

Integrative Capstone

Modern Criminal Justice Issues Reflection

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Contemporary policing has transitioned with super sonic speed. Utilization of new technology, working within challenging social constraints, legislative changes in crimes and narcotics, as well as the focus on mental well being of our sworn members are some of the areas that have impacted contemporary policing in America.

One of the critical Issue that I've identified has been the focus on the future of police engagement in our diverse communities. By improving public perceptions and increasing trust through fair decision making and positive public interaction, the police service can enhance its legitimacy. The success of the Community Safety Partnership<sup>1</sup> (CSP) program, a collaboration between the Los Angeles Police Department and the city Housing Authority, has placed an additional 30 officers in public housing developments in Watts. Programs such as the Watts Rams have provided the youth in the community to focus on team sports and an escape from street violence and gang membership. The CSP's continued expansion to more communities within the city of Los Angeles Police has been a positive impact for our neighbors and especially the youth. Moreover, these types of programs can potentially deter future gang affiliations and provide the youth in our communities of color a positive and supportive environment.

The war on drugs has proven to be a losing one for law enforcement. Policing narcotic activity has drained resources and has not accounted in a significant reduction of narcotics usage. Much like the legalization of marijuana, we can potentially witness policies that would legalize certain narcotics in our society. This controversial move will enable our government to control, manufacture, and sell these drugs in a responsible and safer manner. The second aspect would allocate monies resulting from the multi-

billion dollar criminal industry to instead be distributed to our inner-city and socio-economic impacted communities that have been historically affected by drug abuse and broken families. The third aspect would be for nationwide strengthening of our education and prevention efforts for narcotic use. These monies can be invested in programs such as the D.A.R.E.<sup>2</sup> program that provide anti-drug awareness and prevention. The incorporation of medical and psychological professionals in order to assist with addictions and the psychological need for drugs. Lastly the monies and resources will be directed to the homeless and mental health suffering in our communities.

Police officers mental health and wellness has been historically downplayed and ignored. The stressors of the law enforcement arena and its lingering effects to our sworn personnel continues to take a heavy toll. Police officers are trained to respond and handle volatile, combative, and highly stressful incidents. Officers are equipped with certified field training, proper tools and deescalation techniques. However, the stress and trauma of those incidents can be engrained in officers psyche and negatively effect their long term health. “A large proportion of officer injuries and deaths are not the result of interaction of criminal offenders but the outcome of poor physical health due to poor nutrition, lack of exercise, sleep deprivation, and substance abuse” (Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing).

The focus on providing the proper environment and the tools necessary to maintain proper mental health is crucial for the individuals involved, as well as the communities they serve. New meditation techniques, and the practice of creating and maintaining a positive culture in the stations we serve will assist in this endeavor.

Work Cited:

*Final report of the president's Task Force on 21st Century policing.* Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing | Office of Justice Programs. (2015). Retrieved November 16, 2021, from <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/final-report-presidents-task-force-21st-century-policing>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lamayor.org/mayor-garcetti-announces-creation-lapd-community-safety-partnership-bureau>

<sup>2</sup> <https://dare.org/>