

### **Historic Factors in Policing**

The earliest history of policing in the United States worked extremely well because the communities were small and tight-knit, so informal forms excelled. Town criers helped watch over communities and citizens watched out for their towns themselves. This would not work today because of the extremely low-trust society we have as a result of multiculturalism; back then they were one people and reaped the benefits of an extremely high-trust society with low crime and high social cohesion and peace. This is not simply due to the scale of the communities, but the cultural make up of the people. Luke Johnson writes about the world's biggest city, Tokyo, saying "citizens are hugely better behaved in public than in places like London" (Johnson, 2024). This goes deeper than just manners too, "Levels of crime there are remarkably low relative to the UK: recorded offences in England and Wales are roughly fifteen times higher than in Japan, after adjusting for population sizes" (Johnson). Like modern Japan, the colonists did start using a more formal criminal justice system as the population grew, but it helped maintain a very low crime rate compared to today due to the homogeneity of the people. The changes since the nineteenth century have largely been the police becoming more militarized in structure in response to an increase of tensions and violence along with a decrease of social cohesion and trust due to increasing multiculturalism. Another aspect of this history is that the criminal justice system became more formal as the country grew and governments came into power, as the textbook states, "the criminal justice system evolved because laws became codified and penalties were attached" (Hager, 2020, p. 8). So while early punishments were based on social shame and ostracizing, eventually set laws simply put predetermined fines and jail sentences onto various crimes depending on their severity.

The history of policing is important to understanding modern police practices because many of those practices evolved out of a need or response to other social factors. For example, in the 1960s there were mass protests and riots around the United States due to particular agendas to destabilize the

nation. The rioters were often violent, destructive, and troublesome and no one wanted them in their neighborhoods. In Birmingham, Alabama, the police chief “Bull” Connor ordered the use of water cannons and fire-hoses on rioters, which proved to be a very effective way to disperse and interrupt them. This was necessary to restore the public peace, as the rioters were deliberately being disruptive, and it was an extremely effective and humane method of crowd control. Today the preferred methods of crowd control tend to include riot-shields, pepper spray, mass arrests, and in extreme cases rubber bullets. In general the goal of new technologies is to reduce death and harm as a result of maintaining peace and order. Some new technologies also exist to increase accountability of the police, such as body-cams. In an almost paradoxical twist, the newer technologies tend to be increased as the militarization of the police also increases due to the larger and more violent mobs and riots that occur more and more in modern society. The police find themselves stuck in a place of trying to protect people better, while being loathed by the public more due to the methods they have to utilize to restore and maintain order.

### **The Future of Policing**

The trends that will influence policing during the coming decade have already been in motion for roughly the past decade. A growing racial consciousness due to the media and the taboo of a police officer acting against anyone of another race has demonstrably caused the police to be less likely to shoot minority races. A study found that, “When considering all FOIS in 2015, we did not find anti-Black or anti-Hispanic disparity” (Johnson et al., 2019). FOIS being an acronym for ‘fatal officer-involved shootings.’ The authors of the study emphasize that their findings do not comment on “racial bias,” in a general sense, but the entire study does prove there is no negative racial bias towards minorities in regards to fatal shootings, contrary to what is often claimed to be the case. It reveals rather that if anything the opposite is true; due to media pressure and modern social consciousness, the portion of unarmed and innocent individuals involved in FOIS is much higher among whites than

minorities. This is only natural, as the cultural influence encourages less caution in these cases; no mainstream media outlet is going to lambaste an officer for accidentally killing an innocent white. On the contrary, the entire media complex will go after an officer for a self-defense or accidental kill on a minority, as seen in several high-profile stories over the past decade.

Other social factors that will affect the police in the future will be the extremely polarized political and cultural biases that our modern culture has tried to force onto everyone in order to be considered a “good citizen.” This manifests itself in the form of political prisoners, citizens being targeted and judged with a double standard due to political circumstance, and a general silence and brushing away of injustices done to certain citizens in specific contexts. The first example of this is the complete miscarriage of justice in the case of Travis and Gregory McMichael, who were found guilty of a “hate crime” after killing a trespasser on probation who was trying to burglarize houses in their neighborhood, in self-defense. Madeline Halpert writes, “Defense lawyers had argued the three men chased Arbery to catch him for the police because they believed Arbery to be a burglary suspect, and that they shot him in self-defense.” (Halpert, 2022). Both men were sentenced to life in prison because politically fueled tensions; and the judge excluded key evidence from the trial, such as Arbery having THC (Marijuana) in his system, and the part of recorded footage where Arbery tries to attack the men before they shoot at him. The AJC goes so far as to plainly acknowledge the judge’s bias, “On the eve of opening statements in one of the highest-profile murder trials in Georgia history, the judge presiding over the case involving Ahmaud Arbery’s killing dealt a series of blows to the defense” (Abusaid, Burns, 2021). Disallowing relevant evidence paints the case in a very specific and unjust way; and led to an unjust conclusion because of it. The same thing occurred in the Derek Chauvin trial, Florido said,

And the defense's other main witness was a forensic pathologist, David Fowler, who argued that Chauvin did not asphyxiate Floyd as the prosecution has said he did. Rather, he said that Floyd's

heart stopped suddenly because of heart disease and the drugs that he was on that day (Florida, 2021).

Chauvin was convicted wrongly, to pacify the rioters around the country, and for political reasons.

There are also the cases of Tony Timpa and Daniel Shaver, 2 innocent white men who were shot with nearly no media coverage. The social pressures of modern society will continue to make policing more difficult for any men of conscience who want to do the right thing and truly believe in justice.

## References

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