Compared to the Past,

Things Today are (??????)

(Much Better, Better, The Same, Worse, Much Worse)

In terms of policing , law enforcement, and citizen experience, there is a lot being discussed around what things are 'like' today, as well as where we have come from in the past. If you look at Michelle Alexander's book "The New Jim Crow," she discusses the history of discrimination and disenfranchisement that African Americans and 'persons of color' in the United States have experienced. The phrase Jim Crow refers to the period after the Civil War and leading up to the Civil Rights movement where there was legal segregation in the South. The New Jim Crow (or James Crow, Esq.) refers to modern-day discrimination which is achieved through more sophisticated legal and policy means. We also can look at the Black Lives Matter movement, which was born out of larger frustrations and concerns with the treatment of African Americans and other minorities in the criminal justice system. These events have initiated change and brought these issues into further focus.

At the same time, law enforcement has been experiencing its own transformation. While the police and law enforcement have always been a polarizing presence, they have become increasingly so. The presence of video cameras in every phone has resulted in the surveillance of police, and furthered attention on their conduct in social media. Of course, what we typically see are those occasions when police are said to have acted inappropriately. A reaction to this sentiment has been a Blue Lives Matter movement, which has tried to advance laws which makes it a 'hate crime' to harm law enforcement and first responders. However, crime and violence against law enforcement and first responders is down. Additionally, it is already against he law to harm law enforcement and first responders.

However, it is not all bad. There have been numerous types of efforts to bridge gaps and divides between communities and law enforcement. Community policing, for instance, looks for police to work with community members to reduce crime and help build communities. Police training in some cases has increased to address a wider range of topics and areas of policing. Police are looking to recruit from a wider variety of backgrounds, with hopes that the force might more closely resemble the communities that they police. And there have been some attempts at police reform to change the culture of policing so that 'bad actors' are not sheltered.

For this assignment, you are to do the following. First, I want you to determine whether things have improved or gotten worse from the past, and explain why you think that. Second, based on your answer to the first point, how can we either make things better, or keep the momentum to preserve the progress? What do you think are the major barriers to making progress, as well as what do we need to establishing to keep our progress? How would you propose to overcome those barriers?

Make sure you use all of the relevant course materials, course conversations, and other relevant materials that you can find. Also, if you can integrate materials from other courses that you took, please do so!