

The debate about quasi-military style policing



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Quasi-Military style policing Policies agencies across the world operate in a highly bureaucratic structure. The police department manages itself through a systematic form of administration that defines its tasks and responsibilities, qualifies requisite positions along its structure and uses action to address various requirements and situations according to a set of rules and regulations. A chain of command that exists right up to the top of this hierarchy aims to maximize the efficiency of the police as a force. However, the downside of this organizational system is that there is no flexibility within the ranks whatsoever and engulfed with an indifference towards the needs of the department's human resources. As such, this effective red-tape that hinders the proper working of the police force is a common problem across the world.

In this context, it is also important to note that most police departments operate as quasi military entities. Police personnel wear uniforms, carry weapons for self defense and are organized along the hierarchical structure described above according to their rank. As such, an officer within this chain functions under a authority in which the orders flow in a single direction i. e., top to bottom. Like the case with the military, the police have often abused their powers and have resorted to various crimes apart from being riddled with corruption in various forms. As such, the military model of this quasi structured organization has created problems. By deeming that anything against crime is genuine, police can often embrace the belief that anything in justified in a war like situation. This not only leads to violence as a result of the abuse of power by police officers, but can also create serious rifts between them and the general population.

However, despite these negative traits, a police force performs several

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important duties that are important for the maintenance of law and order and to keep crime under check if not do away with it completely. The police department, through its ranks, operates in an organized fashion and maintains control during occasions where a large number of people come out to interact with one another. Likewise, the police department maintains an intelligence arm much like its military counterpart and gathers information about the events and trends in the local area, allowing its decision makers to make the proper and timely choices necessary to keep illegal elements within check. Further, it is this very quasi static structure that provides the necessary structure that allows several police departments to share information on a regional or national level to tackle law and order issues of such proportions.

However, working in a quasi military framework has also had a tool on the mental health of police officers. Working in a military structure requires the individual to sacrifice his self for the well-being of the society. In this scenario where the goal supersedes the individual, the latter is expected to abide by a certain disciplinary standards, and punished if he does not live up to these expectations. This creates a process where the person becomes part of a machine, where even acts of bravery or saving a life may have the unintended consequences if the proper legal procedures or necessary paperwork are not undertaken. As such, this quasi-military form of police leads to a mental health scenario which is stressful.