body of texts analyzed in this study consists of

transcripts of the interviews, policies, and data collected from Facebook. The analytical stage in

a case study involves organizing the material data from the collected sources (Creswell, 2007).

The transcripts of the interviews, the policy documents, and the data collected in the spreadsheet

in Microsoft Excel were first be organized. A content analysis then required the data to be

reduced into themes from a process of coding and condensing the coding (Creswell, 2007). Once

the data was coded and descriptively analyzed, the results of the analysis were projected into

figures, tables, and a discussion (Creswell, 2007).

   The content analysis revolved around three main theoretical concepts of COP:

organization transformation, problem solving, and community partnerships (U.S. Department of

Justice, 2014). These three concepts of COP framed the analysis of the interview, the policies,

the job posting, and the Facebook data. This ensured that the content analysis measured COP.

The researcher looked for keywords related to community partnerships, organizational

transformations, and problem solving throughout the data collected.

   The best approach to a content analysis is for a researcher to read over the body of text

several times (Creswell, 2007). The researcher read over all the policies implemented by the

police department several times, including the job posting. The same was done for the interview

transcript. Reading over the documents several times immerses the researcher in the minute

details of the material (Creswell, 2007). This also allows the researcher to gain an overview of

the material before it is categorized (Creswell, 2007). Experts indicate that researchers should

also write memos in the margins of the transcripts when a pattern or theme is noticed in the text

(Creswell, 2007).

Research states that a case study content analysis should analyze each piece of data

separately (Yin, 1984). In an indirect interpretation, a researcher examines a single instance and

then pulls apart the data to put it back together in a meaningful way (Creswell, 2007, p. 163). In

relation to this study, the policy documents, Facebook data, and interview answers were analyzed

separately to pull apart the data and were then triangulated to form an overall theme of all data

pieces. A content analysis looks for patterns and themes between two or more categories from

where the data is collected (Creswell, 2007). Naturalistic generalization can then be made from

analyzing the data (Creswell, 2007). In relation to this study, a naturalistic generalization was

only made about the mid-sized police department itself.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability aims to limit the error and bias in a study (Ying, 1989). Furthermore,

reliability is an assessment tool used to determine the stability and consistency of the results of a

study (Creswell, 2007). Interrater reliability was used in this research study to ensure that the

data collection and coding from Facebook and the results of the content analysis were consistent.

Interrater reliability involves having multiple coders analyze transcript data (Creswell, 2007).

Interrater reliability usually involves the coders to agree on the codes, themes, and/or both codes

and themes (Creswell, 2007). Usually, the process involves the coders reading the transcripts

separately and making a list of their own coding (Creswell, 2007). The researchers independently

coded the transcripts separately and then met with the other coders. The coders decided on where

the three main concepts of COP were found throughout the data collected.

Validity in qualitative research wants to establish trustworthiness of a study (Creswell,

2007). Other terms, such as credibility, have been used to describe how validity works in a

qualitative research study (Creswell, 2007). To ensure credibility in a qualitative study, repetition

is often used (Creswell, 2007). A researcher must pick apart the pieces of the data and then

compile the data to gain a whole perspective of the project (Creswell, 2007). Validity helps

ensure that the pieces of data are analyzed individually and then triangulated to accurately

describe the overall results of the analysis. This study ensured validity by analyzing three

separate pieces of data. "In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and various sources,

methods, investigations, and theories to provide corroborating evidence" (Creswell, 2007, p.

208). The data collection from the interviews, policy analysis, and the Facebook information

ensured validation of the research project.

Research also recommends that qualitative researchers should engage in several forms of

validation if possible (Creswell, 2007). Along with triangulating several forms of data, this

research project also utilized peer reviews of the research process. Utilizing peer reviews in a

research project helps keep the researcher honest and on track with using the correct

methodology for the study (Creswell, 2007).

Conclusion of Methodology

Little research exists on how police departments specifically use Facebook as a method

of communication towards a given community (Clancy, 2016; Heverin & Zach, 2010; Meijers &

Thaens, 2013). Interviews, policy analysis, and data collection from Facebook were used in the

study. A content analysis was also used to analyze the case study. Coding and categorizing the body of texts analyzed plays an intricate role in a content analysis research study (Creswell, 2007). From the database, the three main concepts that outline COP were concluded from the analysis and helped determine how the mid-sized police department utilizes Facebook.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYTICAL RESULTS

Community-oriented policing (COP) is often used as an umbrella term to loosely describe the changes and programs that a police department implements to help solve widely occurring problems in a community (Goldstein, 1987). These programs and changes to a police department come in various forms (Goldstein, 1987). These programs can also widely be named as different acronyms, but all have the same goal of increasing the quality of life for community members through police actions (Goldstein, 1987). The current study examined one police department and how it utilizes social media as a potential tool for COP.

The current study applied a content analysis to fully examine how the police department may potentially use Facebook as a tool to implement COP. The content analysis consisted of a social media policy provided by the police department, a job posting of the new Public Information Officer (or Social Media Officer) position, a transcript of an interview with the chief of police for the department, and information collected directly from the police department Facebook page. The framework for the content analysis revolved around three main themes derived from COP literature: organizational transformation, problem solving, and community partnerships (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). Throughout the content analysis of the data, these three themes helped the researcher determine if COP was present in the department's utilization of Facebook.

Policy Document

The social media policy provided by the police department was analyzed using the three main themes of COP. The social media policy was directly provided to the researcher from the chief of police of the examined police department. The policy document is titled "As the Public Information Procedures/Media Policy". The policy was reviewed on September 18, 2017 and

became effective on January 30, 2018. The sections of the policy include the purpose, policy, definitions, procedures for the release/authorization to release, entry of the media to crime or serious incident scenes, individual/association/organization news releases, civilian crime prevention and community involvement specialist, civilian crime prevention and community involvement specialist federal public information duties, publications, media participation in policy development, and public information officer training.

The purpose of the policy, as indicated by the document, is to provide systematic guidelines for the department to follow when distributing information to community members and other media sources. The policy also mainly guides the PIO in how to communicate with the general public and perform the essential duties required in the job position. The policy indicates that it is imperative for the PIO to prepare and distribute news releases in a timely manner. Other personnel of the department must also give the PIO news-worthy information in a timely manner. The PIO should respond to day-to-day requests from the news media for information about departmental activities and coordinate information to other units or agencies who report on information regarding the department. The PIO will also release information about victims, witnesses, and suspects if deemed necessary to inform other agencies or the community. To further understand the role of the PIO position and the role of social media in the police departments functions, the three main COP themes were coded and analyzed throughout the policy document.

Community Partnerships. Throughout the policy document provided by the examined police department, the theme of community partnership between the police department personnel and the community is present. The purpose statement of the policy includes the theme of community partnerships between the police department, the media, and the citizens. Community

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partnerships can occur between the police and government agencies, community members, non-profit organizations, private commercial businesses, and the media (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, p. 2). The very purpose of this policy is to ensure that the media and citizens are informed in a systematic method about information that revolves around the police department. Furthermore, the PIO position is also referred to as the civilian Crime Prevention and Community Involvement Specialist. Community involvement and outreach is one of the main duties of the PIO position. Community involvement and outreach is the fundamental basis of community partnerships.

Section two of the policy also indicates that the PIO should maintain community outreach to community members and the media through social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter. The PIO needs to maintain community outreach in order to keep community members advised of departmental matters. Section four and part B of the policy also indicate that it needs to be a priority for the PIO to establish and maintain a good relationship with employees of the department and employees of media outlets. It is made evident in this section that the PIO must respond to day-to-day requests from media sources as it is an Operation Directive of this policy.

Throughout section four of this policy, it is stated several times that the PIO will coordinate and authorize the release of important news to the public and media sources. It is also stated that the coordinated information can be disseminated to other units, agencies, or bureaus that will also generate press releases. Furthermore, section five of the policy indicates that media personnel will be accommodated and allowed to enter scenes (when possible) by a department supervisor so that more news can be generated. If the media personnel cannot enter a scene for fear of tampering with evidence, then they will be further accommodated by the PIO through a staged area so that the news can still be generated. The premise of the PIO, other department

employees, and outside personnel (i.e., media employees) collaborating to release news is very much present throughout the sections of the policy.

Using social media for community outreach is also shown throughout the policy sections. Part D of section four indicates that social media should be used to reach specific community members by the PIO. Youth and potential police recruits are specifically identified as a target audience to connect to through social media by the PIO. The policy also ensures that the department contact information is clearly stated on all social media websites and platforms. This allows open contact for any community members or media personnel who need to further contact the police department. Lastly, another element of community partnership present in this policy is in section 10. This section specifically indicates that the media is encouraged to help form and critique this policy to better suite the needs of the public. Collaboration between the department, media, and the public is necessary in ensuring that the public is benefiting from the PIO and social media use.

Organizational Transformations. Elements of internal organizational transformations are also present throughout the examined social media policy. Organizational transformations within a police department include the need for an organization to adopt modern management strategies through organization, employees, and technology (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). The need for COP is emphasized through agency management, organized structure, personnel, and technology (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, p. 4). The purpose section of the examined policy calls for a systematic method for distributing information to the media and community members. A systematic method refers to the way the department organizes and manages the release of information to the public. Personnel such as the PIO and the chief of police are at the heart of this organization. Social media such as Facebook also plays a role in this systematic

distribution. Section four, part E of the policy states that the department social media page and its content must be approved by the chief or his designee before being distributed to the public.

Departmental staff who play a role in distributing information over social media are referenced numerous times throughout the policy. The chief, his designee, acting chief, and the PIO are all mentioned throughout the examined social media policy. The chief and his designee especially play a role in leadership of the department. The policy also describes the method in which the PIO will respond to incidents if an on-scene presence is required by the PIO. Specifically, it is the duty for other department personnel to tell the PIO of any serious incidents that require news coverage. This demonstrates the internal organization of the department to distribute information to the public.

The examined policy also specifically addresses organizational transformation throughout the department by indicating how employees of the department are allowed to release or comment on media sources. The department policy indicates that there are at least 12 incidents that employees cannot release to or through the media without permission of the chief or his designee. These factors consist of commenting on sensitive information related to the accused, identifying a victim if that information can put the victim in harm or impacts a department investigation, a comment about any medical condition of any suspects, witnesses, or victim, and so on. Departmental and organization transformation play a large role in the social media policy through leadership positions in the department, moving information internally through the department, and by incorporating public (i.e., media personnel) perspectives into the content of the social media policy.

Problem Solving. Problem solving is not as apparent in the social media policy as compared to community partnership and organizational transformation elements. Firstly,

problem solving in community policing is underscored by the importance of being proactive in distributing information to the public (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). The examined social media policy emphasizes the importance of making sure that notifications are distributed over social media and to media personnel in a timely manner. The policy also wants to ensure that information is given to the PIO from other department employees in a timely fashion when possible. Keywords such as "timely manner" and "timely fashion" are shown several times throughout the policy. Specifically, part B of section four of the examined policy specifically states that the PIO needs to distribute newsworthy information to the public in a timely fashion. Several other sections in the policy also inform other department employees who may be filling in for the PIO at incident scenes that they must inform the PIO of relevant information as soon as possible and practical, but no later than the end of their shift. This timely fashion ensures that the public is informed about events and occurrences in the community as soon as possible. This is a form of proactively distributing information to the public.

Elements that promote problem solving in the community are also present in the policy through the implementation of developing new plans and programs to meet specific needs of the community through the PIO position. Section eight of the examined policy indicates that one of the main duties of the PIO should be to design and develop these new plans and programs to meet specific needs for social networking and community relations. Problem solving specifically geared towards outside media personnel is also present within the policy. Section 10 of the policy specifies that if any department employees have any complaints about outside media people, they should file a complaint internally to the PIO with further details. The PIO then will contact the employee who filed the complaint about the outcome of his or her complaint.

Overall, there is an indication that community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving are present in the department social media policy. Keywords and statements in the various sections of the policy were compared to the definitions of the COP themes. This guided the researcher in determining what themes were present throughout the analyzed policy. A transcript of the interview with the chief of police for the examined police department was also analyzed by looking for keywords and statements that relate to the COP themes.

Interview Transcript

An interview with the chief of police for the examined police department was conducted by the researcher. The interview lasted around 50 minutes and was conducted at the chief's office at the police department headquarters. The interview was voice-recorded by the permission of the chief on the researcher's cellphone. To help better understand the content of the interview and analyze the interview for COP themes, the interview was transcribed into dialogue on paper.

After the interview was fully transcribed into text, the interview resulted in having over nine pages of content. Several of the questions and answers in the interview did not necessarily have a theme of COP in them, but they did pertain to how the police department uses social media and how it has changed over time. Thus, it is relevant and important to discuss these questions and answers to better understand the role of social media and COP in the examined police department.

The first question asked by the researcher, as shown in Appendix C, led the chief of police to discuss the role of the social media officer in the department further. The chief had a thorough answer to this question and explained that the PIO position was developed in the year

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2000 before he was chief of the department. The position was specially requested by the previous

chief when he first came into that position. During the interview, the chief of the department also

recognized that Facebook and social media have changed since 2000. He specifically stated that

communication over social media has drastically changed to media posts and texts and away

from in-person communication over the years.

The chief also commented about the transition changes in the PIO position for the

department. The first PIO for the department was hired in 2000 and left in the year 2013. The

PIO position was then filled until February of 2018 when the last PIO civilian left the office. The

chief stated that a new PIO position was being filled at the end of March 2018 by a female

civilian who was previously employed in the communications industry. Given the opportunity of

a change in the PIO position, the researcher asked for the job posting of the position and if any

new changes would be made to the position as the new employee joined the department. The

chief responded that the department was not necessarily looking for any organizational changes

with the new PIO employee. The chief indicated in the interview that the previous PIO

technologically advanced the department in its communication methods during his time at the

department. In other words, the PIO helped guide the department in implementing social media

and technology into the department to better communicate with the public. Due to this

advancement by the previous PIO, the chief is content with how the department is currently

using social media and communicating with the public.

The researcher also asked the chief about the types of social media platforms used in the

police department. The response indicated that Facebook was first implemented into the

department and used by the PIO because it appeared to be the platform most widely used by the

general public. The response also indicated that the department has a city webpage in

conjunction with the city fire, EMS, dispatch, street services, and parks services. The department

also currently has a Twitter account. This question also led the chief to respond that although the

department is not looking to expand much technologically, it may perhaps implement Instagram

or Snapchat to reach a younger audience once the new PIO is hired.

The researcher also asked the chief during the interview about the specific types of social

media that the department does not use. The response indicated that the chief used to blog in

order to answer random questions asked by the community. However, the chief indicated that it

became difficult to introduce new ideas and material to the community through the blogs. It was

also difficult for the chief to find time throughout the day to blog, as the PIO was not put in

charge of the blogging website.

Questions that pertained directly to the department's use of Facebook were also asked by

the researcher. Specifically, the researcher asked what the privacy settings on the department

Facebook page are and who can comment and post to the page. The response to this question

indicated that the public can comment and post to the page as they please. However, the

department does have a disclaimer stating that derogatory posts or posts that contain bad

language will be taken down from the page. The chief also stated that, while it is infrequent,

individuals will post text with inappropriate language or inappropriate pictures that will also be

taken down immediately.

Another question asking about the process of developing a response to a comment on

Facebook was also asked by the researcher. The answer to this question stated that there is not

necessarily a process for developing a comment to a community member's comment. However,

if a supervisor in the department notices a comment that contains a valid concern by a citizen, it

will be brought to the attention of the chief or the PIO. It was noted by the chief that there is a

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concern about starting an angry discussion over a social media page and that an angry discussion over the Internet could hurt the image of the department. Furthermore, if a comment or concern from a community member is especially derogatory, the post may be taken down or responded to in a way that indicates that the individual does not have the correct factual information.

The researcher then asked the chief if the majority of interactions between community members and the department on Facebook are generally positive or negative. The chief's response indicated that the majority of the interactions are positive. An example of community members defending a post by the police department was explained by the Chief. This example revealed that a post from the department sparked a discussion throughout the community and distinct individuals in the community rallied to defend the honor of the officers depicted in the post. Many of the citizens stated that they appreciate what the officers do in their day-to-day functions. Many of the questions asked by the researcher also produced answers from the chief that relate to community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving.

Community Partnerships. During the interview with the chief of police for the examined police department, the researcher asked if the chief could explain further how the role of the PIO position was established. In relation to community partnerships, the chief indicated that the department needed an employee who could take the time to further engage with inquiries from new media agencies and the general public. Specifically, the chief stated, "At that point, we saw a need to have somebody that could respond to press releases or inquiries from the news or the general public." This signified that community partnerships with the general public and news personnel is the root cause for the development of the PIO position. Furthermore, the chief indicated that the department wanted more than just to have an automated voicemail message or a call-back option for people to contact the department. The need for community members to be

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able to talk directly to an employee representing the department was felt to be a necessity for the

department. The theme of community partnerships only works if the public is able to contact

individuals who work for a police department to build relations and trust. Trust and relations

cannot be built if individuals contact a police department but are not able to speak to an

employee about their concerns or questions.

 As the interview continued, the chief of the department explained that the previous PIO

facilitated community interactions, engagements, and events to further connect and communicate

with the public. It was specified that these events could range from engaging with young children

to senior adults in nursing homes. The chief indicated, "Also that our community interaction,

community engagement, and the community-oriented events that we facilitate stay scheduled,

enrolled, or embedded in participating and seeking out new ways that we can engage everything

from young kids to senior adults." These types of interactions that include various age groups

help ensure that everyone in the community is able to connect with the PIO and the police

department in some manner. Furthermore, the chief stated that the department utilizes a bilingual

officer who speaks Spanish to translate some of its online videos for the city's Latino population.

Again, the police department is concerned about connecting with a larger and diverse audience

through social media and its community-oriented events.

 The chief also indicated in the interview that community partnerships between the media

and the department take place frequently. Specifically, it was revealed that sometimes a post on

the department Facebook page posted by an officer will catch the interest of a local television

network or newscaster. The chief stated, "Local correspondents will call and ask if they can get

an interview with the officer who helped a lady change her car tire or one with the officer who

helped their dogs get back to their owner." These community partnerships between the local

media and the police department are emphasized numerous times throughout the interview with the chief of police.

Perhaps the community partnership between the department and the local media personnel is enhanced through the actions of the PIO. Specifically, the chief talked about the role of the previous PIO and how an annual media day was conducted. Once a year all of the media and TV affiliates would gather at the police academy at the department. The PIO and the media personnel would discuss the successes of some media reports from throughout the year and situations where perspectives differed between the two. This annual gathering would also give the media personnel police-based scenarios (i.e., chasing a suspect) and then the media personnel would discuss the functions of their own jobs. The chief stated that this would give both the media and the police officers an understanding of both job functions. Furthermore, the interview indicated that the chief believed that this allowed the two agencies to grow and understand each other better.

After asking about the purpose of using social media in the department, the researcher was left with an answer that suggested a strong sense of community partnership between community members and the department. The chief stated that social media helps convey the very mission of the organization through engaging with the community to better understand the functions and services that the department provides. Furthermore, social media helps bring light to the many events and programs that the department incorporates into its everyday functions. Specifically, officers helping young children with homework or visiting senior citizens in retirement homes are often shown on Facebook. These types of scenarios suggest that community partnerships are taking place and by using social media in the department, many

other individuals in the community are able to see these departmental partnerships and events

taking place.

      Organizational Transformation. One role of organizational transformation in a police

department is utilizing technology to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of COP (U.S.

Department of Justice, 2014). In the interview conducted by the researcher, the chief of police

for the examined department was asked about the role of social media in the department. The

answer to this question insinuated that social media, and especially Facebook in the early 2000s,

began to be used by the department as the public began to frequently post to online platforms and

make less phone calls. Specifically, he stated, "Folks were communicating far less by voice and

far more by text and posted media. We saw an opportunity there to kind of use it and harness the

power of the Internet and use it in a positive light to keep citizens reprised of what the police

department does." This spurred the department to also incorporate Facebook into its everyday

functions so that community members would be more likely to communicate with the

department over these platforms. Furthermore, incorporating social media into its everyday

functions would still keep the community involved and aware of what was occurring in the

department.

      As a police department needs to fundamentally progress, training and learning

opportunities need to be available for employees (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). During the

interview, the chief of the police department stated that the new PIO will attend a litany of

classes to get trained and certified as a crime prevention specialist. The training, along with the

PIO's communication background, will enable her to conduct interviews and work in

conjunction with news agencies on behalf of the department. It was also indicated that the new

PIO will be asked for ideas for new programs that can be implemented in the department to

further connect with community. It was then stated that some of the new video series that the

chief wants to create for the department social media accounts will be examined on their

effectiveness through scientific research. Transformation in an organization is implementing new

programs and examining their effectiveness to see if they are improving the role of the

department in a community.

One specific question asked by the researcher directly inquired about the hierarchy of

approval for a social media post to be posted to a department social media website. The answer

insinuated that the department social media policy defines this process. If a post includes the use

of a department logo, badge, or the name of the police department, it must be approved by the

chief or the chief's designee. If an officer would like to post a picture of him or herself playing

with kids in the community while the officer is in uniform, it must first be approved. However,

the conversation with the chief implied that most of the time the posts will be approved to be

posted to the department social media accounts. However, if an inappropriate post is found on a

department social media page, it will be removed, and disciplinary actions will be taken against

that officer. This hierarchy of approval and leadership position (the role of the chief in approving

the posts) is a form of organizational transformation for a police department.

More elements of organizational transformation were discussed by the chief of the

department as the interview continued. Specifically, training by the chief is often conducted at

the department police academy over social media conduct. These training modules guide cadets

in knowing what they cannot post to department social media accounts, what is deemed as

inappropriate content, and websites that are prohibited to be visited. The chief also emphasized

that any confidential information that could harm the department or any employees cannot be

posted on any social media account. The department social media policy also provides further

guidance on inappropriate social media behavior by any department employee.

Organization transformation emphasizes the importance of structure and personnel in a

department to efficiently implement COP techniques (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). During

the interview, the chief stated that the PIO often works with the crime analysts in the department.

If there is a potential problem that is identified by a community member and brought to the

attention of the PIO through social media, that information is passed on to the crime analyst unit.

The chief indicated in the interview that the "Facebook feed is just another way for us to identify

where a potential problem exists. We have our crime analysts and we can divert circumstances to

them." This demonstrates the organization and flow of information that can stem from

community members and then be passed on to other department personnel.

Furthermore, the chief indicated that if another employee in the department, like a

detective, has a good idea for the implementation of a program that will benefit the organization,

it will be incorporated. However, if this program or idea is implemented and depicted in a post

online, it must first be approved by the chief. Lastly, organizational transformation is present in

the resource allocations as listed by the chief. Specifically, these include any initiatives portrayed

on a department social media account that are funded by the budget appropriated by the city, but

the costs of these programs cannot surpass the budget.

Problem Solving. The theme of problem solving was not as prevalent in the interview

with the chief of the examined police department as compared to community partnerships and

organizational transformation. However, areas of problem solving were somewhat discussed by

the chief when the researcher asked about the frequency of posts containing concerns and

complaints from citizens. The response by the chief insinuated that there are numerous concerns

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posted often by community members. He specifically indicated, "Sometimes they [citizens] will post about an abandoned auto in the 3500 block of Churchill Drive. We may not even know that there is an abandoned car there." These concerns expressed through social media inform officers about activities in the community that they may not otherwise be aware of and can act accordingly.

Furthermore, the chief implied that the hope is for citizens to see the complaint on the department social media page and then those citizens also see officers in the community responding to those concerns. This not only strengthens the image of the police department, but also allows community members to see that officers are actively solving problems within the community. The interview with the chief also implied that the majority of the complaints by citizens over social media come in the form of comments and posts on the department Facebook page. However, the chief suggested that the major noteworthy issues come in through the city's anonymous website.

The chief of the department also indicated in the interview that if a citizen has a complaint over social media about an employee of the department, someone in the department will reach out to that individual. The department will give the citizen a number to contact a person in the department to file the complaint. The chief stated that social media is a good tool to reach out to individuals who may have a discrepancy. He indicated, "There is a certain level of satisfaction for them as community members." From this statement, the chief of the department is arguing that Facebook allows officers to hear about new problems in the community, fix those problems, and give the community more satisfaction through this problem-solving tactic. In essence, social media is allowing the department to solve problems and address complaints from community members.

Conclusion of Themes. The interview with the chief of police for the department indicated that there is a somewhat open line of communication over the department Facebook page for community members. The interview concluded that any individual in the general public can view content and comment on any Facebook post associated with the department. However, if a post by a community member is inappropriate or contains extreme derogatory language, it can be removed from the page. This open line of communication provides community partnership to take place among the department and a wide array of individuals and organizations in the surrounding community. There also seems to be an indication that there is a strong connection between media personnel in the community and the police department. The annual media days and the relationship between the PIO and media agencies suggest that there is a partnership between the media and the examined police department.

Organizational transformation elements were also present in the interview with the chief. Including other department personnel, like detectives, in on developing and implementing social media events suggests that the department is structured in a way to continue improving community policing ideologies. The role of chief as a leadership position is also important in the hierarchy process of approving social media posts for the department social media accounts. Additionally, the PIO plays a large role in the department on deciding the programs, events, and content that will be posted to the department Facebook page. This role is defined more in the social media policy document and the Crime Prevention Specialist Job posting.

Lastly, elements of problem solving were not as prevalent in the interview as the themes of community partnerships and organization transformations. Problem solving was briefly touched on by the chief when discussing the concerns and complaints posted by community members to the department Facebook page. It was discussed that solving the problems in the

community that were expressed on social media is important to the chief, but is not necessarily

the primary reason of having social media in the department. This was discussed when the

researcher asked the chief what the primary purpose of social media is in the department. The

answer by the chief confirmed that the primary purpose of social media is to engage with the

community (community partnerships) and communicate the mission of the organization. This

answer by the chief did not incorporate the element of problem solving.

Crime Prevention Specialist Job Posting

As communicated in the interview with the chief of police for the examined police

department, a new PIO position needed to be filled for the organization. The researcher seized

the position vacancy as an opportunity to examine the job posting for the new PIO position. The

job posting was acquired by the chief of the department through email. The examination of the

policy can provide information on what the department is looking to change about the PIO

position when hiring a new employee. The job posting was analyzed to provide more context of

the role and duties of the new PIO position. The job posting was also analyzed to determine if

any themes of COP are present in the duties and responsibilities of the PIO position.

Before the job became vacant in the department, the position was titled as a Public

Information Officer position. However, the new job positing for the position is called a Crime

Prevention Specialist. The job posting is about three pages long and provides a description of the

job, examples of the job duties, essential duties and responsibilities, typical qualifications, and

other supplemental information. The COP themes exist in the description of the job, summary of

duties, essential duties and responsibilities, language skills, and reasoning ability.

Community Partnerships. The theme of community partnerships is present throughout

the job description and duties of the Crime Prevention Specialist. The description of the job in

the posting insinuates that public relations work is a primary duty of this position. This position will also require the applicant to participate in community initiatives and exchange information with the public about the department through social media. The summary of the job description also indicates that public relations with individuals in the community, businesses, and community groups is part of the duties performed in this position.

The essential duties section of the job posting also incorporates numerous community partnership elements. Specifically, the job duties explicitly state that the Crime Prevention Specialist needs to build community relationships through the exchange of information. The posting also explicitly describes building these community relationships by using community input and partnerships. The duties of the position also request that the Crime Prevention Specialist should encourage community members to participate in department initiatives. Furthermore, the job duties section of the posting describes the position as an acting liaison between community organizations and the department.

Other specific terminology used in the job posting also implies that some type of community partnership will exist between the Crime Prevention Specialist and the community. It is stated that the Crime Prevention Specialist will communicate information to the public through social media, email, presentations, and other methods. The employee must consult with businesses and provide these businesses with recommendations on how to improve their security measures. Other duties of the job ask that the employee schedules community group events and interaction activities with outside sources. Lastly, it is requested that the employee also participate and communicate with outside news personnel and sources. This is a form of community partnership between the Crime Prevention Specialist and media sources in the surrounding community.

Organizational Transformation. Organizational transformation intended for the examined police department is incorporated into the duties and responsibilities of the job posting. A primary responsibility for the Crime Prevention Specialist job is to help design and maintain numerous programs for the department. The programs mentioned in the job posting predominantly refer to crime prevention programs and community policing programs. The specificity of these programs is not listed in the job posting, but it is essential to the job duties that the Crime Prevention Specialist helps develop these programs further and implement them into the functions of the department.

The duties of the Crime Prevention Specialist job also require the hired employee to help make general suggestions for the department to improve police and community interactions. The department practices to improve these interactions are not specified in the job posting. Lastly, the Crime Prevention Specialist should help assist with the preparation of the department annual report. Developing new initiatives, reports, and programs for a department is a primary goal in the theme of organizational transformation (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

Problem Solving. Elements of problem solving are also present in the job duties and responsibilities for the newly hired Crime Prevention Specialist position. The theme of problem solving is probably most prevalent in the job posting when it is specified that the Crime Prevention Specialist should apply already-set departmental and U.S. Department of Justice crime prevention programs to meet community requirements. In other words, the newly hired employee must be able to help the community through crime prevention programs and strategies when necessary. Furthermore, problem solving is relevant in the job posting in the language skills and reasoning abilities section of the job posting. The hired employee must be able to problem solve by responding successfully to complaints and concerns from community

members. It is not stated what these complaints may consist of in the job posting. It is also stated

that the hired employee must be able to define posed problems, draw conclusions from those

problems, and solve those problems when necessary.

Comparison of Themes. While many of the job duties and responsibilities were only

relevant to one theme of COP, some of the job duties involved an overlap of two or three themes

for one description. An overlap of the job duties, descriptions, and responsibilities in relation to

the three community-oriented themes is also present in the job posting. A list of these

descriptions can be found in Figure 1.

Several descriptions were related to both community partnerships and organizational

transformation. Specifically, one job duty states that the Crime Prevention Specialist should

establish strategies to build community relations through an exchange of information with the

public. This exchange of information can be developed by the Crime Prevention Specialist to

further connect with the public by using videos, emails, the Internet, brochures, news releases,

presentations, crime maps, media outlets, public broadcasting, or other forms of connectivity.

The Crime Prevention Specialist should also improve the image of the police department by

having good relations and contact with individuals in the community and provide the community

with accurate information. Lastly, community partnerships and organizational transformations

are seen overall through the description of the role of creating educational brochures and flyers

to inform the community about issues in the community.

Overlap of community partnerships and problem solving was also present in some of the

job details for the Crime Prevention Specialist. One description of the duties informs applicants

that the hired employee must respond to and resolve citizen inquiries and complaints. The

responsibility of surveying residents and other organizations to evaluate security prevention

programs is also another part of the Crime Prevention Specialist position. These job duties and responsibilities both coincide with problem solving and community partnerships.

Organizational transformations and problem solving were also present in several job responsibility descriptions. Multiple descriptions of the role of the Crime Prevention Specialist indicated that the employee must design, maintain, and implement programs (organizational transformation) to help with crime preventions strategies (problem solving) for the community. These programs are designed by the hired employee to help the department and community implement the best strategy to help reduce crime in the community. Two of the job descriptions in the job posting mention the implementation and design of these programs.

Community Partnerships

- Public relations
- Individuals, businesses, and community groups
- Community initiatives
- Community Relationships
- Communicating Information
- Community Involvement
- Business association meetings
- Police-community interaction

- Established strategies to build community relationships
- Create educational brochures and flyers to inform community
- Maintains contact with media while providing the public with information

- Responds to and resolves citizen inquires and complaints
- Surveys residents and businesses to evaluate information regarding prevention programs

- Public relations work/development of crime prevention programs
- Community initiatives
- Conducts crime prevention training information for department staff and community organization

Organizational Transformation

- Development and implementation of programs, methods, and techniques
- Designs and maintains program
- Establishes strategies
- Assists in police planning
- Assists with design and preparation
- Suggest improvements in department practices

Problem Solving

- Crime prevention
- Crime prevention program(s)
- Ability to solve problems
- Respond effectively to inquiries and complaints
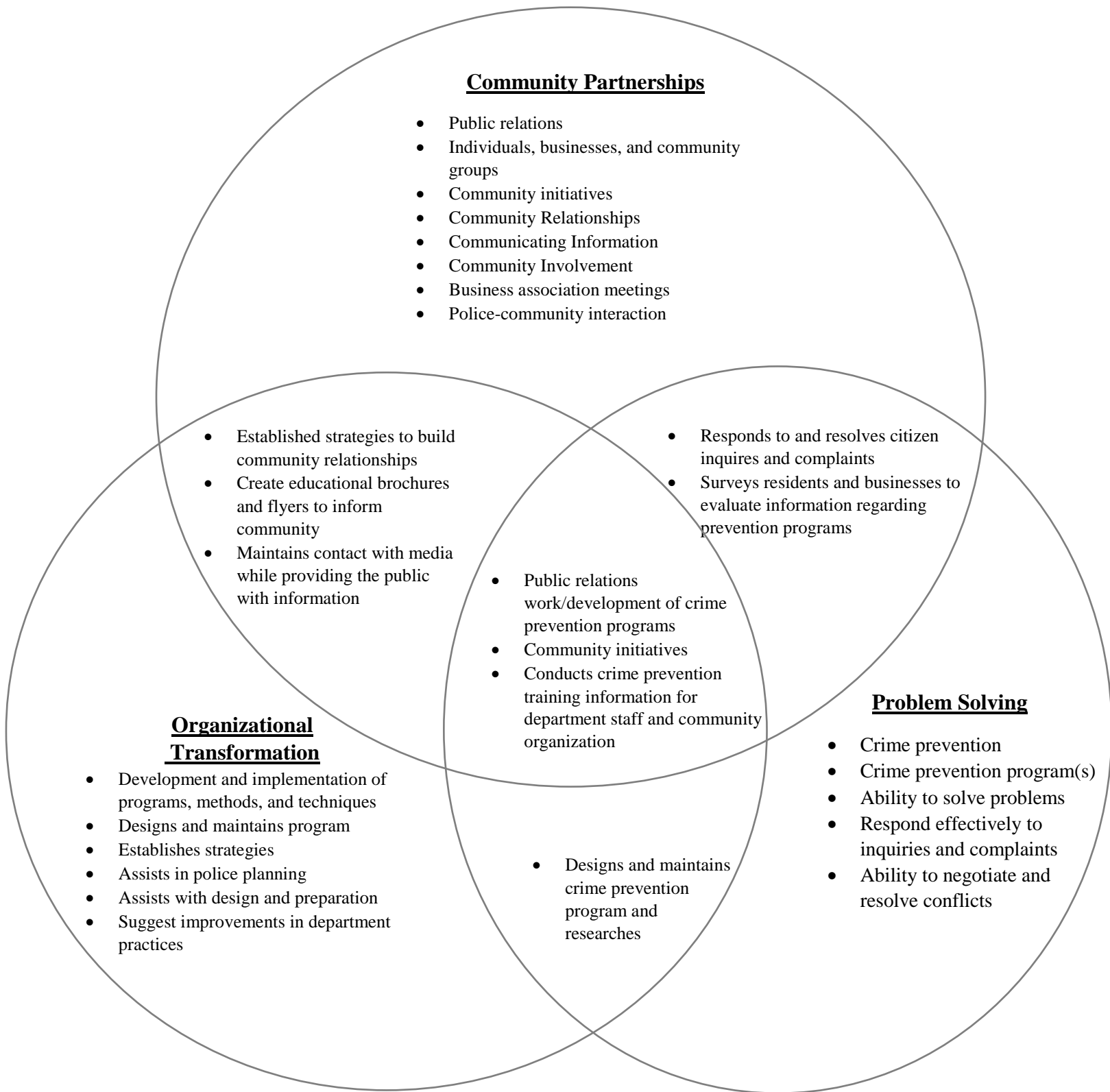- Ability to negotiate and resolve conflicts

- Designs and maintains crime prevention program and researches

Figure 1. Keywords in Job Posting Description

Lastly, Figure 1 shows the descriptions of several responsibilities of the job that incorporate all three COP themes. In the summary of the job duties in the job posting, it is stated that the applicant must perform public relations work for individuals, businesses, and community groups (community partnerships). This communication can also take place over social media. Furthermore, the summary states that the communication should include the discussion of crime prevention and community initiatives (problem solving). This discussion of crime prevention can be in the form of programs developed by the employee (organizational transformation).

One of the duty descriptions also states that the Crime Prevention Specialist will conduct crime prevention training (problem solving) programs for department staff (organizational transformation) and community organizations (community partnerships). Overall, the job posting for the new Crime Prevention Specialist position for the examined police department incorporated all three COP themes into the duties and responsibilities of the job.

Facebook Data

The last portion of the data analyzed for the research project consisted of the data collected from Facebook. The data was collected directly from the official Facebook page of the department. One year of Facebook data was collected by the researcher. The researcher first collected information from Facebook starting at November 30, 2017 and stopped the collection process at November 1, 2016. A total of 730 posts were collected from the Facebook page within the year. Furthermore, the description of the post, COP theme, number of interactions, and post type were collected and analyzed by the researcher. Table 1 represents the number of interactions that occurred with the total number of Facebook posts.

Table 1. Frequency of Interactions

Interactions	Sum	Percentage
Like Emoji	27054	64%
Shares	8997	21%
Love Emoji	2692	6%
Comments	2135	5%
Sad Emoji	789	2%
Wow Emoji	229	.5%
Angry Emoji	179	.4%
Haha Emoji	66	.2%
Total	**42141**	

Table 1 indicates that a total of 42,141 interactions took place with the 730 posts created in one year by the examined police department. The like emoji, or the thumbs up, was the most frequently used method to interact with a post, as it was used 27,054 times. Sharing a post from the police department was the second most frequently used type of interaction. Sharing was used 8,997 times by Facebook users in the examined year. The love emoji was the third most frequently used interaction by Facebook users toward the examined police department. This emoji was used 2,692 times to interact with a Facebook post. Commenting on a page was the fourth most frequently used method of interacting with a post and consisted of 2,135 total comments on a year's worth of posts. The sad emoji was used 789 times and the wow emoji was used 229 times by Facebook users. Lastly, the angry emoji was used 179 times and the Haha emoji was used the least amount of times, having only 66 interactions.

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In terms of percentages, the like interaction was used in over 64% of the interactions that took place on the department Facebook page in the examined year. Shares resulted in just over 21% of the interactions with the Facebook posts. Love emojis resulted in just over 6% of the total interactions for the year. Comments made up around 5% of the total interactions by the Facebook users. Sad emojis made up around 2% of the total interaction percentages and wow emojis made up around 0.5% of the total interactions. Lastly, the angry emoji made up around 0.4% of the interactions and the Haha emoji made up around 0.2% of the interactions with the Facebook posts.

Table 2 represents the total number of post types collected from Facebook. Each post type was classified as either a public relation, other, crime alert, crime safety tip, general alert, missing persons, or a memorial post. Some of the posts could also be a combination of post type. Specifically, a post could have been both a public relations post and a crime safety tip post. Several posts created by the examined police department depicted officers reading to children in a classroom. This would represent a public relations post as the officers are engaging with community members. However, this post also depicted officers reading books about domestic violence/abuse awareness to those children. Thus, this post would be classified as both a public relations and crime safety tip post. Numerous other combinations of post types were also found in the data.

Table 2. Frequency of Post Types

Post Type	Sum	Percentage
Public Relations	382	53%
Other Posts	206	29%
Crime Alerts	57	8%
Crime Safety Tips	47	7%
General Alerts	15	2%
Missing Persons	5	0.7%
Memorial	3	0.4%
Total	**715**	

In reference to Table 2, a percentage was totaled for each post type found within the examined police department Facebook page. The public relations post type had the most frequently posted content to the Facebook page. There was a total of 382 public relation posts created by the police department. Posts classified as "other" had the second highest frequency with a total of 206 posts. Crime alerts had a total of 57 posts and crime safety tips had a total of 47 posts from the department. Lastly, missing persons had a total of 5 posts and memorial had a total of 3 posts from the department.

A total number of 730 posts were collected as the sample size for the Facebook data. However, the data sum total for the post types is 715 total post types. While collecting the Facebook data, the researcher could not classify numerous posts posted by the examined police department. Numerous posts within the sample were either marked as profile or cover pictures

that the police department changed on its Facebook page. These pictures did not have any textual content; thus, they could not be classified into a post type.

The percentage for each post type was also calculated by the researcher. Public relations posts made up just over half of the post types by consisting of 53% of the posts created by the department. The other type of posts made up around 29% of the posts from the department. Crime alerts made up around 0.8% of the post types and crime safety tips made up around 7% of the posts. General alerts generated around 2% of the post types. Lastly, missing persons posts made around 1% of the posts and memorial posts consisted of around 0.4% of the post types for the department.

Overall, the police department posted around 382 posts consisting of public relations content. This content also depicted over half of the percentage of posts created by the department. Many of these post depicted officers interacting with children in youth programs and events, officers attending festivals and interacting with the community, or even officers visiting a nursing home to play bingo with the elderly. Other posts often depicted officers finding lost animals in the community or congratulating an officer on his or her retirement. While these post types helped the researcher analyze the various types of content found in each post, a separate analysis was also conducted to examine the COP themes found within the Facebook data.

Community-Oriented Themes. Community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving were all coded and analyzed for in the Facebook data. Figure 2 is a visual representation of the frequency that community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving were found in the Facebook posts. Posts that contained an element of community partnerships were the most frequently posted content by the examined department. There was a total of 492 posts that contained some form of community partnerships within the

post. Often, these posts would depict officers interacting with community members or

community organizations. Examples of this consisted of the department reading to children,

officers having coffee with community members, or the department volunteering at an animal

shelter.
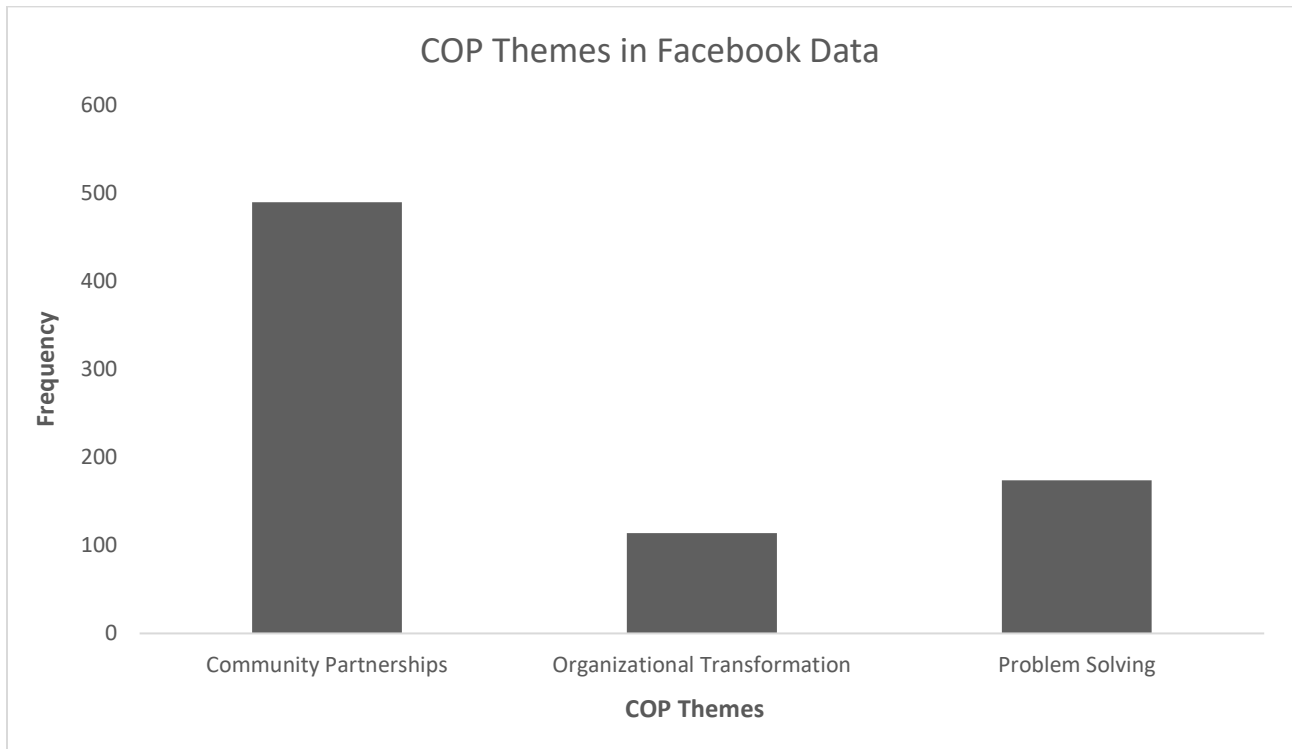
Figure 2. Frequency of Community-Oriented Themes

Problem solving content consisted of around 176 total posts. Posts containing problem

solving content often consisted of the examined department asking for tips or help from the

public on a case or identifying suspects in criminal cases. Organizational transformation

elements made up around 116 total posts for the department. Organization transformation posts

were the least used COP-themed posts found in the Facebook data. These posts often featured

department personnel, whether they were retiring, earning an award, graduating from academy,

or being promoted. All of the COP theme elements were found within the descriptions and

content of each post. To better understand the different types of COP-related posts, a further

analysis examining the post descriptions was conducted.

Descriptions of Posts. During the Facebook data collection process, the researcher

decided to collect the text descriptions of each Facebook post. The descriptions of the posts were

transcribed word-for-word as they were depicted on each Facebook post during the collection

process. The researcher gathered keywords from the descriptions and compiled a list of the

events, programs, training, celebrations, and other relevant information that pertained to

community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving within the

department. Figure 3 illustrates the different keywords and descriptions found within the

Facebook posts that pertain to the three COP themes. These descriptions provide examples of the

three themes, but do not contain all of the exact programs, events, or initiatives used by the

police department. However, the specific examples of the three COP themes found in the

Facebook posts provide more context of how the police department is using its Facebook

account.

First, community partnerships were widely represented in the data through events and

programs that feature specific populations in the surrounding community. Specifically, officers

interacting with children and the elderly were widely seen throughout the Facebook posts. Figure

3 references programs such as PR Reads, Homework Helpers, Community Youth Programs, and

Big Brothers Big Sisters that were shown throughout the posts. All of these programs center

around kids in the community. Furthermore, programs like Senior Sidekicks show officers

visiting the elderly in nursing homes where they would play bingo.

Community Partnerships

- PD Reads
- Visited Kids
- Homework Helpers
- Community Youth Program
- Senior Sidekicks
- PD Grill
- Community Walk
- Big Brothers Big Sisters

- Citizens Academy
- GTO Cadets

- Do You Know Me?
- Media Release about Case
- Safety Info for Kids

- Officer Recognized for Assistance in Case from another PD
- Missing Persons Day & Talking to Detectives

Problem Solving

- Drug Take Back Initiative
- Live Video about Issue in Department
- Annual Vin Etching Event

Organizational Transformation

- Retirement
- Graduating Police Academy
- Recruitment Video
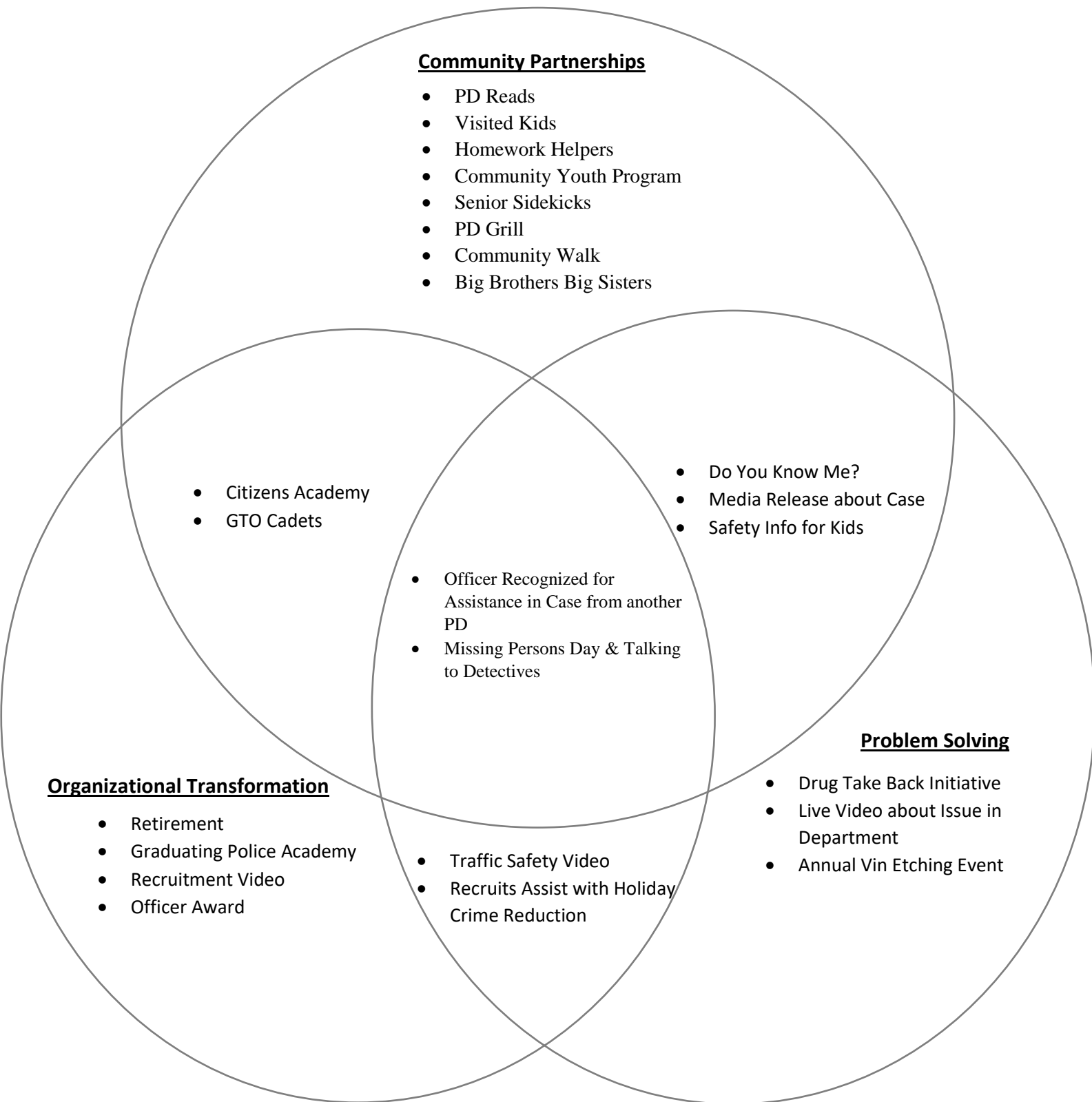- Officer Award

- Traffic Safety Video
- Recruits Assist with Holiday Crime Reduction

Figure 3. Facebook Post Descriptions

Other community partnership events showed officers grilling food around housing complexes for individuals to come and eat with the department staff. Other general community partnerships such as community and neighborhood walks were shown in the Facebook posts.

In terms of organizational transformations, many posts focused around the internal affairs of the police department. Various Facebook posts showed officers being featured for graduating from the department police academy, an officer earning an award or plaque, or an employee celebrating retirement. These posts all represent a change or shift in the staff, leadership, or structure of the organization. Recruitment videos and ads were also collected by the researcher. Hiring new personnel and staff members into the department also affects the structure and potentially the management in the agency. Posts including information about citizens and other special community members graduating from the department citizen academy relate to both community partnership and organizational transformation. The citizens academies allow communication and relationships to build between the individuals who participate in the academies, as well as allow the citizens to bring in new ideas for programs or evaluate the departmental structure.

Problem solving elements were also present in the Facebook posts. The majority of the posts that related to helping solve issues in the community came in the form of initiatives and videos posted to Facebook. Specifically, a drug take-back event was posted about every month and allowed community members to drop off unneeded prescription and other drugs to the police department in a safe and anonymous manner. It may be argued that this is potentially helping the community solve drug abuse issues in the community. Other videos addressed specific issues in the department and featured the PIO speaking about how the department was going to help handle those issues.

Facebook posts that related to both problem solving and organizational transformations were also present in the data. Specifically, videos featuring concerns about traffic safety in the community were present by the PIO and other police officers. These videos indicated that the department was going to strategically place officers in a way that would help solve the traffic issues in the community. Other posts included showing recruits stationed at a mall during the holiday shopping season as to help reduce crime in that mall. The recruits, as authority figures, represent the department while their efforts of being at the mall help solve crime (i.e., shoplifting, thefts) in the community. Problem solving and community partnership overlap is also present throughout the Facebook data. Live video and posts called "Do You Know Me?" often ask for the community's input (community partnership) in order to help solve a case or a problem in the community.

Overlap between all three COP themes was also present in the Facebook data. However, there were only a few posts throughout all of the 730 posts collected that contained elements of all three themes. An example of one of the posts that did contain all three themes depicted an officer from the examined police department receiving an award for his input with another agency that helped them solve an issue in the community. This contained all three themes of COP. Furthermore, another post from the department depicted officers and detectives hosting a day when families of missing persons could attend and ask questions about their case and talk further about the cold cases. This post showed elements of community partnerships, problem solving, and organization transformation being present.

Overall, the Facebook data analysis indicated that there is a heavy presence of all three themes of COP on the department Facebook page. Community partnership elements on posts are the most widely represented, followed by the theme of problem solving. It should also be noted

that out of the total 730 Facebook posts, 646 of those posts had at least one photo to depict what

was occurring in the post. The department uses a lot of visual aides to help show the community

the actions of their officers and employees. Furthermore, 72 videos were posted by the

department within the one year collected. The analysis of the data also indicated that the majority

of the posts from the police department utilized various programs and events to connect with the

community in some form. These programs usually specifically reached out to the youth in the

community. To make further sense and implications of the Facebook data collected, a conclusion

about all pieces of data collected was made.

<div align="center">**Conclusion of Analytical Results**</div>

An analysis of a social media policy document, interview transcript, Crime Prevention

Specialist job posting, and posts from Facebook were all analyzed using a content analysis. The

content analysis specifically guided the researcher in picking out the three main themes of COP

within the different pieces of data that were collected. The police document that was analyzed

first provided context about the role and duties of the PIO position in the department. The PIO

positions main duties are to communicate with outside news media and other agencies to inform

the community about important events that are happening in the city. Furthermore, the policy

document described the role of social media in the department and how the PIO should use social

media as a mechanism to communicate further with community members. Elements of all three

themes of COP were found to be present in the policy document analysis.

An interview with the chief of police of the examined police department was then

conducted. The interview was transcribed into text and then analyzed for any keywords or

statements that may indicate the presence of community partnerships, organizational

transformation, or problem solving. The interview provided the researcher with information

about how the PIO position was first implemented into the department and how the position will change in the near future. The interview also hinted at the PIO and the department using social media to help solve problems, transform the organization, and especially connect with the community. A job posting for the new PIO position was also analyzed to further see how the role and duty of the PIO may change. This document analysis evoked the idea that all three COP themes will still be implemented in the duties and responsibilities in the new PIO position.

Lastly, posts collected from the department Facebook page were also analyzed. The interaction between Facebook users and the department's Facebook posts were mostly in the form of likes and shares. Using the text descriptions and photos of each post, the researcher coded for the three main COP themes found in the Facebook data. A frequency analysis revealed that Facebook posts featuring community partnerships were the most prevalent on the Facebook page. The content analysis also revealed that the examined police department creates and implements many programs, events, and initiatives to interact with youth and elderly populations in the community. Further implications and discussion about these results will facilitate a better understanding of how this medium-sized police department utilizes Facebook.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Little research has previously examined how police departments utilize Facebook. This exploratory case study examined how one police department utilizes Facebook in its everyday departmental functions. The examined police department also incorporates a Public Information Officer position, or an officer who runs its social media accounts, into its department functions. The results of the content analysis determined that themes of community-oriented policing (COP) were consistently found throughout all data points analyzed. Several implications can be made from the analytical results of the study. However, several limitations do exist in the study and should be addressed for future researching purposes.

Empirical Findings

The current study was conducted to answer the research question of how a medium-sized police department utilizes Facebook. A content analysis was conducted to determine if themes of COP were found throughout the analyzed documents and Facebook data. The result of the content analysis determined that all three themes of COP were found throughout all documents and data analyzed. The social media policy analyzed by the researcher illustrated the theme of community partnerships as being present in the policy document. Specifically, the policy consistently mentioned how the PIO needs to maintain a level of community outreach with community members, other departments, and news agencies. The policy document especially warrants the need for the PIO to be in contact with news people in the community to ensure that community members are filled in about current events happening in the surrounding city. The relationship between the PIO and other personnel who work for news agencies is prominent in the social media document.

The themes of organizational transformation and problem solving are also present in the social media document, but are not as prominent and consistent as the theme of community partnerships. The PIO and the chief of the department are the two organizational personnel mentioned the most throughout the policy. The roles of these two employees of the department seem to help the organization maintain community partnerships (especially with other news personnel) and to solve problems within the community. The PIO is put in a leadership role in the department when duties relate to social media and communicating with members of the public. Furthermore, the duties of the PIO are also mentioned throughout the policy, and the descriptions of these duties are similar to those found within the job posting document and interview transcript examined.

The interview transcript examined also had evidence of all three themes of COP being present. Specifically, the interview with the chief of police directly stated that the basis of the PIO position was founded to better community outreach through media sources. Furthermore, the chief also explicitly state that social media is used by the department to help enlighten the surrounding community to the department's everyday functions. Community outreach seems to be a substantial directive of the PIO position and why the department implemented social media into its day-to-day operations. Organizational transformation also was discussed in detail with the chief of the department. The hierarchy of approving visible Facebook posts and ensuring that the examined department is seen in a positive manner through social media platforms was a large discussion in the interview. Ensuring that posts go through the proper approval process (i.e., approved by the chief or his designee) will allow only positive posts to be seen by the public. This hierarchy of approval was touched on in both the interview transcript and the social media policy. Problem solving was also present in the interview transcript an it was brought to attention

by the Chief that problems in the community become most apparent on Facebook through posts and comments.

The job description document for the new PIO position for the examined department also contained the three themes of COP. The job duties and responsibilities within the job posting document predominantly discussed roles and duties that pertained to community partnerships. The duties of the PIO require that the hired person must maintain relationships with the public and other agencies to properly fulfill the role. Organizational transformation and problem solving themes were also present in the job duty descriptions, but were not as prominent as compared to the theme of community partnerships. Organizational transformation mainly appeared through the different trainings and programs that the PIO would have to conduct. Problem solving mainly appeared through the duties that dealt specifically with crime prevention programs. An overlap between all three themes was also present throughout various descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the newly hired PIO position.

Lastly, the Facebook data also has all three themes of COP present within the posts. Community partnerships were especially prominent in the Facebook posts. The examined police department utilized various and numerous events that incorporated partnerships with community members. Events such as reading to children, playing bingo with the elderly, or donating books to other organizations were consistently seen throughout the Facebook posts. Problem solving was the second most common theme found throughout the Facebook data. The problem solving posts usually consisted of asking for community input on solving crimes throughout the city . Organizational transformation posts could be seen throughout the Facebook data, but it was less common as compared to the other themes. Organizational transformation usually consisted of posts that incorporated or talked about employees of the department. An overlap between all

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three themes throughout the Facebook data was also discovered throughout the analysis of the data.

Overall, the theme of community partnership was the most common theme found throughout all of the data elements analyzed. The examined department specifically utilized the PIO to help connect with other agencies and organizations over social media. The interview, social media policy, and the PIO job description all touched on the utilization of the PIO to help connect to the public and convey newsworthy events to those community members. The Facebook data also provided information that indicated that community partnerships were the primary goal for the majority of the posts. The content analysis also indicated that all of the analyzed documents and data had all three themes consistently present. The social media policy and the Facebook data specifically all had large indications that COP was present in the department's Facebook activity. The content analysis indicated that COP was present and utilized by the department Facebook page and through the PIO position.

Social Media Implications

The current study found several interesting results that were directly impacted by the use of social media. Specifically, social media provided an opportunity for the examined police department to freely connect with community members and other online users. Two-way communication was also able to be used by the police department and online users. This two-way communication is important in allowing individuals to have their voices and opinions heard (Van Dijck, 2013). The police department could hear about issues in the community from online users and respond appropriately as indicated in the interview with the chief of the department. However, this research study just analyzed Facebook as the only social media platform utilized by the police department. Many times, police departments utilize several forms of social media

platforms for their departments. The chief of the examined department also hinted during the interview that the department wants to implement and use social media platforms such as Instagram. Further research should be conducted that examines how police departments utilize several different social media platforms in their department. Further research could also be conducted to determine if COP themes are found on other social media platforms or if they are only used through Facebook.

Facebook Implications

The current study examined how a police department utilizes Facebook into its departmental functions. The interactions on posts (i.e., comments, shares, emojis, etc.), the present COP themes, whether the posts contained photos or videos, post descriptions, and the post types were also measured in the current study. The Facebook data analysis concluded that using the like emoji was the most common form of interaction between users and a post by the department. The analysis also concluded that public relations posts were the most common type of post issued by the department. It is logical that public relation post types would be the most frequent post from the department if the theme of community partnerships were found to be the most common theme. Public relations play a part in the overall theme of community partnerships. Interactions also play a role in community partnerships. If interactions do not take place on the department Facebook posts, there would not be a two-way communication happening. Further research could be conducted to determine if any other elements could be measured on Facebooks layout to determine if community partnerships can take place on Facebook posts. Furthermore, because Facebook's layout does update and often changes (Facebook, 2017), further research to examine the changes over time in how online users can interact with Facebook posts may be relevant.

Community-Oriented Policing Implications

The current study sought to examine if COP was present through the examined department's use

of Facebook. COP was conceptualized into three themes for the purposes of this study:

community partnerships, organizational transformations, and problem solving (U.S. Department

of Justice, 2014). These three themes were derived from literature and analyzed by looking for

keywords or statements that hinted towards the presence of COP. The three themes were found

to be consistently present throughout all analyzed data elements in the case study.

Overall, the study sought to examine if a police department could use a form of COP

through an online social media platform such as Facebook. The content analysis helped identify

the consistency of the department incorporating the three COP themes into its Facebook usage.

The researcher was then able to determine that the presence of all three COP elements were

portrayed in the departmental use of Facebook. Further research could include the examination

of more specific COP themes through a content analysis. Since the three COP themes used in the

current study are broader, using more specific and detailed COP themes derived from literature

could potentially help researchers determine what COP elements are present online in a more

detailed manner.

Furthermore, the content analysis indicated that because the theme of community

partnerships was the most prominent COP theme found throughout the data, it may be argued

that the examined police department relies heavily on public relations. While there are benefits

of using public relations tactics to engage with the public, the other two COP themes must also

be present for COP to be successfully implemented on Facebook. Police departments who may

look to successfully implement COP through an online environment should focus on

implementing all three themes of COP evenly. Less reliance on just public relation efforts and

focusing on implementing other COP themes may help a police department troubleshoot community engagement, interactions, perceptions, and other problem solving issues with a community.

Research Implications

An exploratory analysis can provide researchers with a gauged idea of how something is being utilized. The current study sought to examine how a police department utilizes Facebook and how Facebook may be a tool for an online version of COP to be implemented by that department. This exploratory analysis was able to provide the researcher with a broad overview of information that relates to the examined department's use of Facebook and social media. All of the examined data points each provided the researcher with unique and different perspectives of how the police department utilizes Facebook. The social media policy could provide information on the duties of the PIO and the guidelines of how social media should be used. The interview provided information about how the role of social media and the PIO has changed over time. The job description was able to provide the researcher information about how the department continues to utilize social media through the PIO in the future. Lastly, the Facebook data was able to provide an entire picture of social media being utilized over a scope of one year. Further research could potentially utilize some of the same data elements collected as in the current study, but sample multiple other police departments to broaden the generalizability of answering how police departments utilize social media.

Policy Implications

The current study can help guide and influence police departments to implement the use of Facebook into their everyday functions if those departments are looking to implement further ideologies of COP into their everyday functions. Furthermore, if a police department already has

some form of social media or Facebook page related to its department, this study can potentially help guide them in determining the type of content that is most associated with COP. The current study found that by organizing and implementing various events and programs that directly related to engaging with community members (i.e., playing bingo with the elderly or reading to children), community partnerships were formed. These partnerships are a theme found in COP and can help police departments utilize Facebook to further connect with individuals in a community. From these connections, problem solving, trust, and organizational transformations can occur (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

However, based on the findings from the current study, a skew was found in the COP themes. Specifically, the results from the policy, job posting, interview transcript, and Facebook data analysis found that the theme of community partnerships was the most prominent theme present. This theme seemed to be highly skewed throughout all of the analysis conducted when compared to the other themes of problem solving and organizational transformation. Due to this finding, if a police department is looking to further implement Facebook as a tool for COP, the acknowledgement of this skew may be beneficial. In other words, a police department should be aware of only using community partnerships to connect with the public and its lack of using other COP themes. It is imperative that an appropriate balance between community partnerships, problem solving, and organizational transformation is sustained for COP to work for a department (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

Limitations

Although the current study found beneficial results that can positively impact police departments in the criminal justice system, several limitations do exist in the study. One limitation of the current study is the positive conceptualization of Facebook shown throughout

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the study. While the literature review did address some critiques of Facebook, this study never fully recognized how Facebook may not be beneficial to use in a police department. There are various downsides of using Facebook and even possibly negative effects of using Facebook in a police department.

One recent example of these negative effects is when Facebook acknowledged that it exposed millions of users' data to a researcher at Cambridge Analytica. These data breaches underline the extent to which social media may or may not be an effective medium for building trust between police departments and the public. However, this project does not assume that social media COP is more effective when compared to traditional methods and implementation of COP. These two forms of COP are also not assumed to be mutually exclusive either. The goal of this study is only to examine how one police department uses social media and which uses are most associated with COP. This study may also help guide other departments in identifying social media content that is most associated with COP, while also acknowledging the limitations of social media generally and social media COP specifically. Future research should address these negative connotations and impacts that using Facebook may have on a police department. It may be beneficial for future research to measure and address negative impacts of Facebook in a police department, such as lowered productivity by employees, as to help police departments determine if they want to implement Facebook into their everyday operations.

Another limitation present in the current study is the possibility of Facebook posts being deleted during the collection process. The interview with the chief of the department touched on how Facebook posts that spark online arguments are usually removed from the department Facebook page. The removal of these posts potentially altered the entire picture of how the police department is utilizing Facebook. Future research should consider collecting Facebook

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posts in real time (i.e., daily) to ensure that all posts are analyzed. Screenshotting and archiving

detailed information about each Facebook post in a consistent manner may ensure that none of

the posts are missed if they are later deleted from an account.

Another issue that should be addressed in the current study are the downsides of using a

qualitative research design. Specifically, qualitative research is used to provide researchers with

a worldview perspective of data (Creswell, 2007). Perhaps conducting research through a wide

lens provides opportunities to miss minute and significant details in the data. Researcher bias is

also more prevalent in qualitative research and can lead to misinterpretations of data (Creswell,

2007). Specific to this study, utilizing a qualitative approach to analyze the data could have led

the researcher to misinterpret information. Future research may choose to utilize a mix-methods

approach to examine the use of Facebook. This may ensure that both a larger overview and a

smaller, more detailed assessment of the collected data can be examined if needed.

In the context of this study, the sanitation of the data was also a limitation. Due to the

researcher's influence in the data collection and analytical process for the study, there could have

been opportunities in the data where COP was completely missed or misconstrued. In other

words, while the themes of COP were drawn from literature, there was still room in the study for

the researcher to interpret data that may not necessarily have been COP-related. Specifically,

keywords in the data such as "Recruits Assist with Holiday Crime Reduction" found within the

Facebook data were labeled as organizational transformation and problem solving. These

keywords and/or events could have been interpreted differently by another researcher; thus, there

is a possibility of sanitation of the data. However, by utilizing interrater reliability in the study,

this allowed several different researchers to analyze the collected data. In terms of future

research, solid conceptualization and utilizing interrater reliability when interpreting this type of

qualitative data may help limit sanitation of the data. Developing a methodological framework that ensures consistency when conceptualizing such keywords may be imperative to such future studies.

Lastly, the generalizability of the current study is a limitation that should also be addressed. Since a case study was conducted, only one police department was examined. Case studies normally are not generalizable, and the results of the study may not always apply to other police departments (Creswell, 2007). Future research may consider examining numerous police departments and compare the utilization of Facebook between those departments to make greater generalizations of other police departments' uses of Facebook.

Conclusion

The current study examined how a medium-sized police department utilizes Facebook. Through analyzing how the police department utilizes Facebook, the researcher wanted to determine if Facebook is a tool for the online implementation of COP. A content analysis was used to determine if themes of COP were present in the collected data. The content analysis determined that all three themes of COP were consistently present throughout all of the data elements examined. Community partnerships were perhaps the most commonly found theme throughout all of the examined data. Policy implications for police departments and implications for future research were also suggested to help guide future studies in exploring how police departments utilize Facebook in their everyday operations.

Results from the study also concluded that COP in general seems to be present in an online environment for the examined police department. The Facebook data specifically indicated that high volumes of events and programs that fall under a theme of COP were present. Events and programs such as bingo with the elderly, grilling food for community members, and

officers reading to children were especially shown throughout the Facebook data several times. In addition, COP seems to be a primary focus for the PIO position. The policy and job stated that one of the primary functions of the PIO is to communicate with other agencies, organizations, department employees, and community members. It may be concluded that because of the role of the PIO and the various events and programs conducted by the examined police department, COP was very much present over Facebook. While the police department is still conducting traditional and physical methods of COP, Facebook is used as a tool to convey to community members that the police department is willing to engage in a two-way communication with those community members.

Appendix A

Facebook Reactions
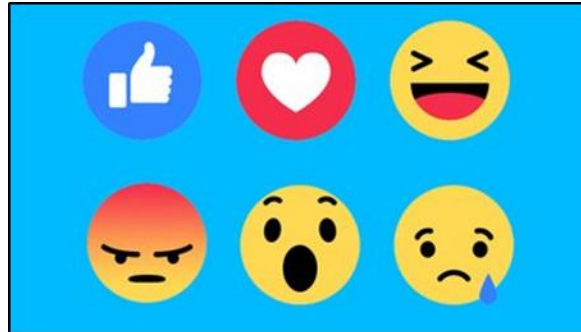
Appendix B

Conceptualization of Post Types

Public Relations Post: Relayed community interest stories that were not related to a police department traditional mission of policing. Usually police-initiated interactions or are directly involved in some event/program/occurrence that involves the community.

Missing Persons Post: Missing person posts generally involved Amber Alerts or missing person stories.

Memorial Post: Posts that served as a memorial or "in memory of" posts for deceased officers.

Crime Alerts: Consist of information from a recent crime that had occurred in the community or that a successful arrest has taken place.

Crime Safety Tips: Posts labeled as "tips" usually informed community members on how to prevent crimes or use self-protection.

General Alerts: Real-time warnings of situations happening in a community that are not necessarily crime-related (i.e., traffic accidents, lockdowns, bad weather, or evacuations).

Other: This type of post involved information that did not fit into any other category.

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. To begin, I'd like to talk a little bit about the role of the social media position in your department. Would you briefly share with me how the position came to be? What were you looking for in a person to come into this new social media officer position? Did you want something different in this position as compared to the past role of the social media officer?

2. (If not answered by question #1) Please further describe the role of the social media officer. How long has the department had the role of social media officer?

For the Chief:

    a.)   As the chief what is the hierarchy for the approval of social media posts?

3. What types of social media does this police department currently use? Why are each of these social media websites used?

    a.) Are there types of social media that you do not use in the department (rejected)?

  b.) Why are these types of social media not used in the department?

4. When did this department first start using Facebook? Why did the department start using Facebook?

5. What are some guidelines that you must follow in deciding what subject matter can be posted over social media?

    a.) Are these guidelines something that is formally written or unwritten?

    b.) What subject matter, if any, cannot be posted on the department Facebook account?

6. What is the purpose of using social media in the department? How does having social media help the department?

7. Some social media websites are completely open to the public and allow individual users to post/comment on a police department page. What are your privacy settings, if any, for who can post/comment on this department Facebook page?

a.) Are there any restrictions on who can post/comment on the department Facebook page? If so, what are these restrictions?

b.) Are any types of comments removed from your department Facebook page/posts? If so, what type of comments are usually removed?

c.) Is there a process for developing a response to a comment on Facebook? What is this process?

d.) How do community members generally engage with this department Facebook page? In other words, do the majority of community members usually privately message the department, post to the official page, or comment on posts?

8. Do Facebook users post about their concerns/issues about the surrounding community to this department Facebook page?

a.) Are these concerns normally shared in the form of posts or comments on other posts?

b.) Is there a certain procedure in responding back to these posts/comments?

9. Do Facebook users post their concerns about this police department to this department Facebook page?

a.) Are these concerns normally in the form of posts or comments to other posts?

b.) Is there a certain procedure in responding back to these posts/comments? If so, what is that procedure?

c.) Do any other officers or units have to be involved or informed if these concerns are voiced over Facebook? If so, who?

d.) If there are concerns voiced over Facebook, are there any liaisons (organizations or other community members) who must be involved to help resolve issues for community members?

10. What are the departmental benefits of using Facebook in this police department?

11. What are some drawbacks that the department has noticed with respect to Facebook?

12. Is using Facebook in the department an expanding area for this police department? In other words, is it an area that is going to continue? How might it also be expanded?

13. Does this police department use additional resources or personnel to run the social media accounts? If so, what are the resources and/or personnel being used?

14. What type of resource allocations are available for the department to help fund some of the events shown on your Facebook page?

15. Those are really all my questions that I had for you today, but is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your department or social media that we haven't discussed?

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