

Abolish the Police Industrial Complex

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What do we mean by the police industrial complex?

The prison industrial complex explains the "overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems." + <https://bit.ly/prisonindustrialcomplex>

The police industrial complex, a vector that runs through that configuration, calls out the public-private partnerships between police, academia, and for-profit corporations that shape what policing and justice look like in America.

The tear gas canisters and surveillance technologies used against protesters this weekend are made possible by these actors, who profit from American policing in a multitude of ways: selling goods and services, subsidizing their R&D through tax dollars, entering into data-sharing partnerships, etc.

How is this police industrial complex different from police militarization?

Although entangled, police militarization does not fully capture the global for-profit and private/public economy that shapes American policing. American policing borrows strategies from urban policing/counter-insurgency tactics that were developed in America's occupational wars, as well as military-grade weaponry distributed through 1033 Program/federal grants—the "Green to Blue pipeline."

But that pipeline is bidirectional. American cities have also functioned as test sites for military technologies: predictive analytics, behavioral profiling, and intelligence technologies have been experimentally rolled out in cities throughout the United States to refine technologies deployed in both military and policing contexts throughout the world.

America's racialized practice of police and policing brutality plays a key role in a global economy of police profiteering.

The unique federal funding and research relationships that American police can offer allow policing profiteers to test these products in environs they profile as being "like" their target markets: historic segregation in Chicago can mean products that are viable in Johannesburg; "resource-strapped" police in rural America are staged to innovate policing products for Lahore or Karachi; neighborhoods where communities refuse to snitch or collaborate offer innovation opportunities for intelligence technologies in other "low-information environs"—like Kabul or Basrah.

American police also function as an exporter of training and methods: through training partnerships, police institutions around the world are "granted" the opportunity to refashion their operations to mirror American policing tactics and technologies. In that way, the techniques that American police acquire in their training partnerships with the occupying Israeli armies make their way to Dhaka, Lagos, and São Paulo.

Abolish the Police Industrial Complex

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How should the police industrial complex inform organizing tactics after Minneapolis?

American policing is continually cast as broken, unfinished, and in need of reform. This is a core ideological component of the police industrial complex and invites researchers and private actors to profit from "fixing" the problems that American policing articulates for itself.

Everything from community relations, accountability, implicit bias, firearm safety—these problems are staged by the police industrial complex to invite collaboration, collusion, and profit. Don't forget how much Axon made off of body cameras after Ferguson!

There is one uniform demand from America's over-policed communities right now: **divest and defund.**

But in the next few months, the recent attention shed on American policing's crisis will mean an explosion of innovation opportunities and public/private partnerships. These partnerships will mean MORE, not LESS policing. You cannot reform America's policing if the practice of reforming America's policing is largely motivated by PROFIT and not community safety, abolition, and reparations.

Abolish Policing, Abolish the Police Industrial Complex

Remember the lessons from abolitionist organizers when assessing reformist reforms vs. abolitionist steps in policing. + <https://bit.ly/abolitionistreforms>

When confronted with new projects, procurements, and police programs, ask:

- 1. Does this reduce funding to police?**
- 2. Does this challenge the notion that police increase safety?**
- 3. Does this reduce the tools, tactics, or technology police have at their disposal?**
- 4. Does this reduce the scale of policing?**