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Book Review

Badges Without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing

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Schrader, Stuart. 2019. *Badges Without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing*. Oakland: University of California Press, 393 pp.

In *Badges Without Borders*, sociologist Stuart Schrader minutely traces the transnational linkages of what US police officers themselves called 'professionalization': a historical process of broad transformations in police institutions and rationalities that gave US law enforcement its contemporary characteristics, transformations such as recruitment standards, formal training, career ranking and stable remuneration. More fundamentally, 'professionalization' also changed US police organizational structure from one subjected to local political loyalties and machinations towards a new arrangement in which federal money and loyalty to the police institution itself – as an independent, self-interested political actor – became increasingly important, supporting the rise of the contemporary US carceral state.

As the author emphasizes, divisions between domestic and foreign are not ontologies, but 'contested results of social, political and economic processes' (Schrader 2019: 15). Thus, Schrader's book can be added to the growing literature on the transnational aspects of the police and policing practices. More specifically, it can be added to the field of transnational history of US security institutions, even though it transcends contemporary disciplinary boundaries.

While not ignoring the influence of previous US international counterinsurgency efforts, Schrader's analysis centers on the years between 1954 and 1974. In 1954, the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration initiated the first formal program to institutionalize international police aid, leading to the much articulated and centralized USAID Office of Public Safety (OPS), created by John F. Kennedy in 1962. During its 13 years of existence,

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OPS was the main linkage between foreign police aid and the internal process of 'professionalization', functioning as a hub for many policing-as-counterinsurgency programs applied globally. In 1974, OPS was closed by the US Congress after increasing pressures by transnational civil rights groups denouncing its relation with gross human rights violation by US-trained police around the world, especially in Latin America.

Throughout the text, deeply detailed historical narrative takes turns with sociological analysis. The book follows the disputes, alliances and overlaps between expansive US bureaucracies and the trajectories of key individuals, such as national security advisor Robert W. Komer and law enforcement expert Arnold Sagalyn. Schrader is also concerned with the dynamics between US Federal Government centralization and local-level decentralization in the process of police reform, highlighting a plethora of other actors, their historical roles and entanglements: the CIA, FBI, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Los Angeles Police Department and the Special Weapons and Tactics unit (SWAT), National Rifle Association, Rand Corporation, and others.

The reader follows an information-rich route across the chapters, which invites us to reflect on: race and policing in imperial perspective; the rise of US overseas police assistance, its transformation into racialized counterinsurgency and its re-importation to American streets; the relations between policing and social regulation; the vast global and US-centered network of policing apprenticeship; the development of tear gas (or CS) as a transnational counterinsurgency and riot-control technology; the genealogy of SWAT; and the ever-present aspects of policing as counterinsurgency across the globe.

As Schrader shows, police reformers and agents were not bound by international frontiers. For them, police was the first line of defense against a crime-subversion nexus potentially exploitable by international communism. Excessive police violence was also considered as counterproductive, deepening urban unrests and crisis. Thus, supporting the creation and training of national police forces in the new states being formed in the former colonial world came to be seen, by the US security apparatus, as: i) part of an encompassing strategy in the dispute between the superpowers for influence and leadership over the periphery; ii) a better way to contain revolutionary insurgency abroad, particularly because of police closeness to day-to-day lives and local networks; and iii) a laboratory to design, test and improve state reaction to domestic riots, especially in a context of rising protests in the US.

Kennedy's doctrinal change from massive nuclear retaliation to gradual response was accompanied by an incisive policy of international police assistance, especially to the Global South. However, it was not a smooth process. As Schrader exposes, Komer struggled inside the Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson administrations in favor of greater efforts for a civilian police-based counterinsurgency (and the creation of OPS), against the dominant trend of military guerrilla warfare. While counterinsurgency abroad was being defined as policing, US government response to the riots and unrests, civil rights movements, and Black freedom protests of the 1960s increasingly framed policing as counterinsurgency at home. Sagalyn was one of the leaders who placed OPS programs and knowledge as references of internal reform, a synergy effect strongly catalyzed by Johnson's War

on Crime (1965) and local police access to federal resources. It was a turning point for 'professionalization', inasmuch 'police leaders were active progenitors of change, not merely passive recipients of demands placed on them by elected officials or voters' (Schrader 2019: 141).

Intellectuals such as Walt Rostow were also important in elaborating and conveying a core ideological foundation for overseas policing and aid: modernization theory, which more or less replaced prior US government assumptions about racial inferiority used to understand the political problems of the 'Global South'. Through this perspective, contexts of large-scale transformation such as urbanization and industrialization in course in peripheral countries were considered as a 'moment of opportunity' for the spread of communism, which could take advantage of a 'disorientation' resulting from the disruption of old social orders. In this turbulent process, the role of US policing assistance would be that of countering left-leaning movements, helping economic development, and promoting the liberal path as the 'right kind of revolution' (Latham 2011).

Thus, counterinsurgency was constituted as the linkage between the macro aspects of great power politics and the micro routines of the daily policing by the beat cop, as 'the search for technical, apparently apolitical, solutions to political problems' was 'counterinsurgency's most sacrosanct, yet most disavowed, liberal principle' (Schrader 2019: 195).

If OPS was shot down in 1974, the build-up of the police-counterinsurgency nexus as the main response to mass protest and social unrest continued to reverberate and intensify globally until today. Now, as Schrader indicated in a recent text (2020), the 'global policeman' has no brain or nervous system, and the OPS role is currently occupied by a myriad of US agencies and private actors.

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