Modern Police in the US

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***Introduction***

 Police are the civil force of a state who is responsible to maintain public order and safety. It is the responsibility of a police force to protect individuals and society by enforcing the law. Modern police are accountable to prevent, detect, and investigate criminal activities. Policing in the United States gas changed and progressed with the passage of time. American policing has evolved and progressed by incorporating modern technologies and problem-solving strategies in their routine activities. The police have lawful power to legitimize the use of force to protect lives and civil disorders. Here, the focus is to determine how policing in the US has changed and progressed over time.

***Discussion***

 In order to understand the history of policing in the US, there is an immense need to examine the English policing system. It is notable to mention that the English policing system had strongly influenced American policing throughout the course of history. A critical examination of the beginning of American policing demonstrates that citizens were responsible to implement and manage law enforcement in their specific regions. The concept of ‘Kin police’ was utilized in England to ensure that people are responsible to take care of their relatives[[1]](#footnote-1). The concept of policing in American was first introduced in the mid-19th century, at the time of colonial America. A specific number of people were inducted in a watch system to provide a variety of services. Members of the watch groups were responsible to provide social services such as recovering lost children, controlling crimes, and lighting street lamps. The watch system was based on the volunteer system in Colonial America due to which its patrolling method was highly disorganized.

After a certain amount of time, the responsibility of social services and law enforcement was transferred to the group of men who lived within a specific community. Within each community, these persons were responsible to capture criminals. That entire system was called the frankpledge system. In Colonial America, the Sheriffs were responsible for policing in the colonies. They had the responsibility to collect taxes and to bring criminals to court. However, the Sheriffs were not responsible to enforce the law in the community. During the early 1800s, social unrest was a major problem in America. In order to maintain peace in the community, Sir Robert Peel introduced a bill to establish the London Metropolitan Police. It was the first modern police in England in 1829 that was primarily formed to control crimes in the region. London Metropolitan Police provided a guide for America to formulate its own force to prevent crimes[[2]](#footnote-2). The ideology presented by Sir Robert Peel helped American agencies to introduce their own police force. The basic purpose behind that modern police was to threaten those who even thought of committing a crime.

 The first publicly funded police agency in America was slave patrols in the South. Race-based conflicts were on their peak in the 18th and 19th centuries. Whites were very protective of their own race and they usually considered themselves as superior to others. African Americans were discriminated against and oppressed on the basis of their race in American society. Whites usually treated them like slaves as African Americans were less civilized. At that time, many African American leaders emerged, who began to unite their people to protect their legacy and dignity. For that particular purpose, race-based crimes were increased at a significant rate in America. In order to control these specific crimes in the South, America established its first publicly funded enforcement agency. After the establishment of that slave patrols, there was a significant decrease in race-based crimes. With the passage of time, the responsibilities of that slave patrols were extended to overcome the issue of White indentured servants. Whites servants were also treated harshly in the 18th and 19th century, therefore, the American government extends the responsibilities of slave patrols to keep a check and balance on that[[3]](#footnote-3). However, the majority of the slave population reported a high level of ruthlessness and brutality by the slave patrols. As a matter of fact, slave patrol consisted of white males, so instead of focusing on slave-based crimes, they usually tried to help their fellow Whites by discriminating against blacks. During the civil war, the slave patrols remained in function. However, with the passage of time, the responsibility to control African American citizens was distributed to the state militia, the federal military, and the Ku Klux Klan.

 The mid-1800s was considered as the beginning of policing in the United States. In 1845, the New York City Police Department was unified. After that, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department in 1846,42 the Chicago Police Department in 1854, and the Los Angeles Police Department in 1869 were also unified to ensure law enforcement in the country[[4]](#footnote-4). A critical examination of the police departments in the US indicates some of their specific characteristics that were adopted from their English counterparts. The police department in the US had limited police authority as the government was responsible to define the power of the police force. In that period, there was fragmented law enforcement in the US where several departments were responsible to provide services in order to maintain peace in a specific community. The majority of these characteristics were also adopted by the modern police force in the US.

 Direct and powerful involvement of politics has completely revolutionized the police force in the US in the 19th century. The police force was heavily influenced by the local politicians at that time. It is notable to mention that the politicians were willing to maintain their political power in the society, so they hired and retained police officers. In response to this, police officers began to support these politicians to remain in power. However, it was proved to be catastrophic for the police department as changes in the political leadership usually changed the entire police department for their own benefits. Due to the support of politicians, police officers were more likely to attain promotion[[5]](#footnote-5). However, if a police officer refused to obey a politician then he/she was prone to demotion. Due to this particular factor, there was a high turnover rate for police officers in the US. In the meantime, modern technologies were incorporated into police departments and offices to ensure better communication and effectiveness. Call boxes were installed to police headquarters to help facilitate effective communication among police officers.

The involvement of politics has been witnessed and considered as a problem by the public and police during the nineties. The main objective of police is to eliminate the involvement of politics in the police in the US. For this, the recruitment of every individual in the police has been ensured based on merit instead of involvement of politics in the recruitment process. Beyond that, the second objective was to make the police department and police highly professional, where different standards have been set for a particular purpose. This enhanced professionalism has focused on covering centralized crimes because of the increased crimes in the country and the inefficiency of departments to control the issue.

For eliminating politics from police, the way and a credible method/way was to hire and promote police officers based on the established standards. Despite this, the ultimate responsibility of the police department was to distribute police as per the requirements of different regions while this needs strong communication. But, at the time they have only one source of communication which was the two-way radio system. In the American police, the contribution of O. W. Wilson makes the police administration centralized and improved the organizational structure and management of personnel. As well as he has developed an effective strategy for the distribution of police as required to even region or area. Hence, there is no doubt that the contribution of Wilson made the US policing get advanced with no intervention of politics.

After some time in 1960, a social disorder which had resulted from rioting, marches, and protest led to huge clashes between public and police. At the time, any violence “which might be required in a case” has been considered shocking to most of the people. Hence, with the spending time, the conflict between the public and police of the US has been covered up to the possible extent through the elimination of politics and decreasing the gaps and misjudgments between police and the public.

***Conclusion***

 In a nutshell, police in the past have gone through various changes and modifications. Several characteristics of US modern policing are formulated from the British police, especially London Metropolitan Police. The establishment of slave patrols to ensure the safety of African Americans was the first step towards the formulation of the modern police force. US government has incorporated various advanced technologies in its police department to ensure better communication and collaboration. However, the US police force was highly influenced by the political powers as politicians usually used them for their own benefits. Overall, the US policing has gone through important changes in the past to become an effective force.

ENDNOTES

1. Top of Form

1. Emsley, Clive. *The English police: A political and social history*. Routledge, 2014.

1. Langworthy, Robert H., and Lawrence F. Travis. "Policing in America: A balance of forces." (1999).
2. Mladek, Klaus. 2007. *Police forces: a cultural history of an institution*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4326251.Bottom of Form
3. Peak, Kenneth J. *Policing America: methods, issues, challenges*. Prentice Hall, 2000.
4. Roberg, Roy R., John P. Crank, and Jack L. Kuykendall. *Police & society*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury, 2000.
1. Peak, Kenneth J. *Policing America: methods, issues, challenges*. Prentice-Hall, 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Langworthy, Robert H., and Lawrence F. Travis. "Policing in America: A balance of forces." (1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Roberg, Roy R., John P. Crank, and Jack L. Kuykendall. *Police & society*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury, 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Emsley, Clive. *The English police: A political and social history*. Routledge, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Mladek, Klaus. 2007. *Police forces: a cultural history of an institution*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4326251.Bottom of Form [↑](#footnote-ref-5)