THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DECENTRALIZATION OF POLICING
IN THE REDUCTION OF PART I CRIMES: A LOOK
AT GEORGIA’S SANDY SPRINGS
POLICE DEPARTMENT

by

Amber N. Kobelt

An Abstract
of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
in the Department of Criminal Justice
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May, 2015
ABSTRACT

by

Amber N. Kobelt

The purpose of the thesis was to examine if the decentralization of a police force from the county level to the city level rendered a statistically significant impact on UCR Part I crime levels in Sandy Springs, Georgia. The decentralization was viewed as a community oriented policing strategy. The research design was quasi-experimental and utilized secondary data collected from the respective police departments. Data analysis concluded that, overall, Sandy Springs saw a statistically significant reduction in the level of UCR Part I crimes ($t(49) = 3.936, p < .001$). Considering each of the Part I crimes individually provided mixed results, showing statistically significant reductions only in theft ($t(38) = 3.524, p = .001$) and vehicle theft ($t(49) = 2.412, p = .020$). Further research is recommended to determine long-term results of the decentralized police force on the reduction of all crime types.
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CHAPTER 1
NATURE AND SCOPE
OF THE STUDY

Law enforcement workers and citizens alike are constantly considering ways to reduce crime in our cities and towns. In the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia, an emerging new approach to handling rising crime levels is to turn unincorporated areas of the largest counties, primarily Fulton County, into independent cities with privatized utilities and, more importantly, community-focused city-level police departments. This decentralization of policing, shifting primary day-to-day law enforcement responsibility from county level to city level, is believed to allow the new departments to interact more closely with the members of their communities and, also, to implement more strategic policing plans that are tailored to the community needs. The first unincorporated community in Fulton County to undertake this task was the area known as Sandy Springs.

Sandy Springs, located in north Fulton County, Georgia, is a 38 square mile community comprised of demographically diverse residents. The ethnic makeup of the population, according to 2009 data, is approximately 67% Caucasian, 18% Black, 14% Hispanic, and 1% other races. The sixth largest city in the state, and second largest city in the Metro Atlanta area, Sandy Springs has a residential population of approximately 99,000. Daytime population, however, reaches well over 300,000 people due to the number of businesses and large corporations established within the city limits. Considered a primarily affluent community, per capita income exceeds $55,000 and median home values fall around $486,500. However, in some parts of Sandy Springs, residents live in lower value apartments and other multi-family dwellings (McDonough, n.d.).
The City of Sandy Springs was officially created on December 1, 2005 and the Sandy Springs Police Department took over law enforcement operations from the Fulton County Police Department at 12:01 A.M. on July 1, 2006.

**Background of the Problem**

Taking initiative in the creation of a new city, the Sandy Springs Task Force formed in early 2005 from a small group of Sandy Springs residents and community leaders (Riley & Anderson, 2005). This group sought to create a new police department for the soon-to-be city of Sandy Springs in an effort to move away from the sparse police services being provided by Fulton County at that time. According to the task force, they were guided primarily by the desire to facilitate the creation of a new police department for Sandy Springs. The task force envisioned a department comprised of first-rate officers and personnel who would provide an array of needed services that would make the residents and officers of Sandy Springs proud (Riley & Anderson, 2005).

Major concerns also existed regarding the staffing levels of Fulton County Police Department and, financially, what level of service they were able to provide to the community of Sandy Springs. Prior to the creation of the Sandy Springs Police Department, Fulton County Police Department staffing was only able to provide approximately 40 personnel to cover Sandy Springs’ eight beats 24 hours a day. With the limited personnel support, the task force found that there were times that only five or six officers on duty and serving all of the area (Riley & Anderson, 2005).

The theory behind these actions being that the decentralization of policing, moving police services for the area from county level control to city level, would allow the new department to interact more closely with the communities and implement more strategic policing plans,
essentially creating a designer police force customized to the voiced needs of the citizens (Riley & Anderson, 2005).

**Statement of the Problem**

The area of Sandy Springs was receiving policing services from the Fulton County Police Department and, as a community, the citizens felt that the services provided were ineffective and inefficient for the needs of the area. Once the city was developed, Sandy Springs, in an effort to solve the policing needs of the community, created a local police department to decentralize law enforcement services from the Fulton County Police Department in Atlanta (Riley & Anderson, 2005).

In the wake of the creation of the city of Sandy Springs and the subsequent creation of the Sandy Springs Police Department, other suburbs and unincorporated areas began considering whether this same decentralized policing model would be beneficial to their communities. Other unincorporated areas in the suburbs began to emulate this model, but no research exists on the effectiveness of decentralizing from Fulton County law enforcement services as a means of reducing crime (Garner, 2008).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of decentralization from Fulton County Police Department to Sandy Springs Police Department on UCR Part I crimes. The study will identify the short-term effects on crime rates when switching from county level to city level law enforcement.

The city of Sandy Springs and the Sandy Springs Police Department are currently leading the way for other comparable communities and, in effect, are setting the standards for other areas to follow. After Sandy Springs’ inauguration as a new city, Fulton County saw additional areas
incorporate and form new cities, including the areas now known as Milton and Johns Creek (Garner, 2008). Before many more communities decentralize and reorganize their police departments, it is imperative to know whether or not such efforts are effective in lowering crime rates.

If the research shows that the Sandy Springs model does significantly reduce crime, then current efforts to reorganize and create other “custom” police departments in high-crime areas could be justifiably reinforced and amplified, knowing that the end product is worth the necessary money, time, and community contributions. On the other hand, if the research shows that the model does not significantly reduce crime, then city funds and efforts can be appropriately placed elsewhere while other crime reduction models are considered. This research, ultimately, could prove to be a valuable contribution to police departments and agencies across the state.

**Theoretical Basis of the Study**

Two concepts form the theoretical basis of this study. The first, and primary, concept discussed in this study is community oriented policing (COP), also referred to as community oriented problem solving (COPS). This policing concept was defined by Trojanowicz in *Community Policing: How to Get Started* (1994) as “a philosophy of full service personalized policing, where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis, from a decentralized place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems” (as cited in Ferreira, 1996, para. 8). This definition of community oriented problem solving will be used in terms of this research.

Building further on community oriented policing, the second concept examined is community oriented policing plus (COP+). Instituted in the Reno, Nevada Police Department in
the 1980’s, community oriented policing plus was a department-wide policing strategy focused not only on community service and relationships with citizens, but also on quality assurance (the “plus”) (Glensor & Peak, 1996). Also focusing on decentralization of patrol and community involvement, the COP+ program was successful in addressing community concerns and bringing citizens together to take a more active role in law enforcement in order to focus on problem resolution and not solely incident response (Glensor & Peak, 1996).

**Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following research questions in regards to the decentralization of policing and the Sandy Springs Police Department:

Q1: Does a significant difference exist in UCR Part I crime levels for the City of Sandy Springs under the services of the Sandy Springs Police Department in comparison to the UCR Part I crime levels for the same area under the services of Fulton County Police Department?

Q2: Which, if any, UCR Part I crimes were affected by the decentralization of policing in Sandy Springs?

**Importance of the Study**

This study examines the effects of a substantial organizational and structural change in the policing services organization in Metro Atlanta areas, specifically in the Sandy Springs area of Atlanta, Georgia. This shift in structure takes time, community efforts, and additional resources to complete. As interest rises in these changes and additional communities consider replicating this model, it is important to understand whether there is any benefit, or even harm, in decentralizing and in moving away from the established law enforcement structure and services.
At the time of this study, no existing research on the success rate of the Sandy Springs Police Department model is publicly available. It is potentially possible that the model is being replicated without cause and without any benefit to the communities. Furthermore, this is an opportunity to advance the available information on the effects of instituting local police departments in previously unincorporated areas that were receiving services from the county police force. It is important that the citizens understand the outcome of their voting efforts and the subsequent restructuring and decentralization of the police department.

While Sandy Springs continues to set the standards for future city-level police departments in Fulton County, it is important to know whether or not the results are worth the changes, time, and effort that go into forming new cities, police forces, and other government entities. Because law enforcement has been the focus of the decentralization discussion occurring in Georgia, knowing the effectiveness of decentralized police departments in reducing crime is essential.

**Study Overview**

At face value, it would seem that using feedback from citizens, getting citizens involved in day-to-day policing and government, and tailoring a police system specifically to the area in which it is located would, in fact, result in a reduction of crime. This research looks at the statistics for the first two years of the Sandy Springs Police Department to determine whether that community-wide assumption was, indeed, correct.

In order to make that determination, the remainder of this study will analyze and compare the crime rates, specifically looking at the UCR Part I crimes, in Sandy Springs for the last two years of operation under Fulton County Police Department, starting July 2004 through June
2006, to the crime rates for the first seven years of operation under the Sandy Springs Police Department, starting July 2006 through June 2013.

The remainder of this study consists of the following chapters: a literature review, methodology, analysis of data, and a discussion of the findings of this research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this chapter is to review the initial research and reporting that was conducted locally prior to the implementation of the Sandy Springs Police Department, and, also, to examine the decentralization of policing services from Fulton County to the City of Sandy Springs as a form of community oriented policing. According to the US Department of Justice, by the year 2000, 68% of local police departments had some kind of community policing plan in place (Hickman & Reaves, 2003).

Sandy Springs Task Force Report

Since incorporation, Sandy Springs has maintained its own police force at the city level in an effort to solve law enforcement problems. Beginning in early 2005, the City of Sandy Springs Task Force went to work on gathering the information necessary to understand the existing public safety environment in the area and, also, to better define the problems and needs of the community. Interviews were conducted with law enforcement professionals from multiple agencies, written and electronic data for the Sandy Springs area were gathered, and plans were developed to begin the conversion to a city-level police force (Riley & Anderson, 2005). To complete their research and report, the Sandy Springs Task Force worked with a variety of sources ranging from law enforcement officers and leadership in Fulton County to the United States Department of Justice. The Task Force also consulted with agencies such the Georgia Department of Public Safety to determine the law enforcement efforts and coverage needed to decrease the traffic incidents and crime occurring on state roads; and MARTA, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, to better understand the crime patterns occurring on the transportation system which provides rapid transit between Sandy Springs and southern Fulton County (Riley & Anderson, 2005).
Utilizing all of the information gathered from various law enforcement resources and government agencies, the Sandy Springs Task Force began looking at the problem areas of Sandy Springs, identifying crime trends, gaps in policing coverage, and what law enforcement changes would need to be implemented to make positive changes for the community (Riley & Anderson, 2005). What the Task Force quickly identified was that Sandy Springs was experiencing crimes of every type and severity from shoplifting to murder (Riley & Anderson, 2005). The Task Force also identified that the presence of gangs in Sandy Springs brought in higher levels of robbery, drug crimes, prostitution, aggravated assault, and homicide. These crimes appeared in multiple hotspots throughout the city, notably on Northwood Drive and in the Roswell Road retail areas (Riley & Anderson, 2005).

On Northwood Drive, the Task Force noted that the large Hispanic population posed a challenge to Fulton County Police Department officers as cultural differences produced mistrust of the police and language barriers impeded communication, all of which hindered officers from being able to provide effective law enforcement support to citizens in the immediate area (Riley & Anderson, 2005). The Northwood Drive area, in particular, was identified by the Task Force as being a crucial test subject for a new police department as it experienced a full range of crime within its boundaries, but also contained essential positive community elements such as a strong Catholic community and church presence (Riley & Anderson, 2005).

Of particular concern to the citizens and the Sandy Spring Task Force was the overall state of the police services provided by Fulton County Police Department. Research discovered that Fulton County Police Department divided Sandy Springs into eight beats and provided as few as 40 officers to cover all of the beats over the course of a 24 hour day. It was not uncommon for as few as five or six officers total to be on duty in all of the area comprising
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Sandy Springs (Riley & Anderson, 2005). Following the Task Force’s interviews with key law enforcement professionals, they stated that those interviewed all agreed that the police protection in Sandy Springs was lacking. Considering the interviewees’ feedback, the Task Force identified key problems resulting from the low level of policing services. First, it was revealed that uniformed officers were spending nearly all of their time daily merely responding to traffic accidents or checking in on burglar alarms. As a result, very little of an officer’s time was spent on patrol or on traffic enforcement duty (Riley & Anderson, 2005). Additionally, research showed minimal follow up efforts in criminal investigations due to lack of resources – primarily time. Only a small percentage of time was spent on investigating burglaries or theft, most of which involved taking down victim information and filing the report (Riley & Anderson, 2005).

Also noted by those interviewed is that Sandy Springs lacked any coverage from a crime suppression unit or drug squad. This lack of specialized resources also meant that there were not any undercover or sting operations in the city. Finally, it was also revealed that the systems in place coupled with the inefficient procedures for routine activities such as warrants, arrests, and booking inmates were responsible for removing officers from the streets and patrol for extended periods of time, even on simple arrests (Riley & Anderson, 2005).

Given all of these findings, it is clear that there was a need for change and that the Sandy Springs area was not receiving the level of service that was not only expected, but required by the citizens in order to maintain an orderly community. A shift towards a police force that integrates tightly with the public need became the focus of local leaders.

**Community Policing Models**

Law enforcement agencies are constantly facing increasing pressure to reduce crime on the streets and provide for safer communities. In an effort to meet these demands, police
departments have created new strategic programs aimed at preventing crime (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], n.d.). As criminologist Kelling noted, a fundamental consequence of community policing is that law enforcement strategy shifts from being passive and reactive to a more proactive approach in which police strategy focuses on preventative intervention in community affairs (OJJDP, n.d.).

It is important to note, however, that community policing is not a single, well-defined program. Instead, community policing may encompass a wide variety of strategic programs or procedures which stem from the belief that effective policing depends on citizen engagement (OJJDP, n.d.). Community policing encourages the creation of organizational strategies to address and reduce the causes and fear of crime, as well as social disorder, through the utilization of various problem solving techniques and building partnerships with the public. This fundamental shift in the structure of policing stresses the importance of the prevention of crime as opposed to a reactive response to incidents (Hickman & Reaves, 2003). According to Hickman and Reaves’ research, implementing community policing plans empowers officers on the front-line while simultaneously decentralizing command and encouraging police to actively engage in preventing the problems that face the communities that they serve (2003).

Building on various prior studies of crime rate factors, community oriented problem solving has been a part of the evolution of community focused, proactive policing, spanning concepts and theories from Goldstein’s problem-oriented policing to community oriented policing plus. Along the way, theories such as Wilson and Kelling’s broken windows theory (1982) and Sampson and Raudenbush’s collective efficacy theory (1999) have also come into the forefront as they sought to test and improve upon community oriented policing programs. Herein, the remainder of this chapter will examine the evolution of community policing models.
and consider the structural decentralization in the Sandy Springs model as a form of the more citizen-engaged community oriented problem solving.

Community oriented problem solving represents a shift in policing style from the traditional reactive style to a more proactive approach which focuses on crime prevention. To prevent crimes before they occur, community oriented problem solving relies on the engagement of community members in guiding the policing strategies for their hometowns (Hickman & Reaves, 2003). A proactive philosophy, community oriented policing promotes solving criminal issues, increasing the quality of life of citizens, and decreasing citizen crime and safety concerns (Glensor & Peak, 1996). Within the context of community policing and problem solving, law enforcement agencies may employ an array of strategies to create conversation and consistent information flow about problems in a community. These strategies may include foot patrol, neighborhood policing, or other team policing methods that foster collaboration between the police and community members so that priorities driving problem-oriented policing can be set jointly (Boostrom, 2005).

Glensor and Peak (1996) also supported the importance of collaboration between citizens and officers, stating that the goals of community oriented policing cannot be achieved solely by placing officers on foot patrols or by opening neighborhood stations. Instead, there must be a buy in – a collaborative effort from the community at large – to take an active role in the communications with police officers and departments surrounding shared law enforcement and community goals.

**Theoretical Framework**

Throughout the past few decades, the state and involvement of community has been a prominent topic for research on social and policing theories and crime statistics. As Boostrom
(2000) points out, in the 1920’s, researchers out of the University of Chicago, often referred to as the “Chicago school,” laid the foundation for a tradition that viewed urban neighborhoods as vital test areas in studying the causes of key social issues, including crime and delinquency, as well as solutions to such issues. Amongst these researchers were Shaw and McKay, who formulated a theory which correlated high crime rates and increased levels of delinquency with social disorganization within a community (Boostrom, 2005).

To form their social disorganization theory, Shaw and McKay conducted studies of crime rates in Chicago neighborhoods, showing that certain neighborhoods, particularly those in the center of the city, consistently experienced high rates of crime and violence across multiple years and generations (Boostrom, 2005). Of particular importance, Shaw and McKay noted that, despite changes in the people living in the areas and the duration of time, the crime and violence remained the same or even increased. The areas where this was most evident were those with the highest levels of both mobility and heterogeneity in the citizens. From these studies, Shaw and McKay concluded that the high levels of criminality were environmental and due to social disorganization, which lead to ineffective social control and guardianship in those communities. That is, if a community does not self-police effectively, delinquent behavior and crime can result in particular areas across time and generations of residents (Boostrom, 2005).

Shaw and McKay’s social disorganization theory, since the 1920’s, has been studied, challenged, and expanded by subsequent researchers. One such theory, the broken windows theory, formulated by Wilson and Kelling in 1982, examined disorganization from a broader scope and held that disorder led to serious crimes and must be eliminated quickly (Wilcox & Cullen, 2010). Wilson and Kelling’s theory operates on the general premise that disorder, whether physical or social, leads to a breakdown in social control and, as a result, creates an
environment which allows crime to flourish (Wilcox & Cullen, 2010). Wilson and Kelling held that allowing small, seemingly mundane crimes such as vandalism, toll-jumping, or even public drunkenness created levels of disorder which lead to larger, more significant crimes and violence. Additionally, high levels of disorder impact public perception of safety, much the same way as media accounts of crime and violence do (Glensor & Peak, 1996).

The broken windows theory has been tested in various studies, including a Skogan (1990) study in which statistical models were used to support a connection between “disorder and robbery at the neighborhood level” (Wilcox & Cullen, 2010, p. 1019). However, it was Sampson and Raudenbush who later revisited this theory in a 1999 study in which they suggested that it was not disorder that caused crime, but rather that crime and disorder are the products of low collective efficacy (Wilcox & Cullen, 2010).

Collective efficacy is defined as “an emphasis on shared beliefs in a neighbourhood’s capability for action to achieve an intended effect, coupled with an active sense of engagement on the part of the residents” (Sampson, 2004, p. 108). In other words, collective efficacy is the level to which the residents of a given area actively work together towards a shared goal; neighborhood collective efficacy depends on the connection between community cohesion and shared expectations. This collective efficacy theory was Sampson and Raudenbush’s effort to improve and expand upon Wilson and Kelling’s earlier work. They found that high levels of collective efficacy exist when members of a neighborhood or community are able to successfully control the behavior of other individuals or groups within the community (Sampson, 2004). With this level of community control in place, due primarily to shared goals and visions for the community, neighbors work towards the same goals and, ultimately, criminal behaviors are discouraged, lending to a decrease in crime and violence levels. Sampson and Raudenbush
conducted research which produced, in one sample, a two standard deviation increase in collective efficacy which correlated with a 40% decrease in the homicide rate for one Chicago neighborhood (Sampson, 2004).

Additionally, since the 1980’s, another movement in policing has developed and influenced the law enforcement world (Boostrom, 2005). Problem oriented policing, a predecessor of community oriented policing, was initially outlined by Goldstein in 1987. The standardized police practices of the era were critiqued as being too focused on the policing processes themselves and not on the results of those processes; the argument being that police organizations had become blind to the very problems that they were meant to solve (OJJDP, n.d.). In fact, it was Goldstein who was a pioneer philosopher in advocating for more aggressive order maintenance policies and procedures, allowing officers to interject themselves into situations without requiring a specific complaint to be filed (Boostrom, 2005). Influenced by earlier works, such as Wilson and Kelling’s broken windows theory, Goldstein argued that policing needed to move toward a more proactive approach and focus on solving community problems to prevent crimes before they happened (OJJDP, n.d.). This paved the way for community oriented policing, an approach to policing that is similar to problem oriented policing, but focuses heavily on citizen engagement in the problem solving processes.

Emphasizing proactive crime prevention, community oriented policing emerged as an acceptable alternative to traditional policing in the 1980s. At the core of community oriented policing is the collaboration between the police and residents as they work together to identify and solve problems in the community (OJJDP, n.d.). As noted by Sampson (2004), community oriented policing has an explicit goal of bolstering the participation of residents in the day-to-day activities of their neighborhoods by fostering a better relationship with government entities. This
is a stark transition from problem oriented policing; moving away from reactive policing towards community-focused, strategic policing.

While community oriented policing is not a one-size-fits-all or strictly defined program, there are still various aspects associated with the implementation of such programs. Amongst these elements is community empowerment; citizens taking an active role in the policing processes and working with law enforcement towards shared goals. Also, community oriented policing depends on viewing the police function as a broad role which encompasses many facets, such as patrol, information dissemination, investigation, and crime prevention. Additionally, community oriented policing is highlighted by the reliance of the police on the community for direction, information, and, at times, authority. Community oriented policing strategies often target specific problems with customized tactics as opposed to relying merely on routine patrol or rapid response time to solve neighborhood issues (OJJDP, n.d.).

Over time, additional improvements to the existing community oriented policing model have been identified. In Nevada in 1987, economic factors had caused staffing and resource reductions at the Reno Police Department, but the community calls for police services did not slow down – instead, they increased dramatically (Glensor & Peak, 1996). After identifying the need for broad change, the Reno Police Department instituted their COP+ strategy across all units. The difference between this implementation of a community policing strategy and the existing community oriented policing approach was a quality assurance factor, also referred to as “the plus” (Glensor & Peak, 1996). The department struggled to keep up with community demand and, as a result, there was erosion in community support. After instituting a community oriented policing strategy, the department then created an additional unit to focus on quality assurance. This unit surveyed citizens biannually in an effort to identify top concerns in the
community and, also, to monitor the department’s effectiveness in addressing those concerns to the satisfaction of the citizens (Glensor & Peak, 1996).

The department also implemented additional improvements such as the creation of a media group, neighborhood advisory groups, and decentralized patrol. Community support eventually grew for the department as the residents began to engage and play a more active role in the problem solving efforts for their neighborhood. Ultimately, the external partnerships formed with the citizens by the Reno Police Department emerged as being a vital component in the creation and subsequent success of Reno’s community policing strategies (Glensor & Peak, 1996).

Another program coming out of Chicago and similar in implementation to the decentralization of policing in Sandy Springs is the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy or CAPS. The CAPS initiative, which began as a pilot program in select areas of Chicago in 1993, is part of the larger scale move towards community oriented policing in Illinois’ Chicago Police Department (Skogan, Hartnett, DuBois, Comey, Kaiser, & Lovig, 2000). The second largest police department throughout the United States, the Chicago Police Department employees nearly 17,000 officers and is responsible for providing policing services to upwards of three million people. Additionally, they face the challenge of covering more than 225 square miles (Skogan et al., 2000).

The CAPS initiative brought about substantial change in policing processes and community interactions, as well as expansion of the role of law enforcement officers. Focusing on persistent community problems – related or ongoing incidents requiring intervention and affecting a significant number of citizens living or working in an area – CAPS relies on the utilization of both police and community efforts and resources to identify, assess, and solve
community problems and prevent crime (Skogan et al., 2000). Under the CAPS initiative, crime reduction and prevention remain the primary focus of the police organization, but attention is also paid to the expansion of the responsibilities of officers and the department into community, not just criminal, matters. CAPS provides additional community services and handles concerns which do not, traditionally, fall into the scope of the police. For example, CAPS also provides officers for code enforcement issues, social disorder complaints, noise ordinances, and municipal service issues traditionally handled by the court system (Skogan et al., 2000).

In order to successfully implement the CAPS program, the Chicago Police Department made many changes to accommodate the new problem solving initiatives. These changes included reorganizing the patrol division, redesigning the 911 system, and encouraging teamwork and collaboration among officers throughout the agency. Additional layers of leadership were instituted and officers were allowed better access to the community; most notably, specialized beats were organized and implemented in neighborhoods throughout the city (Skogan et al., 2000). A study conducted by the National Institute of Justice measured the problem solving capacity of CAPS in three key areas: individual, political, and collective (Skogan et al., 2000).

At the individual level, CAPS found that neighbors surveyed believed that a high percentage, 83%, of fellow citizens would step up and step in to stop crimes and negative behaviors in their neighborhoods, such as vandalism, fighting, or the harassment of senior citizens by teenagers (Skogan et al., 2000). That is, individuals strongly believed that they were living in areas with a low tolerance for social disorganization or broken windows.
From a political point of view, the study found that residents in many areas still lack the ability to address problems on their own without a police force. This highlighted the integration between the police department and members of the community.

Finally, as a collective, CAPS found that individuals who were involved in organizations in the neighborhoods were more likely to communicate and prioritize their concerns for their community (Skogan et al., 2000). Collectively, neighbors became involved in community organizations with shared goals and views, particularly regarding crime. Nearly 60% of surveyed households in Chicago belonged to at least one community organization, primarily churches, resulting in higher levels of collective efficacy (Skogan et al., 2000).

The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy, CAPS, is an example of a successfully implemented initiative to move from traditional, reactive policing to a proactive model that relies on community involvement in urban areas facing high levels of crime and disorder.

**Criticisms of Community Oriented Policing Programs**

A review of existing studies and information surrounding community oriented policing programs reveals a mixed review of the effectiveness of such programs. Perhaps the most evident criticism is that there not an existing, specific, defined program that constitutes a community oriented policing model. Instead, the programs nationwide vary based on the communities in which they are implemented. This “flaw,” however, is reflective of the community oriented policing concept itself – every community has different problems and needs, and policing is not one size fits all. Also, because of this setup, a review of the literature shows that different aspects of community oriented policing are more impactful on certain crime types in different areas. It is the collaboration with community members, the “plus,” however, which best characterizes the community oriented policing concept.
Contribution to the Literature

In the case of the City of Sandy Springs, Fulton County Police Department was already operating under a community policing model. The size of the county and the distance from the police department serving the area, however, was a challenge for the police and a frustration for the residents. By decentralizing the policing services and expanding communication and collaboration opportunities, the model was modified to accommodate for the needs of Sandy Springs residents.

At the time of this study, no other research conducted by a party outside of the government of the City of Sandy Springs and focusing on the policing impact of the decentralization from Fulton County exists. The majority of existing studies that are available are focused primarily on the economic impact of other changes implemented by the City of Sandy Springs when they outsourced all utilities and municipal functions - other than fire, police, and 911 (Gilroy & Stanek, 2006). It is this researcher’s hope that an examination of the short-term impact of decentralizing policing responsibilities can provide some insight to citizens in similar unincorporated areas as they push towards incorporation and the reorganization of policing services.

This study will analyze the data for Sandy Springs before and after the implementation of a new police department. The expectation is that some, but not all, crime types are significantly impacted by a decentralized police department utilizing community oriented policing strategies.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this research is the number or frequency of reported incidents in Sandy Springs, Georgia, for Part I crimes by month from July 2004 through June 2013. This time frame includes two different phases of policing for Sandy Springs: (1) the pre-decentralization phase, July 2004 – June 2006, under the policing services of Fulton County Police Department; and (2) the post-decentralization phase, July 2006 – June 2013, under the policing services of the newly created Sandy Springs Police Department. It should be noted that, for the purposes of this study, a reporting year is defined as July through June of the following year. This is to accommodate for the July 1, 2006, start date for the Sandy Springs Police Department which maximizes the use of the available data. For this study, a total of nine years of data was examined. Part I crimes include: criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2004).

Description of Research Approach

For the purposes of this quasi-experimental study, raw secondary data were retrieved directly from both the Fulton County Police Department and the Sandy Springs Police Department for the eight beats covering the area.

The Fulton County crime data were collected from the department’s database by a GIS officer using a query of Part I crimes for the pre-decentralization date range of July 2004 to June 2006. The data supplied by Fulton County included a description of the crime (as determined by Fulton County’s reporting system), but did not include a field with the UCR Part I crime type identified. The data were sorted using Microsoft Excel by the description and then assigned to
the appropriate category of crime in an adjacent cell. The data were then converted into a count by month of the frequency of the corresponding crime type in order to match the Sandy Springs data format and to allow for comparative analysis.

The Sandy Springs crime data were compiled from the county’s crime management system by the police department’s crime analyst. The data, covering the post-decentralization time frame of July 2006 to June 2013, were provided in tabular format, showing the frequency of each Part I crime by month.

**Research Questions**

Q1: Does a significant difference exist in UCR Part I crime levels for the City of Sandy Springs under the services of the Sandy Springs Police Department in comparison to the UCR Part I crime levels for the same geographical area under the services of Fulton County Police Department?

Q2: Which, if any, UCR Part I crimes were affected by the decentralization of policing in Sandy Springs?

**Operational Definition of Concepts**

For the purposes of this study, decentralization is defined as “the dispersion or distribution of functions and powers; specifically: the delegation of power from a central authority to regional and local authorities” (“Decentralization,” n.d.). In other words, devolution, moving law enforcement services for a city away from one centralized county location to a smaller, self-governing local location.

Part I offenses, as classified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reports, were measured in this study. It is important to clarify the definition of each offense. The Part I offenses to be considered are: criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated
assault, burglary, larceny-theft (not including motor vehicle theft), motor vehicle theft, and arson (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2004). Their specific definitions, from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports Handbook (2004), are as follows:

Criminal homicide is “The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another. As a general rule, any death caused by injuries received in a fight, argument, quarrel, assault, or commission of a crime is classified as Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter” (p. 15). Criminal homicide also includes the manslaughter by negligence, “the killing of another person through gross negligence” (p. 18).

Forcible rape is defined as:

The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Carnal knowledge is defined by Black’s Law Dictionary, 6th ed. as “the act of a man having sexual bodily connections with a woman; sexual intercourse […].” “Against her will” includes instances in which the victim is incapable of giving consent because of her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity (or because of her youth). (p. 19)

Robbery is defined as “The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear” (p. 21). This includes robberies that involve firearms, various cutting instruments, and other dangerous weapons, as well as robberies in which no weapons are used, referred to as strong-arm robberies.

The next offense category is assault, “an unlawful attack by one person upon another” (p. 23). This includes aggravated assault, which is
An unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault usually is accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. (p. 23)

Burglary, “the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft”, is the fifth Part I crime that will be evaluated in this thesis (p. 28). This includes scenarios where entry to a structure is attempted but does not result in successful entry.

Another offense to be considered is larceny-theft. This is “the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession or constructive possession of another” (p. 31). To further define larceny-theft, we must also consider the definition of constructive possession. Constructive possession, per Black’s Law Dictionary (as cited in Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004) is “where one does not have physical custody or possession, but is in a position to exercise dominion or control over a thing” (p. 31).

Larceny-theft does not include motor vehicle theft, “the theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle” (p. 35). Under the UCR, motor vehicles are any “self-propelled vehicle[s] that [run] on land surface and not on rails” (p. 35).

Finally, arson is the last Part I offense that was evaluated in this study. Under the UCR, arson is “any willful or malicious burning or attempt to burn, with or without intent to defraud, a dwelling house, public building, motor vehicle or aircraft, [and/or] personal property of another” (p. 37).

Limitations

While conducting the research for this study, there were a few limitations related to the methodology. First, the data from both police departments, Sandy Springs and Fulton County,
only include reported crimes and crimes witnessed by officers. Therefore, crimes which were undetected or unreported were not included in the data. Additionally, data may not reflect cases in which an officer used their discretion to let the offender walk away with just a warning. Another limitation is that the police data may include crimes which were reported but never substantiated.

A lack of police officers in the eight beats under Fulton County Police Department may have contributed to lower reporting due to the inability to have officers readily available and accessible to take the report information. In some cases, citizens did not bother to report crimes because they did not believe that the Fulton County Police Department would be able to support them in an acceptable time frame and manner (Peisner, 2006).

Furthermore, prior to 2008, all data for Fulton County Police Department were collected from police reports and manually entered into the records (S. McBride, personal communication, February 24, 2014). The county lacked a formal crime management system and, as such, there was the potential for human error. The Sandy Springs Task Force noted in their research that it was difficult to obtain consistent statistics from the Fulton County Police Department for both criminal and traffic offenses (Riley & Anderson, 2005). The Fulton County computer system would require a special request for a truly detailed analysis, requiring a custom database and query to be developed (Riley & Anderson, 2005; S. McBride, personal communication, February 24, 2014).

The small time frame for the data in this study may also affect results, particularly as very limited data was available from Fulton County Police Department. Data includes the first year of the Sandy Springs Police Department; as the force was being built from the ground up during that time, it is possible that a fair number of crimes were undetected due to the adjustment of a
new police force being created. Additionally, there were challenges when the computers were not installed prior to the department’s kick off and all paperwork had to be completed by hand during the first three weeks after opening (Nurse, 2008).

Furthermore, both police departments utilize the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) hierarchy in reporting crimes, meaning that only the most serious offense at any one incident is recorded. That is, if both a rape and a murder take place, only the murder is reported. The only exceptions to this rule are justifiable homicide, arson, and motor vehicle theft, which are always reported (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2004).

Finally, there are numerous Hispanic communities within Sandy Springs where crimes may go unreported due to cultural issues and language barriers. Crime activity in these areas includes drug and violence hotspots, which, until the formation of Sandy Springs Police Department, were dealt with on an inconsistent basis due to inadequate staffing (Riley & Anderson, 2005). One troublesome area in particular, noted by the Sandy Springs Task Force, is the Northwood Drive area. Comprised mostly of apartments, this area consists of citizens who are nearly all of Hispanic descent. Because of the high concentration of Hispanic residents, the Fulton County Police Department officers assigned to serve those areas faced challenges from the cultural differences and language barriers. These challenges were identified as preventing the officers from providing policing services in an effective manner (Riley & Anderson, 2005).

The next chapter of this thesis will discuss the analysis of the data collected from each police department. Data for this quasi-experimental study were collected from both Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department and then loaded into Microsoft Excel where t-tests were performed to analyze the effects of decentralization of policing in the reduction of UCR Part I crimes in Sandy Springs.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

This chapter will review the data collected from the police departments for UCR Part I crimes in the Sandy Springs beats for July 2004 to June 2013. The first part of this chapter will look at the frequency of crimes by year and by type. The second part of this chapter will discuss the data as they apply to the research questions of this study.

The frequency reported for each crime type from July 2004 to June 2013 can be seen in Table 1 below. A visual review shows that theft is consistently the most reported Type I crime in Sandy Springs and far outnumbers each of the other categories of crime. Arson and homicide were the least occurring crimes for all years, as well.

Table 1

*Frequency of reported crimes by type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agg. Assault</th>
<th>Arson</th>
<th>Burglary</th>
<th>Forcible Rape</th>
<th>Larceny-Theft</th>
<th>Motor Vehicle Theft</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004 - 2005</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2223</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 - 2006</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2171</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 2007</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 - 2008</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 - 2009</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 - 2010</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1764</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 - 2011</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1749</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 - 2012</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 - 2013</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2029</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Reporting years run July – June.
Next, several t-tests were performed to determine if a significant difference exists in the overall crime level and in the individual crime types across the two police departments. For the purposes of this study, a two-tailed t-test for independent samples with an alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

**Q1 Analysis**

The first research question to discuss is: Does a significant difference exist in crime levels for the City of Sandy Springs under the services of the Sandy Springs Police Department in comparison to the crime levels for the same area under the services of Fulton County Police Department? The null hypothesis and alternate hypothesis for each test are as stated below:

- \( H_0: \mu_{FCPD} = \mu_{SSPD} \)
- \( H_1: \mu_{FCPD} \neq \mu_{SSPD} \)

In order to answer this question, first the frequency of each crime type by month was examined for both the Fulton County data (July 2004 to June 2006) and for the Sandy Springs data (July 2006 to June 2013). Next, Welch's t-test, a two sample t-test assuming unequal population variances, was run in Microsoft Excel utilizing the total of all Part I crimes under (1) Fulton County Police Department (n=24) and (2) Sandy Springs Police Department (n=84). A significant difference was found in the data (\( t(49) = 3.936, p < .001 \)). The average number of Part I crimes per month under Fulton County Police Department was 293, whereas the Sandy Springs Police Department experienced an average of 262 Part I crimes monthly. In this case, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Q2 Analysis**

The next question studied is which, if any, UCR Part I crimes were affected by the decentralization of policing in Sandy Springs? In order to answer this question, again a Welch's
t-test was run in Microsoft Excel for each of the eight Part I crimes under (1) Fulton County Police Department (n=24) and (2) Sandy Springs Police Department (n=84). Now, the results of each of those tests will be reviewed.

**Aggravated Assault**

When looking at the frequency of reported aggravated assault incidents across Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department, a significant difference was not found in the data \( t(47) = 1.201, p = .236 \). In this case, the data fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Arson**

When looking at the frequency of reported arson incidents across Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department, a significant difference was not found in the data \( t(30) = .471, p = .641 \). In this case, the data fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Burglary**

When looking at the frequency of reported burglary incidents across Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department, a significant difference was not found in the data \( t(52) = 1.109, p = .272 \). In this case, the data fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Forcible Rape**

When looking at the frequency of reported forcible rape incidents across Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department, a significant difference was not found in the data \( t(38) = -.600, p = .552 \). In this case, the data fail to reject the null hypothesis. In fact, the average number of forcible rapes actually increased under Sandy Springs. This may be attributed, however, to the extended number of years reported for Sandy Springs and improved access to officers under Sandy Springs Police Department. Also, because the overall number of
incidents remains small, any increase in reports could result in a perceived increase in forcible rape.

**Homicide**

When looking at the frequency of reported homicide incidents across Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department, a significant difference was not found in the data ($t(31) = 1.903, p = .067$). In this case, the data fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Larceny-Theft**

When looking at the frequency of reported larceny-theft incidents across Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department, a significant difference was found in the data ($t(38) = 3.524, p = .001$). The average number of thefts per month ($n=24$) under Fulton County Police Department’s services was 183, and the average number of thefts per month ($n=84$) under Sandy Springs Police Department’s services was 161. In this case, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Motor Vehicle Theft**

When looking at the frequency of reported motor vehicle theft incidents across Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department, a significant difference was found in the data ($t(49) = 2.412, p = .020$). The average number of vehicle thefts per month ($n=24$) under Fulton County Police Department’s services was 24, and the average number of thefts per month ($n=84$) under Sandy Springs Police Department’s services was just under 21. In this case, the null hypothesis is rejected.
Robbery

When looking at the frequency of reported robbery incidents across Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department, a significant difference was not found in the data ($t(32) = 1.169, p = .251$). In this case, the data fail to reject the null hypothesis.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Overview

For over thirty years, the unincorporated area known as Sandy Springs in Fulton County, Georgia received policing services from the Fulton County Police Department, headquartered more than twenty miles away in south Atlanta. Sandy Springs’ population grew in number and diversity for more than a decade and, by 2005, the people wanted more from their police force. In early 2005, a group of community leaders, citizens, and law enforcement officials came together to create the Sandy Springs Task Force. This task force was dedicated to officially creating an independent City of Sandy Springs so that the community could provide and control its own resources – including, most importantly, the police department. They were successful and the City of Sandy Springs was officially incorporated as of December 1, 2005, and the Sandy Springs Police Department took over law enforcement operations from the Fulton County Police Department at 12:01 A.M. on July 1, 2006.

The purpose of this thesis was to examine if the decentralization of the police force from the county level to the city level had a statistically significant impact on UCR Type I crime levels in Sandy Springs. These results are important to understand as the “Sandy Springs model” has been the catalyst and has set the standards for other similar communities in Georgia to replicate.

A review of the literature shows that decentralization of services is a key component of proactive community policing strategies, particularly community oriented policing. However, various studies have shown that community oriented policing programs deliver mixed results in the reduction of crime levels.
In order to test the impact of the Sandy Springs decentralization of policing, secondary data for UCR Part I crimes were collected from both the Fulton County Police Department and the Sandy Springs Police Department for the time frame of 2004 to 2013. Data were organized into reporting year timeframes of July – June to align with the start of the Sandy Springs Police Department and maximize the use of the data. Limitations in the Fulton County Police Department’s reporting system restricted the available for the Sandy Springs beats to only July 2004 to June 2006.

An examination of the number of reported incidents for the eight beats covering the City of Sandy Springs from July 2004 to June 2013 showed a statistically significant reduction in the overall level of Part I crimes under the services provided by Sandy Springs Police Department as compared to those provided by Fulton County Police Department (\(t (49) =3.936, p <.001\)). The average number of monthly reported incidents was reduced from 293 under Fulton County Police Department’s services down to 262 under the Sandy Springs Police Department, where \(p <.001\).

This is an important finding as crime prevention was a leading concern in developing a decentralized police force for Sandy Springs. While this reduction does not account for any reduction in Part II crimes, which can be a precursor for Part I crimes, or for traffic offenses, a reduction in the levels of the most heinous crime types reflects positively on the decision to decentralize and focus on community needs.

An examination of the number of reported incidents by crime type for both Fulton County Police Department and Sandy Springs Police Department in the same eight beats covering the City of Sandy Springs from July 2004 to June 2013 provided mixed results when reviewed at the individual crime type level. While reported crime levels were reduced for all Part I crimes except
for forcible rape, reductions at a statistically significant level were only seen in larceny-theft (
(38) = 3.524, \( p = .001 \)) and motor vehicle theft (t (49) = 2.412, \( p = .020 \)).

Combined, these two crimes account for nearly 70% of monthly reported incidents throughout the review period. Given the high percentage of overall incidents that they comprise, it is not surprising that statistically significant reductions in these crime types contributed to the statistically significant reduction in Part I crimes, as a whole. It is important to point out that forcible rape actually experienced a perceived increase in incidents. Additional research would need to be conducted to conclude if this was due to a higher sample number, improvements in reporting and data collection, improved access to officers, or a legitimate increase in the frequency of forcible rape. Because the number of rape incidents per month is so low, an average of less than 2 per month, any additional incidents will impact the results.

Additionally, the creation of the Sandy Springs Police Department impacted the community in ways outside of the count of criminal incidents. Incorporation as an independent city and decentralization away from Fulton County Police Department allowed the City of Sandy Springs to save money through the privatization of city utilities and municipal offices – freeing up ample funds to focus on the creation of a customized police department focusing on community needs and dedicated to building a strong relationship with the community at large. Many changes were implemented by the Sandy Springs Police Department which have impacted day to day policing protocol and improved, in most cases, community relations.

Most importantly, the move to Sandy Springs Police Department increased the number of officers assigned to Sandy Springs and available to assist citizens. The inaugural force consisted primarily of officers from the Fulton County Police Department – many of whom had worked the eight Sandy Springs beats over the years. This allowed the new force to hit the ground
running and immediately increase officer availability, responsiveness, and visibility. Moreover, officers from Fulton County Police Department were recruited specifically to assist in the largely Hispanic areas of Sandy Springs – these officers spoke Spanish, understood or even shared the culture, and were able to focus on repairing the relationship between these communities and the police.

After kick off, the police department became increasingly involved in the community – assisting with graffiti clean up, hosting community events and officer meet and greets, as well as creating the task forces that the citizens felt were needed most – DUI and Gang Activity. Finally, improvements to the reporting systems have allowed for better reporting, case management, and the publication of crime statistics, providing better communication between the police and the people of Sandy Springs.

Conclusion

Reviewing the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of a decentralized police department in Sandy Springs does show a statistically significant reduction in the level Part I crimes when viewed as a total count of incidents reported. Looking at the eight Part I crime types (aggravated assault, arson, burglary, homicide, forcible rape, robbery, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft), only larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft show a statistically significant reduction in crime levels under the Sandy Springs Police Department. Because these two types of crime account for roughly 70% of the Part I crimes in this area, it is not unexpected that a significant reduction in these areas could result in a statistically significant reduction in all Part I crimes for Sandy Springs.

It is the belief of this researcher that the adoption of a community oriented policing strategy specific to the area, as a result of decentralization of policing, allowed for more officers
on the streets in the right neighborhoods and with extended hours. With larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft being such a significant portion of crime, it is also logical that the Sandy Springs officers have put forth additional efforts to prevent these thefts as they impact the majority of the community, as opposed to homicide and rape which account for a very small percentage of crimes and affect relatively few in comparison.

There are several inferences from the outcome of this study that must be considered by community leaders who may be considering moving to the Sandy Springs model. Because the research in this study supports the case for decentralization of policing in large Metro Atlanta areas, those neighborhoods which feel that they are not receiving the necessary level of policing services must consider what level of involvement in the creation and operation of a local department could be supported by community leaders and citizens. Because the findings of the research highlight the importance of citizen involvement in policing and community strategy, communities considering decentralization from Fulton County Police Department should measure the interest and engagement levels of community leadership, citizens, potential law enforcement personnel, and sub-communities, such as religious organizations.

Overall, current efforts in unincorporated Fulton County communities to decentralize, reorganize, and create custom local police departments could be justifiably reinforced and amplified by concerned citizens and community leaders. On a larger scale, this potentially creates a case for a complete decentralization away from Fulton County Police Department for the remaining unincorporated communities outside of the Atlanta city limits.

**Recommendations**

Additional long-term research is needed to better determine the effects of the decentralization of policing on UCR Part I crimes in areas such as Sandy Springs, Georgia. In
the case of Sandy Springs, it is difficult to determine, with such a short timeframe, if the existence of the Sandy Spring Police Department has a significant long-term, lasting effect on crime levels. Because the creation of the department allowed for greater police presence and more advanced reporting systems, it is possible that the apparent increase in crimes in the 2007–2010 timeframe, for example, is actually due to better accessibility to officers and more accurate record keeping. Furthermore, while it was not covered in this particular study, it is possible that a significant impact may have also occurred in the number of traffic crimes, particularly in Driving Under the Influence (DUI) charges.

Future studies should also examine the satisfaction levels post-decentralization of both the residents of Sandy Springs and the officers of the Sandy Springs Police Department. Because the majority of the original Sandy Springs Police Department force were officers that switched from Fulton County Police Department, it would be beneficial to get their perspective on changes resulting from the decentralization. Additionally, measuring the perception of crime levels from the citizens and officers and comparing the perceived levels to actual levels of crime and violence could be enlightening and provide prospective into the degree of integration between the police department and community members.

Because the department is still working with the community and implementing new strategies, additional long-term research should be conducted to compare, for example, the crime levels observed in the first five years of the city to years ten through fifteen, when the programs have had more time to resonate with the citizens and the data are provided by comparable, consistent collection methods.

That being said, it is also recommended that surrounding cities who wish to replicate this model should take a look at the results and determine if existing forces could be expanded and
utilized in a similar manner without having to create entirely new departments until future studies could determine long-term results.
References


APPENDIX A
HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL
AND EXTENSION

--------- Forwarded message ---------
From: Janice Putnam <putnam@ucmo.edu>
Date: Tue, Apr 22, 2014 at 11:44 AM
Subject: Re: HS Approval
To: Amber Kobelt <akobelt@gmail.com>, UCM Research Review <researchreview@ucmo.edu>

Perfect...no changes!
Janice

On Tue, Apr 22, 2014 at 10:33 AM, Amber Kobelt <akobelt@gmail.com> wrote:
Correct - no changes have been made.

Sent from my Windows Phone

--------- Forwarded message ---------
From: Janice Putnam
Sent: 4/22/2014 8:46 AM
To: UCM Research Review
Cc: Amber Kobelt
Subject: Fwd: HS Approval

Meghan please pull the file and ask Tom to renew this.
There are no changes correct Amber? If so send an email asking the original study to be amended.

Janice

--------- Forwarded message ---------
From: "Amber Kobelt" <akobelt@gmail.com>
Date: Apr 21, 2014 4:44 PM
Subject: Fwd: HS Approval
To: <putnam@ucmo.edu>
Cc:

Thank you for the quick response and for your assistance. Please see the electronic approval below. I do not believe that I have a hard copy of this approval.

Regards,

Amber Kobelt
700266844

--------- Forwarded message ---------
From: Wendy Geiger <geiger@ucmo.edu>
Date: Thu, Oct 9, 2008 at 3:53 PM
Subject: HS Approval
To: akobelt@gmail.com, Gene Bonham <lbonham@ucmo.edu>
EFFECTIVENESS OF DECENTRALIZATION

You will also receive a hard copy in the mail.

wendy

-----------------------
October 9, 2008

AMBER KOBELT
2425 SHELDON PLACE
CUMMING GEORGIA/30040

Dear Ms. Kobelt,

Your research project, “The Effectiveness of Decentralization of Policing in the Reduction of Part I Crimes: A Look at Georgia’s Sandy Springs Police Department” was approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee on October 9, 2008.

Please note that you are required to notify the committee in writing of any changes in your research project and that you may not implement changes without prior approval of the committee. You must also notify the committee in writing of any change in the nature or the status of the risks of participating in this research project.

Should any adverse events occur in the course of your research (such as harm to a research participant), you must notify the committee in writing immediately. In the case of any adverse event, you are required to stop the research immediately unless stopping the research would cause more harm to the participants than continuing with it.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the number above.

Sincerely,

Wendy Geiger, Ph.D.
Associate Dean of The Graduate School
geiger@ucmo.edu

Approved Co-Investigators: none

pc: Gene Bonham, HUM 300

Wendy L. Geiger, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Communication
Martin 136J

Associate Dean of the Graduate School
WDE 1802  
University of Central Missouri  
Warrensburg, MO 64093  
geiger@ucmo.edu  

---  

Have a Healthy Day and Fruitful Research!  

Dr. Janice Putnam  
Research Compliance Officer  

Professor of Nursing  
ADM 315 University of Central Missouri  
Warrensburg, MO 64093  
*putnam@ucmo.edu*
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM: REQUEST FOR EXEMPT STATUS
University of Central Missouri, Human Subjects Protection Program
Ward Edwards Building 1800, Warrensburg, MO 64093
Phone: 660-543-4621

Title of Research Study: The Effectiveness of Decentralization of Policing in the Reduction of Part I Crimes: A Look at Georgia's Sandy Springs Police Department
Investigator Name (with M.I.): Amber N. Kobelt
Full Mailing Address: 2425 Sheldon Place, Cumming, GA 30040
Department: Criminal Justice
E-mail Address: akobelt@gmail.com
Co-Investigators:

Status: Grad Student
Student No: 700266844
Phone: 678-468-2665

I understand that my research must comply with the Human Subjects Regulations as stated in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Public Welfare, Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects, Revised June 18, 1991.

Principal Investigator Signature: __________________________ Date: 9-5-08

All student research must be signed by faculty advisor. Include name and campus address.

Faculty Advisor Signature: ________________________________ Campus Address: ________________________________

COMMITTEE USE ONLY

Protocol Received: ________ Protocol Approved: ________ Chair Sign: ________
Referred for Full Review: ________

Revisions:
Requested Received Approved Chair Sign
Requested Received Approved Chair Sign
Amendments:
Received Approved Chair Sign
Received Approved Chair Sign

Minutes: _______ Tracking: _______ Inform Cons: _______

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HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM: REQUEST FOR EXEMPT STATUS
University of Central Missouri, Human Subjects Protection Program
Ward Edwards Building 1800, Warrensburg, MO 64093
Phone: 660-543-4621

Federal law requires that all research involving human subjects must be submitted to the Human Subjects Review Committee. While such research may be exempt from review, the principal investigator must still submit copies of all questionnaires, consent forms, interview schedules, advertisements, files, and a summary review of the research project to the Human Subjects Review Committee. We do this for the purpose of documenting all research on human subjects, for the protection of human subjects and the researchers.

The committee recognizes that there is a difference between research and information gathering exercises. NOTE: If you are unsure if your project is research or information gathering call the Office of Sponsored Programs at (660) 543-4264.

To be exempt from review, the research must satisfy the following conditions. Please check to indicate that each condition is satisfied:

1. The research does not pose more than a minimal risk to the research participants, where minimal risk is defined as follows: “A risk is minimal where the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, in and of themselves, than those encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.”

2. The research does not involve minors, pregnant women, fetuses, human in vitro fertilization, or prisoners.

3. The information obtained is not “recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or any disclosure of the human subject’s responses” would not “reasonably place the subject(s) at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject’s financial standing, employability, or reputation.”

4. The research must fit into one of the categories for research that is exempt from review (See Human Subjects Review Committee Guidelines).

Other research may be exempt. For a full listing of all exempt research see the Federal Policy and 45 CFR46.101.

**All related documents must be submitted along with a project summary.**

Updated: June 2005

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1 OPRP Guidelines, Chapter I, p.1.
2 See 45 CFR46,101 (b).
Project Summary

The Effectiveness of Decentralization of Policing in the Reduction of Part I Crimes:
A Look at Georgia’s Sandy Springs Police Department

The purpose of my project is to determine whether or not creating local police
departments in Fulton County, Georgia’s suburbs is an effective method in reducing Part I
crimes in those areas. The current political trend in Metro Atlanta is for unincorporated areas
to form new, independent cities with their own local governments and, most importantly, their
own police departments. Because this is a lengthy and expensive process, I feel that it is
important to determine whether or not the results are worth the costs and political efforts
involved.

In order to complete this project, I would need to collect data from Fulton County Police
Department and Sandy Springs Police Department’s public information officers. The data
would include the following information: date of incident, type of incident, counts of crimes,
and location of the crime. All information is anonymous; no information regarding offender
characteristics or potentially identifying would be included. Because the data is gathered from
public information, it would be impossible to obtain consent.

There will not be any direct contact with human subjects and all data will be processed
through the respective police departments before being sent to me. Individuals included in the
information will not need to do anything and data will not need to be recorded by myself.

With that being said, I respectfully ask for exempt status for this thesis.

Thank you,

Amber N. Kobelt
Graduate Student
Criminal Justice Department