

Undercover operations

Law



Undercover Operations The main goal of investigation is to collect substantial evidence that will be used to identify and prosecute a criminal successfully. Without the collection of substantial evidence, law enforcement officers will always find themselves at the losing end in their efforts to curb crime and the society will continue to suffer. This noble aim has forced law enforcement officers to go an extra mile into using undercover work in order to collect the evidence they need. In this method, the undercover officers have to observe and even take part in illegal practices to protect their cover and thus collect evidence. They could play lovers, prostitutes, drug dealers or crime bosses.

Undercover work has facilitated the prosecution of criminals operating in a complex setting and uncovering of operations of criminal gangs. Despite its benefits to the society, some people are against the use of undercover work as a means of collecting evidence of crime. Some of the reasons they give are that it increases crime, does not respect privacy, involves deception, allows the government to do what it is prohibiting others to do among other reasons (Pollock, 2004).

Personally, I support the use of undercover work by law enforcement officials. Although it involves unethical actions, it is also ethically justifiable. When it is examined from the utilitarian viewpoint, it is a noble-cause corruption in which the end justifies the means. It leads to the good of the greater population and thus it is justifiable if it is used to obtain useful and important ends. For example, it is important in the prevention of crimes when there are specific hints and reasonable grounds to suspect that some people are planning a serious crime or have done it. It helps to uncover the truth, collect evidence and make arrests.

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Victims of some serious crimes do not report their experiences and rarely are such crimes reported. These include pornography rings, drug distribution networks and fences of stolen property. In this case, underground work is the best investigation tool. Undercover work is ethical when the targets are individuals or gangs who commit crimes they are aware that they could call for the use of deceptive police practices for example drug distribution.

It could also be risky for the law enforcement officers to investigate some of the crimes openly and thus underground work justifies the use of special risks. In this case, it is ethical and justifiable as the best means towards the collecting of evidence and making arrests in some crimes. Pollock (2004) states that undercover work is justifiable when it is directed against individuals whom the law enforcement officers have a reasonable grounds to suspect. This means they are not used for anybody or anyhowly.

If undercover work is not used, it may be difficult to arrest some criminals due to the complexity of the way they carry out their operations. In this case, undercover work becomes a tool for enforcing the law equally. Undercover work involves the collection of evidence in the most noncoercive and nonintrusive ways as possible hence it is the best method of investigation. The work is carried out by persons of upright character whose aim is to protect the interests of the public. Given all these advantages and justifications, law enforcement officers should step up their undercover work in order to increase their ability to control crimes.

References

Pollock, J. (2004). *Ethics in crime and justice: Dilemmas and decisions* (4th Ed). Belmont, CA. Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.