An Analysis of the Crime Reduction Abilities of the St. Cloud COP House

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An Analysis of the Crime Reduction Abilities of the

St. Cloud COP House

by

Kellen Gregory Olson

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
St. Cloud State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Douglas Gilbertson, Chairperson
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Abstract

In August of 2017, The city of St. Cloud, Minnesota, opened up the first Community OutPost House (COP House) in the state. The COP House is a community oriented policing initiative that moves members of the St. Cloud Police Department and other organizations into a home within a crime-ridden area. The main objectives of this initiative are to increase trust in police, reduce crime, and improve the community as a whole. A one-year period of crime data taken from around the COP House was broken down into two six-month increments and analyzed to determine whether the COP House had an affect on crime within the South Side Area. Three categories of crime were analyzed, including drug, violent, and property crimes. Drug and violent crime decreased overall, but the results for all three categories were found to have no statistical significance.

Keywords: COP House, Community Oriented Policing
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Chapter I: Introduction

Several high profile events around the United States in the year 2014 created increased tension between citizens and members of law enforcement. The shooting death of Michael Brown in Missouri and the strangulation death of Eric Garner in New York were just a few of the many incidents that took place within the year. These events occurred in such quick succession that it left the nation in shock. In fact, by June 2015, U.S. citizens’ confidence in police had hit a new 22-year low (Jones, 2015). Police departments across the nation began to desperately search for ways to regain public trust (Merchant, 2014). Within that search, a refocus on the importance of Community Oriented Policing occurred (Yousry, 2014). During this time, previous functions of Community Oriented Policing used across the nation were revisited.

St. Cloud, Minnesota, opened the city’s and state’s first COP House (Community Outpost House) on August 18th, 2017 (Svejkovsky, 2017). The project was inspired by a similar initiative that started in Racine, Wisconsin. The idea was to purchase a home within the city at the foremost center of a high crime area that would serve as a satellite police office helping to bridge the gap between citizens and police. The primary purpose of the St. Cloud COP House is to reduce crime while strengthening police/community relationships (Gaetke, 2017).

The St. Cloud COP House is the implementation of a combination of policing tactics between Community Oriented Policing as well as Hot Spot Policing. The Community Oriented Policing aspect was a collaborative effort between officers of the St. Cloud Police Department and the citizens of the surrounding South Side Area. The Hot Spot Policing aspect of the COP House would be the concentrated influx of police presence within one of the most crime ridden areas of the city. The community oriented policing aspect of the house intends to strengthen the police department’s relationship with the South Side Area through the various community
outreach functions it provides. Together, the two tactics also aim to create a reduction in overall crime.

A lack of research exists on the effectiveness of these police COP House initiatives. This might be due to the fact that there really aren’t many of the houses in existence around the country today. What research I have been able to find is focused more on Community Oriented Policing and its crime reduction abilities. Due to this, I became interested in the St. Cloud COP House, and more specifically its function of crime reduction. With the St. Cloud COP House being new, the data available is somewhat limited. Therefore, research on the St. Cloud COP House is appropriate and needed.

**Problem Statement & Questions**

In this explanatory study, I analyzed crime data to identify the nature and extent to which the St. Cloud COP House has affected overall crime in the South Side Area. A quasi-experimental research design with nonrandom sampling was used to identify data as pre-test and post-test measures for analysis. Four research questions were answered:

1. What are the pre-test violent, drug, and property crime rates?
2. What are the post-test violent, drug, and property crime rates?
3. What is the nature (no affect, increased, or decreased) and extent of affect (Insignificant, moderate, or significant) that the COP House has had on area crime rates?
4. What more could be done to increase the affect of the COP House on reducing crime rates?
Chapter II: Literature Review

Sir Robert Peel and Police/Community Relationships

The St. Cloud COP House is a collaborative effort between the citizens of St. Cloud and the St. Cloud Police Department. The idea of this working relationship had existed for some two centuries before officers in St. Cloud began building on it. In fact, this notion was really first conceived on a different continent.

Sir Robert Peel, the father of modern-day policing, created London’s first police force when he drafted the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 (Dempsy & Forst, 2016). From day one of its creation, Peel believed that a police force should be responsible to the public. As a direct response of this belief, Peel created nine principles that would serve as a guide to London’s new police officers. Of those nine principles, the seventh best communicates Peel’s belief in community/officer relationships.

Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent upon every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence. (Peel, 1829)

Even some 180 years ago, Peel knew that in order for a police force to be effective, it would have to work with, for, and be composed of members of the community. Sir Robert Peel’s principles serve as a reminder of the fundamental need for community and police relationships, and also serve as a foundation upon which current Community Oriented Policing was built.
Community Oriented Policing

Community Oriented Policing is defined as a policing philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the 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 (USDOJ, 2014). The original idea and foundation for Community Oriented Policing was created by University of Wisconsin Professor Herman Goldstein and his Problem-Oriented Policing approach. Goldstein came up with a policing strategy that used a process in which police could identify, analyze, and respond to the underlying circumstances that create problems (Goldstein, 1979). This process would later be expanded on by John Eck and William Spellman when they created the widely used SARA Model (Scan, Analyze, Respond, and Assess) (CEBCP, 2018).

In 1994, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate passed the Community Oriented Policing Services (C.O.P.S.) act which was created through the Title I of the Violent Crime Control Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (James, 2011). With its passing, a six-year budget of $8.8 billion dollars was allocated to be spent through Federal grants on the advancement of community policing by the nation’s state and local law enforcement agencies (USDOJ, 2017). During this time, a paradigm shift had occurred making Community Oriented Policing the new standard for law enforcement. Within that shift, the funding provided to these initiatives has increased over time. Twenty-two years later, federal funding through the C.O.P.S. act has increased to $212 million dollars for the year of 2016 (USDOJ, 2017).

The St. Cloud COP House is a living physical embodiment of Community Oriented Policing. It is a police department literally moving into a neighborhood for the purpose of improving that very neighborhood. It is important to note that community policing goes much
further than just that physical embodiment. The community outreach functions the house provides further exemplifies the house as an. For example, the COP House currently offers English lessons as well as mentor programs that are funded through donations (Svejkovsky, 2017). This illustrates how the house itself is not just a secondary department location, but an entirely new function of the St. Cloud police department.

**Community Oriented Policing and Crime Reduction**

Research on the effectiveness of COP in reducing crime has varied. A meta-analysis by researchers from various accredited universities conducted in 2014, located within the *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, measured the effectiveness of COP throughout the United States (Gill, C., Weisburd, D., Telep, C.W. et al., 2014). Within it, the authors analyzed 25 studies that contained 65 different assessments on before and after the implementation of various forms of COP (Gill, C., Weisburd, D., Telep, C.W. et al., 2014). Their findings found that, though COP had a positive affect on citizens trust in police, there was no statistically significant reduction in reported crime or fear of crime (Gill, C., Weisburd, D., Telep, C.W. et al., 2014).

Another study found, focused on the grants provided by the Federal Government for community oriented policing programs and whether or not they had any serious impact on crime. These grants were able to be used due to the C.O.P.S. act and the subsequent funding it provided. The study in particular, focused on whether or not the grants had any affect on reducing violent crime rates. The researchers looked at the amount and type of funding provided to local law enforcement agencies through C.O.P.S. and then compared them to crime statistics for each area. The researchers found that the grants used for hiring more police officers did not have a statistically measurable effect on violent crime rates (Davis, G. G., Muhlhausen, D. B., Ingram, D., & Rector, R, 2000).
Operation Peacekeeper was a COP Program that began in Stockton, California, in 1997 that aimed at reducing gun violence among youth gang members (NIJ, 2018). The program relied heavily on youth outreach workers as a means of community outreach. Their mission was to convey to youth gang members that they have better options to follow in their lives. These outreach workers were considered to be street savvy individuals who had formal training in community organizing, mentoring, mediation, conflict resolution, and case management (NIJ, 2018). The outreach workers would physically work anywhere in the neighborhood where youths who were at risk for violence are found. This included schools, public parks, street corners, and apartment complexes (NIJ, 2018).

Using a pre and post-test means of analysis, the program's effectiveness was measured between 1997 and 2002 (NIJ, 2018). It was found that the average amount of monthly gun homicide incidents decreased by some 35 percent (NIJ, 2018). This reduction equated to a drop from 2.9 homicides per month down to 1.9 homicides per month (NIJ, 2018). Once the program was discontinued, the effects still lingered as there was only a slight increase in youth gun violence to 2.1 homicides per month (NIJ, 2018).

In Stockton, the community outreach functions were found to have the ability to create a significant decrease in serious violent crime. This illustrates the potential in a Community Oriented Policing approach in reducing crime. More specifically, the potential of the mentorship style of community outreach which the St. Cloud COP House utilizes in the South Side Area of St. Cloud.

**Citizen/Police Trust**

One of the other main purposes of the COP House is to strengthen citizen and police relationships within the South Side Area. Though this is something that I would like to elaborate
through research at a later time, I do feel it is necessary to acknowledge and how it could potentially affect a decline in crime as well as a possible increase in reported crime.

Citizen trust in police, primarily in African American communities, has remained low throughout history. W. E. B. Du Bois stated in his book *The Souls of Black Folk* that the police system in the South was created for the sole purpose of controlling and tracking former slaves post emancipation. He wrote that it, in conjunction with the court system, created a device meant to enslave the southern black population. Furthermore, that very police system around this time could include any white man at any time whenever it was necessary (Du Bois, 1903). This system placed the utmost importance on severely punishing blacks. This excerpt illustrates how many black southerners at that time viewed the southern police force. This wasn’t an organization that was tasked with protecting and serving, rather to enslave.

Mistrust in the police within the African American Community was also created during the civil rights movement as police officers were tasked with the enforcement of segregation laws. The entire country saw on national news African Americans being arrested for sitting at the wrong counter or the wrong area of a city bus. In fact, during the first year of the “Sit-In” movement, over 1500 black demonstrators were arrested (U.S.History, 2018). If police during this time exercised their arresting powers for something as little as eating at the counter of a restaurant, then fear of arrest for pretty much anything would be present. With the civil rights movement only taking place as little as sixty years ago, generationally, that mistrust in police has most certainly been passed down. With the recent deaths, it is no wonder that mistrust exists today within the African American community.

All of this is relevant to the goals set by the St. Cloud Police department. Since the demographics of the South Side Area are unique to that of the rest of the city, and contain a
disproportionate higher minority population. If the COP House is truly able to strengthen the relationship between officers and citizens within the South Side community, then an increase in reported crime might also occur. This would not be due to an actual increase in occurrences of actual crime within the South Side, rather an increase of reports from citizens who had a newfound trust in the department.

**Hot Spot Policing**

It is a fact that crime is not evenly distributed throughout a city. Inevitably, certain areas will produce more crime than others. In fact, in the city of Minneapolis, a 1989 study found that three percent of the city’s addresses accounted for 50 percent of calls for service to police (NIJ, 2009). Similar but less dramatic trends can be found in other cities across the United States. Thus, it is easy to conceptualize why these certain areas would command an increased presence by law enforcement.

Hot spot policing is a specific tactical police response to a specific problem. In St. Cloud, the response to the amount of crime occurring in the South Side Area was the COP House. Though this isn’t a direct translation of this traditional police response, it is in spirit. Hot spot policing strategies focus on small geographic areas usually found within urban settings where crime occurs in a higher concentration (NIJ, 2017). The police response within these areas is a necessary response to the higher levels of crime taking place. The size of the areas that are selected to be saturated can range from a single building, a few square blocks, or an entire neighborhood. Strategies used within these hot spots by police are primarily composed of traditional methods of policing like vehicle and foot patrols, as well as order maintenance type initiatives (NIJ, 2017). Thus, it is easy to see why the COP House also falls under the category
of hot spot policing. The house itself will create an environment that will saturate the surrounding neighborhood with a police presence not normally experienced.

**Concentric Zones**

According to Burgess and Parks zonal hypothesis, there are five distinct concentric zones within urban social structures (Burgess & Parks, 1925). In their model, the inner most ring (zone) is referred to as the central business district (Burgess & Parks, 1925). Of the five zones, this area has the most property value and is often referred to as “downtown.” Surrounding the central business district is the most relevant zone in reference to the COP House and that is the “zone in transition.” Burgess and Park characterize this zone as the area of deterioration or a so-called “slum” (Burgess & Parks, 1925). This zone is often viewed as the least desirable place to live within a city and is often made up of deteriorating housing. This area is the center of residence for newly arrived immigrants and migrants. This zonal area in particular experiences a high rate of resident turnover as people are constantly moving in and out of the zone. Along with the high turn over is a large portion of residents who are renting properties rather than owning.
Figure 1. The Concentric Zone Model
(http://cdn.yourarticlelibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/clip_image00252.jpg)

The South Side Area closely resembles many of the characteristics of the transitional zone. For starters, the majority of the area’s housing consists of rental properties. Since the area is in close proximity to St. Cloud State University, many of the rental properties are intended for student use. With student housing, comes great turnover in tenants renting properties. It is assumed that the majority of the students renting would most likely only live in the area for no longer than four years. With St. Cloud State dealing with a recent decline in student enrollment, a lot of those properties are now being occupied by non-students.

Along with the transient housing situation that is prevalent within the South Side Area, comes the issue of social anonymity. This issue presents itself through the lack of social bonds that develop between neighbors within these transient neighborhoods. With the constant turn around, there is a lack of sufficient time for neighbors to develop meaningful relationships.
Trust can only develop between neighbors who have a meaningful relationship. This trust can eventually lead to neighbors who look after each other's property while they’re away, and pick up their mail, and so forth. If that bond can never be developed, then that added protection is lost. It would be difficult for instance for a neighborhood like this to have a meaningful Neighborhood Watch program.

The characteristic of heterogeneity is also present within the South Side Area. Many of the areas residents recently immigrated from eastern Africa. Combining this immigrant population with the abundance of students living within the area places the South Side Area and the COP House within the zone of transition.

Social Disorganization Theory

Social Disorganization Theory was born and developed out of the Chicago School of sociological thinking. Social Disorganization Theory is defined as an inability of community members to achieve shared values or to solve jointly experienced problems (Bursik, 1988). The theory was developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay in their book *Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Areas*. In it, they argued that social disorganization is caused by population loss, transience in residents, and heterogeneity within neighborhoods (Mckay & Shaw, 1942). In other words, the place in which a person lives can be a possible indicator that there will eventually involve criminal activity.

The South Side Area has many of these social disorganization factors present within it’s confines. Transience in residents can be found not only with the many students living in the area, but also in the large apartment complexes that are found throughout. Heterogeneity of the neighborhood is also present with the numerous East African residents as well as the diverse population of students that attend St. Cloud State University. If social disorganization is in fact
the cause of the criminality within the South Side Area, then the community strengthening functions of the COP House could be responsible for reducing its effects by creating stronger neighborhood bonds.

**Broken Windows Theory**

Two related theories can be used to explain how and whether St. Cloud Police Department’s COP House will have an impact on reported crime. The Broken Windows Theory was first proposed in 1982 by a journal article written by James Wilson and George Kelling (Mckee, 2013). In it, Wilson and Kelling created a link between physical and social disorder within neighborhoods and crime (1982). Physical disorder can be defined as houses left in a state of disrepair, abandoned cars and garbage littered throughout a neighborhood. Social disrepair can be defined as groups of youth staying out past curfew, constant noise violations from neighbors, and problematic loitering. Some even consider drug dealing on corners as a form of social disorder (Mckee, 2013). This disorder is what is viewed by members of a given community and creates a fear of crime within it. It is that crucial perception of disorder that breaks down social controls and ultimately leads to crime (Mckee, 2013). With the theory holding that the two separate types of disorder ultimately lead to crime, then the obvious way to combat crime is to eliminate social and physical disorder. This broken windows style of policing is most famously associated with the city of New York’s implementation of the practice in the early 1990s (Wan, 2016).

Though the entire South Side Area isn’t necessarily in a state of total disorder, it has in the past suffered from large amounts of drug dealing on it’s street corners. This could constitute a level of social and physical disorder present in the community. This can be demonstrated through the property that the COP House is now built upon, which was previously occupied by a
home that had fallen into total disorder and had been responsible for over 100 calls for service from the police within a five-year period (Smith, 2017). This home itself would have a tremendous affect on the immediate neighborhood surrounding it through social disorder (the constant lineup of squad cars outside the residence) or physical disorder (the houses rundown appearance). Most likely, this was the rationale behind the purchase of the home to begin with; by stopping the perceived disorder and fear of crime that leads to the weakening of social controls.

There are many opponents of the Broken Windows Theory. Some say the significant decline in serious crime experienced in New York in the 1990s wasn’t actually caused by broken windows policing (Wan, 2016). Others have linked the theory and subsequent policing style directly to large decreases in violent crime (Kelling & Sousa, 2001).

**Routine Activities Theory**

Routine Activity Theory, was developed by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus K. Felson and detailed within their 1979 published article, “Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach” (Cohen & Felson, 1979). In it, they state that crime will occur when a motivated offender, a suitable target and the lack of a capable guardian converge in the same place at the same time. It is unique theory in the fact that it is actually a theory of victimization, or why people become victims of crime.

In their original research, Felson and Cohen examined the changes in the U.S. crime rates from 1947 to 1974 (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Around this time, most people believed the increase of crime to be related to the number of people willing to break the law (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Cohen and Felson went about explaining the increase in crime through a different approach by looking at the increased availability of criminal opportunity. They identified this increased
opportunity as a combination of the availability of an attractive target (e.g., something to steal, a person to rob) and the lack of guardianship over the target (e.g., a burglar alarm, a strong companion) (Cohen & Felson, 1979). This explained that crime rates cannot only be affected by motivated offenders, but also by the amount of available suitable targets. They ultimately pointed at the major shift in the workforce to further explain the increased suitability of targets. They saw that with the more women who were at jobs during the day, homes would no longer have guardians, thus making them a more suitable target.

The theory requirement for the presence of a motivated offender is automatically satisfied when a crime has been carried out. For this study, this is a given since the data set I’m using utilizes calls for service to the police for the previously identified crimes. The COP House is also essentially satisfying the capable guardian requirement of the theory. Here, the house is staffed with numerous sworn police officers. Their patrol cars are often visible and present to the surrounding neighborhood. They become more visible to the surrounding neighborhood. The presence of the squad cars alone could be enough to deter a motivated offender from committing a criminal act within its immediate vicinity. The COP House can also have the potential to help eliminate the suitable target portion of the theory through its community outreach functions. This can be accomplished by the educational properties that come with this style of community partnership. This could be anything from tips on keeping one’s house safe when on vacation, to tips on walking home safe from a night out on the town.

St. Cloud

As of 2016, the U.S. Census estimates the population of St. Cloud to be roughly 67,000 (U.S. Census, 2018). This figure is only around a 2 percent increase in size since 2010 (U.S. Census, 2018). In 2010, the city was composed of around 27,000 housing units (U.S. Census,
Of those 27,000, around 50 percent of the housing units were occupied by owners (U.S. Census, 2018). The median value of housing units was $144,000 and persons per household is around 2.5 (U.S. Census, 2018). The median monthly cost of a home mortgage was around $1200 with the median rental cost around $700 (U.S. Census, 2018).

Education statistics were compiled between 2012-2016 and held that of persons 25 years and older, around 92 percent had a high school diploma and 29 percent had a bachelor’s degree (U.S. Census, 2018). Economically, around 70 percent of the population age 16 and up is in the work force (U.S. Census, 2018). Furthermore, the median household income in 2016 was around $45,000 while the income per capita was at $23,000 (U.S. Census, 2018). Finally, the Census holds that around 23 percent of St. Cloud’s population is living in poverty (U.S. Census, 2018).

St. Cloud South Side Area

The St. Cloud COP House is located within the South Side Area of St. Cloud, Minnesota. Census information was provided to me by the City of St. Cloud’s Planning and Zoning department. The information received was a compilation of data from the years 2012-2016 and was broken down into sections based upon Census Tracts (CT) and Block Groups (BG). The South Side Area was located within nine different tracts and block groups provided. It is also important to note when dealing with census information that the census uses a 90 percent confidence level. Therefore, the estimations provided should be taken as just estimations and not direct representations of the actual population.

According to the City of St. Cloud, the total estimated population for the South Side Area is 13,134. This figure accounts for roughly 19 percent of the entire population of the city. With the South Side Area being somewhat of a smaller geographical region compared to the other
neighborhoods, and having such a large overall city population, it illustrates how saturated the areas population is due to the presence of the university. Of the 13,134 residents of the area, 7,059 were male and 6,075 were female.

The housing situation in the South Side Area is unique when compared to the rest of the city. This is due to St. Cloud State University being located within the South Side’s boundaries. Because of this, numerous large housing complexes are scattered throughout the area. These large housing units though have recently gone through changes in occupancy. With the declining enrollment at St. Cloud State University, large apartment complexes that were once filled with college students, are now occupied by non-students. With the university being located in the South Side, the area also experiences massive changes in population during the summer as many students return home.

**St. Cloud COP House**

The St. Cloud COP House project cost around $400,000 and was paid for entirely by public donations (Berg, 2017). The idea for the project began circulating as early as 2014 when high ranking members of the police department began to search for a piece of property to open their newly decided upon initiative (Unze, 2014). Ultimately, a home that had been the location of numerous criminal activities was selected. In fact, the lot in which the St. Cloud COP House was constructed on had been responsible for over 100 calls for service alone (Berg, 2017).

The St. Cloud Cop House currently has three sworn officers assigned to it and the surrounding area. These three officers work on projects around and at the COP House as well as respond to calls for service within the area (Ellering, 2018). The house has an office area where these three officers can stop in and use to type up reports or to take a short break from their shifts. The COP House also has two higher ranking members of the department attached to it
including a sergeant who also works with the nearby St. Cloud State University “Campus Area Police”. The highest ranking member of the department that oversees the entire operation is a lieutenant who is based out of the main police department. With the COP House being in such close proximity to St. Cloud State University, the St. Cloud Police Department also offers an internship opportunity for students to work in conjunction with the department and the Cop House. This internship spot will be offered each school semester going forward.

The major influence for the St. Cloud Cop House was a similar initiative that came from the city of Racine, Wisconsin. There, in the early nineties, the city of Racine was overrun with violence that had traveled northward from the city of Chicago. The police department wanted to use an alternative option to patrol saturation and they ultimately decided on moving into an older home within the affected area and set and example for the rest of the community. Ultimately, the purpose of the program was to build relationships with members of the community, improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, reduce crime, and empower citizens to take back their neighborhoods (Racine, 2018). Racine currently has six of the COP Houses within the city (Racine, 2018). Finally, a reduction in crime of up to 70 percent has occurred in the surrounding neighborhoods with the help of the Racine Cop Houses (Racine, 2018). The successes in Racine do not necessarily indicate success in St. Cloud. These figures merely represent the potential that a program like this could have.

One major difference between the St. Cloud COP House and Racine is that the St. Cloud COP House is actively collaborating with local community organizations. Organizations like Anna Marie’s Alliance in St. Cloud; a non-profit that helps battered women and children currently utilizes the COP House (Ellering, 2018). Other non-profits that help with the reintegration of prisoners into society post-release operate out of the Cop House from time to
time as well. The COP House is also used by the the Stearns County Human Services as well as the Gold Cross Ambulance service. Furthermore, if anyone who is working on a project that will benefit the city of St. Cloud, in some way shape or form, they are welcome to use the COP House facilities.

The Cop House also offers tutoring two times a week in cooperation with the Hands Across the World non-profit organization. (Ellering, 2018). These tutoring sessions include English lessons for the many non-native English speaking residents of the area. The COP House also offers birthing classes for the Somalian population of the South Side Neighborhood (Ellering, 2018).

Other community focused services the house provides are more focused on the children of the community. For instance, in October of 2017, the COP House hosted a neighborhood Halloween party. An ice cream freezer was also donated to the COP House for the purpose of passing out ice cream treats. These are available during the summer and warmer months to anyone who knocks on the door.

**Beat 12**

St. Cloud Police Department divided its area of coverage into five “Beat” areas. The area surrounding the St. Cloud COP House and more specifically the South Side Area is located within what is considered “Beat 12” by St. Cloud Police Department.
As seen above, Beat 12 is the longest stretching area of the five beats within the department’s jurisdiction. The eastern boarder is made up of the west bank of the Mississippi river. The Southern boarder stretches down past Interstate 94. Within the large length of Beat 12, the South Side area makes up around one quarter of its entire area. This would later come into consideration when selecting the relevant effective surrounding area of the COP House for analysis.
Chapter III: Research Design

Research Method & Delimiters

I will use a quasi-experimental design to conduct a secondary analysis of existing data collected by the St. Cloud Police Department. Using data from the St. Cloud Police Department, I analyzed violent and property crime rates before (pre-test measure) and after (post-test measure) the new COP House (experimental treatment) opened in the South Side Neighborhood of St. Cloud. Regarding this study, the main delimiter was geographic proximity to the COP House. Since the COP House is located in the heart of the South Side Neighborhood, all the other neighborhoods that are not in close proximity within the city of St. Cloud would be excluded from the study. The reasoning is rooted in the COP House’s ability to influence a reduction in crime rates, and the effective range of that influence within the city. Local government conceptualizes the city in neighborhood zones. Since the COP House is located in the South Side Neighborhood and is also closely bordered by a small section of the McKinley & Railroad Parks neighborhood, these two neighborhoods were combined into the “South Side Area”.

Research Populations & Sampling

The target population of this study was all St. Cloud Police Department neighborhood crime data (i.e., the old core neighborhoods of Lake George, McKinley & Railroad Parks, North Side-Hester Park, Northeast-Wilson Park, Seberger-Roosevelt, South Side Neighborhood).
The survey population (a.k.a., sampling frame) consisted of all St. Cloud Police Department neighborhood crime data for only the South Side Area. A nonrandom, purposive sampling technique was used to extract the sample population. According to Maxfield and Babbie (2007), purposive sampling is based on a researcher’s knowledge of the subject and research needs relative to information and data. The sample population was further defined by two six-month increments, that is the pre-test measure period (2/18/17-8/17/17) and the post-test measure period (8/18/17-2/17/18).

**Conceptualization & Operationalization**

For the purpose of this study, analysis would yield a monthly crime total for the one-year period as well as a mean for each six-month block. Property crime involves acts related to the theft or destructions of one’s property. For the purposes of this study, property crime will include burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft. Violent crime is acts that include the use or threat of force against another. For the purposes of this study, violent crime included:
homicide, assault, sexual assault, terroristic threats and robbery. Reported drug crime was also analyzed and included possession of drug contraband and possession of a controlled substance.

Nature refers to the qualitative affect the COP House will have on crime in the South Side Area. For the purposes of this study, three qualitative classifications were used. These included the classifications of None, Increased, or Decreased. It is important to note that the classification of an increased affect actually shows a decrease in crime within the South Side Area.

Extent refers to the quantitative affect that the COP House will have on the crime in the South Side Area. For the purposes of this study, the “Extent” was broken down into three classifications that were identified based upon the percentile change in crime rate for both property and violent crime within the South Side Area. These three classifications were as follows: Insignificant (0-10 percent), Moderate (10-20 percent), and Significant (20+ percent).

**Data Collection, Processing & Analysis**

Data were collected with the assistance of the St. Cloud Police Department and a spreadsheet database was obtained from them for analysis. This database contained a one-year period of reported crimes that occurred in the South Side Area. Furthermore, the spreadsheet contained the nature of the crime, the location where it took place, and the date it occurred. Analysis yielded statistical and visual forms. Analysis via SPSS provided three sets of descriptive statistics for both of the six-month increments. Once obtained, the means were compared to see whether or not the COP House had an impact on reported crime. Visual forms of analysis include line graphs of the monthly crime rates for each form of violent, drug, and property crime. Crime statistics from the remainder of the city of St. Cloud were also used to
compare the findings from the South Side Area to help determine whether or not the change in crime found was in fact unique to the South Side Area.
Chapter IV: Findings & Conclusions

Property Crime, Before and After the Opening of the COP House

From February 18th, 2017 – August 18th, 2017, there were 91 reported instances of property crime within the South Side Neighborhood.

Table 1

Property Crime Before Opening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>FEB 18-28th</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>APR</th>
<th>MAY</th>
<th>JUN</th>
<th>JUL</th>
<th>AUG 1-17th</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROPERTY CRIME PRE</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that the February and August sections only contain partial days of each month as exactly six-months prior to the opening date of the COP House was selected. The property crimes that occurred within the South Side Neighborhood included burglary, criminal damage to property, theft, motor vehicle theft, and theft from a motor vehicle. Of the first six months prior to the opening of the COP House, the month of April had the maximum occurrences of property crime with 22 while the month of March had the minimum with 9.

From August 18th, 2017-February 17th, 2018, there were 130 instances of property crime within the South Side neighborhood after the COP House had opened up. This was an increase of 42 percent from the pre-test period.
Table 2

Property Crime After Opening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>AUG (18-31st)</th>
<th>SEP</th>
<th>OCT</th>
<th>NOV</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB (1-17th)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROPERTY CRIME POST</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like with the before data, it should be noted that the month of August and February only include partial figures as exactly six months after the COP House opened falls in mid-February. The maximum occurrences for property crime after the Cop House opened up was 35 in the month of September. The minimum occurring in the month of January with only 5 instances of property crime being reported.

![Figure 4. Property Crime Over a One Year Period](image URL)
Above is a visual representation of property crime within the South Side Area of St. Cloud over the entire twelve-month period. The months of the year have been coded numerically (e.g. 2 = February). The central line represents the day the COP House opened up in mid-August.

Table 3

Property Crime Paired Sample Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROPERTY BEFORE</td>
<td>13.000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.50925</td>
<td>1.70434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROPERTY AFTER</td>
<td>18.5714</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.31337</td>
<td>4.65402</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive statistics for the pre (before) and post (after) test comparison of property crime are listed above. The mean amount of property crimes per month for before the opening of the COP House was 13. The mean amount of property crimes per month for after the COP House had opened was 18.5. An increase of 5 instances of property crime per month occurred after the opening of the COP House.

Table 4

Property Crime Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Before – Property After</td>
<td>-1.329</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A paired samples T-Test was used to look for a statistically significant difference between the means of the pre and post test measures. In this instance, the means for the amount of property crime before and after the COP House opened up were compared. The findings failed to be statistically significant at the .05.
A set of maps (below) were created by Dustin Marlow as a visual representation of property crime in the South Side Area before and after the COP House opened. The yellow house indicates the location of the COP House while the red ski masks note the location where a property crime incident occurred.

Figure 5. Crime Maps of Property Crime
**Violent Crime, Before and After the Opening of the COP House**

From February 18th, 2017 – August 18th, 2017, there were 59 instances of violent crime within the South Side Neighborhood of St. Cloud.

Table 5

Violent Crime Before Opening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>FEB (18-28TH)</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>APR</th>
<th>MAY</th>
<th>JUN</th>
<th>JUL</th>
<th>AUG (1-17TH)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIOLENT CRIME PRE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously noted, the months of February and August only include a partial list of data. The maximum occurrences of violent crime were in the month of June with 16. The minimum number of occurrences was 6 in the month of April. The violent crime that occurred within the South Side Neighborhood included assault, domestic assault, homicide, and terrorist threats.

From August 18th, 2017- February 17th, 2018, there were 51 instances of violent crime within the South Side neighborhood after the COP House had opened up.
Table 6

Violent Crime After Opening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>AUG (18-31st)</th>
<th>SEP</th>
<th>OCT</th>
<th>NOV</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB (1-17th)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIOLENT CRIME POST</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously noted, the months of August and February include only partial dates as six months exactly was selected after the COP House opened up. The maximum of occurrences of violent crime after the COP House opened up was in the month of October with 13. The minimum amount of occurrences of violent crime occurred in the month of September with 5.

Figure 6. Violent Crime Over a One Year Period
Above is a visual representation of violent crime within the South Side Area of St. Cloud over the entire twelve-month period. The months of the year have been coded numerically (e.g. 2 = February). The central line represents the day the COP House opened up in mid-August.

Table 7
Violent Crime Paired Sample Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent Before</td>
<td>8.4286</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.86683</td>
<td>1.46152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent After</td>
<td>7.2857</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.53557</td>
<td>1.71429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive statistics for the pre (before) and post (after) test comparison of violent crime are listed above. The mean for the violent crimes per month before the COP House opened up was at 8.4. The mean for the violent crimes per month after the COP House opened up was 7.2.

Table 8
Violent Crime Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent Before-Violent After</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A paired samples T-Test was used to look for a statistically significant difference between the means of the pre and post-test measures. In this instance, the means for the amount of violent crime before and after the COP House opened up were compared. The findings failed to be statistically significant at the .05 level.
A set of maps (below) were created by Dustin Marlow as a visual representation of violent crime in the South Side Area before and after the COP House opened. The yellow house indicates the location of the COP House while the blue brass knuckles note the location where a violent crime incident occurred.

**Figure 7. Crime Maps of Violent Crime**
From February 18th, 2017 – August 18th, 2017, there were 74 instances of drug crime within the South Side Neighborhood of St. Cloud.

Table 9
Drug Crime Before Opening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>FEB (18-28TH)</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>APR</th>
<th>MAY</th>
<th>JUN</th>
<th>JUL</th>
<th>AUG (1-17TH)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRUG CRIME PRE</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously noted, the months of August and February include only partial dates as six months exactly was selected after the COP House opened up. The maximum number of occurrences of reported drug crime took place in the month of May with 19. The minimum number of occurrences of reported drug crime took place in July with 6.

From August 18th, 2017- February 17th, 2018, there were 55 instances of drug related crime within the South Side neighborhood after the COP House had opened up.

Table 10
Drug Crime After Opening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>AUG (18-31ST)</th>
<th>SEP</th>
<th>OCT</th>
<th>NOV</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB (1-17th)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRUG CRIME POST</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As previously noted, the months of August and February include only partial dates as six months exactly was selected after the COP House opened up. The maximum number of occurrences of reported drug related crime happened within the month of January with 10. The minimum number of reported drug related crimes occurred during the months of November and December with 6.

**Figure 8. Drug Crime Over a One Year Period**

Above is a visual representation of drug crime within the South Side Area of St. Cloud over the entire twelve-month period. The months of the year have been coded numerically (e.g 2 = February). The central line represents the day the COP House opened up in mid-August.
Table 11

Drug Crime Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>STD. DEVIATION</th>
<th>STD. MEAN OF ERROR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drug Before</td>
<td>10.57</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.35343</td>
<td>1.64544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug After</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.77281</td>
<td>.67006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive statistics for the pre (before) and post (after) test comparison of drug crime are listed above. The mean for the drug crimes before the COP House opened was 10.5 while the mean for after the COP House opened was 7.8.

Table 12

Drug Crime Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drug Before-Drug After</td>
<td>1.299</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A paired samples T-Test was used to look for a statistically significant difference between the means of the pre and post-test measures. In this instance, the means for the amount of drug crime before and after the COP House opened up were compared. The findings failed to be statistically significant at the .05 level.

A set of maps (below) were created by Dustin Marlow as a visual representation of drug crime in the South Side Area before and after the COP House opened. The yellow house indicates the location of the COP House while the black syringes note the location where a drug crime incident occurred.
Figure 9. Crime Maps of Drug Crime

During the same period of February 18, 2017 – August 17, 2017 and August 18, 2017-February 17, 2018, the remainder of the area of the city of St. Cloud experienced a decrease in
drug crime of 2 percent, a decrease in violent crime of 16 percent, and an increase in property crime of 25 percent.

Table 13

Percent of Change in Crime Citywide and South Side Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Side Area % of Change</th>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Violent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Side Area % of Change</td>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>+42%</td>
<td>-13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder of St. Cloud % of Change</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nature and the extent in which the COP House had on crime is listed below. The COP House had an increased affect and significant extent on drug crime, decreased affect and significant extent on property crime, and increased affect and moderate extent on violent crime.

Table 14

Nature and Extent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Violent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATURE</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTENT</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter V: Recommendations & Implications

Study Summary

One full year of reported crime data was analyzed to see whether or not the St. Cloud COP House had an affect on reported crime within the South Side Area of St. Cloud. This one year of data was broken down into two six month periods composed of six months before the COP House opened and six months after. Three distinct categories of crime were selected for analysis including, drug, violent, and property crime. The pre and post-test measures were then analyzed using a paired samples t-test to determine whether or not the COP House was the cause of the change in crime measured.

Discussion

Although statistical significance was not achieved in the property crime paired samples t-tests, it doesn’t completely rule out the possibility of the COP House having an affect on the reported crime within the South Side Neighborhood. With the results not being significant, the change in means for the pre-test and post-test periods cannot be attributed directly to the COP House with statistical certainty.

Interestingly, an increase in property crime of 42 percent occurred within the South Side Area after the COP House opened while an increase of 25 percent occurred during the same time frame for the remainder of the city of St. Cloud. As previously referenced, this isn’t necessarily a negative product of the COP House itself, but could possibly be a positive outcome demonstrating that trust in police has in fact increased. With an increase in trust in the police created by the community oriented initiatives, South Side Area Residents could feel more comfortable to report possible occurrences of property crime to authorities. On the other hand, this increase could also be potentially explained by the naturally occurring changes in crime
based upon the different seasons of the year. Ideally, more analysis would need to be done to
determine whether this large increase was abnormal or not.

Another possible explanation for the increase could come from nearby St. Cloud State
University. With the main fall school semester not starting until mid August, the pre-test sample
would only include one semester in which the weather would be suitable for outdoor social
events while the post-test would include two full months of suitable weather for outdoor social
gatherings (e.g. yard parties). This can be seen with the two highest months of property crime
occurring in September and October with 35 and 34 incidents occurring. This seasonal trend in
crime has been documented in the past throughout a seventeen-year period and rather consistent
over all types of crime (Gilbertson, 2018).

A decrease of 13.5 percent in total violent crime occurred within the South Side Area
after the COP House opened up. This change was found to not be statistically significant
signifying that the change in violent crime cannot be attributed directly to the COP House.
Though this finding was not statistically significant, it is rather interesting that a decrease
occurred in violent crime to begin with. This is because school is in session for almost the
entirety of the post test six-month period. One would then assume that this would mean an
increase in younger people within the South Side Area, thus more opportunities for physical
altercations to take place. While a decrease of 13.5 percent was seen in the South Side Area, a
16 percent decrease occurred within the remainder of the area of the city of St. Cloud. This
would point to the decrease in violent crime that occurred in the South Side Area consistent to
that seen in the entire city.

One of the more surprising results of the study came from the drug crime portion.
Though the COP House between the pre-test and post-test, the South Side Area experienced a 25
percent reduction in drug crime after the COP House opened. Though this finding was not statistically significant, it is significant as the decrease was much larger in comparison to the 2 percent decrease seen over that same time in the rest of the city of St. Cloud. What makes this finding even more remarkable is the fact that school was almost in session for the entirety of the post-test period. In fact, three days after the COP House opened, the Fall semester began at St. Cloud State University. One would assume with the massive influx of students during this time, that an increase in recreational drug use would occur. So it is possible that the COP House in fact created this departure from the city trend; but, it cannot be said for certain.

**Social and Policy Implications**

Since funding for the construction of the COP House was made entirely of private donations, significant results on crime would signal a great return on that investment. Unfortunately, the findings of this study on the COP Houses affect on crime weren’t conclusive enough to make that determination. With that in mind, it is important to remember that the COP House provides so much more than just crime fighting. From the English lessons to the birthing courses, the impact these community initiatives have on people day to day are invaluable. In time, these will help to improve the South Side Area.

The reduction in drug crime is definitely promising, but only time will tell if this was caused by random chance or by the COP House itself. As previously noted, if the COP House proved to be a great success in battling crime in the South Side Area, then the potential for future COP Houses within the City of St. Cloud and the state of Minnesota is increased. Unfortunately, it’s too soon to make this distinction as well. Again, I would like to stress that these judgments are based solely on the results on crime within the South Side Area and not reflective of the outreach functions themselves.
Increasing the number of officers attached to the COP House could be one possible solution to achieve a decreased level of crime within the South Side Neighborhood. Though this would cost the city more resources, having more full time officers based out of the COP House would not only create a larger police presence at the house itself, but also within the South Side Area. This increased presence could help to deter would be criminals within the South Side Area. It is possible that this could also help to curb the large increase of property crime experienced in the South Side Area after the COP House opened up.

Another recommendation would be to allow more time for the community outreach functions to grow and take hold. Though six months may seem like an extended period of time, the complexities involved in a citizen/police relationship may take longer than previously thought to develop. Though significant reductions in crime occurred relatively shortly after Racine opened their COP House up, to expect those same results in a city composed completely different demographic wise is. Likewise, Operation Peacekeeper that began in Stockton, California, took over five years to create a significant reduction in violent crime.

Conclusion

The reduction in drug crime experienced is definitely promising, but only time will tell whether this was caused by random chance or by the COP House itself. Unfortunately, as far as crime reduction goes, that is all that can be said of it. Though statistically significant results on crime were not found, it’s too soon to label the COP House as ineffective and or a poor use of donated funds. Ideally, a follow-up study based on a one-year or even two-year pre-test / post-test design would be beneficial as it would allow more time for the COP House’s initiatives to take hold, and demonstrate attributable results.
References


Park, Robert, Ernest W. Burgess and Roderick D. McKenzie. The City; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925


