

This minor criticism aside, Harcourt has written a masterful and innovative book on the meaning of guns to youth and has developed a provocative policy position based on the interview data. There is much to recommend about the book. The analysis is carefully done, the theoretical positions thoughtfully articulated, and the policy implications fairly discussed. The book will have broad appeal to scholars across a range of substantive fields and constitutes a major contribution to debates on youth gun crime.

\* \* \*

*Citizens, Cops, and Power: Recognizing the Limits of Community.* By Steve Herbert. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Pp. 180. \$40.00 cloth; \$16.00 paper.

Reviewed by Mathieu Deflem, University of South Carolina

Everybody knows about community policing, but nobody really knows what it is, let alone what it accomplishes. As Herbert reveals in this short book, even those directly involved—the police and their citizens—hold conflicting ideas about community policing and its constituent elements. The general narrative is simple: community policing involves improved relations between police departments and citizens in order to fight more effectively the crime problems that affect localized communities. Through community policing, informal and formal controls join hands through a partnership between the citizens in a community and the professional agents of crime control. Yet underneath the façade of the community policing rhetoric lies a complex normative and sociological reality, the basic contours of which are usefully examined in this work.

Herbert's book is based on qualitative research involving interviews and observations of police officers and community participants in three police beat regions in West Seattle (Washington State). The regional police beats are diverse in terms of their demographic and socioeconomic structure and crime rates. The research is theoretically framed around the discourse on community in political philosophy and, in confrontation therewith, the reality of community perceptions held by citizens. The main thesis of Herbert's study is that the notion of community is unbearably light in that it cannot effectively hold the policy responsibilities it is meant to fulfill and because the police apparatus remains unresponsive to the community, even when a partnership is formed. At least two central problems are revealed in the police-community

partnership: citizen involvement comes disproportionately from upper-middle-class strata, and the police are generally reluctant to take the wishes of the community into account. In this sense, this work shows that there is little if any community in community policing.

On a conceptual level, Herbert argues, community is not only difficult to grasp but also differently understood in political philosophy, on the one hand, and among citizens, on the other. Political thinkers conceive of community in either liberal or collectivist terms, but always assign to it an unquestionably desirable quality, typically from the viewpoint of a decentralized conception of governance. Therefore, community policing has become the definitive strategy to reduce distance between the police and the citizenry by devolving authority from central power to localized self-determination. Herbert's research, however, shows that citizens do not conceive of community in such idealized terms. Instead, citizens attribute the qualities of individualism, heterogeneity, transience, and fear to their communities.

Other problems with community policing stem from the police perspective. The police understand themselves as separate from the community and define their work through a professional ethos that is based on autonomy and expertise. As a result, the police view the community as an entity from which they are removed. They need not be subservient to the community but rather responsive to it on the basis of professional standards of policing. The responsiveness of police to the community is thus primarily a result of a conception police have of their work, rather than of popular demands. Most critically, Herbert argues, the culture of police is decisive in generating a milieu that, instead of seeking to foster community involvement, emphasizes adventurous and machismo-oriented work, safety for the officers, and an assertion of authority. Likewise, from within the community, citizens' perceptions of the police are an incoherent mixture variously seeing the police as servants, professionals, and bureaucrats.

Herbert's book is a more than useful addition to the literature on community policing. It reveals many of the conflicts, tensions, and inherent problems with a control strategy that is now so commonly accepted among policy professionals, police, and citizens that it is practically beyond critique. One cannot be against community policing. And one need not be against community policing either, providing its underlying principles and ideal aspirations can still be subjected to careful scrutiny. Herbert's study is a first step in the right direction. From the viewpoint of a sociologist of social control (rather than a political geographer), I observe that this book is as much about policing as it is about

community. It might thus have benefited from a more explicit reliance on the policing and social control literature that has analyzed pertinent issues on the merging of informal and formal controls, uncovering the less-than-benign nature of such developments. Nonetheless, Herbert's grounding in political geography is successful in being able to transcend the narrow technocratic focus of evaluation studies that dominate the police literature. As an intellectual effort with a policy purpose, this concise study may well prove to be among the more useful contributions on community policing. It is also a short and very readable book. Professional experts in police administration and policy as well as community activists have no excuse not to read it and learn from it.

\* \* \*

*Lethal Punishment: Lynchings and Legal Executions in the South.* By Margaret Vandiver. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006. Pp. 336. \$65.00 cloth; \$27.95 paper.

Reviewed by Timothy W. Clark, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Vandiver explores the racial nature of law and lynching in the post-bellum U.S. South in this important book. Vandiver seeks to understand why some incidents of alleged crimes and racial infractions by African Americans were likely to invoke illegal mob violence while others were left to the racially biased legal system to pursue "justice."

This book fills a long-vacant niche in the current research between historians' descriptive case studies of single lynchings or executions and social scientists' large-scale quantitative analyses of lynchings or executions across states or regions. Vandiver uses the local histories of nine Southern counties where lynchings and executions occurred to serve as case studies. For this endeavor, Vandiver selected seven rural counties from northwest Tennessee, and two urban counties, including Memphis, Tennessee, and Ocala, Florida. These geographic areas were chosen based upon the availability of a historical record and on the variations on the use of lynchings and legal executions. In this purposive sample, Vandiver includes counties where lynchings were prominent for decades and abruptly stopped, lynchings were rare and executions common, and lynchings were common and executions rare. While Vandiver admits that the generalizability of her work is limited due to the small number of cases and nonrandom sampling, this work follows the protocol of comparative analysis and provides a scale