

Example of recent developments in police work essay

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN POLICE WORK

When the American colonies developed their first police forces, they looked to English departments for policies and practices (Grimes, 2013, pp. 138-139). However, the members of those early police forces would not be able to recognize many of the concerns of today's police, as a significant portion of today's crimes are modern developments. The new crimes faced by modern police forces have resulted in both negative and positive changes in the way police work is now done, as compared to before the development of these types of crime. Some of the factors that have had these kinds of positive and negative effects include the Patriot Act, terrorism, cybercrimes, and white-collar crime. All modern police forces have changed their previous policies and practices in response to these factors.

The Patriot Act was signed into law in October 2001 (Grimes, 2013, p. 24).

This act was a response to the terrorist attacks of September 11. The passage of the Patriot Act has had several positive effects on today's police work. First, the law provided for enhanced and streamlined surveillance procedures. As noted by the U. S. Justice Department (2004), this has made the collection of evidence potentially related to terrorism much easier.

Second, the law provided new grant programs that has funneled money into state and local police departments. This has allowed for the purchase of new investigative equipment (Schroeder, 2011). A negative effect of the Patriot Act has been public criticism of its use when there is a perception that the provisions of the Act are being used beyond its intended scope, such as the case of a 16 year-old arrested in North Carolina for allegedly making bomb threats (Lamb, 2009).

According to Jones and Libicki (2008), in 40% of the cases they studied, police and intelligence agencies were responsible for bringing terrorist groups to justice. Thus, it makes sense that police departments play an important role in the effort to counter terrorism. One effect of the rise in terrorism has been what has been described as the “ militarization” of the police force, that is, running a police force using the policies and procedures of the military (Balko, 2011). Given the known role of police in counter-terrorism efforts, this change can be seen as positive and necessary to effectively combat the threat of terrorism to the public. However, there have been some observations that these changes are not truly being used against terrorism, but against illegal drug sale and possession or even non-violent crimes, and such militarization of police forces is not truly necessary. If this use of additional force proves widespread, it would make militarization a decidedly negative development for police work (Lee, 2013).

Cybercrime is one of today’s challenges in police work (Grimes, 2013, pp. 582-590). Cybercrime is defined as crimes where a computer is the target of the crime, where a computer is a tool of the crime, and crimes where a computer is incidental to the commission of the crime. These types of crimes have had a major impact on how police work combatting cybercrime as the traditional methods of investigating crime are not effective against cybercrime. In particular, the lack of physical proximity, the scale of the crime, and the easier ability to for the criminal to be anonymous are among the reasons investigative processes used in real world crimes may be ineffective (Brenner, 2010). A positive effect of these developments is that law enforcement now understands that to keep pace with criminals that are

becoming more and more technologically skilled they need officers in place with these skills. In response, many areas such as California and South Carolina have developed specialized task forces. A negative effect of cybercrime is that training and staffing of these specialized task forces is extremely expensive which puts pressure on already stretched budgets (Wolf, 2009).

A further source of challenges for today's police is white-collar crime (Grimes, 2013, pp. 594-597). White-collar crimes are those crimes that are nonviolent, financially motivated, and often involve fraud (Strader, 2002). One of the positive effects of the need for investigating white collar crime has been the co-operative efforts of law enforcement and accountants, whose skills are often necessary to provide the proof needed to convict white-collar criminals (Ginsberg, 2006). As white-collar crime is by definition financially motivated, accounting skills are often needed to follow the money path. In contrast, there is a perception that white-collar crime receives little attention from law enforcement due to the need to concentrate personnel resources and funds on violent crime (Strader, 2002). Thus, the rise in white-collar crime can be a negative for police work if the public perceives that law enforcement is unable or unwilling to do anything about the situation.

The passage of the Patriot Act, the rise in terrorism, cybercrime, and white-collar crime has all had significant impact on today's police work. Many of these impacts have been positive, resulting in a more effective, better funded, and more co-operative police organizations. However, some of these effects have been negative and have increased the public perception of police as an institution that oversteps its powers or is ineffective. Time will

tell whether police departments will be able to rise to these challenges, as these areas will only become more significant in the future.

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