

Police Brutality, Community Trust, and Policing Reform

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Introduction

Negative police image is counterproductive as it makes the policing work even more difficult and challenging due to a lack of goodwill and cooperation from the community. The purpose of this paper is to establish measures to be undertaken in enhancing policing and reducing negative image and conflict between the community and the police force. Allegations of police brutality, lack of police presence and unethical conduct will be addressed to enhance the provision of adequate security and safety services. The Justice Department will be engaged to ensure errant officers are properly and adequately disciplined.

Police Brutality

The police department has law enforcement officers who are hardworking and dedicated to their difficult work. By working together with the Department of Justice, state, county, and local officers will be investigated, and the claims brought to our attention will be addressed accordingly. The purpose of this paper is to ensure that any claims of misconduct and breaking the law by a few law enforcement officers are investigated and those found guilty are prosecuted and punished. According to Rosenthal (2017), any officer found to be acting under the 'color of the law' should be swiftly prosecuted. Any individual whose constitutional rights have been violated should avail themselves to the Department of Justice and help in the investigations without fear of victimization. No individual person

Community Uproar On Police Brutality

The media and the public have raised several issues concerning the conduct of law enforcement officers in the recent past that need to be urgently addressed. The police departments have been accused of a code of silence and that it takes too long to address disciplinary cases. Allegation includes contravention of the constitution (18: 241 and 242) by using excessive force, sexual assault, intentional false arrests and fabrication of evidence leading to loss of liberty by innocent individuals. Any law enforcement officer found guilty is liable to pay a fine or imprisonment. Claims of contravening the constitution (42, 14141) have also been presented. Law enforcement officers who have been using excessive force, discriminatory actions, harassment, false arrests, coercive sexual conduct, unwarranted searches or arrests that constitute a pattern or practice have been reported to the media and will be investigated.

Action Plan To Address Police Brutality

The first step is to put measures that will stop police misconduct from occurring through the provision of clear guidelines, education, and training of law enforcement officers. The disciplinary measures for errant officers should be more consistent and should be addressed in a timely manner by supervisors. An improved and transparent system that will deal with a breach of the law by law enforcement officers is in place and should be used in this case. Community participation in policing is highly encouraged to reduce conflict between the agency and the people.

Preventive Measures

Setting up strict and well-understood discipline guidelines on the code of conduct as a preventive measure is necessary to avoid officers breaching the law. The police department should ensure that all law enforcement officers are made to understand the repercussions of breaking the law. The officers must be made aware of the disciplinary process that will take place to act as a deterrent to breaking the law. Any law enforcement officer found to be practicing a code of silence or cover-up should be relieved of their duties and prosecuted. Police officers who engage in cover-ups or deception involving the misconduct of another officer will be interpreted as having engaged in a “code of silence.” Proper training and education of law enforcement officers will help in long-term appropriate decision-making that is in line with the law. Direct supervision should help the officers not to engage in breaking the law by preventing misconduct from happening through better supervision of patrols. Each squad will have a supervisor responsible for decision-making in the field. Improving field training to ensure that officers know how to react to different challenges encountered in the course of duty. Officers who often interact with the public in sensitive and dispute-oriented situations should wear a camera that will help monitor the officer’s conduct. This will act as a deterrent to unlawful conduct by the officers and protect them against false accusations.

Improve Disciplinary System

This will help to make the system transparent and more effective by reducing the time taken from reporting to action on errant law enforcement officers. This is one of the major setbacks in ensuring justice for victims of police misconduct. The process takes several years to investigate cases and deal with appeals from the accused errant officers. A set deadline that should be less than two years should be set up to ensure rapid and timely execution of justice. There should be an adjustment in the way grievances and appeals are handled to make them fit the stipulated deadline for the conclusion of these cases. An independent police review authority that is civilian in nature should be deeply involved in the investigation of allegations of breach of the law. The investigations should be decentralized by giving a mandate to district investigators who are closer to the people and hence make it faster rather than depending on the federal government investigators. The number of

personnel involved in investigations should be increased to ensure adequate and timely action on cases that emerge.

Ethical Decision-Making In Policing

Ethical policing is determined by the values of the society. Certain behaviors, actions, and ideas that are held to be important influence decision-making in the policing career. Societal guiding values such as integrity, citizenship, public service, hard work, kindness, compassion, justice, empathy, bravery etc., are all important and should be adhered to by law enforcement officers as expected by society (Guffey, 2018). It's important for police officers to do the right thing in regard to societal expectations. Unethical behavior, such as dishonesty, laziness, cruelty, unnecessary violence, partiality etc., undermines public trust in the police force and should be addressed promptly. Proper training in the police academy will instill these values in officers before they graduate from the police academy. The law enforcement Oath of office should be taken seriously and upheld. The code of ethics in the police department should encourage the officers to enforce and follow the law in their work. For officers to make good ethical decisions, they can subject themselves to the critical thinking test to determine the legality, results, alternatives, justification, and contradictions that may result after acting in a certain way. Another ethical decision-making test is the media test where the officer will assume their actions are made public information by the media to help make appropriate decisions. Finally, the officer may use the gut test by using instinct and conscience in the right and wrong decision-making process.

Multicultural Environment And Policing

As explained by Oliver (2018), the effort to diversify the workplace into a multicultural environment is very important. An individual's race should not influence the decision on hiring, assignment of duties or promotion of law enforcement officers. Social categorization of people should be ignored, and employees of the state should be treated as individuals (Goldstein, 2013). Police diversity is important to counter allegations of discrimination by minority groups. Cultural aspects of diverse groups will be understood better if there is representation in the police force by those who understand the underlying mindset of a particular minority group (Oliver, 2018). Cultural diversity in the police creates confidence and trust with all the members of the community.

Racial Discrimination And Policing

Racial profiling is the act of targeting, searching or detaining individuals for criminal activity based on their racial stereotypes. The publication of the Rodney King case, the 26 yrs. Old beaten by four white police officers in Los Angeles, the Abner Louima case of the Haitian brutally assaulted by a group of NYPD and African American Amadou Diallo, a West African immigrant shot 41 times by four NYPD

officers, should not be used to discredit the police force as they were separate sensationalized incidences that should not have occurred. Although in the past there have been injustices meted out to minorities, no police force should be biased and discriminatory. Reforms in reducing racial discrimination should be continued. The FBI should be provided with more funding to be able to pursue the investigation of racial profiling and the culprits charged (Hayasaki, 2015). Community policing is also important in keeping in check racial discrimination (Apuzzo, 2015). The police force will attempt to ensure that the police organization reflects the diversity of the community served. Accountability on the processes of legal, political and community aspects of policing should be enhanced. Civilian Oversight will also help keep the vice in check where necessary. There should be the development of ethnic minority staff networks, innovation, and training of qualified and capable minority groups in the police force to gain the trust and understanding of minority groups.

Lack Of Officer Presence In The Community

According to a study carried out by Hill, Pollet, and Nettl (2014), police operate a high visibility policy in neighborhoods known to have high crime rates. Residents of high-crime neighborhoods tend to receive high police presence and have a higher rate of incarceration and community supervision. The police should not be biased in its operation in order to gain trust. Community policing is encouraged to have a positive interaction between the police department and the community. As explained by Dwivedi, Fontaine, and Vigne (2017), there should be a willingness on the part of the community to partner with the police so that timely information can be received and policing needs addressed in line with community needs. There should be more police presence as it will help reduce crime and improve safety in the community (Campbell, 2018). The community also has a responsibility to encourage the youth to join the police force for equitable representation of minority groups in the police force. When there is little police presence in remote areas, women and children are exposed to real danger. Training of more officers is important to raise the police-citizen policing ratio.

Conclusion

The issue of police brutality has been there for a long time in most nations throughout the world but should no longer be tolerated. Adequate measures such as more stringent oversight, enactment of laws against police brutality, encouragement of community policing, training of police officers to uphold ethics, and timely punishment of errant officers should solve this problem. The community should be made to understand and be encouraged to take an active role in enhancing safety and security.

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