Police Brutality: The Past 10 Years

Phillip Casano, William Tarrant, Michelle Villa, Giovanni Messina, Peter Genco

Learning Community 02, English 101 and CJBS 101, Professors Amanda Freeman and Daniel DiPrenda

Introduction

- Police brutality has been an issue ever since the establishment of police forces.
- The term ‘police brutality’ itself, however, did not come into existence until 1893 when it was used in a New York Times article to describe an officer beating an individual.
- Police brutality is a huge issue that has always been around, but in the last 10 years it has drastically changed.

‘Brutality’ is Interpreted Differently

- Civilian perceptions and officer perceptions of police brutality are very different. While police officers are following the reasonable officer on the scene standard, the public thinks police officers’ actions are unreasonable.
- With the increase of people complaining about police brutality, policymakers and police administrators came up with the idea to educate citizens on the reasonable officer on the scene standard (Novak, 2009, p. 153).
- Law enforcement agencies also came up with increasing diversity among the ranks of officers, developing new training methods on the use of force, and strengthening their internal affairs divisions.
- Researchers have found that not only are less educated police officers more likely to engage in serious misconduct, but also the detected police officers were caught because they are not as smart, educated, or otherwise able to avoid detection by the police agency (Novak, 2009, p. 155).

Threat Assessment and Targeted Violence

- Pre-9/11, there were particular situations that law enforcement were not trained to handle. The main reason behind this blemish in law enforcement training was due to the fact that people did not think or believe that such threats could exist.
- Many policies and law enforcement training focus on threat assessment and targeted violence (Fein, Vossekuil, & Holden, 1995, p. 2). Targeted violence can refer to a wide range of crimes, including stalking-related violence, multiple homicides in public locations such as schools and workplaces, as well as domestic and foreign-initiated acts of terrorism. (Harris, 2012, p. 2).
- Threat assessment was compiled in a list of surveys known as the Exceptional Case Study Project (ECSP). This survey, compiled of a study of 83 individuals, was the main guide used by law enforcement in order to assess the threat level of a particular situation (Harris, 2012, p. 3).

Technology

- Technology has played a part in the habits of law enforcement in recent times. In the past 10 years alone, technology has rapidly evolved. However, law enforcement also had to learn how to evolve in order to keep up with modern times and modern crime.
- Officers need to be careful because everything they do can be recorded by anyone. Most people have a cell phone that is capable of recording anything and everything.
- Many law enforcement agencies are putting technology to their benefit. Many suggest equipping police officers with cameras to keep them in line and better the efforts to solving cases of police brutality (Pinizzotto, 2009, p. 1).
- The U.S. Attorney’s Office requested assistance from the FBI to create a training for the attorneys. The goal was to give these attorneys a realistic experience that would help them gain a better understanding from a law enforcement point of view for cases of police brutality (Pinizzotto, 2009, p. 2).

References Cited


Conclusion

- In the last 10 years, the issue of police brutality has drastically changed. There are new measures being taken because of this.
- Technology plays a big role in this issue and can be used in the future to possibly help correct it.
- Everybody cannot be too quick to judge a case because they do not know what it is like to be in the position that the officer was in when the incident occurred.
- As we look to the future, we can hope that reforms in the policing system and new developments can help lessen or possibly even get rid of police brutality altogether.