

Innovative Strategies for Community Policing in Korea: Learning from Advanced Overseas Practices

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Abstract

This study aims to explore innovative measures for community policing activities of the Korean police in the context of the newly implemented autonomous police system and the increasing demand for community-oriented policing. By conducting an in-depth analysis of advanced community policing practices in the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom, this research identifies key characteristics such as resident participation, communication, scientific crime analysis, and customized policing services. The study reveals the need for the Korean police to establish a collaborative governance system that actively involves residents, strengthen scientific policing capabilities utilizing advanced technologies, and provide policing services tailored to local characteristics. Organizational and personnel management reforms, including the substantiation of the local police officer system and the establishment of an institutional foundation for resident participation, are proposed. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of developing a creative community policing model suitable for the Korean context, rather than directly transplanting overseas practices. Continuous research and efforts to build a new policing paradigm that reflects the changing social environment and policing demands are suggested. Ultimately, the success of community policing lies in the active participation and cooperation of all members of society, including the police, government, local communities, and residents.

Keywords: Community policing, Autonomous police system, Resident participation, Scientific crime analysis, Customized policing services

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background and Purpose

In recent years, Korean society has been facing various public safety issues due to rapid urbanization and population concentration. In particular, changes in the population structure, such as an increase in single-person households, aging population, and influx of foreigners, have led to new types of crimes. According to the 2022 statistics from the National Police Agency, the number of five major violent crimes increased by 7.4% compared to the previous year.

In this situation, citizens' satisfaction with public safety and trust in the police are declining. In the 2023 Social Integration Survey conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration, the level of trust in the police was only 51.4%, which is significantly lower than the 54.5% for the military. Especially recently, the Itaewon disaster has raised questions about the police's on-site response capabilities.

Meanwhile, the autonomous police system, which was implemented nationwide starting from July 2021, was expected to be a new turning point. The autonomous police system aims to provide policing services

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tailored to local characteristics and expand citizen participation. However, as it is still in the early stages of introduction, the role and status of autonomous police are still ambiguous. Public awareness of autonomous police is also very low among local residents.

Therefore, this study aims to explore innovative measures for community policing activities of the Korean police in line with the implementation of the autonomous police system. Specifically, the main research tasks were set as follows: ① proactive response by the police to specific crimes that have recently surged, ② eliminating gaps in foreign affairs by establishing roles between autonomous and national police, and ③ building a cooperative governance to strengthen communication between local police and residents.

In particular, this study intends to present a practical model suitable for the Korean situation by conducting an in-depth analysis of policy cases from advanced countries in community policing activities such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan. In addition, by conducting case studies focusing on specific areas with high policing demands, such as tourist spots and multicultural areas, it aims to derive more effective policy alternatives. Through this, it is expected that the autonomous police system will be stably established, and community policing activities of the Korean police will substantially contribute to enhancing citizens' sense of safety. Furthermore, it aims to increase public trust in the police and contribute to building a new policing governance in which all members of the community cooperate.

1.2 Current Status of Community Policing Activities by the Korean Polices

Since the 1990s, the Korean police have introduced the philosophy of community policing and have been carrying out crime prevention activities through communication and cooperation with local residents. In particular, the autonomous police system implemented from July 2021 is becoming an opportunity to strengthen local community-oriented policing activities. Specifically, first, local community-oriented patrol activities are being conducted centered on police boxes and substations. Local police officers patrol their assigned areas, communicate with residents, and provide various life safety information. They also carry out various community activities such as crime prevention education for residents and youth guidance activities.

In addition, smart policing activities using advanced science and technology are also expanding. Crime occurrence is predicted through big data analysis of crime, and proactive responses are made to high-risk areas. Real-time monitoring and rapid on-site response capabilities have also been strengthened through CCTV and intelligent patrol systems. Meanwhile, cooperation with related organizations to solve community problems is also active. The police form policing councils with local governments, education offices, and civic groups to carry out community-tailored policing activities. Through this, they seek to solve various community problems such as preventing juvenile delinquency, eradicating school violence, and ensuring the safety of women and children.

However, the limitations are that the number of residents per local police officer is high, and it is not easy to form bonds with residents due to frequent personnel transfers. Problems such as perfunctory resident participation and confusion of roles between autonomous and national police have also been raised. Above all, the lack of voluntary participation and cooperation from residents is a regrettable point. It seems that building a collaborative governance system in which the community thinks about policing issues together and seeks solutions, breaking away from police-led unilateral activities, is an urgent task.

Table 1. Status and Limitations of Community Policing Activities by the Korean Police

Category	Contents	Limitations
Local community-oriented patrol	-Resident-oriented patrol centered on police boxes and substations -Communication with residents and provision of safety information	-High number of residents per police officer -Lack of bonds with residents due to frequent personnel transfers

Resident participation activities	Crime prevention education for residents Youth guidance, volunteer activities, etc.	Perfunctory participation Police-led unilateral activities Smart policing	resident
Police-led unilateral activities Smart policing	Crime prediction based on big data Real-time monitoring through CCTV, etc.	Concerns about privacy infringement Tendency to rely excessively on technology	
Cooperation with related organizations	Cooperation with local governments, education offices, etc. Customized problem-solving for each region	Confusion of roles between autonomous and national police Lack of cooperative governance	

As examined above, the Korean police are making multifaceted efforts to expand community policing activities. However, it is insufficient to achieve effective results due to the lack of resident participation and limitations in police personnel and budget. In the future, along with the stable establishment of the autonomous police system, collaborative policing activities in which all members of the community participate as policing agents should be revitalized. Through this, it will be necessary to provide policing services tailored to local characteristics and enhance residents' sense of safety.

2. Analysis of Community Policing Activity Cases of Overseas Police

2.1 Community Policing Activities of the U.S. Police

The U.S. police have actively introduced and developed community policing since the 1980s. The core is for community police officers to actively communicate and cooperate with residents to prevent crime and improve quality of life. In particular, it is characterized by analyzing specific types and causes of crimes and establishing customized measures through problem-oriented policing focused on crime-prone areas.

A representative case is the community policing activities of the Chicago Police Department. In the early 1990s, Chicago was one of the most dangerous cities in the United States. In response, the police held regular meetings with residents in 279 patrol districts and encouraged resident participation across classes and races. They also strengthened communication by providing crime information translated into 10 languages. As a result, from 1991 to 2002, violent crimes decreased by 50% and property crimes decreased by 58%.

The CompStat system of the New York Police Department is also noteworthy. It is a system that predicts crime occurrences and responds proactively by analyzing crime data in real-time (Bratton, 1998). Through this, police forces are concentrated in areas with high crime risk, and customized information is provided to residents. Recently, it is evolving into predictive policing by incorporating advanced technologies such as big data analysis.

In addition, the U.S. police are carrying out various community activities for crime prevention, such as crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), youth mentoring, and anti-drug campaigns. In particular, the El Paso Police Department in Texas is receiving attention for its customized policing activities considering local characteristics. Considering the characteristics of El Paso, which has a large immigrant population, Spanish was made mandatory in police officer training, and communication with immigrant communities was strengthened.

Community policing activities of the U.S. police are characterized by resident participation and communication, scientific crime analysis, and customized strategies. As a result, they are achieving visible

results such as a decrease in crime rates and an increase in resident satisfaction. In fact, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice, the crime rate in areas that introduced community policing was about 20% lower on average than in areas that did not.

However, in some areas, there are conflicts between the police and minorities, and concerns about privacy infringement due to excessive surveillance. In particular, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, there were issues raised about police surveillance and discrimination centered on Islamic communities.

Table 2. Cases and Characteristics of Community Policing Activities by the U.S. Police

Category	Contents	Characteristics
Chicago	Regular meetings between residents and police Provision of crime information in multiple languages	Encouraging resident participation Strengthening communication New York
Newyork	Introduction of the CompStat system Predictive policing based on big data	Scientific crime analysis Proactive response El Paso
El Paso	Spanish training for police officers Communication with immigrant communities	Considering local characteristics Customized policing
Chicag	Regular meetings between residents and police Provision of crime information in multiple languages	Encouraging resident participation Strengthening communication New York

2.2 Current Status of Community Policing Activities by the Korean Polices

In Japan, community-oriented policing activities have traditionally been emphasized. In particular, the activities of local police officers (koban-kan) centered on police boxes (koban) and residential police boxes (chuzai-sho) are key. Koban-kan regularly patrol their assigned areas, communicate with residents, and provide various life safety information. Through this, they provide resident-oriented policing services.

Since the mid-2000s, resident-participatory crime prevention activities such as "creating safe and secure towns" have been revitalized. Residents, NPOs, local governments, etc. cooperate to carry out activities such as crime prevention volunteering, youth guidance, and crime prevention campaigns. This is an attempt by the police and the community to work together to ensure local public safety.

Recently, the Japanese police are also strengthening scientific policing activities using advanced technologies. In 2020, the Metropolitan Police Department introduced an AI-based crime prediction system to concentrate police forces in areas with a high possibility of crime occurrence. Proactive response through big data analysis is a characteristic.

Policing activities are also being carried out in response to social changes such as aging population and population decline. To ensure the safety of the elderly, a "Senior Citizen Safety Network" is being established in which local police and welfare agencies are linked, and activities such as visiting elderly people living alone are being carried out. In addition, as a crime prevention measure in response to the increase in vacant houses, activities such as vacant house status surveys, maintenance, and safety patrols are also being implemented.

Table 3. Cases and Characteristics of Community Policing Activities by the Japanese Police

Category	Contents	Characteristics
Local police officer activities	Resident-oriented activities centered on police boxes and residential police boxes	Traditional community-oriented policing Excessive workload, lack of

	Provision of life safety information, personnel communication with residents	
Crime prevention town development (bohan machizukuri)	Cooperative crime prevention activities by residents, police, and local governments	Volunteering, campaigns, youth guidance, etc. Expansion of resident participation
AI-based crime prediction system	Proactive response through big data analysis	Crime prediction, proactive response
Utilization of advanced technologies	Establishment of a network for the safety of the elderly	Policing in response to aging population
Response to social changes	Crime prevention activities in response to an increase in vacant houses	Safety measures related to vacant houses

In summary, the Japanese police have long carried out resident-oriented policing activities based on the local police officer system. Recently, there is a trend of expanding resident participation and strengthening proactive policing activities by incorporating scientific technologies. In line with social changes, policing measures for the elderly and vacant houses are also being actively implemented. However, limitations such as excessive workload for local police officers and lack of personnel are also being pointed out. In addition, there is criticism that police-led activities still dominate.

It is necessary to make resident participation and police-community cooperation more substantial and to innovate the organization and strengthen capabilities to respond to new policing demands.

2.3 Community Policing Activities of the U.K. Police

In the U.K., community policing activities began to take off in the mid-1990s. In particular, intelligence-led policing drew attention, which is a strategy that systematically collects and analyzes crime information and utilizes it for crime prediction and prevention.

In the 2000s, the U.K. government introduced the Police and Community Together (PACT) system nationwide to strengthen community policing activities. At PACT meetings, local residents and police discuss policing issues together and seek solutions.

In addition, the Neighborhood Policing system emphasizes community-oriented policing activities. Neighborhood police officers regularly patrol their assigned areas, communicate with residents, and carry out crime prevention activities and community participation activities.

Recently, predictive policing activities using advanced technologies are also expanding. West Yorkshire Police is employing a strategy of predicting areas with a high possibility of crime occurrence through big data analysis and concentrating police forces in those areas.

Meanwhile, as part of community policing activities, the U.K. police are establishing cooperation systems with various related organizations. They operate councils with local governments, education offices, resident groups, etc., and are working to solve local issues such as preventing juvenile delinquency, responding to domestic violence, and ensuring the safety of the elderly.

However, there are also limitations to the U.K. police's community policing activities. Above all, the issue of a lack of police budget and personnel is constantly being raised. In addition, in some areas, conflicts between the police and minority races and concerns about privacy infringement due to excessive surveillance are also arising.

Table 4. Cases and Characteristics of Community Policing Activities by the U.K. Police

Category	Main Contents	Implications
Intelligence-Led Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection and analysis of crime information - Utilization for crime prediction and prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scientific crime analysis - Proactive response
Police and Community Together (PACT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborative crime prevention activities involving residents, police, and local governments - Volunteer work, campaigns, youth guidance, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of resident participation - Strengthening police-community cooperation
Neighborhood Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local patrols and communication with residents - Carrying out crime prevention and community activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resident-oriented policing - Reflecting local characteristics
Predictive Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crime prediction based on big data analysis - Concentration of police force in high-risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilization of advanced technology - Enhancement of scientific policing capabilities
Cooperation with Related Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operation of consultative bodies with local governments, education offices, etc. - Responding to issues such as juvenile delinquency and domestic violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of multi-agency cooperation system - Integrated solutions for local community issues

In this way, the U.K. police are diversifying community policing activities through information analysis, resident participation, technology utilization, and cooperation with related organizations. However, challenges such as lack of resources and building trust between the police and residents still remain.

The U.K. case provides many implications for community policing activities of the Korean police as well. It seems that activating resident participation, strengthening cooperation with related organizations, and enhancing scientific policing capabilities through the introduction of advanced technologies will be necessary.

2.4 Implications

As a result of comprehensively analyzing the cases of community policing activities of advanced countries such as the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom, several important implications could be derived for innovating community policing activities of the Korean police.

Above all, it was confirmed that the voluntary and active participation of community members is the key factor determining the success or failure of policing activities. Beyond simply police-led unilateral activities, it is necessary to establish a collaborative governance system in which residents are substantially involved in the decision-making process from the planning stage and directly participate in the implementation.

In particular, the inclusion and consideration of social minorities such as multicultural families and immigrants stood out. Providing customized policing services that carefully consider the characteristics and needs of these groups will be the starting point for true "policing together."

In addition, it was found that scientific policing activities utilizing advanced technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence (AI) are a global trend. It is urgent to introduce an intelligent policing system that systematically analyzes vast amounts of policing data to predict crime occurrences and respond proactively.

Furthermore, the importance of responding to policing demands in line with changes in the population structure, such as aging population and an increase in single-person households, was also confirmed. Flexible and creative policing activity design that can nimbly respond to newly emerging safety threats is required.

However, it is not desirable to directly transplant these advanced cases to Korea. This is because the social and cultural foundations such as the local police system, autonomy capabilities, and civic awareness are different. Creative and selective benchmarking is needed to seek a community policing model suitable for the Korean situation.

To this end, it is necessary to first solidify the institutional foundation for community-oriented policing activities by promoting the early settlement and substantiation of the autonomous police system. Innovation in the personnel and education system that can induce long-term service of local police officers and enhance their expertise and pride should also be supported.

Ultimately, for the success of community policing activities, a change in perception and active participation of all members of society, including the government, local governments, residents, and civil society, as well as the police, are essential. Voluntary cooperation based on a sense of community will be the foundation for creating a livable and safe community.

Table 5. Implications of Community Policing Activities in Major Overseas Countries

Category	Main Contents	Implications
Resident Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular meetings between residents and police - Resident participation in crime prevention activities - Customized activities targeting minority groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of resident cooperation governance - Respect for diversity in policing
Scientific Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of crime information - Predictive policing based on big data - Utilization of AI for crime prediction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancement of capabilities utilizing advanced technology - Establishment of proactive response system
Customized Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety measures for the elderly - Crime prevention activities responding to vacant houses - Activities reflecting local characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policing services addressing social changes - Localized policing services

However, there are limitations in directly applying these overseas cases to Korea. This is because the situations in each country, such as the local police system, the role of local governments, and population structure, are different. Therefore, the Korean police should seek a community policing model suitable for our reality by examining the strengths and weaknesses of overseas cases in a balanced way.

In particular, it is necessary to lay the foundation for providing policing services that reflect local characteristics, taking the establishment of the autonomous police system as an opportunity. In addition, establishing an institutional foundation for enhancing the expertise of local police officers, inducing their long-term service, and activating resident participation is necessary. Furthermore, it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation system between the central and local governments and related organizations to establish an integrated policing governance.

3. Improvement Measures for Community Policing Activities of the Korean Police

3.1 Implications

The main implications derived from advanced overseas cases are the need to activate resident participation and strengthen police expertise. To this end, the following improvements are necessary in terms of organization and personnel management.

First, the local police officer system should be substantiated. As with Japan's koban-kan system, local dedicated police officers should be expanded and deployed, and long-term service should be guaranteed. Through this, the bond between local police officers and residents can be increased, and policing services suitable for the local situation can be provided.

Second, the education and training system for enhancing the expertise of local police officers should be strengthened. Professional education in various fields such as local characteristics, resident communication techniques, and crime analysis is necessary. In addition, innovation in the personnel system is required to boost morale and pride of local police officers.

Third, an institutional foundation for activating resident participation should be prepared. As in the cases of Chicago in the United States and PACT in the United Kingdom, resident-police regular meeting and resident participation programs such as crime prevention activities should be revitalized. To this end, practical incentives such as a reward system for resident participation and budget support are necessary.

Table 6. Improvement Measures in Terms of Organization and Workforce Management

Category	Implications
Strengthening the Local Police Officer System	- Establishment of resident cooperation governance - Respect for diversity in policing
Enhancing Professional Education and Training System	- Specialized training in areas such as local characteristics, communication with residents, and crime analysis - Boosting morale and pride of local police officers
Establishing a Foundation for Activating Resident Participation	- Operation of programs such as regular meetings between residents and police, crime prevention activities - Provision of incentives such as resident participation rewards and budget support

Through these improvement measures, if the expertise of local police officers and resident participation are activated, it will be possible to provide policing services suitable for local characteristics. Furthermore, it is expected that trust and cooperation between the police and the community will be established, leading to substantial policing results.

3.2 Resident Communication and Participation Aspects

As can be seen in the overseas cases, resident participation and communication are key elements of community policing activities. To this end, the Korean police should seek the following improvement measures.

First, the resident-police regular meeting system should be revitalized. As in the cases of Chicago in the United States and PACT in the United Kingdom, a system should be established in which residents and police hold regular meetings in each region, discuss policing issues, and seek solutions. Through this, the actual policing demands of residents can be identified and reflected in policies.

Second, resident participation crime prevention activity programs should be diversified. As in Japan's "creating safe and secure towns," programs in which residents directly participate, such as resident volunteer activities, crime prevention campaigns, and youth guidance activities, should be actively discovered and operated. To this end, practical incentives and budget support for resident participation are necessary.

Third, communication with minority groups should be strengthened. As can be seen in the case of the El Paso Police Department in the United States, customized communication and policing services considering the characteristics of minority groups such as immigrants and multicultural families are required. To this end, efforts such as providing life safety information in multiple languages and expanding the deployment of police officers from minority backgrounds are necessary.

Table 7. Improvement Measures in Terms of Communication and Participation with Residents

Category	Implications
Regular Meetings between Residents and Police	- Establishment of a system for regular meetings between residents and police in each region - Discussion of public safety issues and exploration of solutions

Resident Participation Programs	- Programs such as crime prevention volunteer work, campaigns, and youth guidance - Incentives and budget support for resident participation
Communication with Minority Groups	- Provision of life safety information in multiple languages - Increased assignment of police officers from minority backgrounds

residents actively participate as the main agents of local policing activities through these improvement measures, it is expected that trust in the police and satisfaction with policing will increase. Furthermore, an organic cooperative relationship between the community and the police will be established, leading to substantial policing results.

3.3 Policing Service Provision Aspects

As can be seen in the advanced overseas cases, the core of community policing activities is to provide customized services that reflect the actual policing demands of residents. To this end, the Korean police should seek the following improvement measures.

First, scientific policing capabilities utilizing advanced technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence (AI) should be strengthened. Good examples are the United Kingdom's intelligence-led policing, the CompStat system of the New York Police Department in the United States, and the AI crime prediction system of the Japanese police. Proactive and efficient policing services can be provided through crime occurrence pattern analysis and prediction of high-risk areas.

Second, policing strategies optimized for each region should be established by comprehensively analyzing the population composition, crime characteristics, and sociocultural background of each region. Differentiated approaches should be developed for each target characteristic, such as immigrants, youth, women, and the elderly, and a safety net should be tightly established by organically cooperating with community organizations. As the El Paso Police Department in the United States carried out activities considering the characteristics of immigrant communities, local autonomous police in Korea should also establish differentiated policing strategies by closely analyzing the demographic, social, and cultural characteristics of the region.

Third, proactive crime prevention activities through environmental improvements such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) should be strengthened. As the Japanese police are carrying out activities such as installing crime prevention CCTVs and creating safe towns, the Korean police should also work with related organizations to improve the local environment.

Table 8. Improvement Measures in Terms of Policing Service Provision

Category	Implications
Enhancing Scientific Policing Capabilities	- Crime prediction and analysis based on big data and AI - Utilization of precise public safety information for proactive response
Customized Policing Services	- Analysis of population, social, and cultural characteristics by region - Development and implementation of differentiated policing strategies and activities
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Improvement	- Application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques - Creation of a safe environment in cooperation with related organizations

It is important to provide comprehensive policing services that organically combine these advanced technology-based predictive policing, customized strategies reflecting regional characteristics, and environmental improvements for fundamental prevention. Through this, the actual sense of safety and satisfaction felt by residents can be increased.

However, in this process, it is necessary to be wary of excessive reliance on science and technology and bias in the process of specialization by region. Above all, it should be kept in mind that technology and data can never replace the field experience of police officers and the participation of residents. The ultimate goal of policing services is to actively communicate and empathize with residents and create the well-being of the community together.

The success or failure of community policing activities ultimately depends on the sense of safety and satisfaction felt by residents. To this end, it is most important for the police to establish differentiated policing strategies suitable for local characteristics and provide services that reflect the actual demands of residents. Advanced overseas cases should be referred to, but a creative model suitable for the Korean reality should be developed.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to diagnose the status of community policing activities of the Korean police and seek improvement measures through the analysis of advanced overseas cases. This is because the need to establish a new policing model based on resident participation and cooperation has emerged in a situation where a shift in the policing paradigm centered on the community is required, taking the recent surge in policing demands and the implementation of the autonomous police system as an opportunity.

Accordingly, this study conducted an in-depth analysis of policy cases from advanced countries in community policing activities such as the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom. The characteristics of resident participation and communication, scientific crime analysis, and providing customized policing services were identified, and implications for the Korean police were derived.

This study is meaningful in that it reminded the importance of community policing activities and suggested the direction for the Korean police to take through advanced overseas cases. Continuous follow-up research should be conducted to prepare more effective policy alternatives in the future. In particular, new types of crimes and social problems are emerging in the rapidly changing policing environment in recent years. In response, the Korean police should also seek to establish new paradigms such as smart policing utilizing science and technology and socially integrated policing.

Community policing activities should also evolve innovatively amid these waves of change. While based on resident participation and cooperation, it is required to incorporate advanced technologies such as big data analysis and artificial intelligence. In addition, customized policing services that meet new social phenomena such as the increase in single-person households and aging population should be provided. To this end, innovation in police organizations and personnel management must precede above all else. It will be necessary to foster local specialized personnel, establish an institutional foundation for activating resident participation, and build a cooperation system with related organizations. Furthermore, active participation, interest, and securing a social support base of residents, who are the consumers of policing services, will also be an important task.

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