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Retrieved on 2017-02-22 from <aworldwithoutpolice.org/2016/09/07/against-the-romance-of-community-policing>

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Community policing is a confusing term. It joins together two of the most ambiguous words in the English language. Despite this ambiguity, its power resides not in what it purports to mean—a partnership of the police agencies and the people they protect forged through the fluid exchange of intelligence from the latter to the former—but in what it reveals about the purpose and mechanism of the police-led fabrication of social order. Here are some thoughts about why we should be wary not simply of community policing but of community itself.

Police is the form of governance, the exercise of coercive power and authority, defined by its undefinability. The police power concerns a limitless and ever-growing set of objects because it takes as its task the prudential identification of threats to public safety in advance of their occurrence.

In everyday usage, community is taken to be an inert, or perhaps warm and fuzzy, collection of people gathered together according to some form of spatial, ethno-racial, or other propinquity. In contrast, I would define community as a technology of social reconfiguration and manipulation.

How community creates adhesion among people is hidden by the embedded assumptions of boundedness, cohesiveness, and harmony in typical usage. The very working of the technology itself erases politics. It erases the vast inequalities in access to power and resources that structure and striate this gathered-together confraternity called community.

Although there is much more to be said on the topic, one chief means of this gathering together is the police power. Policing leverages social inequalities to further empower leaders to marshal the apparent consensus community represents. Dissensus becomes scripted as crime. Policing links the governance of the past with the governance of the future: catching offenders to keep them from offending again. Community is the stake, medium, and outcome of this action. To police is to define the boundaries of community through exclusion and punishment and to realize capitalist economic interests within those boundaries.[1]

> Community is the terrain of intervention for police, shaped by police. It does not preexist police and it does not provide a bulwark against police power. It cannot achieve its apparent cohesiveness without the police power. It cannot be joined to police to moderate the negative effects of policing.

In the unending media coverage of policing today, community policing continues to be held out as an antidote both to the injustice, violence, and racism of the institutions of US policing and to the supposed scourge of crime. Critics abound, of course. But more popular are the true believers, the voices who tell us

[1] My thinking on community (and the title above) has been influenced by Miranda Joseph's book **Against the Romance of Community**. My thinking on policing as the fabrication of social order is influenced by Mark Neocleous, and my thinking on many other aspects of the police power mentioned here is influenced by Markus Dirk Dubber, Mariana Valverde, and Bryan Wagner.

constituted under white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism is not the first place to look for their alternatives.

As abolitionists demand the redirection of police budgets toward more positive and constructive social goals, I worry when the demands are framed as: give the money to the community instead of the cops. I return to the practice of counterinsurgency, which often is little more than an elaborate way to direct resources in "the community" to buy loyalty. What is the community? It is the target of social intervention. Who in the community gets identified as the proper channel for such support? Those who demonstrate their loyalty and reliability. How do they do so? By laboring on works that keep the broader population from becoming refractory to authority…and so on, as I have written. In Galula's words, "It will be up to this minority, selected, tested, organized by us, to help us, first, to rally the majority, which is neutral, and eliminate that minority which is hostile, and then to implement the chosen political formula."

Rather than community, which occludes inequalities, we should speak in terms of solidarity and in terms of specific positionalities in relation to dominant economic and political structures.

Finally, the distinction between so-called militarized policing and community policing is less tenable than it seems. When we speak of the so-called militarization of policing, I believe we should be talking less about the hardware that cops carry and more about our critiques of policing. If we are unable to step outside the framework that makes policing counterinsurgent because we cannot dispense with the technology of community, then we know we have been fully integrated into a social situation of perpetual war.

counterinsurgency manuals. Today, even after much of the Galula-influenced catechism of "population-centric" counterinsurgency has been repudiated, this wannabe sociology lives on. (Check the counterinsurgency manual FM 3–24 from 2006 and the revised version from 2014. It's in both.) But its most pernicious afterlife is on the streets of the United States.

To divide the populace into reliably identifiable groups has pertinent effects for police. First, it treats loyalty or adherence to incumbent power (ie, the state) as a preeminent value. Even if people are "neutral" for a million good reasons, this neutrality is cause for suspicion because it can so easily transform into disloyalty. Second, it draws inferences about behavior from perceptions of loyalty. This is the internal logic of racism. Third, it mistakes cause and effect, by treating loyalty as what should be rewarded rather than loyalty as the result of the interests policing serves. While protecting and enshrining capital, police perceive an interest in the realization of capital as a form of loyalty and legitimacy for their work. Fourth, it gives police an endless justification to exist: to police is to sort and classify according to this system, a perpetually unfinished task. Order-maintenance policing, the term I prefer to broken windows policing, is this sorting. Don't take my word for it, take George Kelling's: "For me, broken windows was about community policing."

In recent weeks, critics of police, including many self-identified abolitionists, have mounted some of the most brilliant and beautiful protests and demands we've seen. Many grasp the folly of community policing as a reform goal. Yet many also remain hitched to the positive evaluation of community. We must instead critique it, ruthlessly. Community as

that if the police just get to know the community, crime will go down and police racism will dwindle.

In response, my argument is simple: community is the terrain of intervention for police, shaped by police. It does not preexist police and it does not provide a bulwark against police power. It cannot achieve its apparent cohesiveness without the police power. It cannot be joined to police to moderate the negative effects of policing. Nor can it be joined to police to stimulate the repression of crime that the community members are otherwise incapable of achieving without enhancing the power of police. To commit a crime is to evidence one's ineligibility for community membership. That is its inherent logic. Community and police double-back on each other under present social arrangements, to maintain and reproduce present social arrangements. In this sense, the term is redundant.

A new Department of Justice (DOJ) analysis of the Baltimore police department (BPD) contains what some have found to be a shocking revelation (shocking only if you live under a rock). The DOJ, a firm advocate of community policing, found: "Finally, BPD's policies and training do not consistently embrace community policing principles. BPD's community policing strategy involves few training modules on community policing and communication. We attended one of these in-service trainings, which focused on community policing and foot patrol. The segment on officers' role as 'warriors versus guardians' focused primarily on the benefits of being a warrior. Indeed, it seemed that principles of community policing and the role of a police officer as a 'guardian' is not yet well understood by the instructors, who emphasized the drawbacks of this approach, making it unlikely that officers will understand how to embrace such principles in their interactions" (161). The shock is that training in community policing emphasized acting like warriors. The DOJ believes there is another way to train police, which is more appropriate.

Warrior training is an increasingly common form of in-service police training.[2] It is designed to get cops to kill people with alacrity. It is wrought from pop psychology, machismo, and racism. There is no evidence behind it other than the power of gut feeling it self-referentially lauds. A great new documentary called **Do Not Resist** depicts some of this warrior training, led by the quack cop guru Dave Grossman, who tries to convince officers that they are the only barrier to total chaos, while hyping the sadistic and erotic pleasure of violence. This way of policing sounds very different from the relatively benign notion of community policing.

Yet the affinities are far greater than would appear. Both forms use community in the same way. One of the underlying ideas in warrior training is the "sheepdog" principle, as enunciated by Grossman and others. In essence, the principle states that cops should act like sheepdogs, herding, directing, and controlling the sheeplike masses while warding off predators. Implicit in this ultra-simplistic metaphor is the notion that the vast majority of people have no strong loyalty one way or the other; a smaller percentage of people are always loyal to police and the forces of order; and an equally small further percentage of people are always disloyal, predatory, criminal, and so on.[3] The police as sheepdogs must eliminate the small group that is always refractory while convincing the vast majority to follow orders, avoid criminal entanglements, and so on. They can enlist the reliably loyal and law-abiding in this quest and perhaps even convince some of the neutral to join the cohort of reliably loyal, if not just moderately and begrudgingly loyal. To convert the neutral into the loyal, against the disloyal, is the goal of community policing.

[2] Warrior training is increasingly coming under scrutiny, particularly after high-profile police killings have resulted from it.

[3] A recent critique of policing by a Black ex-cop even applied the sheepdog principle to cops themselves, saying 15% are inherently bad/racist, 15% inherently good, and 70% willing to take whatever side is easiest to take.

> Rather than community, which occludes inequalities, we should speak in terms of solidarity and in terms of specific positionalities in relation to dominant economic and political structures.

This sheepdog principle is counterinsurgency theory 101. One of its most prominent advocates in the 1960s was David Galula, a semi-legendary French officer and theorist who has influenced generations of US counterinsurgents. (The most important component of his forces, it's worth recalling, were gendarmes—police.) In Galula's Algeria or South Vietnam, the axiom was to apply in exactly the same way: some percentage of citizens (~20%) was loyal to the government and some percentage (~20%) was disloyal, meaning revolutionaries. The majority of the population (~60%) was neutral. This group did not necessarily care who governed, and it could be easily swayed to the side of the revolutionaries. Bound up in this estimate of the broad swath of the population that was neutral was a range of racist notions about mental acuity, capacity for self-governance, laziness, guile, and so on. Neutrality was inherently suspicious. The job of counterinsurgents was to help the reliably loyal sway the neutrals' loyalty to the government and to ensure that this majority remained loyal and continually demonstrated its loyalty. Coercion was of course one way to make sure that loyalty was constantly visible: in secured hamlets in South Vietnam, peasants would be forced to muster, raise a flag, salute it, and express their support and gratitude. If they did not do so, a range of penalties awaited, from withholding pay and rations to incarceration to execution.

With the discretionary despotism of street policing, what precedes so many killings other than some perceived refusal to acknowledge, respect, and affirm the authority of police?

In the era of the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, these ideas about fashioning a loyal community were inscribed in