

Q&A – Dr. Tony Cheng – 10/05/2024

1. The education question, I think, runs into a big difference between the US and Scandinavian systems. Police training in the US is largely created and handled by the Police itself, and may be subject to the same kind of problems that community engagement is. At least, this is what I've drawn from Peter Moskos' account of attending police training in his 2009 work...
2. I am sure you get this question a lot, but what policy solutions does your work suggest would be effective at reforming police departments?
 - a. The book does not offer policy recommendations that would require police initiative because it is rational for policing agencies to pursue the Policing Machine. Instead, it engages with policy in two ways: (a) the strategies that I observed residents used to resist the Policing Machine and (b) recommendations on what cities should do to de-monopolize the Policing Machine. First, in terms of resistance, one strategy that residents pursued was to reestablish democratic oversight over police. Regardless of residents' visions of police, many began collecting their own independent data documenting their complaints to police as evidence to both pressure and empower local elected officials to act on their behalf. Another strategy that residents pursued was to cultivate relationships with non-police providers of state resources, such as prosecutors or the animal control agency. Second, in terms of de-monopolizing the Policing Machine, one recommendation is for cities to remove police from the process of evaluating and granting permits for public events. Another important pathway forward is for cities to distribute public resources more equitably so that the organizational capacity of police departments is not so disproportionate to other community groups, such that they would ultimately come to rely on police anyways.
3. A vision of a new society definitely does not include the violent repression by the state to protect property and profit. Police don't protect people or prevent crime.
 - a. One point that I hope readers take away from the book is that we need to think about police beyond its law enforcement functions; they are also political mobilizers using tools beyond citations, arrests, and other classic law enforcement instruments. Thinking about police as political mobilizers aligns

with conceptualizing them as central actors in our urban political systems (not just criminal justice), which I hope will expand our theories about the relationships, tools, strategies, and priorities that matter to police.

4. Great example in CA is MACRO in Oakland. Mobile Assistance Responders of Oakland - the idea that "we keep us safe" as in community. Thank you for investigating these issues.
 - a. I agree that cities should invest in police alternatives, but I also want to emphasize that it will be crucial for cities to distribute resources more equitably so that police's organizational capacity is not so disproportionate to their alternatives. Otherwise, even those established or presented as police alternatives may come to rely on police resources, thus making it difficult to disentangle these alternatives from the police and its partner channels under the Policing Machine.

5. Regarding the police training questions raised by Professor Lindström, would moving toward a system where police need university-level training and degrees potentially create a form of leverage to change police departments?
 - a. I do not think a university-level training would affect the organizational and institutional incentives under the Policing Machine because the strategies identified in the book are rational for policing agencies to pursue. Stepping away from the Policing Machine, however, there is evidence that higher educational requirements reduce police uses of force. Ultimately, however, the answer to this question will depend on one's vision for policing and how exactly one diagnoses its core problems.

6. Thanks, Prof. Tony, for this valuable work...I really liked the title especially the word 'machine' which reflects their behaviors towards the population. I would add my question in the education field. How and in what way these officers get their knowledge towards the community and population?
 - a. The Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs) I interacted with during fieldwork received additional trainings on a variety of topics, such as conflict resolution, mediation, and how to access resources offered by peer state agencies. As part of their trainings, new officers would also accompany their

supervisors or the precinct's Community Affairs officers to meet community partners, such as those in the Clergy Council. New officers would also be introduced during Community Council meetings. These educational methods continued the relationships between police and community constituents.