

Militarization of the Police Force: Causes and the Alternative

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Annotative Bibliography

N. Stamper. (2011). Occupy the Police. 293(22):6-8. Accessed October 10, 2011. Available from: Academic Search Elite, Ipswich, MA.

This article highlights the use of militarized SWAT teams against the citizens of the United States. It highlights the use of these SWAT teams against the demonstrators of the “99% movement.” The article uses SWAT statistics to conclude that the increase of the militarization of the police is unfounded.

Williams, J., Westall, D.(2003) SWAT and non-SWAT police officers and the use of force. *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 31(5),Pages 469-474, 10.1016/S0047-2352(03)00051-5.

This was a study done by J. Williams and D. Westal. They studied the tactics used by SWAT officers while they are on a normal patrol. They hypothesized that these SWAT officers were more likely to use force because they have been socialized to through their training. The conclusion of the study resulted in the rejection of their hypothesis because there was no relationship between being a SWAT officer and the use of force.

McGrane, S. (2010) Katrina, Federalism, and Military Law Enforcement: A New Exception to the Posse Comitatus Act. *Michigan Law Review*, 108(1309) Pages 1310-1340.

This scholarly article was completed by S. McGrane. McGrane focused on how the United States government failed to implement the Insurrection Act during Katrina because they were too afraid to infringe on state rights. He stated how there needs to be a better mechanism in

implementing this policy in order to ensure the use of its benefits. In the article he also mentions the changes that have occurred to the Insurrection Act.

G. Reynolds. (2009) SWAT Overkill: The Danger of a Paramilitary Police Force.. Accessed October, 10 2011. <http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/military/4203345>

In this article in Popular Mechanics law professor G. Reynolds argues that surplus military gear and tactical tactics have made SWAT teams into a military force. He states several incidents of over use of power by police forces. He also states how the police forces are acquiring excess amounts of military gear.

Meeks, D. (2006). Police Militarization in Urban Areas: The Obscure War Against the Underclass. *Black Scholar*, 35(4), 33-41.

In this Article D. Meeks explains the social situation of the underclass. He explains that present day policies have led to the underclass being a victim of a war against the underclass. He says that the underclass is being hurt both socially and economically. The militarized police force the underclass faces is also examined in this article. He concluded that the war on crime is not against crime but against the underclass.

Zimbardo, P.(2008) *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how Good People Turn Evil*. Reading 15. Pgs. - 146-156.

This book is on the study done by P. Zimbardo called the Stanford Prison Experiment. This experiment is known for its abuse of ethical issues. The study of a mock prison was set up in the basement of Stanford. The reading shows how the students subject to the experiment changed in as little as 9 days.

Twohey, M. (2000). SWATs Under Fire. *National Journal*, 32(1), 37.

In this article M. Twohey criticizes the use of SWAT teams inside the United States. He explains that these paramilitary SWAT teams conducting raids are an overzealous use of power. He also explains the relationship between these SWAT teams and the current military. This military training and weapons could result in the overzealous use of power by SWAT teams.

Yero, A. (2012) Re-visiting Concept and Theories of Community Policing. *International Journal of Academic Research*. 4(4), 51-55.

This article done by A. Yero analyzes the theoretical base and true concepts of community police work. This article used existing literature to examine the concepts of community police work. It explains the different theories of community police work and how these theories could be implemented. The article states for community policing to work it must be accepted by police, leadership, and the citizens.

Mohamed, R., Fitzvold, E.(2010) Door Room Dealers. Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner

This book analyzed the drug network on college campuses today. These drug dealers were being studied to compare their practices to how minority drug dealers operate. It was found that kids of privilege on college campuses operate in a manner in which they are unafraid of getting caught. These practices were very different than intercity dealers who were afraid of getting caught. The study also found when these privileged drug dealers were caught they often didn't face prison time. This book highlighted the selective use of drug policies.

Militarization of the Police Force: Causes and the Alternative

A man awakes to his wife hysterically explaining that a man outside the window of their house pointed an assault weapon at her. He grabs his gun, which he has for this very reason. Instructing his wife and child to hide safely in the closet, he puts his life on the line to protect his family. He proceeds to clear his home making sure the armed intruder hadn't entered his household. While doing so he was shot 60 times by several armed men (Ritzer 2011). This has to be a story about a less civilized country, right? It must be some terrorist force? Surely in the United States this kind of thing wouldn't happen. This is a true story about a 26 year old man named Jose Guarena. The fact is, as a former U.S. Marine serving in Iraq, Jose had been in many situations similar to this. Jose survived two tours in a warzone and experienced combat with multiple armed men. The event that ended this brave marine's life took place on the ground he fought to defend (Ritzer 2011). After reading this you're probably thinking this killer should be punished to the fullest extent of the law, but in fact the shooter was a law enforcement officer dressed in full combat gear brandishing a M16 assault rifle serving a court approved narcotics search warrant. No narcotics were found in the residence nor were any shots ever fired from Jose's gun (Ritzer 2011). This invasion of Jose's home was something he would have been familiar with while he served his tours in Iraq. Marines use these tactics against terrorist forces armed with Ak-47 and trained to use them. Should these same tactics be used by police officers to serve search warrants on non-violent offenders?

This use of a militarized police force against the civilian population is not only immoral but is not uncommon. The police are supposed to serve and protect, not harm and punish. These militarized units are known in the law enforcement field as SWAT teams. These SWAT teams are trained in military style tactics, are equipped with specialized weapons such as submachine

guns, and are often the same officers policing the community (Williams 2003). The first SWAT team creation is credited to the Los Angeles police department in opposition to increased violent crime in the mid-1960's. This SWAT team took down the largest black panther group in 1969 and even took down the Symbionese Liberation Army in 1973 (Williams 2003). This created national attention for this LAPD SWAT team and interest by law enforcement to have their own SWAT teams. This interest created an explosion of SWAT teams around the country, 55% of cities with a population above 50,000 created a SWAT team. The excuse used during this time period was the increasing violent crime rates. Coming into the 1990's with violent crime rates falling there was an inverse relation to the creation of SWAT teams (Williams 2003). In cities with a population above 50,000 the creation of SWAT teams increased 538% between 1980 and 1997. Even smaller cities increased the creation of these militarized units by 157%. So by 1997 90% of larger cities had a militarized police force and 66% of smaller cities (Williams 2003). These increases lead to almost 30,000 SWAT deployments in just the year of 1997 (Williams 2003). With the falling violent crime rates however these SWAT teams started to be used to execute search warrants, arrest warrants, and other citations where usually normal police officers were used. In 1999, 75% of these SWAT team deployments were executing search warrants (Williams 2003). SWAT teams have recently taken a proactive approach to crime control. This means that militarized police forces in cities such as Fresno are used for patrolling "high crime" areas, which are often synonymous with minority areas (Williams 2003). To understand the problem of militarization within the police system we must understand the main causes, the effects this militarization has on the policing system along with society, the reasons the militarization of the police has happened, and the alternatives to this militaristic police system.

Causes of Militarization: “All for One and All for One”

One cause of militarization in the police force starts right in the beginning of a police officer’s career while in the academy. Stories about going through a military boot camp are harsh and downright horrific but large similarities are seen in police academies around the country. This causes the police force to be more and more militaristic. The military boot camps are designed to break down new recruits through physical and mental abuse then “take the civilian” out of them replacing that with a military soldier (Smith 2009). The similarities when looking at police academies are astounding, using the same physical and mental mind games to remove the “civilian” from police recruits. First these similarities seem worthwhile due to both careers being life threatening and the need for physically and mentally strong recruits. The fact is being a soldier and a police officer are two opposite fields and this was recognized as far back as 1878 when the Posse Comitatus Act was passed by congress. After the end of reconstruction this bill was passed in order to make it illegal for the military to be able to enforce federal or state laws inside the United States. This means that the military cannot act as would our police force when dealing with United States citizens (McGrane 2010). There have been few exceptions made to this act since 1878, one of which is the Insurrection Act which allows the president to deploy military troops only when he thinks that the deployment of these troops is absolutely necessary because the situation cannot be handled by local law enforcement or when the state specifically requests this form of government assistance. This use of a militaristic force on the citizens of the United States has been recognized as a problem and these two acts show that limits must be set upon its use. The line between law enforcement and military has increasingly grayed in the recent years however (McGrane 2010). In some cases the military is actually training the law enforcement swat teams. Joint Task Force Six, based at Fort Bliss, Texas, is the headquarters for

the military training of law enforcement. This Task force was formed in 1989 by Defense Secretary Dick Cheney. The 170 man task force consisting of sailors, marines, and airmen holds training seminars for law enforcement. This military training of law enforcement doesn't stop with JTFS-6 though, often law enforcement train among marines on the local military bases (Twohey 2000). This militaristic training can be argued to be a violation of the Posse Comitatus Act due to this training blurring the line between the police force and the military. When this now militarized police force returns to their routine policing duties there is a minimal difference between them and the military itself. With the Insurrection Act only being used once since the civil war, which was to deal with opposition of the integration the schools, this everyday use of a militarized police force on society is not only unjust but unneeded (McGrane 2010).

The job of police officers today has become more like a frontline social worker. They are the ones making decisions as social workers for the majority of their shift. These military-like academies produce an end product of a paramilitary soldier ready to fight an enemy, not a social worker. This could lead to abuse of power and lead to innocent civilians being killed. Since the majority of a police officer's shift is dealing with non-violent people most of their training should be on resolving disputes with words not breaking down doors. These police academies should be producing police with a social worker background not police looking for an enemy.

The second main cause of militarization in the police system is the structure itself. The structure of the police system is modeled after the military structure, which causes a militarization of the police. The hierarchy of the policing system and the labels placed on these different levels make police act less human, passing the blame up the ladder saying that they were just doing what they are told. These police officers are less likely to feel responsible for their actions causing them to do things they normally would not even consider. This is

demonstrated when looking back at the history of the holocaust. Ordinary men from Germany that had been entered into the German military completed arguably the most horrific event in history. More notably were the mobile units of the “Final Solution” (Brown 2011). These mobile units were groups of ordinary soldiers from the German military. They had a routine in how they executed mass numbers of Jewish captives (Brown 2011). They would enter the village where the Jews were being held and tell them that they were being transferred. The Jews would gather every belonging they could hold and line up in the streets. The Jews were then ordered to strip and march all the while being gunned down by the mobile unit of infantry men (Brown 2011). Normal German men were doing horrific things because the orders came from the top of their hierarchy system.

Studies on this phenomenon of the effects of hierarchy systems and the use of authority to control people’s actions have had staggering results. In a famous controversial experiment, Stanley Milgram tested people’s obedience to authority. In this experiment he picked people from different walks of life and instructed them they were doing a learning experiment (Milgram 1974). These participants played a word matching game with someone they thought was also a participant. When a wrong word was given the participant would shock this other player who happened to be an actor. These shocks increased in intensity until “XXX” was printed next to the shock lever. Even though the other player was screaming in pain and toward the end silent 65 percent of participants continued until the highest voltage marked “XXX”. It didn’t take a threat to their life or their family just a remark from an authoritative figure saying the experiment must go on (Milgram 1974). This study not only shows the willingness of people to be obedient and not question authority but also the dangers of having a hierarchical system. The results of this experiment and the use of this system almost would make sense from a military stand point.

This, along with the creation of an enemy, is what allows good people of the United States military to pick up weapons and kill other good people from a different country. Where the use of this type of system doesn't make sense is in the law enforcement system "protecting" our nation's people. The police system ranking individuals and even dressing as the military does cause police officers to believe they are at war. The hierarchical system and the environment lead to this abuse of power, as seen in the Stanford University prison experiment. A mock prison was set-up and students were assigned to either be guards or prisoners (Zimbardo 2008). These prisons were set up as realistic as possible and they were to continue this experiment for several weeks. This experiment with ordinary college students had to be ended early due to it becoming a "Little shop of Horrors" as the lead experimenter explains, "Some of the visual images from my experiment are practically interchangeable with those of the guards and prisoners in that remote prison in Iraq, the notorious Abu Ghraib" (Zimbardo 2008). The guards were abusing the prisoners and even the prisoners were showing signs of going crazy. This experiment not only shows how fast a person can be changed into an uncivilized human being by corrupt authority but also how quickly when they are given authority they become corrupt and abusive. It took only 9 days for a Stanford student to become an abusive guard under the right conditions (Zimbardo 2008). This proves that with a hierarchical system and a stressful environment even the highly educated can become abusive. This hierarchal system needs to be flattened out to prevent this illustrated phenomenon by keeping the officers responsible for their actions. If the officers feel responsible for their actions this will lead to officers having a conscience and acting more humanely to their fellow citizens. These men and women in the police system will act more like people with consciences and less like they are at war. The system should focus on putting

the blame and responsibility in the hands of the individual officers so that they will be more likely to act humanely to their fellow citizens.

Another main cause of police militarization is little control on its use. To stop this overuse of militaristic power against the civilian population by law enforcement there must be limits set upon it. These militaristic tactics have their place in law enforcement when dealing with violent people that could potentially injure members of the law enforcement community. Using these same tactics against non-violent offenders is immoral and should not be done. This escalation of a military-like police force started as early as the 1960's in opposition to the Black Panther groups (Stamper 2011). Police exploited the perception that they needed higher amounts of firepower to match their opposition. The increases of firepower have been seen ever since with police forces acquiring assault rifles, machine guns, and even military surplus tanks. Recently we have seen this in the Occupy Wall Street movement where civilian protestors were pepper sprayed, beaten, and even shot with projectiles (Stamper 2011). The events on Wall Street looked similar to scenes from riots in third world countries (Stamper 2011). This kind of paramilitary force should not be used against non-violent protestors or any non-violent person. These military-like tactics should be reserved for only the most violent and life threatening of situations. The use of this type of force against the Occupy Wall Street movement was only seen to escalate the situation even further. This is not to say these Military-like tactics should not be used however, these tactics have their place in the police system. As stated earlier however they should be used against only the most violent and life threatening of situations.

In July of 2007 in Maryland, a swat team executing a search warrant entered a house and killed two labrador retrievers who were protecting the establishment. The search warrant for this house was approved even though it was the wrong house (Balko 2010). This would have been

chalked up as an accident and retribution paid out, however the house and labradors were owned by none other than Cheve Calvo (Balko 2010). This name is unrecognizable to most but in Berwyn Heights they know this name well, as the mayor. This event prompted investigation because it affected someone of Mr. Calvo's status. The results were disturbing finding that there were 4.5 of these raids happening per day in Maryland and in some communities one of these raids happening daily (Balko 2010). One would think by these stats that Maryland must be an extremely violent place, but only 6% of these swat team deployments were for events which swat teams were intended for, such as bank robberies or the taking of hostages. One would ask why the other 94% of deployments were initiated. The other 94% were for the execution of search warrants on what the article describes as "misdemeanors and what the FBI calls 'non-serious felonies,' generally meaning minor drug crimes."(Balko 2010)

The proliferate development and use of these swat teams throughout the United States is not uncommon. When the federal government makes surplus military gear available and free to law enforcement agencies they start up paramilitary teams even if they have no need for them. The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) spear heads this project of providing military surplus gear to law enforcement, in accordance to the National Defense Authorization Act passed in 1997 (Twohey 2000). The passing of this bill caused a frenzy by police departments to hoard this surplus military equipment. In under two years there was 3.4 million orders by police departments totaling over 727 million dollars worth of military equipment. Some of the items transferred during this period included "253 aircraft (including six- and seven-passenger airplanes, and UH-60 Blackhawk and UH-1 Huey helicopters), 7,856 M-16 rifles, 181 grenade launchers, 8,131 bulletproof helmets, and 1,161 pairs of night-vision goggles" (Twohey 2000). The problem lies in once these paramilitary teams are assembled and trained they have to be put

to use to be able to justify their price tag. This leads to SWAT teams being used in ordinary police work and executing search warrants on non-violent offenders. This undue use of these paramilitary SWAT teams puts civilian's liberties at risk when there is misinformation or "accidents". On September 26, 2006 in Bedford, Virginia, the police with the help of an internet service provider traced a child-porn supplier to a house in the small town. The house was raided, computers seized, and accused interrogated along with their children for 5 hours. Soon it was found out that the internet service provider had fingered the wrong house. This house was owned by a farmer and school teacher (Reynolds 2007). This family's civil liberties were violated due to the use of these paramilitary tactics when a simple knock on the door could have resolved the issue.

Other times the civilians aren't so lucky and can be harmed in the case of 92-year-old Kathryn Johnston. On November 23rd, 2007, police arrested a man suspected of drug dealing in Atlanta, Georgia. He proceeded to point out "his house" saying that there was a large stash of narcotics in his place. When the cops entered they met 92-year-old Kathryn Johnston, living in downtown Atlanta she owned a revolver for home protection and when her door was broke down she proceeded to use it (Balko 2007). The police officers, who had broken her door down, returned fire fatally wounding her. The list of cities with innocent civilians being raided in 2007 is somewhat appalling "Temecula, Calif.; Annapolis, Md.; several incidents in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York City; Galliano, La.; Hendersonville, N.C.; Ponderay, Idaho; Stockton, Calif.; Pullman, Wash.; Baltimore; Wilmington, Del.; Jacksonville, Fla; Alton, Kansas; Merced County, Calif.; and, believe it or not, Atlanta, Ga. [again]"(Balko 2007).

These tragic events or "mistakes" are not slowing down departments from acquiring these paramilitary SWAT teams however. In police forces serving over 50,000 people in 1982 only 59%

had a swat team but as of 1995 89% had swat capabilities (Twohey 2000). Some people would say these larger jurisdictions need the higher firepower to match the opposition. But in the 1997 a study on the increasing militarization of the police found that the rates of acquisitions of swat teams by smaller agencies is actually higher. Between 1985 and 1995 these smaller agencies acquiring almost two hundred more paramilitary swat teams (Twohey 2000). This alarming trend is matched by the number of “mistakes” and innocents being harmed in the process.

Effects of Militarization on Society: “White lie or White Policy”

Now that some of the causes of the militarization of the police have been mentioned and the problem apparent, what effect does this have on society? The answer lies in our everyday actions and the way we can live our lives. Think about this situation, you are driving down the road listening to your favorite radio station when you look in your rearview mirror and see the familiar shape of headlights and driving lights...a patrol car. What do you do? You panic! Turn down your radio, try to drive as perfect as possible, and don't even think of making eye contact because then you will surely get pulled over on suspicion. By this reaction you would expect the person in the police car to be Al Capone and not a peace officer paid to protect and serve society. This reaction is an effect caused by militarization of the police. This mentality not only causes the police force to treat civilians like the enemy but also causes civilians to see the police force as the enemy. When you look into your rearview mirror you don't see a community officer, you see the enemy.

The effects of the militarization of the police have been prominent throughout the history of the United States but greatly brought to the highlight after the events of September 11th and the “War on Terror.” This shift from community police work to the crime control militarization

we know and experience today didn't start with the war on terror however. The shift started with the "War on Drugs" and then the "War on crime" (Meeks 2006). Both of these policies increased funding to Law Enforcement, in 1994 alone the U.S. spent 100 billion on law enforcement and prisons. This increased funding in law enforcement came from ending public programs and funding to inter-city organizations. The greatest evidence of this was during the George H.W. Bush administration in 1992, after the riots in Los Angeles they instituted a program called "Weeds and Seeds" (Meeks 2006). This program was to provide 80 percent of its funding to inter-city community programs and 20 percent to law enforcement to control crime. After a few years of implementing this program however they realized that only 20 percent of the funding was actually going to these community programs and 80 percent was going to a militarized police organization based on crime control (Meeks 2006). This evidence points out that the aspect of community policing for the greater good of the community has been thrown out the window and a plan of controlling the lower class for the greater good of the rich instituted. The law enforcement communities when faced with the decision to either have organizations to help reduce crime or buy more guns to control crime within the lower class have overwhelming bought increasing amounts of firepower. This firepower including MP5 assault rifles, body armor, and even police tanks (Meeks 2006). These items are not policing equipment at all but military ordinance. This military ordinance was used by law enforcement to actually begin not a war on crime but a war on the lower class, their enemy being their own under privileged citizens. This war on the lower class exemplified by a much greater portion of prison populations being lower class even though crime rates have no correlation to class. This focus on lower class crimes causes families to be split up due to fathers being incarcerated, male role models being removed from the community, and causes a great economic downfall in these lower class

communities (Meeks 2006). This, in turn, causes greater resentment of this militaristic police force within the lower classes being used to control and punish them. The shift from helping the lower class to controlling them is illustrated by there not being a fiscal policy benefiting the poor or underclass since the Carter administration but plenty of militaristic policies disadvantaging them. According to Edward Goetz, the government that was once actively debating policies that would benefit the poor and solve their social problems such as poverty, educational reforms, and healthcare reforms have switched to debating how to control welfare and control crime (Meeks 2006). This use of the militaristic police force to control and disadvantage the lower classes is a horrible violation of the rights of our own citizens on the basis of class bias. This caused not only the police to be uncivilized against citizens but the citizens they were supposed to be protecting to see police as the enemy.

Now that the class bias of the militaristic police force we have today has been brought to light we must now look into racial bias. To fully understand the effects of the militarization of the police one must look at the dangers of putting this powerful militarized police force in the hands of the few powerful people that have their own racial biases. The thought of having a powerful police force seems great; in a perfect world it would be but the sad truth is along with every other nation of the world power breeds corruption here in the United States as well. The major policies instituted by these few people in control at first glance seem to be for the good of the people but when looked at closer they are only to maintain their position of power while exploiting the minorities. In Paul Butler's study titled "100 Years of Race and Crime" he traces back the racism in the criminal justice system to 1910. He mentioned how there were problems of unjust lynching and random mob violence against predominantly African Americans but minorities as well. He states this racial discrimination of minorities carries on to today with over

one million African Americans being imprisoned (Butler, 2010). The staggering statistic that screams over-representation in the prison system is one in three African American males are either in prison, on parole, or awaiting trial. Butler states that over the past decade discrimination has presumably been getting better, but the incarceration rate for minorities has risen. The incarceration rate between Whites and Blacks is 7:1. Meaning per 100,000 people, for every single White in prison there are 7 Blacks. This high incarceration rate and rising population of blacks in the U.S. has led there to be more blacks in the U.S. prison system than there were slaves in 1950 (Butler, 2010). The study finds that during the “War on drugs” while violent crime rates were falling, the prison population was skyrocketing. The prison population grew from 300,000 in the beginning of the “war on drugs” to over two million today. Half of these arrests were from drug offenses and three-fourths of those convictions were minorities (Butler, 2010). With minorities having a less than or equal drug use to Whites this is explained by discrimination. This discrimination was due to not only police officers targeting minorities but also legislative actions, such as “cracking down on crack”. Crack is not the leading cause of overdose but is predominately used by minorities (Butler, 2010). Butler states that most people would say blacks have more rights today than they did in 1910; however, incarceration rates need to be taken into consideration (Butler, 2010). This high minority incarceration rate can mainly be attributed to the selective use of drug laws by law enforcement (Butler, 2010).

To highlight this selective use of drug laws against minorities there was a study done on drug dealers on college campuses by Mohamed and Fritsvold. This study highlights this selective use of drug laws against minorities by showing how easily non-stereotypical dealers execute their business compared to stereotypical dealers (Mohamed 2010). This study began by identifying some drug dealers on the specific campus being studied, which proved to be rather

easy. The researchers found it relatively easy to find college students who deal drugs and get them to give up insight on their organizations, with 30 dealers identified (Mohamed 2010). The primary recipients of these identified dealers were Caucasian college students and their levels of use often led to supply shortages. The practices by the drug dealers in the study would have landed a stereotypical dealer in jail; doors were left open, drug paraphilia strewn across rooms, even dealers going as far as delivering their drugs with a lit blunt in their mouth (Mohamed 2010). It was like their actions were invisible to authorities not because they were trying but because no one was looking. The drug dealers told stories of getting pulled over by authorities, with several pounds of drugs in their possession, but getting let go without even an attempted search of their vehicle. The article points out that there was a case of police targeting minorities by asking to search their vehicles without any cause and these Caucasian males were never even asked if their vehicles could be searched (Mohamed 2010). With dealers venturing up to 150 miles to their suppliers and with easily visible practices only one dealer of the study was caught. This dealer saw the inside of a court room but was never put in jail (Mohamed 2010).

This study illustrates that this racial stereotype that Blacks or Latinos are the drug dealers has made its way into law enforcement. This is proved by intercity minority drug dealers going to great lengths to hide their practices but facing mass incarceration, while these college student dealers are getting away with “murder” in their drug dealing. This brings to light that the excuse of militarizing the police for the “War on Drugs” is unfounded. Since the police are uninterested in the mass amounts of drugs being dealt out on college campuses but incarcerating mass amounts of minorities for the same reasons. It proves the racial bias of the police system. This shows that the “War on Drugs” is not an excuse for the militarization of the police but is an

excuse for the system to execute their racial bias. This execution of the racial bias involves using these militarized SWAT teams to selectively execute search warrants on minorities.

The current policy that greatly illustrates this continuation of the abuse of power to control the minority is the “War on Drugs” which was instituted in 1970. The administration that is supposed to be in control of the drug problems in the United States is called the Drug Enforcement Administration. In response to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 the DEA listed three of its main goals:

DEA strategic goal 1--disrupt/dismantle the leadership, command, control, and infrastructure of drug syndicates, gangs, and traffickers of illicit drugs;

DEA strategic goal 2--reduce the impact of crime and violence that is the result of drug trafficking activity by providing federal investigative resources to assist local communities; and

DEA strategic goal 3--facilitate drug law enforcement efforts directed against major drug trafficking organizations by cooperating and coordinating with federal, state, local, and foreign law enforcement and intelligence counterparts (GAO 1993).

These goals of the DEA are backed by a substantial government funding ranging equating to more than 2 billion dollars a year. With this kind of funding the rates of drug use should have clearly gone down since the implementation of the “War on Drugs” right? Wrong. The rates of people addicted to illicit drugs remained unchanged holding steady at 1.3 percent of the population (DOJ 2002). The rates of people who have tried marijuana in the U.S. still holds strong at 38 percent. Goal Number two was to reduce the crime associated with crime and violence due to drug trafficking but this had been declining even before the implementation of this “War on Drugs”. When murder rates are compared between the United States and Netherlands, a nation that has less focus on the control of drugs, the results are astonishing. The murder rate in the Netherlands is 2 per 100,000 with their lax drug laws. The U.S., with their

2,140 million dollars of allocated funds against drug crime, still have a murder rate of 8 per 100,000, four times that of the Netherlands (DOJ 2002). Obviously this goal has not been accomplished if doing less causes more success. The third goal of going after the large drug trafficking organizations domestic and foreign seems to have not been accomplished due to the growing problem of Drug cartels around the world and even within our neighboring country of Mexico. This problem of Drug Cartels inside Mexico can even be linked to the DEA's unsuccessfulness of their first two goals. The Drug Cartels are merely supplying the large market of drug users in the United States. If the DEA had been actually putting its resources toward decreasing the drug use rates within the United States the international problems would solve themselves because there would not be a market for these illegal drugs inside our borders.

If the DEA has not accomplished these goals in the past 20 years since these goals were stated to keep their high rates of government funding then what exactly was the effect of these hundreds of millions of tax dollars? In 1984, during the infancy of the "War on Drugs" Whites made up 60 percent of the prison population (Meeks 2006). This makes sense statistically due to them making up a greater portion of the total population; in some respects this number is actually too low. After the maturation of the "War on Drugs" this has substantially changed however, in 2002 the white population only made up 35 percent of the prison population (DOJ 2002). Using racial stereotypes this is often explained away by saying that due to the increased focus on drugs and their use that the African American population was focused on because they use more drugs and this increased their incarceration percentages. The increase in incarceration percentages is true at a staggering 81% of federal drug offenders being African American (DOJ 2002). Also true was the focus on the African American population with the African American population only making up 13 percent off all drug users and then making up 37 percent of all drug related

arrests (ONDCP 2012). The part of this stereotype that is wrong however is that the African American population doesn't have a higher number of drug users. White Americans make up 72 percent of all drug users in the United States but these numbers should reflect on their incarceration rates. So statistically if White Americans make up most of the drug users in the United States then they should make up most of the prison population serving for drug related crimes but this isn't true. With White Male incarceration rates at 717 per 100,000 and Black male incarceration rates at 4,919 per 100,000 (BJS 2010). This obviously illustrates a focus on the Black population but doesn't have legitimate reasons to be explained away. If this focus on the African American population cannot be explained by higher drug use rates or numbers which the DEA is supposed to be cracking down on then it can only be explained by the racial bias of the organization itself. The focus on African Americans and other minorities due to racial bias doesn't end with the "War on Drugs" however it extends to the whole criminal justice system with the staggering statistic of one out of every three African Americans serving time at least once in the federal and state prison system. This not only leads to a significant disadvantage to the minorities living in the United States but also leads them to have a greater interaction and hatred of this militaristic police force being used against them. This greater interaction with the police and minorities involves selective use of drug laws (Butler 2010). This leaves minorities subject to overzealous raids due to non-violent drug offenses. The excuse to militarize the police because it's needed to fight the drug war is unfounded. Instead this police militarization is due to the perceived need to increase control of the underclass minorities.

How Militarization Came About: “Police of the State or For the State”

Why would a nation that stands for freedom, like the United States, stand for the alienation of its own people? The answer lies in one of the causes of militarization and that is the structure of the system. Earlier we focused on the evil that people can do when they can pass the blame up the ladder of a hierarchical system, but who exactly is the blame passed up too? Who is making these decisions to harm and alienate their own nation’s citizens? These decisions are being made at the top of this hierarchical ladder, with the blame of these actions rarely, if ever, reaching them. But surely these political leaders have good intentions with policies being passed such as “The War on Drugs”, “The War on Crime”, and “The War on Terror.” I do not like seeing drugs on their streets, crime occurring, and terrorism. However, these scare tactics are excuses to implement policies of militarization. “The War on Drugs” was implemented when this drug crime spread into white suburbia (Meeks 2006). The reaction of the police to deal with this public dilemma was greater militarization and arrest rates for drugs skyrocketed even though drug use rates were falling. “The War on Crime” was implemented during a time that violent crime was on a decline for the past 10 years (Meeks 2006). Violent crime has decreased 25 percent since 1994 but arrest rates have skyrocketed. Then we have “The War on Terror” which was implemented after September 11th (Meeks 2006). It seemed like politicians could pass any bill they wanted as long as they linked it to terrorism even going as far as passing the National Defense Authorization Act, which allows not police officers but the military to arrest U.S. citizens “suspected of terrorism” and detain them as long as they see fit. According to the bill they can detain someone indefinitely without the ability of having a trial (Marcus 2011). We have witnessed the brutality brought on civilians by these anti-terrorist groups during the “Occupy Wall Street” movement. Non-violent protestors met a militarized police force using

violent force. These protestors were seen and treated by police like terrorists, not citizens exercising their right of freedom of speech. These political leaders are acting for the good of a community but that community is their community, the Upper class. This legislation portrayed as protection of the people is doing nothing but allowing the militarization of the police to control the people they are supposed to be protecting.

Alternative to Militarization: “It Takes a Village to Raise a Child”

As we can see from the information stated earlier an increase in police militarization does not benefit the community as a whole and can be easily corrupted due to greed. Obviously a reform of our criminal justice system is desperately needed and one of the alternatives is Community policing. There is a consensus between the scientific and law enforcement communities that a move toward community policing will not only reduce the fear of police by its citizens but will also inevitably reduce crime, which is something police militarization will not accomplish. The definition of community policing can be vague but it involves a partnership between the citizens and the police that involves policing for the community and not policing of the community (Yero 2012). This type of policing would focus the blame of crime not only on the citizens of the specific community but also on law enforcement in that community. This would shift funds and focus to crime prevention instead of crime control. To understand Community policing you must first understand what exactly it encompasses, the theories behind it, and the changes due to implementing this type of policing.

Community Policing is a form of policing that there is a joint union or relationship between the police and the community. This union is formed to jointly battle crime and to better the quality of life for all the citizens in the community (Yero 2012). This would be done by

community based crime controls, such as neighborhood watch programs, foot patrols within communities instead of patrol cars, and increased accountability toward police actions against citizens (Yero 2012). With a system like this the community would feel a part of the system and be less likely to resent the very system that is supposed to be serving them.

The training and job of police officers would greatly be changed by employing community policing. The approach of law enforcement would be based on problem solving instead of punishment, there would be a sharing of power between police and the community and these would be different for every community, police officers would live in the community and be permanently assigned to the same community, and most important of all training at all levels would be different and instead of supervisors evaluating they would be used as supporters for officers in need of help (Yero 2012). The primary goal of a police officer would not be to seek out criminals and punish them, rather, identify and solve problems at the community level (Yero 2012).

There are theories that support the implementation of community policing over the militaristic system we have in place today. The first theory is known as the Normative Sponsorship Theory. This theory states that there are a significant amount of people that have goodwill and that cooperation in the community is a necessary for harmony (Yero 2012). It states that a community program will only be supported if the program represents all the people in that community (Yero 2012). This theory is representative to the fact that each community would have to have their own officers with different attitudes and responsibilities. The community will not support this type of policing if they don't believe they are personally being represented. This theory could explain why the current policing system is not supported due to most people not feeling that they are represented or have a say in policies that are imposed (Yero 2012). The

plans for community policing must reflect the entire community with each community having their own voice. The second theory is known as the Broken Windows theory. In this theory they compare communities to a building. If a window in the building is broken and not repaired, people will think that no one cares, so they will proceed to break all the windows in the building (Yero 2012). This reflected on a community would state that when crime is dealt with at the community level it would be much more responsive and would keep the community on the right moral track. This community police system would be more efficient, responsive, and effective.

The increased community involvement of the police could not only result in crime prevention but when a crime was committed the community would be a lot more inclined to help a police force that they actually respect. When it comes to solving crimes the community is often relied upon for information leading to the arrest of the culprits. Getting this information involves eyewitnesses or even just community cooperation with officers. Under our militaristic police force the citizens of communities are often uncooperative due to then being afraid and untrusting of the police themselves. An example of a police force that is similar to this community policing policy is Japan. The police force in Japan is a lot more involved in the community often knowing who lives in each house and even knowing their occupation (Kerbo 1998). The community is also a lot more respectful to the police and sees them as community leaders rather than their enemy. These aspects of the Japanese model of policing have led to Japan having high clearance rates of crimes with murder clearance upwards of 90 percent due to the cooperation of the community (Kerbo 1998). These high clearance rates of solving crimes is a crime deterrence due to the high probability of getting caught which explain the low crime rates in Japan compared to the United States. So this police-community relationship could have more benefits

than just a better quality of life for the community but also a more efficient criminal justice system.

Conclusion: *“If it isn’t Broke Then Don’t Fix It ...”*

Now that you understand the problem of militarization within the police system by understanding the main causes, the effects this militarization has on the policing system along with society, the reasons the militarization of the police has happen, and the alternatives to this militaristic police system. We see that the militarization of the police due to social policies after the 1990’s was unfounded. The inverse relationship between violent crime and creation of these SWAT teams highlights this. Within the body of this paper evidence was given that the creation of the SWAT teams is not due to violent crime but the perceived threat of the underclass. This perceived threat has created a police system that militarizes itself and uses these extreme tactics to accomplish the mass incarceration of minorities. The system must be reformed to community policing strategies to demilitarization the police and solve these race and class biases. Putting yourself in the shoes of Jose Guerena, would you have not done the same? I know if I faced the same situation I would like to think that I would do just what he did. He was protecting his family from a paramilitary force, unknown to him that they were the same force that is supposed to be protecting his family. This situation could have been prevented with a simple “knock and announce” by the police. Jose Guerena, a law abiding citizen, would have relinquished his firearm. If the demilitarization of the police commences the effects of militarization will subside and just maybe the citizens of the United States will be able to look a police officer in the eyes, not fear for their innocence but wave with respect.

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