TRANSCRIPTION FOR “ENFORCING ORDER, AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF URBAN POLICING” PODCAST

Bedrosian Book Club
September 29, 2014
Raphael Bostic: This is a conversation. I'm going to kick it off. We're going to go around and interview. First question is, what do you think of the book? And we'll just go from there and just follow me, where we go, wherever we go.

Lavonna Lewis: OK. You've done it before.

Raphael Bostic: Not with this group.

[ Laughter ]

Lavonna Lewis: Point taken.

Matt Gainer: We're glad to be here with you.

Raphael Bostic: So are you ready? Alright, well thank you for joining us for the Third Bedrosian Book Club Podcast. My name is Raphael Bostic. I'm a professor here in the Price School and I am the Director of the Bedrosian Center. And this week's podcast is to talk about a book that's really interesting, quite timely given some of the things that have happened in Ferguson, Missouri and elsewhere. It's called "Enforcing Order, an Ethnography of Urban Policing" by Didier Fassin. And I am very pleased to be joined by three people here at USC, three faculty members. This is your first. I think it's everyone's first pod cast performance. I shouldn't say performance, experience. And so why don't we go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves, tell us who you are and where you're from.

Lavonna Lewis: So, I'm Lavonna Lewis. I'm teaching faculty here at the Price School. And I'm also Director of the Undergraduate Programs here at Price. And I'm very interested in issues of health disparities and cultural competency and so that book resonated with me.

Matt Gainer: I'm Matt Gainer. I run the Digital Library and occasionally I teach and also do documentary work.

Martin Krieger: I'm Martin Krieger and I'm one of the faculty of the Price School and I've been interested in this kind of work for a long time.
Raphael Bostic: All right, so why don't we just jump over the very high level. What did you guys think of the book? Did you like it? Do you think--feel like it was effective, so what do you all think?

Matt Gainer: It was depressing but necessary. It would--took me into the worlds that I don't typically go into.

Raphael Bostic: Just say more about that, what worlds did you get insight into that you didn't know about before?

Matt Gainer: Well so, I guess actually I should say part of it is just the methodology, you know, the fact that this is done as an ethnography where there's lots of firsthand observations that help complete a picture that we may know about from, let's say news and public information sources. This was a very different way of thinking about these particular problems in this particular kind of space.

Raphael Bostic: So tell us--since you are this first one Matt, you get the pleasure twice. What are the problems that we're talking about here? Tell us what is this book about?

Matt Gainer: You know, I really thought about it being when you think about power and power relationships more than anything else there, of course it plays out in lots of ugly ways and sometimes very interesting ways. But it was mostly about power and race and enforcing order is a great title because it's very much about how different kinds of powers affect order in cities.

Raphael Bostic: Well actually about the enforcing order title was interesting because it had a dual meaning, right? There were two types of what it is. This book, you know, Fassin spent months just busy shadowing the special police, force, members in the equivalent of public housing authorities in the United States. And really just was there watching what they did, taking it down, chronicling it. And subsequently, started reflecting on what it meant at a much higher level. And all of the conceptual framework and really trying to make some significant points. I thought it was quite interesting, Lavonna did you agree?

Lavonna Lewis: So I guess what stand out to me is the number of times I read the word invisible. And that really resonated with me because I understand part of what I do is I tell people, is to make the invisible visible. We talk about values and beliefs that are basically invisible. But it's very clear from the reading of the book that those things that are off the radar screen for a significant majority, so in all this time invisible or the day to day experiences of people in that community. And so, to read the book is to kind of validate in some ways the reality. The fact that this is what's happening on a day to day basis, even though other people may be insulated from it, and may think it's overstated. But then again, that's what stood out to me that this idea of trying to get what is hidden in many instances. More visibility because of the consequences it has, not just for the people in that community but for, I think in some respect for
the soul of the nation. And so that's kind of what stood out to me as I was going through it the first time.

>> Raphael Bostic: It was interesting you said invisible because I actually in writing up some notes, wrote down invisible to most as a phrase and something that was quite prevalent throughout the entire story. And so I want to come back to that in a couple things. But Martin, what do you think about the book?

>> Martin Krieger: Well, from my point of view, it reminds me of the books I was reading around the 18th--1970. In that sense it's very old hat, studies, you know, fieldwork studies. But what makes it not so old hat is it's in France. So for example, the question of equality is not just an abstraction or a, it's part of the French liberte, egalite, fraternite. Second of all, the notion that the state has very real meaning there, it's very hard to see in United State because with centralization, because of how it works. And the third feature is the kind of theorizing, engaged in which you might call it French or you might call it something else, which, you know, rapidly goes to a high level of discourse. And it's recognizable, you know, it's essentially Michel Foucault modernized. And so for me reading this book had this problem that I kept saying, well what's so special here? I've read books like this. And with--just one last point is end up, for example, is reflections on being a, you know, a--doing field work and, you know, passing. It's a standard. So it's very interesting to me that he says this stuff. And every, you know, he--it’s obvious to think that France had a different culture academically.

>> Raphael Bostic: So I'm glad you're going to the academic stuff because I wanted to have a conversation about the notion of scholarship.

>> Martin Krieger: Yeah.

>> Raphael Bostic: And to what extent do you view this is as a really scholarly piece as opposed to something that might be more of an expose or an advocacy piece, whether the position that he's trying to make a point on. He had some pieces of data on it and they happened to make the point pretty well. But how do you think about this from a scholarly perspective?

>> Martin Krieger: This is standard participant reserve and research. What makes it scholarly presumably is the amount of time he spends there. Some assumption that he is not editing too much, you know, is not getting ever, which you have to trust to some extent. And the theoretical principles he puts in. I think this is as good scholarship as there is, with various kinds. It's--and you can say well, it does imbalance things and so forth. I think it's--that's not the point he's trying to convey what that world is like. Putting the context of society, you know, all the stuff by the French State, that's not journalism. And the same thing about all these theoretical structures. So, what I give in tenure? Well he's the professor of the institute of French study so he doesn't need me.
>> Lavonna Lewis: So the only thing that I would add to that was also the appreciation for what he considered kind of the idea of research design. And recognizing that because of the hostility or the kind of pushback from the initial work that want the doors opened to kind of additional scrutiny. So he recognized that a comparison would have been great to be able to do that. But again, the doors closed, and so--so just no more people saying yes to that kind of examination. So I think that also goes to kind of the heart of the scholarship.

>> Raphael Bostic: So as I was reading it, there were times where I felt like this was advocacy. This was just, I'm going to take the moments that fit my story. And tell those that tell them and run them till I can't run them anymore. Did you guys not have those kind of reactions?

>> Matt Gainer: I did. Certainly, I don't know that that's like a fundamental problem. I think if you're involved in anything that you care about, you develop opinions. And those opinions play out and they're informed because of these scenes that repeat themselves over and over and over and over and over and occasionally do that over and over again.

>> Raphael Bostic: I think it happens more than twice.

>> Matt Gainer: That's the depressing part when I say--when reading it that that--it's, you know, one becomes separating this--at some level, that it can be observed to be such a normal thing.

>> Raphael Bostic: Sad and outraged. So the book, the way the book opened, I thought was quite dramatic but telling about how the police stabbed his own son for basically just sitting at the bus station, waiting to go home. And took him in and roughed him up and tried to get him to basically confess to a crime he didn't even know existed. And that there was some notion that this was normal, right? That this was something in the expectation that anyone who lives in those neighborhoods. And this was where a part of the invisibility comes because it was a very interesting passage where he talked about the politics of France. And how the public actually thinks that these places are dangerous and everyone is a criminal. So everyone can be stopped. And yet, the people who live there, very few of them, or certainly not the majority of them are criminal. But yet they're subjected to the presumption of guilt. That was really eye-opening, and it was really exposing a reality that I don't think very many people are previewed to.

>> Martin Krieger: But remember, if you think about who are these people, these are people essentially, the legacy of French Colony was brought back to Paris.

>> Raphael Bostic: North Africa.

>> Martin Krieger: I mean that's what--that's how they got here. They were, you know, they're part of, you know, somehow they're part of the French world. And so that's how they got there as for whether it was a biased presentation. I'm sure it was selective, you know. There are probably lots of days. The point he makes is the police often have boring days, nothing
happens. But he's had a general theoretical structure and the data probably--the stories he tell are probably quite representative I suspect. And because of the repetition again, you know, you get lots of samples. And he has the moral obligations with academic because, I don't know how to put it, to be reasonably fair. And in my knowledge of a history of participant-observer research in cities, in planning, in sociology. It really are doing, how to say, absolutely unfair. I just were seeing a book called the--by Venkatesh who's a professor at Columbia, its about--it's the floating city or something it's all about New York's underground economy. Largely if you're rich and you want to get a sex worker, you want to get drugs, you have to find someone to give you access to it. And people have accused him of sensationalism and so forth. And he may well be doing that. And further theoretical structure there. But the point is, it's a very deep point about the levels of society, how they're connected. So in a way, what these people are doing is showing as you said, making visible what people systematically blind themselves to. Even if they participate in it, you know, the usual thing, the politician gets a sex worker through somebody else. And, you know, while they are being very righteous.

>> Lavonna Lewis: And I think that was for me, one of the issues, just the kind of the universality of how we handle difference. And so the fact that people were obviously different, became a driver for a different set of expectations for how they lived to be treated, how they were acknowledged, how they were handled. And so it was, it was systematic in that way and this. And so when I start thinking about, you know, its universality, I mean that is pretty much kind of how we can see some of the relationships that we have here, whether it be around race or gender or a disability, the fact that we have a tendency to sometimes use difference as a legitimate tool for very different types of policies, different types of interactions within and across populations.

>> Raphael Bostic: So, Lavonna you talked about universality. So I'm worrying that you think that those types of things happen in the US as well. Could you talk a little bit about it--Do you think this book is relevant for the US and how we think about relationships?

>> Lavonna Lewis: I think it's absolutely relevant because again, for me, it is--it speaks to how people from two very different places have to experience those places. In my position, in this kind of ordering the places, says something about what I should expect, right? Coming and going. And so--

>> Raphael Bostic: In the same place?

>> Lavonna Lewis: In the same place, so this idea that because I am an immigrant or because I am African, my getting high is different than the college students getting high, right? That's not unique. I mean we could look at our kind of policies around. You know, cocaine, right? Cocaine being one sentence, why cocaine--crack being something else. So this evidence that you have, this kind of expectations around, how differences get elevated to the level of policy? And again, because this policy is now institutionalized, I don't really need a person to kind of perpetuate these differences. Now it's just--I'm just obeying the law.
Raphael Bostic: Matt, your perspectives, thoughts on this? Do you agree with what Lavonna said?

Matt Gainer: Yeah. I'm still--yeah. And--but actually I just want to step back to your original--about the question you asked about whether there's some kind of underlying agenda and why that might be. And I think about it as someone who does documentary work that you might start off or less invested in, in a place or an idea or a community. Then you--It would be by the time you finished working on a long-term project like this. And throughout that process, what you see and what you experience, it's just like daily life, informs what you want to do when you carry that message to other people. And so, I think, it's not just apparent that there are some kind of agenda but it's almost necessary because otherwise the book's an empty vessel that, you know, other academics read and never gets out to the world. And even talks a little bit about wanting this message to sort of be readable to other audiences which makes a whole lot of sense. And so, it functions both as a mirror and a window. So if for someone like me, I get a window into this particular culture. But also, you know, if you hold it up in the right direction locally and Paris, it becomes something altogether different and potentially does start to affect the structures that you're talking about that, you know, uphold races and power relationships at an institutional level.

Raphael Bostic: So, I've seen some of your documentary work with the photos in CTI, at San Diego, for example. Through that, have you seen the same sorts of institutionalized difference that Lavonna was talking about?

Matt Gainer: Sure. But I should step away from the city heights projects because for me, that's still a very young project.

Raphael Bostic: Sure.

Matt Gainer: That was a two-month thing. So, I have--there are lots of parallels to what I read about in this book to what I saw a photograph in the antiwar movement for a decade or the grassroots organizing that's happened around the immigration debate and the relationship of people of color to law enforcement. And it's not just people of color but you see more of that. Certainly, in law enforcement being a structure that one feels like that you either can or can't question. More often than not, if it's a middle class white person in their 40s like me, I feel much more comfortable than an 18-year old African-American or a Mexican migrant questioning officers when they're doing stuff wrong. That doesn't mean they're going to respond to me but it's sort of a natural thing for me to feel like it's my place to question them. And what plays out of the book is that people are subjugated over and over and over and over and over again to the point where they no longer feel like they can question, what's been done to them, not just around them. So the reports, do you want to file a report after you've been beaten up by an officer? Multiple times in this book, he observes people saying no. And that's so deeply problematic on so, so many levels that it's disturbing. And did I see stuff like that? Absolutely. In
Los Angeles, in DC, in New York, in Chicago, in St. Louis. And I thought a lot about that actually while I was reading the book about places where I saw a really different kind of policing. And I remembered, several times, I thought about this. A couple weeks I spent across from the bush ranch in Texas. Crawford Texas is a little, little bitty town. And having people who were sued diametrically opposed. So on the one hand, there were the people who were pro-Bush, pro-war. And on the other hand, you had people who were anti war, anti-Bush. Literally, camping across the street from each other in a ditch for two weeks. And the way the officers in that environment handled detentions was to treat them all like it was one big extended dysfunctional family that they were all a part of the same community as it were. And that doesn't really get to play out in larger urban areas the same way. And I think that's part of the fundamental problem, is that everyone sees each other as other. And you never get to the point of dialogue. And when the police get into this sort of head space of--this person's a threat to me that it makes it even worse. And so that's happened for example, I remember from WTO hearing officers talk about, we'll they're going to throw blood on us or they're going to throw this on us. And they saw people as a threat and that sort of--

>> Raphael Bostic: Hypes the tension.

>> Matt Gainer: Yeah, it just amps it up. And that's what we hear about in this book. That in Paris, over and over again, these--the anti-crime squads believed the mythologies and passed them on to the new recruits and sort of indoctrinate them into a structure that's so deeply corrupt and troubling. And that's what I--again, I go back to it's depressing. It's also infuriating as you point out. But you can't help--at least I can help, we need something like this and starting with this sort of feeling of sadness that this can go on, right?

>> Raphael Bostic: But let me, I just want--so that, I agree with everything you said there. But one thing I wanted to add to what you said is that, when these kids get beaten up by the police, roughed up completely, have their rights violated, and they decide not to file a report, that's actually rational, right? That they understand institutions sufficiently we'll, like really well to know that going down that path is not an optimal path. And that as bad their situation is, it would be worse if they did these things. And that's why--that's what makes it even all the more difficult. Because there is no recourse, there's no hope for recourse and that contributes to sort of an amping up of the pressure. And so that when things--when the pressure gets released, it's not these little things, it's like these explosions because there's this basically litany of experience, this litany of wrongs that have happened that are--now that's what they're responding to much more than whatever the incident of the moment happens to be.

>> Matt Gainer: You know, when women think the kids who gets described as torching cars or whatever, torches the car, that's not based on what happened that day. That's what's based on what happened that decade. And that's sort of the problem. It's so big and so persistent that it's just deeply troubling. And again, seeing it happen, I've seen it happen in L.A. I remember photographing a small antiwar protest where a woman lost her daughter, go and get arrested and went into cardiac arrest and both were arrested. And the woman who had the heart attack
was taken to a holding cell and was only released from the holding cell after her daughter was released. Now, this is a middle class white family. So I wouldn't go as far as to say that it just happens to poor people from other places.

>> Raphael Bostic: Just more often.

>> Matt Gainer: Just more often, and when it's built into the structure, and the structure enables it, and supports it, that's where it starts to become--Martin? I'm sorry.

>> Martin Krieger: No that's fine. First of all, I don't think this is a popular book. I think this is written for scholars. It has good stories but it's so imbued with the, let's say the theoretical structure. And it's so obviously so, at least to me that, it's just, you know, this is not journalism. At least, way out of the standard. But the second thing is how French this book is. It's about France. The France of the French revolution, the France of 1968. In other words, you have the state being under attack. And that's a very deep resonance within France. And 1968 made enormous impact intellectually and historically. Even though it wasn't that big a deal compared to what you could have had. And, but it was, you know, the revolution. And these--and what they're trying to do here is to avoid another event. That's what's floating around to the back of their minds, is the state being attacked, the state obviously. The state being attacked by masses of people. Oh that doesn't just buy anything, but the French experience, and they're very alive to--you know, the revolution in '68 and probably two or three others that I don't know about. And so, it's--the resonance is enormous here. It's--You know, the United States doesn't have those kinds of things. Well, they get excited about what happened at Columbia or something. It's the only thing that comes close to the civil rights movement.

>> Raphael Bostic: Which was kind of contemporary to this, I mean--

>> Martin Krieger: Right, it was identical.

>> Raphael Bostic: I mean the US is so--but this was, you know, and when Lavonna talked about universality, I was also thinking about the extreme difference, right? So the French system is just really different from ours. And Fassin talks about this a couple of times that the French reaction to, you know, the riots was to say nothing. To do no self-examination, to do no kind of, "We're all going to come together and figure this out and be one community." In Britain, which I had not known very much about, they had two rounds of that. In the US, we have had multiple rounds of that as well. And it's taken us to different places. About--maybe or not we haven't solved that I want to make somebody solve it. But the type of structure that's in France is familiar and foreign at the same time. I mean the notion that the police would be reporting to someone at the national capital as opposed to some monopoly, that would never happen here and in any community. Now, you can argue about, you know, "Ah, the police is doing what they need to do," or whether the local leadership is making sure they police and I will get to that in a moment. But it's just so different that construct, which makes the institutional structure I think more difficult.
>> Martin Krieger: Yes, because the thing that's going on in France is the states and the identification of bureaucracy with the state as an idea, and with the fact that, you know, there are certain universities, you've got to go to the move in that world. It's not—it's much less true within the United States by a long shot. And an attack on the state by even questioning it is very hard for them to handle. You know, think of the greatest heads. And what really makes it even worse is that the people who work in bureaucracy who were the—you know, the ones who make are part of this elite. They went—maybe they went for the—

[ Foreign Language ]

And they know each other. They're all probably—you know, I forgot what they were called. The different ones have different names. But this is like everybody went to Harvard, or Yale or MIT. And that's all. And that creates an enormous world of not only a privilege but of self—how would I put it? Of connections and so forth. You attack X, you're attacking me.

>> Raphael Bostic: Wait a minute, it's—I mean it's simply, you know, a notion of not—this is not exactly the right word but if a group think we're all the same, we all know how the world works, our reality is the only reality, and we're going to do what makes sense to us. And on some level, it makes a whole lot of other French existence invisible.

>> Lavonna Lewis: Yeah, I think what struck me was the fact that it was very clear that it was—it was deliberate and intentional in the sense that we are looking for a certain type of person to work here. If you don't fit into this box, you are not going to make it here, right? And so, to be very kind up front about this, so it wasn't accidental in that respect that these people just happened to end up in an environment where these kinds of things happen. But there was a screen and a vetting process that says, "You will be successful and you can handle you know, this type of discrimination or interaction, day in and day out or you can't." And so those folks that couldn't handle it for the most part were very quickly told to go elsewhere.

>> Raphael Bostic: Selected out.

>> Lavonna Lewis: Right and so that—so I think that—what struck me was, I think the odds there that at that some point mentioned this issue of institutionalized versus personal racism. And there's an article that talks about a third, right? And it talks about this issue of—so there's institutionalized and there's kind of internalized. In the middle, it is this kind of personally-mediated which said that I make some decisions about how I'm going to treat people irrespective of what the institution say and what people are saying about me. And so those officers who made a constant decision to treat people with respect. You know, even in the environment or a culture that says "We don't do that." had made that kind of personally-mediated choice. It's like, this is the environment that I work in but it doesn't define me. My job in terms of, you know, I'm supposed to serve and protect I guess. So that was kind of interesting to me. And if he was going to going to just tell one side of the story, those would
have never been mentioned. But that the idea that the people that were in many instances, the most successful at their job in the community were the ones who actually did it in a way that was, again professional or respectful of the task at hand. And so that was kind of interesting to me that people recognize that. It's not just about what an--the choice that an individual makes or these kind of other levels that kind of constraint whether or not to respond the way that you're expecting me to respond.

>> Martin Krieger: You know, it's also about class in the following sense. Tiananmen Square was--the soldiers the Chinese sent were from the countryside. They didn't identify with the people they were dealing with. The people who worked in the suburbs were from the rural areas of France. Again, they had no intimate connections--

>> Raphael Bostic: No reference found.

>> Martin Krieger: Right. And so, in that sense it's a systematic set up. No one ever--I mean it's--as they say. It never was thought that the police should reflect the community. You know--

>> Lavonna Lewis: Right.

>> Martin Krieger: --stuff we now talk about a lot.

>> Lavonna Lewis: Right.

>> Martin Krieger: And you say "How in the world can they be so--say ignorant?" And the answer is "Because I am representing the state. I am an authority. I inherit the legal aspects." It's almost--it's--the level of distraction is really amazing.

>> Raphael Bostic: But that's, you know, all of these I gets to where Matt math started with this is about power, right? At the end of the day, certain people have power and they have the ability to impose a reality that this correlate with how they see the world and how they want to see the world.

>> Matt Gainer: And it seems to be about the preservation of that power as much as anything else. Because if they're--if they're trumping up charges against kids who were effectively defenseless against them, in order to use statistics to support--the support of their--

>> Raphael Bostic: The narratives right? Exactly.

>> Matt Gainer: It's just this vicious ugly circle.

>> Martin Krieger: But you see, they're--they don't have to be viewed as evil. They could be viewed as people who says "Well, these kids get away with it. So we'll have to do--you know--we'll have to be judged in jury right here, now." And--
>> Raphael Bostic: No, but the problem is, that's not their job, right? Their job is not to be the--

>> Martin Krieger: Oh I'm not justifying, I'm just--how they think that they come to that position.

>> Raphael Bostic: And I agree with that but, I mean--that's clearly how they think.

>> Martin Krieger: Right.

>> Raphael Bostic: I mean this happened as frequently and as many contexts as it does makes it clearer, that's what I think. The question is--and the frustration for me is at the end of the day, that's not their job. And yet there seems to be no mechanism to get them just to do their job. Which is ironically to enforce order, right? But to do it--not about making class statements and not about reinforcing--which is good, then the reinforcing order is another entirely good--not--the positions of certain people, but rather trying to help people navigate their daily lives. And that's not what these people were trying to do in anyway. In anyway.

>> Matt Gainer: It's funny, says, funny. My mother who's visiting right now and I told her--because she read this book too. She spent a lifetime in urban schools and a bunch of different rules. And we're talking about exactly that thing a couple of days ago, that in urban schools, it's usually the case that--well, she had this situation, it's usually the case, that I don't actually know the data. But she had issues with her teachers that more often than not, teachers wanted to enforce a particular kind of relationship rather than help usher people through the process of making good decisions.

>> Raphael Bostic: Mm-hmm.

>> Matt Gainer: And that's what comes out a lot--in a lot of the scenarios that Fassin describes where there's this very assertive patriarchal. This is exactly what--how you are to respond to me, and if you don't, then I'm going to--this system. This is the path we go down, kind of thing. Well, you know, it always ends up this ugly. So if we're taking you in, that's very different than the officer, the one that I described in Crawford, you know, who would say "OK. There's conflict here. Let's talk through this and figure out a way to make this work because we're all here for two weeks on a ditch."

>> Raphael Bostic: Mm-hmm.

>> Matt Gainer: That's a very, very different kind of thing.

>> Raphael Bostic: So--And so you talked about Crawford, I want to talk about Ferguson. So we know what happened to Ferguson. A young man, unarmed gets gunned down by the police. Basically, in broad daylight as far as I can tell, and there are four days--no actually, it's longer than four days of disturbance. The police tell very little and then probably too much and very
selectively. And it led to some extent, a reexamination was happening in local policing. How should we think about this book vis-a-vis Ferguson?

>> Lavonna Lewis: So I think my initial response is that it goes back to this idea of meeting people where they are as opposed to where we think they are, right? And so in some respects, most--I think there's a majority opinion that says the role of law enforcement is you know maintaining order, maintaining the peace. And in some communities, that resonates very easily. In other communities, like the book that we read, the relationship between the residence and the police is very different, right? And so, I remember the examples of the people that were responsible for providing services for some of the young people, calling in the police for help. And what ended up happening was the problem escalated as opposed to deescalated. And part because they didn't really have a full appreciation for the kind of disconnect between, you know, how the different parties saw one another. And I think the same thing is true in Ferguson. I mean, it never, the fact that we're now hearing that residents were saying that there were problems with the police before the riots. That all of a sudden get, you know, they get amplified and get attention to get visibility says that, I mean there's this kind of a knee-jerk reaction. And sometimes, what happens is that it is when the cities are burning down, that someone says that there may be a problem that maybe we over reacted. I think what I really liked about the book that came in kind of as an aside to us, the fact that they made the comment that brutality is not new. What is new is the technology that allows us to captures some of it. And so that's part of the narrative as well. I mean, it's like, you know, the idea that people would--that the police will put cameras on their shields or their badges to say that I'm OK with the additional level of scrutiny. I mean, I don't think that we will be having that conversation if it were not for Ferguson that this idea that--though, if we really want order kind of broadly-defined, I mean, at what price. And again, what are we going to do in terms of transparency and accountability to get that because I think that those in the perception that we haven't had now.

>> Raphael Bostic: So I'm glad you talked about that because, you know, we are a governance center and the notion of establishing processes and the protocols that can generate sufficient levels of accountability and transparency is really important. In the US, we have not really had a hard conversation about this. Do you really think this is going to happen now? I mean has--

>> Martin Krieger: No, I think what's going to happen is the following. First of all, in the suburbs of Paris, the bosses knew what was going on and they just say its fine. In fact, they make sure that less was known about it once they realize it was going to get out. And while there's no boss in Ferguson, I'm sure that the state--the governor, once he discovered Nixon's in the [inaudible], you know, didn't want to stay behind that. The thing that's going to change and it's changing already is everything will be recorded. If not by the police, by people nearby and everything will get out, and if you think--I think that's seems to have a very powerful effect from what I can figure out. Does it mean that the officers will behave better, a good question. But you know, it's no longer possible to assume that someone is not watching. Now, maybe it is, you know the
desert, you know, all around. But, for all you know the guy has a cellphone, recording it and broadcasting it.

>> Matt Gainer: And since this is breakthrough, I hate to go back to cliche but it's not what you see, it's--or what's in front of you is what you see, or something along these lines and, so we can see pictures all day long of stuff happen in Ferguson and interpret it a thousand different ways depending on who you are, reinforces a different kind of worldview or a preconception. And you saw that play out and the discussion that happen in both in sort of official media and also on, you know, in other kinds of spaces. And if one of the problems with Ferguson, is it's not just entrenched, it's designed in St. Louis. And I'm sure a lot of other places to be exactly how it is. I mean, there's something like 70 or 80 different police precincts in St. Louis County. So you can get a ticket multiple times the same day for having the same tale like out. Those precincts exist partly because those communities were incorporated to keep people of color from moving into them. So when a developer would build a new development, they would just make it a city. It's crazy when you actually talk about it that way. So it's literally built into the fabric of that part of the city that there's this long history of keeping people separate. And so, it's now obviously embedded in a lot of police forces who by the way depend on for huge amounts of their operational budgets, writing tickets and court cost, right? And so, it sort of built in that there's going to be adversary relationship between people on the street and then the neighborhoods. And the police forces who often times lived in other places. So will it change? I don't think to cameras are going to change it. I think it's much, much deeper than that. Do having cameras present when bad things are happening help sort things out afterwards? Yes. And the same would be true in Paris. And there are studies that they talk about this in England as well where 2008, I think was Oslo [assumed spelling] or just a study that came out that talked about cameras not being particularly effective at stopping crime, but they're help--they're good at helping sort out the details after a crime has happened.

>> Raphael Bostic: So I think it's a little different. I want to say two things on that, maybe three. One, when the crime is perpetuated by the authority. I think cam--if potentially perpetrated by the authority, the camera I will, I think have a deterrent effect. Because there is more than just the effect, it's your career, it's your job as you like--I think this one thing. Second thing which you said is--which is really important is that St. Louis is constructed. So I was with my little plug but I was in a documentary on a little town in suburban St. Louis called Spanish Lake. And in that movie, they document how the population of this town went from 99 percent white to basically 99 percent black over a 20-year period and how the institutions facilitated that change both governmental, but also in real-estate, all that kind of stuff. So the construct is very real and the separation is very real. The one thing about Ferguson which is interesting and different is that usually when you do those constructions you do it such that the minorities are a minority. In Ferguson, the minorities were not a minority, right? So this was one where there was conceivably the potential to exercise power. If they could have voted to have a different police force but it didn't happen. And to me is an interesting question about what were the mechanisms, forces, belief structures that allowed this to persist when the levers of power were available? To me, that's the one difference. In this book, there's no question that, you know, the
people that lived in these neighborhoods had no access to power. They had no nothing right, in that sense. But in Ferguson, it's a little different. I don't know if you guys feel the same or think I'm crazy.

>> Martin Krieger: We know the history of--it takes a long time for the under power to use the phrase disempower to realize it's time to go. It happened with the civil rights movement. It happened with immigration rights. Republican parties still hasn't quite realized that Hispanic population, Catholic, though they may be, doesn't find them very attractive. That was their gait, you know, that was their thing. And so, the question you might ask about why in the world did no one try to organize Ferguson? And I don't know the story of that. But that's what you're looking for. Because this all-white police force of mostly white, could not have survived if someone started voting systematically.

>> Lavonna Lewis: Yeah, it may not--I guess it speaks to I don't want to call it apathy but I mean those are very real. I think the better word is hopelessness right? And, if you time and time again seek change and it doesn't come, you know, how are you going to convince me this time would be any different, right? And so, if there is any benefit from riots, it kind of changes the dynamic and may shift the conversation. And so it really is around, we have the attention of no longer an invisible issue. Maybe it can now elevate to a kind of, to lead to some level of change. But I do think you have to recognize it, you know, working in communities. There is a very real sense that, you know, is this the flavor of the month? Is this the savior of the month? Or is this an opportunity for real, systematic changes. And so that--and that have to be credible, right, to kind of generate the kind of support, to generate the kind of momentum that's going to take to keep it going. And again it's--this--that moment may be something they can capture to leverage change. But without it, it was business as usual. And so we know that in policy in general, we have this kind of status quo, bias, why will we ever change we think is working? And so until something fundamentally shifts that in my thinking, then I don't think that I'm dealing with a broken system. I'm just looking at something.

>> Martin Krieger: Forty and 50 years ago, people became community organizers. At least the students I knew then, [inaudible] but something. I don't know if it's true anymore but speaking as a profession in a school policy and city planning and so forth, probably very few of our students go into doing that kind of work. I may be wrong.

>> Lavonna Lewis: I would disagree in the sense that--

>> Martin Krieger: Good.

>> Lavonna Lewis: Yeah, I mean I didn't think that there is a belief on the part of our students that they can be change agents. Now, where they decide to try to initiate change may vary significantly, but I do believe that they have--do they have--That they have--Yeah.

>> Martin Krieger: It's just--really back to community organizing.
>> Lavonna Lewis: Yeah.

>> Raphael Bostic: But I actually think, you know, I'm doing some other research about economic development and having an empowered community is essential. And that can really block, not having that kind of coordination and sense of us. A sense of community can block. That people can then be gatekeepers. All those stuff require such a persistence that without some structure and some sustained engagement is very difficult to see this go forth. I wanted to just ask two more questions. First is, what should we think about learning from this in terms of policy and power, maybe policing? Are there lessons to be learned from this book that we would want to take out and really try to lift up to create some dialogue around?

>> Lavonna Lewis: So, I guess I would go back to the word, just the dialog. And to recognize that this scenario, this set of experiences and interactions happened in part because both parties didn't see any value in engagements, or any value and dialogue or getting to know what the other world, persons of war was like. And so I think that the message to me from that is, is that if I don't take time to kind of peel back some of those layers in terms of, you know, why I may be getting the kinds of responses I'm getting, and ask questions about, you know, are we connecting or disconnecting? We're going to keep kind of stumbling along in that regard. So this whole idea of saying rather than assuming that you understand this and see this exactly the same way I do, we need to ask the next question and say is that really true or we--I mean it's, you know, pretty basic. But to basically recognize it, look if I'm coming to, you know, this conversation from USC with an advanced degree and you're coming to the meeting with the fifth grade literacy level, then there's gotta be somebody that's going to have to get us on the same take.

>> Raphael Bostic: To mediate that--

>> Lavonna Lewis: And so I think that to me is part of government's responsibilities to make sure that the people that are most impact to borrow policies actually in some, we have a voice in those policies and so I get that from.

>> Martin Krieger: Given the legal environment where often troops can stop actions. What's really striking for me is development within government and within corporate firms of community engagement. No, I'm not saying this is real engagement but it happens. And it wasn't the case in 1960--1970. Nowadays, any real estate developer has a whole bunch of people worrying about that. Any firm had, you know, it's not just PR they're trying to develop dialogues, maybe fake dialogues. In France, that isn't part of the game as far as I can tell, because it's an entirely different story. I don't know what happens in Britain. I don't know what happens in Germany. You know, but the kind of what we've developed in US largely because small groups can stop big projects, slow them down. And once you're going to slow them down, it makes it much more expensive. It means, in some--it's a great success. But I'm not saying, the problem has gone away. But it's an enormous transformation in the last 45 years. And as for France, I don't know
what they can do, given the culture of their society. Because it just isn't built that way. As I say democracy may belong in France but not the democracy we understand. By the way I'm not saying we're so wonderful.

>> Raphael Bostic: No, I understood that. No, I don't think anyone heard what you said to suggest that.

>> Matt Gainer: Lavonna has pointed earlier about visibility is so essential. This isn't the Paris that I think of, right? So.

>> Raphael Bostic: To be sure huh?

>> Matt Gainer: To me, what I think of is, you know, strolling the left bank, the Eiffel Tower which by the way they carried it about enough to literally copyright the lights on. I mean, they're very in tune with the image of what it means to be French and what Paris is, they being Parisians, right? So, you know, at its base, they have--they being Parisians have to care as much about this image of Paris as they do about some of the other stuff. And so how that happens, I don't know. Maybe it does take something like the riots that they experience, to bring it into sort of the public discourse in a meaningful way. It's plain out in other ways now with you know, back to the camera thing where they're talking about, there are debates about how many CCTV, you know, the security cameras should be spread out through urban spaces in Paris right now. It's going to be way fewer than in London but it all sort of comes into play as something of what's the image and it, you know, I hate to be cynical but on some level, that's what I think it will take to get them talking.

>> Raphael Bostic: We'll see. Yeah, because of the role of the state in creating the institution, you know, it leads me wonder about, you know, what any of these cameras are going to mean and who's going to get to see it with videos. Because we don't have as far as I know, there is not a French equivalent of TMZ which will pay for the video. So, it's going to come out at some point. In France, I don't know and, you know, it'll be one of the things to look for. I am really--the thought of--for the US, really having people think hard about how the police and how to create meaningful person-to-person connections, all right? The whole community policing movement was based on the notion that people are out there and they get to know folks and information flows better in both ways and you don't have crazy things happening. I'm hopeful that happens. You know, the other thing which we haven't talked much about is I'm hopeful that it leads some to reflect more about just our general rhetoric around safety, around the streets, around what goes on and what neighborhoods, right? Because, you know, as you look--and this is true, very true in the US. If you pull people in the United States, they actually think it's more dangerous than ever before. The statistics would suggest that it's as safe as urban America has been for 40 or 50 years, right? And so that disconnect contributes to this general level of fear that almost provides a justification for all the militarization of local police and all that kind of stuff. And so we can get people to actually just know the facts. You know, the only one thing I thought about--we know things that regular people don't know. And regular people need to know this, just to have
some basis for making good judgments. I think that, that be really important. Alright, last question because we're almost to the hour. Who should read this book? And who is this targeted towards? And those are really two different questions, so, you know, I'm just interested in your perspectives on this.

>> Lavonna Lewis: Now that's an interesting question. So, I mean, I think it is--it should be read by anyone that wants to understand the importance of different voices and different perspectives and different lenses. And by that, I mean to understand again, it's like to believe that groups of people could be in a space side by side and have totally unique experiences in that space. It's something that people need to understand because we have a may--and this is only a generalization but I think that we have a me-centered world view. And so I look at everything to the lens of my experiences. And anyone that wants another set of lenses needs to read this book because you understand bad things can happen not because of--for any other reason than kind of messages around, this is how we do it, accept the culture, there'll be no sanctions, there'll be no backlash. And so--and on the other side of it, just take whatever happens to you if you want to survive. And that is a very cruel message to have to give to young people but it is a message that parents had to give so their kids could survive.

>> Martin Krieger: I think this book itself, the way it's put together, how it's designed and so forth is not a popular book. The eye could exert about a third of it into a very, you know, into a book that people should read. You don't have to dub all the theorizing because it's typical French, you know, stuff. You know, there's nothing wrong with it. It's just not going to go over Thomas' famous watching regression analysis and--

>> Raphael Bostic: Hey.

>> Martin Krieger: And you could do it.

>> Raphael Bostic: I was waiting for this to get out of hand.

>> Martin Krieger: And the other part is, so for example the story that begins the book, you know, is defined as a, you know, an article or newspaper or a television thing. But books like these are--because of how they're organized, don't do the work. You can try on students. But I've discovered, at least most students will not be able to get past all the decoration. I send my students in the field into Los Angeles do field work. What they discover is, it's not at all what their fantasy is, you know--

>> Raphael Bostic: So you would tell people don't do this? Don't read this book but go out in the neighborhoods and--

>> Martin Krieger: No, no. I would not--I--my problem is that I know whether they will consume this book or whether they will think it as one more thing they have to, you know, answer questions on the exam about.
>> Raphael Bostic: So just academics? What about policymakers or staffers or--

>> Martin Krieger: Maybe staff, but, you know, you've got to see the point that this is organized in a very different way. He's, you know, he's a French sociologist. It's not organized to give those messages. The staff could tell their boss these are the stories, read these pages. And there's nothing wrong by the way with this book that way but it's not organized in any sense to be useful.

>> Matt Gainer: But he's also a French sociologist who points out at some point in the book I think it's towards the end, how reassured he was to know that one of the police chiefs he had spoke with at [inaudible], so he's got great hope that this could be--

>> Martin Krieger: I didn't say this is the smirkiest [phonetic] remark I've ever read, you know. I mean, if you think that you're reassured by a police chief reading from code, boy--

>> Matt Gainer: I'm just saying, you know, that--

>> Martin Krieger: No, no. I know but--I think his reassurance shows where he is. There's nothing wrong with him, he's a professor. You know, but makes it--

>> Raphael Bostic: I don't know how to think, I don't know what's wrong how you should think of that. Matt, who should read this?

>> Matt Gainer: It's a great question. I think it's sort of all of the above. If I were part of a group that had the ability to affect policy in this kind of space whether it's in Paris or some place else, I think it's a great book to read with colleagues and coworkers and other people who might be able to participate in the discussion about ways to affect these kinds of things. If I were teaching a class that dealt with issues that are touched on this book. I think it's a great example that I think a lot of young people could tap into because unfortunately, a lot of young people have had these kinds of experiences. And I think having the right kind of person to guide them through questions and dialog about what the book discusses, it could be an incredible useful experience. If it's tied to going out and doing, you know, work in the community and sort of engaging the world around them, I don't think in and of itself, it's going to solve the kinds of problems we hope that they're going to be solved, but I think it's a useful tool.

>> Raphael Bostic: But you're glad you read it?

>> Matt Gainer: Yeah.

>> Raphael Bostic: Martin?
>> Martin Krieger: I have mixed feelings largely because I've read this kind of book too many times. Except it taught me a lot about France.

>> Raphael Bostic: Sorry, you're glad you read it?

>> Martin Krieger: Mixed.

>> Raphael Bostic: Lavonna?

>> Lavonna Lewis: So, I'm glad I read it because I make a big deal out of being comfortable making other people uncomfortable. And this book made me uncomfortable.

>> Raphael Bostic: I would concur with that repeatedly and that's what made it a rich experience. I thought the book was actually—it was not written for a popular audience I agree with that. I thought the last chapter was outstanding and really brought it together in a crisp, concise way. I do think that, you know, one group that should really think about reading this would be media people, columnist types like people who do sort of a much more detailed thinking about the world before they just write and they don't feel the same sort of pressures. I think there's a potential to really create a different sort of space on this that could come out of that which should be useful. Well, we are just about out of time, Martin Krieger, Matt Gainer, Lavonna Lewis, thank you all for joining us. And thank you all for listening. This has been a really fun and interesting conversation and I hope you found it to be that. And will join us the next time we do this. So thank you, have a great day.