

## BOOK REVIEW/ COMPTE RENDU

**Forrest Stuart.** *Down, Out, & Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016. \$27.50, 333 pp., paper (9780226370811).

In Los Angeles' Skid Row, "the homeless capital of America" (2), police surveillance is part of daily life. University of Chicago Sociologist Forrest Stuart's monograph *Down, Out, & Under Arrest* details the effects of policing in the 50 square block area adjacent to LA's gentrified downtown. Stuart conducted a five-year ethnography in Skid Row from 2007-2012, the results of which inform this book. He chronicled the links between Los Angeles' Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) and the "ubiquitous and intrusive policing g[iving] rise to a contradictory culture of everyday resistance" (122). The SCI began in 2006, added 80 new police officers to Skid Row, and focused on enforcing laws regardless of how minor the offence. Stuart presents two main arguments. First, the SCI's zero tolerance policing policy negatively affected poverty governance in the area and represents a form of social control where police are responsible for regulating the urban poor. Second, this control changed the behaviour of people living in Skid Row, even when police were absent. Stuart calls the community response to perpetual monitoring and regulation *Cop Wisdom*, which, according to Stuart, shapes residents' interactions with themselves and police. others. These two assertions, Stuart argues, show how the state's relationship with the urban poor has transformed from "malign neglect" to "malign attention" (7).

By blending archival research with ethnography, Stuart examines the historical factors that led to the development of the SCI, and how its zero tolerance policy plays out in practice. His ethnographic research involved interviews with Skid Row residents, LAPD officers, and members of the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN). Founded in 1999, LACAN formed to give members a stronger voice and is largely composed of Skid Row residents. LACAN opposed the SCI. Stuart established strong rapport with members of all three groups—residents, police, and activists—which gives *Down, Out, & Under Arrest* its real significance. It offers a proficient methodology for urban ethnography, and suggests alternative forms of surveillance practices (i.e. harm reduction) as healthier avenues of supporting the urban poor.

Stuart builds upon earlier poverty studies in The United States' urban centres and previous examinations of Skid Row policing. His study draws from, and complements wider literature on global policing and surveillance in the twenty-first century. Stuart shows how private welfare organizations and the police worked together to regulate the lives of Skid Row residents. LAPD officers had zero tolerance for civic ordinance infractions, even issuing fines for jaywalking or loitering. Residents avoided jail time or fines by signing-up for rehabilitation programs in Skid Row's three mega shelters, which were run by private organizations. In this context, the police enforced neoliberalism's version of "rehabilitation," placing the onus on people to 'fix' themselves through eventually making "the *right* choice" (122). That choice was based upon enrolling in a mega shelter program. Once enrolled, residents received a new identification card, which residents used to avoid ordinance fines and reduce police surveillance. This environment became a "therapeutic landscape" in which individuals were expected to overcome poverty, homeless, and addiction while the structural causes of these problems went largely ignored. The SCI's policy of zero tolerance, then, became "therapeutic policing" stemming from this new way of conceptualizing Skid Row from the top down. *Down, Out, & Under Arrest* convincingly presents this therapeutic landscape, and form of policing, as being overall harmful to the community due to its unintended consequences.

As part of his data collection, Stuart primarily interacted with four groups of Skid Row residents: men who lifted weights together in a park, informal street vendors, LACAN activists, and LAPD officers. Stuart joined the men who exercised together as a means of avoiding addiction and criminality, disciplining their bodies in a form of *cop wisdom*. Eventually, the police forced the exercise group to disband, as it was an unfettered activity that distracted people enrolled in the mega shelters' programs. The street vendors' methods of *cop wisdom* was regulating behaviour that draws police attention by being "eyes on the street." This "privileged the vendors' own well-being over that of their neighbours" (184). LACAN turns surveillance back on the LAPD. LACAN members patrolled Skid Row recording the detainment and arrest of residents to later be used in legal actions. Stuart argues LACAN's strategies of surveillance and community coalition building directly influenced changes in the policing of Skid Row.

Finally, Stuart's fieldwork with the LAPD shows that many of the officers believe zero tolerance policing leads to positive outcomes. Stuart describes how Manny, an LAPD officer and military veteran, believes arresting veterans residing in Skid Row is a form of therapy; helping with issues like PTSD. For Manny, it is a way to help his brothers-in-arms.

However, the behaviour of officers only concerned with upholding the law is consistent with Manny's: the use of arrest. Stuart concludes that "police officers make abysmal social workers" and despite surveillance, coercion, and violence not actually being therapeutic, "we continue to ask [police] to address large-scale social and economic problems" (266-267).

While Stuart explains his ethnographic methods in detail, it is worth considering his own "surveillance" of people in Skid Row. How did his presence affect the behaviour of residents once they realized he was a researcher? Stuart heavily relies on his own observations, and yet does not always verify his conclusions on being cop wise within his four groups of study or other Skid Row residents. Doing the latter would have further strengthened his arguments by including residents outside his main qualitative focus. Additionally, despite Stuart's strong relationship with police officers, it is possible that some officers were hesitant to share opinions that diverged from LAPD's official policies. Since Stuart had access to LAPD emails, the book would have strongly benefited from a section discussing the internal correspondence he had access to, even if internal communications only supported his fieldwork.

Stuart shows the futility of the therapeutic approach by sharing stories from many people affected by the therapeutic landscape. In a time when other urban centres in North America are moving towards similar practices, the book's conclusions serve as cautionary tales for policy makers and law enforcement. Instead of near-ubiquitous policing, supportive measures such as supervised injection sites may be more beneficial for communities. A worthwhile endeavour for researchers interested in building off of this work would be to ethnographically study experiences within the mega shelters, including the rehabilitation programs, as well as to examine how LAPD policing has changed since the introduction of body worn cameras. Overall, this work expands knowledge in surveillance studies, urban studies, and human geography. It is highly recommended for researchers working in these fields, and anyone interested in learning about the daily challenges faced by those affected by extreme poverty. *Down, Out, & Under Arrest* offers a compelling critique of not only police surveillance, but of civic governance, and neoliberalism.

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