

Paramilitary essay



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Paramilitary forces which are assigned specific functions and have organization that is same as those of military forces, however, paramilitary are considered as not having same status as those of the military.

Paramilitary term is subjective and is used pertaining to what is considered same to a military force, it can be the police, the army or other armed groups. Thus, the aspects of paramilitary differ much in accordance to the context and the speaker. For example, in Northern Ireland, the term paramilitary is used to refer to specific unlawfully armed groups.

For the purpose of this research paper, we are going to look at the Special Weapon and Tactics (SWAT) paramilitary group which is a tactical paramilitary unit in many of American police departments. (Balko, 2001)

Origins/evolution of SWAT paramilitary force SWAT paramilitary unit can trace its origins back to 1920 when it was formed by William E. Fairbairn together with the Shanghai Municipal Police (S. M. P). Fairbairn was a police officer; the Shanghai Municipal police started a reserve unit that was commanded by Fairbairn to tackle riots, terrorists in the municipal and with urban guerrillas.

The SMP were the first to create the original special weapons and tactics unit, and their police who had been trained in bloody gun fights were greatly advantaged during the second world war and there after. (Balko, 2001)

However, Delano Police department was the first one to implement civilian SWAT in America; this was in 1965, when they did follow Fairbairn by responding to United Farm Workers union (UFW) demonstrations that was going on around the farming community of Delano in California.

In other parts of Los Angeles, the Cesar Chavez united farm workers were also staging several violent riots in Delano. (Balko, 2001) Delano police department responded to those many demonstrations by forming the first ever united states SWAT units. Having seen what the paramilitary unit in Delano achieved, the Los Angeles police department also took up the idea of forming a special trained and also equipped unit within the LAPD which, was intended to react and manage dangerous situations where shooting was involved in order to reduce police casualties.

Afterwards Daryl Gates the then chief of police agreed to the idea and created small selected units of willing officers. The initial SWAT unit was made up of four men per unit and had fifteen teams, the officers were specially trained. The idea of paramilitary units soon gradually was taken up by many other police departments in the country. By 1980s the SWAT units with other paramilitary teams were being used moderately in police department in the country. There were deployed in volatile, and in dangerous situations such as hostage or bank robbery situations. (Balko, 2001)

Organization structure of SWAT and its impacts In the modern times, SWAT paramilitary have undergone a lot of organizational restructuring to suit the modern day challenges. With the reduction of civil riots and demonstrations in America, the highly paid and highly equipped SWAT officers can not be allowed to sit there and wait for an emergency to happen. In many cases these officers today are deployed on normal duties. However, the officers are available for SWAT assignments and are called upon by use of cell phones, pagers or radio transmitters in case they are required.

The SWAT paramilitary are organized in way that they can rapidly respond to any callout. From experience delayed response brings problem and has proved to be ineffective. The impact of The role of the SWAT paramilitary in policing The SWAT units and other paramilitary units have a duty of fight crimes in society. The paramilitary normally are deployed in areas way the situation is grave and dangerous. Situations like arresting armed bank robbers, quelling violent riots and demonstrations, undertaking release of hostages and drug fighting.

Generally paramilitary officers have a role in tackling dangerous crimes. However, at many times the SWAT officers and other paramilitary forces are used in maintain general law and order. Communication of SWAT with the public Communication issues in the paramilitary has raised great concern, with the rapid response that the officer are known for, they end up not checking and counterchecking information. It has been observed that in most cases the command line of paramilitary communication is not followed when assigning assignments to the paramilitary.

Break down in communication have lead to failed paramilitary raids which have led in unnecessary injuring, terrorizing, and death of innocent civilians, police officers and also nonviolent offenders. Consequently, there is poor communication between the public and the paramilitary. (Kraspa, 2002)
Hindrance of paramilitary to agency's service provision Regular police are trained to maintain law and order and at the same time protect the rights of citizens and up hold their liberties.

While, paramilitary SWAT officers are trained in military techniques and use military weapons which are sophisticated and dangerous to be used on civilians. The paramilitary units seem to have more authorities, the units use armored cars and perform “ without on knock” searches that a frighten people as they are surprised, at times this officer enter houses through windows or from the roof as they are dropped by the helicopters, all this interfere with the rights of citizens.

Consequently, this hinders the aim of the police force of providing security and maintaining law. Macko, 1997) Regrettably, paramilitary militaristic policing habits that have been created by policymakers and politicians have led the paramilitary officers to start using war like approach and on many occasions treating civilians and offenders like enemy. Over the past years incidents of failed drug raids, wrong arrests and deaths of innocent people have raised public debate on the tactics employed by paramilitary. This has strained the relationship between the public and the police agencies.

(Macko, 1997)

Problem oriented policing Problem oriented policing (POP) term was coined by Herman Goldstein, this refers to policing strategy which entails identifying and analyzing of particular crime and disorder difficulties so as to developed effectual response plans in concurrence with the ongoing assessment. The POP strategy place a lot of weight on research and assessment together with crime prevention. The strategy engages the public together private bodies in reducing of problems within the communities.

Goldstein, 1979) Goldstein (1979) asserts that where as in traditional police system, an officer on patrol will respond to repeated calls to a specific

problem prone area (hot spot) and tackle with each specific incidence, in POP that officer will be encouraged to discover the main cause leading to the problem and formulate ways of resolving the problem. The main objective of POP is to cure the problem and not to merely treating it. Patrol officers explore the possible ways of responding to a certain problem.

The moment the a problem is found the police officers are supposed to work hand in hand with the community members in order to find a solution for the problem, the solutions can include various ways apart from making arrests. The solutions may base on the wrongdoer, the community as a whole, outside agencies, the environment or some use of some ways of mediation. In most cases, police and the community are often forced to come up with specific tailor -made responses to arising problems. (Goldstein, 1979)

In the recent past, POP approaches of policing have become well-liked among many police administrators and top placed city officials. Goldstein, 1979) Two main reasons explain this; one POP is an innovative and easily approved and accepted by the communities and the public as whole. The public welcomes the chance of being heard and making contribution to the security issues. The public trust in POP means the police administrators feel more secured with their jobs so do elected city officials. Two; POP gives the police administrators a chance of collecting financial aid and grants from the federal government. The availability of grants from the federal government serves a big incentive to the police agencies that are using the POP.

Important impacts of POP Enhancing communication within the public Within the POP policy, the public is given a more direct say in identifying the

objective and aims of the police, the public also can influence the issues that the police puts focus on. This enables the police to know the priority crime concerns of the community. However, this can also bring conflict of interest as main focus of crime activities may differ from the perspective of the community and the police. (Goldstein, 1979) Abuse of power by police High discretion of police authorities creates a danger of the authority abusing power.

POP policy do encourage police officers to actively intercede in situations that they had in the past not dealt with, this presents more chances for abusing power. Reactive and proactive Another significant impact that can arise when POP is implemented is the conflict among proactive and reactive policy makers. (Goldstein, 1979) Police in big metropolitan areas, do receive a higher number of 911 emergency calls for service than those in quite areas in small town. However, these seemingly quieter places may have a lot of problems than the large metropolitan areas.

This situations leads to officers being dispatched in metropolitan areas to respond to emergency calls, and ironically leave the quieter places which seem peaceful but have real problems that need to be solved. Conclusion This paper concludes that the raise of paramilitary was mainly in response for need of an elite squad in the police force to deal with dangerous and risky situations such as violent riots, drug arrests, bank robberies and terrorism. Over the years, these roles have changed and increased, today paramilitary officers are being used perform duties of regular police like police patrols.

This has caused a lot of casualties mainly to the civilians leading to the public question the very role of policing. Paramilitary, generally have interfered with the core values of regular police officers. Paramilitary officers need to go back to their original objectives of tackling crime in dangerous situations. Problem oriented policing is a good initiative, however at times misuse of power may occur in POP. Thus, officers need to be more transparent when implementing POP policies. Nevertheless, police force units are important in maintaining law and order and they need to be enhanced to deal with modern day challenges of security.