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Book Review

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## Book Review

In the recent past technocrat reforms sparked by development in big information, analytics are reconstructing the norms, relationships, and practices aligned to various institutions in US domestic policing through the use of fundamental approaches. In <sup>3</sup> *Andrew Guthrie Ferguson's The Rise of Big Data Policing: Surveillance, Race, and the Future of Law Enforcement* provides a detailed exhibition of data analysis and does so vividly, with a comprehensive concept towards policy transformation that might deescalate the distress of big data policing in marginalized and disadvantaged communities. Ferguson is a legal professor and scholar, with a specialty in privacy, Fourth Amendment law, and patrolling technologies. Furthermore, he has expansively written on predictive policing. This concept is patent in the experience with which Ferguson deposits about data applications within a wider institutional set in policing. The contrary is that the exuberant instances via which the arguments of the book are established almost all of them are drawn from democratic case law. Literature focuses on the <sup>2</sup> review of Ferguson Andrew Guthrie *The Rise of Big Data Policing: Surveillance, Race and The Future of Law Enforcement*. New York: New York University Press. 272 Pp. Paperback. US. ISBN:9781479892822.

The book presents a notion that appears paradoxical to surveillance researches and scholars; that big data policing goes beyond a collective urge to curb issues related to police practices, brutality, and systematic biases. Readers who may be familiar with the crucial evaluation of prognostic policing may be astonished to realize that advocates authentically believe in the superiority of big data to amend instead of worsening police harm (Shapiro, 2018). This is important in the rationalization of decisions concerning whom, where, when and how to execute police practices. As Ferguson writes, "In the presence of long-serving claims of

segregation, rekindled rage, and systematic problems, leaders of the police commenced examining new designs to reestablish policing... In reaction to contested human bias, it is not new that the desire of objective-look, data-oriented policing might be tempting". The author disputes this emerging complexity to give reference to the comprehensive purposes of technocratic police modifiers while delivering a vital assessment of the consequences and costs for the communities affected by police investigation and scrutiny aided by technology. The outcome is a conservative optimism concerning the unavoidable of big data in relation to policing. As a result, Ferguson designs an outlook that astute discernment about the inexplicit politics of data-driven technologies and his reasoning that such technologies may be subjected to misuse towards various ends.

Ferguson organized the chapters of the book into three parts. However, this is not a conventional designation. In chapters 1 and 2, the author gives explanations behind the escalation of data-driven policing. Regarding chapter 1 "Big Data's Watchful eye," explains big data that will be popular to many learners of surveillance including data convergence, data trails, mass surveillance, and data brokers. The most differentiating point in chapter 1 is the fact that data comprise provisions that seem to exclude the enforcement of the law from their general descriptions. In chapter 2 "Data is the New Black," offers a comprehensive intersection of diversified drivers designed to generate environment full of technocratic transformations in domestic policing. This is in line with the constrained budgets of various departments during the 2007-2008 financial crisis.

According to Selbst (2017), the American Department of justice contacted investigations into police discrimination and brutality in areas like Chicago, IL, Ferguson, MD, MO, and Baltimore found the existence of deescalated morale and increased frustrations with the

administration of police. The frustration is more evident in the growth of big data analytics in the commercialized industry than any other sector. Similarly, the collaboration between the academic criminologists and the departments of police are involved in the assessment of big data systems. The grant dollars from the federal government provided for evaluation and implementation of big data platforms in law enforcement is considered to be under biases. This convergence creates the stage for tension exhibited between technocrats and police reform innovations that Ferguson digs into.

The second section that is also informational is comprised of chapters 3 through 6 which offers a series of models explaining the current implementation of big data policing. Each chapter explores a different approach in which transformations in big data technologies are being witnessed through the use of standard police activities. Chapter 3, "Whom We Police" explores individual based predictive examples. Verstraete et al. (2017) posit that the model applies demographic profiles, and affiliations scraped from social media and scrutinized by law enforcement data platforms such as co-arrestees. The model described in chapter 3 is also critical since it explores how the police can target risk persons for toughened prosecutorial attention and stringent interventions. The appropriate example of these models includes the Heat list or "The Strategic Subject List." Chapter, "Where We Police," takes another direction away from individual-based to geospatial predictive policing arrangements. The incorporation of crime data is essential in executing risk predictions concerning specific times and places. In both chapters 3 and 4, the author cautions about the systems' ability to assimilate prejudiced biases underlying in police activities.

In these chapters still, Ferguson further warns of exacerbation of harm for ethnic or racial minority groups, although even race or other guarded communities are exempted from these

analyses. The author notes that the main source of bias is from the intersectional design of discrimination in which social constructs, geographical location, and demographic data membership are contained in protected classes. Moreover, in both chapters, Ferguson explores adverse information about the clarity and quality of data. In the case of individual-based modeling, persons who are identified at high risk are hardly given the information explaining why and how they made it to *heat list*. If it is geospatial modeling, communities are not issued with necessary information about why and how they gained the status becoming the components of promoting surveillance and policing.

The threads of geospatial modeling and individual-based models are continued. Chapter 5 “When We Police,” concentrates on the investigation and actual time surveillance and it continues by drawing a series of disparate technologies used in large scale tracking system and access to immediate information. Ferguson categorizes the large-scale tracking system into a Domain Awareness System, facial recognition technology, automated license plate readers (ALPR), aggregated crime database and aerial cameras and drones. Ferguson genuinely warns that as police department begin to depend on this technology aided systems for analyzing real-time investigative functions which lead to the widening of the margin of error data should not be undermined. Moreover, a room is designed to cater for ambiguities and officers’ space to countercheck predictions against the impediment of common sense. Chapter 6 “How We Police,” discusses the existing relationship between epistemologies needed in transformation data mining strategy and the execution of existing data.

This chapter also clarifies the correlation of suspicion drawn in solving a mathematical problem of probability and its relation to big data analysis. Ferguson recognizes the prognostic probability nature visible in all police suspicion. The author discusses probable causes and

highlights the transition from small data commonly known as officer's street knowledge to big data and how they may misappropriate 20th-century interpretations of legal terms which are constructed to safeguard the interest of people against abuse from police. The most troubling issue in this chapter is that the scope of data version of probable events is generalized instead of being individualized. As a consequence, this mess has triggered several challenges facing the civil rights associations and members of ethnic and disadvantaged minority communities that have more than enough times suffered under the hands of police abuse (Katyal, 2019).

The third section with a wide range of information is embedded in chapters 7 to 10 which provide the author's analytic position on the troubling trends witnessed in the surveillance section of patrolling. Chapter 7, "Black Data," should be regarded as the lynchpin of the whole book since it gives a summary of Ferguson's understanding of the troubling nature of big data patrol as currently executed. The issue of concern here is that the black component is assigned more than enough duties to implement (Kaminski, 2017). At one-point black is seen describing the disparate effect of data policing that is controlled brown and black classes. The problem is evidenced by opacity contained in black boxed systems of data surveillance. The black further laments about the destructions of legal judgments implicated by logics derived from big data notions. As much as this information brings fundamental connections within the body chapters contained in the book, it also appears to be devoid of inevitable thinness of a unified concept being used to address the issue of transparency law and race in a single fell swoop. Although at this juncture the book displays productive insights such as a conceptual discretion between accountability and transparency that is essential in behooving any decision maker to understand, the reader is more likely to notice lack of conceptual depth in the analysis.

Absolutely, the most vital contribution of the book is “blue data”, not the black data as many would imagine. The blue data is the title subject of Chapter 8. Blue data explores the inversion of big data patrolling approaches in predicting the abuses committed by police on individuals. In this chapter, Ferguson nailed optimism about the insights drawn from big data analytics in relation to the primary subject of the book. As a result, the same principles are applied in monitoring and surveilling urban populations, especially when turned internally about the line of officers patrolling. Ferguson displays various instances where blue data analytics are already being advanced, including a scenario where the literature of criminology refers to entire crime maps. Entire full crime maps are a term used to mean locational tracking subjected to police officers on duty especially in the fields. The implementation of algorithms that can be used to flag officers in the field who are at risk and complaints raised due to the use of force by the officer. Chapter 8 also covers the analyses of stop level hit rises and associated percentages for stops and searches that are unwarranted.

The chapter further displays information about the use of ubiquitous and real-time surveillance to monitor problems reported in policing events. Ferguson predicts that there is a possibility of the Fraternal Order of police and field officers to oppose these new measures of oversight although he does not give a detailed plan that can work as a roadmap to the implementation of these systems other than using fiats. The author notes “It might be the event that officers will the invasive feeling contained in the big data surveillance, however, as it is common with other consumer surveillance, the creepy concept of the individual data intrusion does not necessarily affect the predictive value of the policy.” Nonetheless, it is at this point that the reader will find the summary of Ferguson to be useful in anyone enticed by such a

relationship because the connections between big data and police reform surveillance are eventually realized (Verstraete et al., 2017).

Chapters 9 and 10 with subject titles “Bright Data” and “No Data” are a continuation of the conversation. The ideology of bright data appears to be a bit ambiguous, but Chapter 9 draws the concept that big data policing is so far successful in the fight against identifying persons and communities that have passed through the brutal hands of police due to disinvestment, but unsuited to tackle the issue of longstanding and massive problems. This is summarized by an argument that reacts to predicted crime are not aligned themselves. In contrast, Chapter 10 explores the problems that emerge because of the quality of predictive data. The inaccuracies of data that is obtained compromised sources lead to increase of biases in the society. The concluding chapters of the book propose that agencies are meant to enforce the law should take part in surveillance conferences where data-driven technologies would be evaluated and audited by the community. As he approaches the end, Ferguson gives two fundamental questions that may be used in model such as conferences to shade some lights on accountability and transparency. The author’s argument that part policy, common sense and part ethical suggests that the leadership of police should stand firm in defense of policies they make using the adopted technology. Shapiro (2018) suggests that this involves the problems the adopted technology is supposed to address the input that may influence the entire system and the ability of technology to evaluate and test the accuracy and protect the associated disparities. The concluding parts of the book also highlight whether the technology adopted will respect the autonomy of the community it will affect.

<sup>4</sup> *The Rise of Big Data Policing* is such a comprehensive and smart review of the 21st century of big data policing. It proposes beneficial policy recommendations that are easy to

execute. Moreover, Ferguson's inquisitiveness of the practical leadership between technocratic reform and police abuse will act as an enrichment of surveillance studies the potential scholars, as the nationals who spark the incorporation of advanced technologies are more often overlooked through the introduction of new abuses. That said the book fails to inquire about this current relationship. Ferguson does not give credit to conceptual work that needs to be done to prove the legitimacy of the ubiquitous surveillance systems. As a result, it eschews, for instance, the anticipatory logics of war on terror in the history of police surveillance. Consequentially, the book does not pay credence to the possibility of technocrats to be serving a genuine function within an expansive paradigm towards a big data-driven securitization of the space found in the urban



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