

Landscapes of Loss and Recovery: The Anthropology of Police-Community Relations and Harm Reduction

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In Seattle, Washington, people dedicated to street outreach services and changing arrest patterns among low-level drug offenders and commercial sex workers are involved in an exciting program: Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD). LEAD represents a collaborative project of the United States Department of Corrections, Seattle Police Department, King County Crisis Diversion Facility, the Defender Association Racial Disparity Project, and ACLU of Washington State. The authors initiated qualitative assessment of the program in the summer of 2012; along with other fieldwork activities, interview guides were developed for interviews with LEAD participants, case managers, and police officers to assess the effectiveness of harm reduction features of the program. The research found that LEAD mediated between two opposing perspectives: community members (neighbors, business owners) who seek an intensification of police surveillance and more arrests versus law enforcement officers and officials who contend that no more arrests can be made because of dwindling criminal justice resources. This article explores contestation over urban space and how LEAD can function beyond its immediate goal of channeling clients away from prosecution and incarceration to include bridging divides that threaten to destabilize neighborhood-police relations.

Key words: harm reduction, qualitative program evaluation, arrest-referral, homelessness, nonviolent drug offenses, Seattle

Introduction

In Seattle, Washington, people dedicated to street outreach services, exposing racial disparities in arrest patterns, and changing those arrest patterns among low-level drug “offenders” and commercial sex workers are involved in an exciting program: Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD). LEAD, first piloted in 2011 and currently operating

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in the Belltown and Skyway neighborhoods of Seattle (see Map 1), represents a collaborative project of the United States Department of Corrections, the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, the Seattle City Attorney’s Office, Seattle Police Department (SPD), King County Sheriff’s Office, the King County Executive, the Mayor’s office, King County Crisis Diversion Facility, the Defender Association Racial Disparity Project, the ACLU of Washington State, and community members. The inspiration for LEAD came from “arrest-referral” programs that have been implemented in nearly every police department in the United Kingdom; one study of 128 individuals involved in the United Kingdom programs revealed a “47% reduction in the use of opiates and a 73% reduction in crack use” (Nyrop 2011a). Program participation also resulted in reduced recidivism—“67% of those in the program were re-arrested less often following referral to the program than before” (Nyrop 2011a). According to the LEAD National Support Director and co-author, Kris Nyrop, the Seattle program “started with a simple question: ‘what if we could make arrest the strategy of absolute last resort for police officers when they’re encountering individuals engaged in low-level drug activity?’” (Le Ray 2017: para. 3). A “pre-booking diversion” program, LEAD relies on police officers to redirect offenders of nonviolent crimes from arrest to community-based services instead of jail and prosecution.

We initiated qualitative assessment of the program in the summer of 2012, developing interview guides for interviews with LEAD participants, case managers, and police officers to assess the effectiveness of harm reduction features of the program. An early finding of the evaluative work was the role of LEAD in mediating between two opposing perspectives: community

Map 1. Downtown Seattle



members (neighbors, business owners) who seek an intensification of police surveillance and more arrests versus law enforcement officers and officials who contend that no more arrests can be made because of dwindling criminal justice resources.

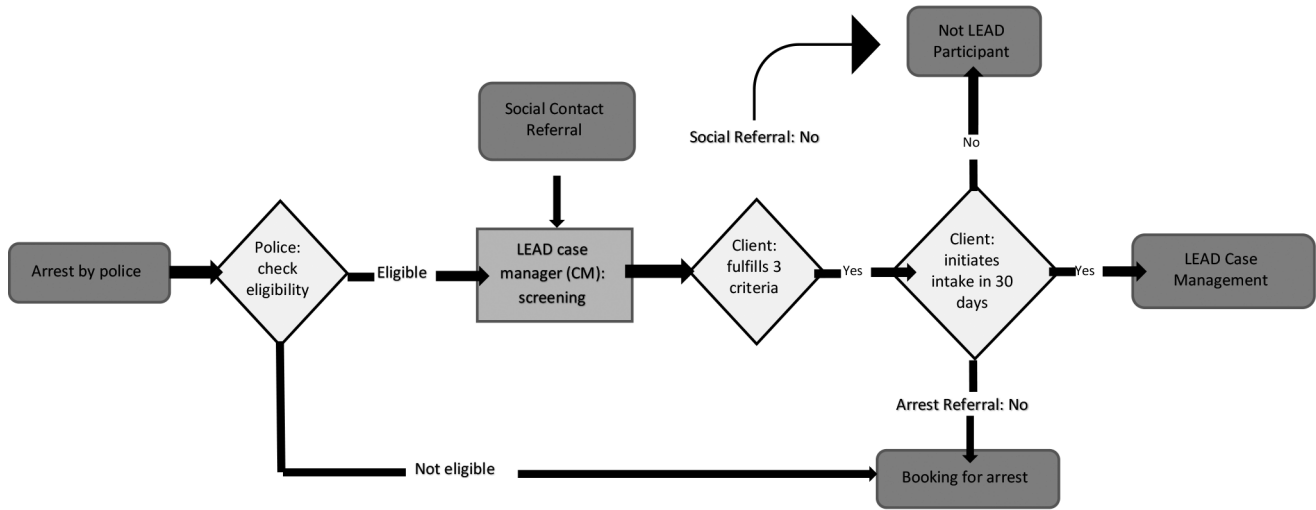
Across a landscape of contested space, characterized by competing public safety and spatial interests, we show how LEAD functions beyond its immediate goal of channeling clients away from prosecution and incarceration to include bridging divides that threaten to destabilize neighborhood-police relations. The article foregrounds narratives of loss and recovery from the same streets where, nearly fifty years ago, James Spradley (1970) laid the foundation for an activist ethnography in urban America. In the end, our goal is to reveal how it is possible for disparate constituencies who live, breathe, and work in the city, often with competing interests around the use of space and with strong ideas about social problems (how they are identified, defined, and

solved), to participate in constructive dialogues for change. We apply anthropological theories of cityscapes to explain those divides—to be explicit about why communication breaks down before it even begins—with the sensibility that exposing system flaws does not mean that clear victims and villains are made.

The Diversion Process

It's a Saturday night in downtown Seattle. Reflected in the rain-slicked streets are the red and blue lights of a police cruiser. Inside, an officer is running a records-check on an individual carrying a few grams of drugs. The records come back: no felony convictions for violent offenses, no suspicion of promoting prostitution or involving minors in drug crimes. The cop gets out of the car and offers the individual two options. One is King County jail. The other is referral to a case manager with the LEAD Program (Le Ray 2017: para. 1).

Chart 1. LEAD Diversion Chart



Qualifying Arrests	LEAD Eligibility	Social Contact Referral	Client Criteria	Case Management
Drug possession/use	No past violent crime record	Police contact, no arrest	Release information	Housing
Low-level dealing		Concerned family member	Provide contact information	Treatment
Sex work or petty theft to support addiction		Local business owner	Not return to location of contact for 24 hours	Employment
		Community member	Initiates intake with CM within 30 days	Contact with family
				More...

To become a LEAD client, an individual is first apprehended for one of the following offenses: drug possession or use, drug dealing, sex work, or petty theft. If the individual does not have a history of violent crime and the police officer believes that the person could benefit from LEAD, the individual will have two choices: (1) get booked for the crime and potentially face a felony charge or jail time or (2) talk to a LEAD case manager. This is what LEAD directors call the “two door choice.” Door 1: jail. Door 2: LEAD. No doubt, the power of the arrestee to make an informed, independent choice is undermined by coercion. The only choice besides jail becomes the LEAD program. However, what is required by individuals at the point of diversion is minimal: a short conversation with a case manager during which basic contact information is provided, a release of information of criminal history is signed, and a commitment not to return to their place of contact with the police officer for twenty-four hours is made. At this point, the client walks free. Following this initial encounter, the client has thirty days to initiate contact with the LEAD office if they elect to pursue program benefits. If not, there are no consequences (other than not receiving

LEAD benefits and possibly not having the option to divert from arrest in the future). And, to the credit of LEAD program directors and case managers in response to criticisms over the coercive nature of the process, the program has evolved to allow clients to join through “social contact” by initiating referrals on their own or by asking for a direct referral by family members, business owners, or police officers in advance of even the threat of arrest.

Aims of LEAD

A precursor to LEAD was the 1811 Eastlake “Housing-First” facility (aka “1811,”) which opened in Seattle in 2005 to shelter chronically homeless substance abusers without the imposition of abstinence or treatment requirements. The goal was to apply harm reduction strategies (i.e., focus on individual and community wellness rather than exclusively on sobriety) to encourage change among addicts, while reducing their reliance on emergency medical services, hospital-based medical services, and law enforcement (Kuehn 2012; Larimer et al. 2009). The program became a

Figure 1. Welcome to Belltown



model for others across the country, showing a total cost rate reduction of 53 percent per month for housed participants (an average of \$2,449) compared to wait-list controls over the first six months of participation, with financial benefits increasing relative to the length of time beyond six months that participants remained housed by the program (Larimer et al. 2009).

Experts in mental health and substance abuse prevention, including those with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, applaud the achievements of supportive housing programs like 1811. But after “housing first,” some ask, what is second? “Housing alone can’t resolve some of the challenges chronically homeless individuals face. In addition to dealing with chronic medical conditions, individuals with psychiatric or substance abuse problems face societal stigma and may be estranged from family” (Kuehn 2012:18). And, as shown by Luhrmann (2008) in her work among homeless women with psychotic disorder in Chicago, offers of housing assistance are often resisted when they are contingent on psychiatric diagnosis, medication requirements, and stringent residential rules. Yet, despite such complexities (and knowledge thereof) in how services are designed and received, to handle offenders (with what some contend is a moral rather than rational legal code), police and the judiciary rely on traditional criminal sanctions—booking, prosecuting, and jailing. However, approaching low-level drug offenses and prostitution in these ways only moves a relatively small fraction of offenders off the streets, for brief periods of time and at a significantly higher cost than non-criminal justice system interventions (Aos, Miller, and Drake 2006; Public Defender Association 2011). It diverts increasingly limited law enforcement

resources from more serious crimes, with little to no improvement in neighborhood quality of life. Absent other interventions, it does not reposition offenders to make positive life changes. Instead, it creates or reinforces connections to other offenders in custody and burdens individuals with court records that become barriers to housing, employment, and education. Moreover, traditional drug law enforcement has a well-documented disparate racial impact (Alexander 2010; Cole 1999, 2001, 2011; Hagan and Coleman 2001; Human Rights Watch 2009; NPR 2011). In Seattle, Blacks were more than twenty-one times more likely to be arrested for selling serious drugs than Whites in 2005-2006, despite the fact that multiple data sources suggest that Whites are the majority of sellers and users of serious drugs in Seattle (NPR 2011; Public Defender Association 2011).

In Seattle, concerns began to emerge around conventional law enforcement tactics that result in a “revolving door” phenomenon and homeless alcoholics who were “cycling in and out of emergency departments and the criminal justice system” (Kuehn 2012:17), with a rapidly growing number dying on the streets (Coleman 2017). A survey by the Seattle West Precinct identified fifty-four individuals most frequently contacted by police in Belltown who had been collectively arrested 2,704 times (Seattle PI).

The majority of these offenders live in Belltown shelters, assisted-living facilities, or jail-alternative housing where drug-related criminal activity is endemic and supervision by housing staff is reportedly inconsistent or lacking altogether. So, while housing support had succeeded in providing some relief to some people, it was clearly not sufficient. LEAD client “DH” (July 31, 2012) described his experiences of chronic arrest and a worn safety net this way:

I'd been arrested thirty-two times.... They want to send you to treatment and then they don't want to help you. They put you back on the street. I can't go to treatment to try and stay clean, but I go in and come out the same way; it's the same thing.

In a similar vein, LEAD client "BS" (July 27, 2013) explained:

I've been downtown about 22 years now. Went to prison, got out, went to prison, got out and went to workplace. Got me a job, got an apartment in Seatac. I lost that because I got hooked back on drugs and that lasted for about five years on the streets.... A lot of things I was doing, I knew it was wrong but I had to do it to survive, you know? I wasn't hurting anybody or doing violent crimes. I thought I had to survive.

For the sake of people like DH and BS, instead of burying their heads in the sand on issues of recidivism and racial bias in drug arrests, SPD narcotics officials approached the ACLU and the Public Defender Association (co-author Nyrop's justice reform nonprofit organization) for suggestions on how to do things differently (Le Ray 2017). By 2009, a diverse group of stakeholders looking at the intersection of public safety, rising costs, inefficiencies of conventional criminal justice interventions, and chronic suffering among arrestees agreed to pilot a pre-booking diversion program such as LEAD.

In terms of "big picture" goals, LEAD is designed to reduce the number of low-level drug offenders entering the criminal justice system in the first place; redirect public safety resources to more pressing priorities, such as serious and violent crime; improve individual and community quality of life through research-based, public health-oriented interventions; and sustain funding for alternative interventions by capturing and reinvesting criminal justice system savings. "When it launched in 2011, LEAD was the nation's first pre-arrest initiative for low-level drug offenders. Now, nine other cities across the country, from New Mexico to Maine, have modeled programs after it" (Le Ray 2017: para. 12). At the time of this writing, an additional eighteen sites were preparing to launch within one to two years. As a result of these initial successes, LEAD serves to maintain Seattle's reputation as a forerunner in crime prevention innovation (Johnson 2012).

Program Evaluation and Methods Training

Since summer 2012 and continuing into the present, undergraduate anthropology majors from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, have worked as LEAD interns, collecting qualitative data through in-depth client interviews and participant observation in the LEAD program offices and operational meetings. The over 350 LEAD clients and student researchers have conducted seventy-six interviews, sixty-seven of which are unique, all audio recorded and transcribed; through a process of ongoing analysis, interviews have been broken into four broad categories: conditions of arrest/diversion, police relations, history with social

services, and personal goals (see Appendix 1: LEAD Client Interview Guide). In addition to generating interview data, the authors have compiled and analyzed notes from Belltown Business Association (BBA) meetings and LEAD Operational meetings (obtained through public-access meeting minutes as well as gathered through participant observation by the authors and student researchers) and reviewed sources of local, regional, and national news about Seattle crime and prevention activities to provide a sociopolitical context for our work. The data comprise a source of information for program evaluators at the University of Washington for use in reports to funders and for grant proposals. From the outset, the authors have worked with a rotating team of students to design evaluation tools and conduct data collection. Along the way, students received training in ethnographic methods and urban anthropology and have worked in street outreach services such as needle exchange to connect with clients through direct service delivery. Beginning in summer 2017, students became involved in data analysis (see Appendix 2: LEAD Codebook). One Whitman student even had her cinematic debut in a PBS Frontline documentary on the United States drug wars, in which LEAD was the crowning piece (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/chasing-heroin/>).

Claiming Public as Private: Contested Rights to City Space

Soon after the publication of *You Owe Yourself a Drunk*, James Spradley's 1970 seminal work for the field of urban anthropology among Skid Row vagrants in Seattle, the "war on drugs" began in this country, setting into motion what has been characterized as an assault on low-level drug offenders that resulted in an exponential rise in penal populations. Critical of a system that repeatedly punishes a small group of offenders who lack the meager funds (reported to be \$20 in the late 1960s) to spring themselves from the "drunk charge," Spradley paved the way for a political economic approach to studying homelessness as well as an activist anthropology. His work challenges policy makers, politicians, law enforcement, and mainstream Americans to re-examine assumptions about the urban poor—assumptions that reveal the cultural values of those in power surrounding definitions of private and public space, civility, and self-determination. Seen by Spradley in the 1960s and 1970s, and still obvious today, is the extent to which his "urban nomads" are viewed through the lens of dominant American values of sobriety, self-control, and specific ideas of "home," in turn promoting a sense of propriety over public space among residents who demand greater police surveillance and intervention. Simply put, "public" and "private" are blurred when vagrants occupy city spaces in ways that offend. Prophetically, Spradley (1970:252) explained that the "drunk charge covers a multitude of sins—sleeping in public places, urinating in alleys, drinking on docks, sitting in bars, begging on streets, claiming the public places of our cities as one's home.... [The urban nomad] is punished for the crime of poverty...."

Decades have passed since Spradley's original work, during which time the nonviolent crimes of low-level drug offenders have continued to be unduly and unreasonably punished, leaving them with thwarted options for true recovery and reentry. At the same time, public impressions of the "threats" to personal safety posed by these offenders have risen; as more and more members of society are incarcerated for vagrancy and addiction, so too do fears intensify among "regular" citizens that danger lurks around every city corner. "Take back the city" movements have galvanized the citizenry and triggered official responses all the while criminal justice researchers have dispossessed conventional prevention and punitive measures of "success" (Cole 2011; Harrison 2001; Tonry 1995; Warner and Kramer 2009; Wilson, Mitchell, and Mackenzie 2006).

In 2010, the United States experienced a decline (0.3%) in combined (state and federal) incarceration rates for the first time since 1972 ($N=5,575$) (Guerino, Harrison, and Sabol 2012). Still, from 1972 to 2009, overall incarceration rates quadrupled, attributed mostly to drug-related arrests, even though studies suggest stronger correlations between alcohol abuse and violent crime than illicit drug use and crime (see Martin et al. 2004). Moreover, declines do not necessarily reflect changes in policy or attitudes toward police practice but rather budgetary constraints and cuts that have come in the form of prison closures, intensified burdens on local jails, overcrowding, and laid off workers. Sometimes, running at odds with persistent dominant sentiment—that drug crimes should be punishable to the full extent of the law—law enforcement is looking to public health models for solutions to nonviolent crime such as diversion to substance abuse treatment in lieu of incarceration (Cole 2011; Martin et al. 2004).

Safe Space: Resident Perspectives

To Spradley, the street corner is the living room of the urban nomad. With vivid detail, *You Owe Yourself a Drunk* puts that living room on display for its readers. Since his work, urban anthropologists have given theoretical teeth that were missing from Spradley's observational scenes, arguing that it is not enough to "document how structural forces shape urban experience" (Low 1996:386). Still, Spradley ushered in a decade of empirically rich urban research that exposed the literal and metaphorical barriers of "the divided city"—divided along lines of race and class. Such lines are especially apparent when city residents mobilize to construct their surroundings to meet collective aesthetic standards. Initiatives such as "graffiti cleanup" (BBA Board Meeting Notes, February 21, 2012), art installations on vacant storefronts (BBA Board Meeting Notes, March 20, 2012), and "CleanScapes" for parking pay station cleanup (BBA Board Meeting Notes April 17, 2012), get linked to public safety when the Department of Justice and SPD are asked to intervene by patrolling "hot spots" for open-air drug markets and installing new street lights and surveillance cameras (BBA Board Meeting Notes, March 20, 2012). Mind you, calls for greater surveillance of hot spots are typically not

Figure 2. Belltown Police Patrols



for reasons that are related to any moral objection to drug use but instead because drug and alcohol addiction, particularly among the poor, can lead to behaviors that unsettle peoples' ideas about who gets to do what and where.

Residents eager to revitalize Seattle neighborhoods for their own piece of the commercial-tourism pie can actively manipulate public memory of the use of space(s) (Ruble 1992; Rutheiser 1996; Sieber 1990). The Belltown neighborhood is no exception. As Castells theorized in 1996 with the idea of the "informational city," rather than serving to increase positive interactions between disparate groups, technologies (that determine, reproduce, and represent dominant images, values, and interests) intensify racism and xenophobia. In turn, a "fortressed" city is produced as the built environment assumes the form of social relations with wealthier and more stable residents establishing the aura of privacy through "patterns of avoidance of social contact" (Low 1996:397). New social imaginaries lead to new spatial constraints on those groups of people (e.g., street addicts, homeless, sex workers) who present a threat to the "privacy" and control desired by other residents (Ruddick 1996; Waterson 1993).

Social boundaries divided along conceptual lines of public and private only intensify a sense of danger that, in turn, leads to fear among residents that they, then, are compelled to squelch (Merry 2010). The spaces themselves are not necessarily locations of criminal activity, yet mental maps of danger are nonetheless constructed based on the "kinds of people" (Merry 2010:127) who occupy the spaces. Avoidance of social interactions with the people who are, indeed, in these spaces exacerbates the feeling that they are to be feared and controlled. Moreover, the residents in Belltown, rather than treating publicness and privateness as a continuum, carve public and private along dichotomous lines—a conceptual move that serves to encourage dictates over how each is to be used, when, and by whom. "Rules"

Figure 3. See It, Say It



surrounding use of space become entrenched even as certain members of the “public” (those deemed unworthy to judge the norms of access, agency, and interest because they lack political, financial, and social will/rights) are left outside of the decision to establish particular boundaries.

In an interview with KOMO 4 News (2012) in Seattle, Washington, resident and Belltown Business Association (BBA) member, Tim Gaydos was nothing short of hyperbolic when he said the following about “lawless” behavior in his downtown neighborhood:

People are getting killed, assaulted, injured, murdered. And, people are living here, are raising their families here, people are doing business here.

Yet, according to another resident who was likewise addressing the so-called “string of violence” in Belltown, “The only thing you have to worry about is street people and drug dealers” (KOMO 4 News 2012). This sentiment is echoed in a report of a Downtown Seattle Foundation study, which found that the number two reason “why people do not come to Downtown” (just behind “parking” and followed by the “weather”) was panhandling (Belltown Business Association meeting minutes, December 20, 2011). Represented here is

a common conflation of homelessness and panhandling with violent crimes under narratives of general lawlessness—narratives that have ignited community pressure on public officials to institute new policies around crime prevention, including increased police patrols. Gaydos and other members of the BBA, thus, wrote a letter to the Mayor, City Council, and Seattle Police Department (SPD), “pleading for a crack-down...” According to Gaydos, the only thing standing in the way of greater police presence on downtown streets is will. “They are able to do that. We just need them to make this a priority.” Gaydos’s concerns stem in part from a “see it, say it” civic crime-reporting project adopted by residents and business owners, the Community Online Reporting Program (CORP), which involves accessing interactive law enforcement maps and completing online forms about suspected criminal activity (see <http://belltownba.org/public-safety/> and <http://www.seattle.gov/police/report/>).

In the approach to LEAD, the SPD began what at the time was being called “the most ambitious effort of its kind in the nation,” Tweets-by-beat:

...[T]ransforming the pen and ink of the old police blotter into the bits and bytes of the digital age. It allows residents—including, presumably, criminals—to know in almost real time about many of the large and small transgressions, crises, emergencies, and downright weirdness in the neighborhoods (Johnson 2012: para. 3).

In addition to SPD-sponsored projects like Tweets by Beat, residents are encouraged to upload amateur videos of criminal activity to YouTube—done in part to give evidence to support calls for increased police surveillance but also with the intention of sparking collective outcry over what is considered inappropriate use of shared spaces. Implied in the dominant narratives broadcasted over television, radio, and Internet news and social network sites are constructed distinctions between “decent” and proper (e.g., children playing) and “illegal” or improper (e.g., homeless loitering) uses of space (Anderson 1999). In turn, certain groups of people who deem themselves proper users of public space because they are law abiding and “pay” to live in the neighborhood, ascribe metaphors of privacy to what are otherwise municipal spaces. By claiming to “own” that which is public, residents and business owners assume a vocal stake in how and when police intervention occurs.

Secure Space: Law Enforcement and Leadership Perspectives

Pushing back against discursive discrimination while not dismissing the concerns of business owners and community representatives, Carl Marquardt, legal counsel for the Seattle Mayor’s Office, noted, “I think the problem that we see is that there’s illegal behavior and other behavior, which may or may not be illegal that makes people uncomfortable. I’m talking about behavior that creates a fear of crime or a sense of lack of security” (Lee 2012:10). What Marquardt is addressing includes a sociological phenomenon well-documented in

the urban studies literature: despite evidence that cities can be, and indeed are, often characterized by strong social ties between individuals and networks of people, prevailing perceptions of “the city” are nonetheless dominated by a fear of strangers (see Merry 2010). And, along with a general sense that one-is-surrounded-by-strangers comes a feeling that those strangers are unpredictable and dangerous. Yet, that sense of danger may have more to do with social boundaries between racial, ethnic, and class groups than with interactions across boundaries or real suspicious/illegal behaviors. National statistics show a “discrepancy between fear and the chance of victimization: although fear focuses on the random, unpredictable attack of the stranger, the risk of assault and murder by friends is far greater” (Merry 2010:124).

Still, because social boundaries between groups do exist more often in urban than rural settings, a sense of anonymity in fact heightens the risk of experiencing a crime or harm of some sort. This makes for legitimate demands on law enforcement; however, because the majority of crimes that occupy police time and clog the judicial system are of a nonviolent nature, officials are caught between a rock and a hard place when it comes to deciding how to allocate strained resources. A balancing act ensues in which officials must show appropriate and active response to public concerns, while realizing that the risks of true danger to individuals at the hands of vagrants is minimal. Adding to this charged and complex situation is the (frequently ignored) fact that vagrants, too, have rights to police protection.

Ian Goodhew, Deputy Director of the King County Prosecuting Attorney Office, added that the primary concern of people who live in Belltown “is not whether John Doe got twenty years in prison for selling cocaine. They just don’t want John Doe and the other twenty people who were selling cocaine on the street corner in front of their business doing it again” (Lee 2012:10). It was in this contentious climate that LEAD was presented at community forums, where it became clear to officials that business owners and residents saw the Seattle Police Department’s willingness to facilitate a new law enforcement program like pre-booking diversion as a meaningful step toward improving “their” streets. There was hope, then, that at the nexus of what is desired by way of crime prevention and what can feasibly be done, lies a shift in attitude from punitive measures to harm reduction.

Indeed, during a report to a meeting of the Belltown Business Association at the start of the LEAD pilot (November 15, 2011), King County Prosecuting Attorney, Daniel Satterberg was described as saying, “As with many public agencies, his office has been undergoing staff reductions and has lost 51 positions including 37 prosecutors and 15 staff [sic] over recent years. He indicated that the probation system, which used to be robust, has also been drastically cut in the past few years and is in danger of being eliminated. He also discussed the changes in the mental health system in the State whereby the streets have become the ‘default dumping ground’ for the mentally ill...” (BBA Meeting Minutes, November 15, 2011). The reality, then, of funding and resource retractions has meant that the hands

of law enforcement agents are tied when it comes to following standard procedures for dealing with drug and sex offenses. However, this awareness of a need for a different approach to public safety and criminal justice does not change the fact that most people arrested on Seattle streets do not commit violent crimes. The salient concern remains how to solve “criminal activity” that amounts to nothing more than homeless addicts having no place to go for sleep or help of any kind, such as drug and alcohol treatment. This results in a population of vagrants—eventual LEAD clients among them—who end up existing along a continuum of violence—one theorized in anthropology as “lumpen abuse”—that “highlights how social and embodied suffering are deeply connected to larger structures of power and hegemony creating multiple levels of social, interpersonal, and individual violence”:

[Lumpen abuse] sets the individual experience of intolerable levels of suffering among the socially vulnerable (which often manifests itself in the form of interpersonal violence and self-destruction) in the context of structural forces (political, economic, institutional, cultural) and embodied manifestations of distress (morbidity, physical pain, and emotional craving). (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009:16)

From this theoretical lens, the impact of LEAD actually appears two-fold: first, LEAD functions on the individual level to address everyday violences—the daily, personal, social experiences of suffering among individuals; and, second, on a structural level, by introducing progressive change in Seattle policing protocols and intervention practices (Ash 2017).

Public-as-Private Space: “Offender” Perspectives

LEAD represents a unique opportunity to reach a typically concealed population, “hidden” so to speak from “agencies of social control” (Watters and Biernacki 1989:417) and hard-to-reach using traditional data collection strategies like community health surveys. Rapport and trust established between LEAD clients and case managers, who may have their own testimonies of addiction and recovery, sets the stage for interviews that move beyond an inhibitive structure to a place of emotional, lifeway narrative. Thus, borrowing from the methodological toolbox of public health anthropologists working in the area of HIV risk prevention among illicit drug users, the interview guide for LEAD clients was designed to elicit their “war stories,” or “stylized narratives of street experiences” (Singer et al. 2001:589). What emerged were narrative constructions by LEAD client interviewees that revealed a sense of order and rationality within lives marked by disruptions and chaos. And, while embellishments were present (not uncommon in stories told about long-term suffering on the streets; see Bourgois 1995 and Singer et al. 2001), the narrative formations constructed by LEAD clients nonetheless reveal truths about what is important for them to share and what they believe is important for those involved in their process of recovery to, likewise, hear.

Among LEAD participants who were interviewed for this project, all reported years of interactions with the criminal justice system for vagrancy associated with alcoholism, drug use and sale, or prostitution. Many had experiences attempting recovery and working with social services including housing and food support networks. Yet, shared sentiment held that attempts at rehabilitation, even when shelter was provided, failed because punitive restrictions such as drug- and alcohol-free mandates for shelter residence were imposed. Moreover, interviewees scratch their heads over questions of rights to access public space. Ultimately, since they have no place else to go, they feel as if their hands are tied when it comes to devising or accessing alternatives to living their private lives in public. As LEAD participant “DL” (July 30, 2012) remarked:

We exist, we aren't going nowhere.... This is shared space, so we got every right to be about here. Like looking at this poster even, right here [points to the poster on the wall at the LEAD program office], my point, 19,176 people homeless, annual one-night count Friday, January 25, 2008, that many people, 12 people on benches, 212 people on structures, 228 people on streets, 140 people in doorways, 29 at a bus stop, 239 under bridges, in other places, 156 in railways and other places. I'm just saying, ...I never had a constant support system; I never had a sober social support system or network...I didn't have a clean and sober place to live....

Other LEAD participants, “JB” (August 3, 2012) and “WJ” (July 24, 2012) offered the following about how being poor and an addict leads to a vicious cycle of having no place to go other than the streets, where one is bound to get wrapped up in “using”:

You know what I'm saying, it's just, I got trapped back in the jungle, ...the concrete jungle. I got trapped back in it, and I got lost. I got lost somewhere you know maybe I took the wrong turn, and I wasn't being brave. I just got lost. (JB)

You know, I knew I didn't want to use, but it was a little more difficult that I was having to stay in shelters in tent city and stuff like that and those are not good places because there are still people on drugs up in there. So I am always going to be enticed by somebody who wants me to go take them to get some dope or if I come up with some money I might get dope myself. (WJ)

Shifting Perspectives: From Criminalization to Harm Reduction

Many stakeholders in the Belltown LEAD project view it as offering a potentially more effective and less costly strategy for managing street-level criminal activity than conventional approaches. As Seattle Police officer sergeant Tom Yoon described, “LEAD is trying to address the revolving door of the drug offenders who are constantly being arrested in the same area. Incarceration has not deterred them, so an alternate method [of] dealing with the chronic repeat offender is needed” (Lee 2012:9). Moreover, there is consensus among other stakeholders that not only is the traditional criminal

justice system approach expensive and ineffective, it does not address the underlying causes that drive individuals to commit low-level drug crimes and enter into the cycle of incarceration. For instance, Major James Graddon with the King County Sheriff's Office stated that the traditional approach is “not answering the overall societal problems. It is not getting to the root of the problem and [there are] the addiction issues, the mental health issues...” (Lee 2012:9).

Sharing Space

Designers of the program knew that in addition to community buy-in, transparency and accountability would be key components of LEAD's success, especially since a problem of perceived crime and security among the public (regardless of actual crime rates) along with a lack of confidence in police responses to criminal activity had been identified. Thus, core features of LEAD include regular operational workgroup meetings and stakeholder access to program performance reports as well as to program staff for recommendations surrounding outreach activities and locations. Of these features, the operational meetings, which occur approximately every two weeks and focus on providing community members with updates on the program (e.g., how many clients are participating, what program features are under review, and what outcomes clients are reporting), have gone a long way in encouraging *collaboration, common interest, and trust* (emphasis added; Lee 2012). Project Directors have noted distinct cultural and attitudinal shifts among meeting participants—Defender Association staff (including Kris Nyrop), case managers and their supervisor, two County prosecutors, an ACLU attorney, social workers, and representatives from the City Attorney's office, the Seattle Police Department, Department of Corrections, the Belltown Community Council, and the Community Advisory Board, which is made up of business owners, healthcare providers, and residents. An interesting, if not unexpected finding of the LEAD assessment, and explored in Teresa Lee's Stakeholder Analysis (2012), has been a convergence of social workers' and police officers' perceptions of and attitudes toward offenders: rather than seeing individual offenders as the “problem,” consensus emerged in appreciation of the limited life options, inadequate social support, or impaired personal capacity that leave some members of society reliant on drug or sex-work activity for survival. Simply put, typically incongruent constituents are dialoging about adopting a public health framework rather than approaching drug activity as a criminal justice issue.

Ron Jackson, executive director of Evergreen Treatment Services (ETS), described the target population as being “less ‘criminals’ than people who were sick and weren't getting good primary care, were living outside not because they wanted to live outside, but because they were having difficulty going through the various hoops to get into housing.” Likewise, James Pugel, Assistant Chief of Seattle Police (with different motivations for supporting LEAD than Jackson) explained:

We have the “have-nots” who would love to get help. They just don’t have the money or the capacity or the family support. You have the “cannots” who are mentally unable to do it. And then, you have the “will-nots.” And, the “will-nots” are the hardened bad guys. Most of these people in Belltown, they’re just the “cannots” or the “have-nots....” These are dependent people who have a pretty big chance [provided by LEAD]. And, many have a good desire to turn their life around (Lee 2012:11).

So rather than assuming that constituents related to the LEAD project, such as police, case managers, and community members (e.g., business owners) represent a united front (against the “offenders”—another supposedly unified group), LEAD operates on the premise of great divides between these groups and sees its function as shrinking those divides, at least enough to hear each other across the chasm.

Seattle’s Neo-Nomad

Returning to Seattle today, Spradley would likely find that his descriptions of lifeways and feelings of helplessness among poor alcoholics still apply, except that women would necessarily be part of his sample, and “drunkenness” as probable cause of arrest may be applied alongside “street disorder” and disturbances, possession of controlled substances, and prostitution. Similar issues associated with arrestees—homelessness, chemical dependency, untreated mental illness, racial profiling—persist. What Spradley (1970:4-5) wrote nearly five decades ago still pertains:

...[T]hat the great need of our times is to renew our institutions. But they can only be renewed effectively, renewed so they serve all members of our nation, if we have a full appreciation for the pluralistic, multicultural nature of American society. ...America is faced, not simply with an urban crisis, but with a grand experiment in human community: can we create a society which recognizes the dignity of diverse cultural patterns? Can we renew our institutions so they are truly human with the full realization that there are a variety of ways to be human?

Such words resonate with LEAD advocates who embrace principles of harm reduction to respond to crises of the individual as well as the social; rather than penalizing or denying services to someone because they do not achieve abstinence, for example, the individual at risk of harming themselves or their community is engaged “where they are” along a continuum of stages of change (Norcross, Krebs, and Prochaska 2011). LEAD works with clients to design individual intervention plans; connect them to legal advocacy and leadership-development training; and provide them with intensive case management, peer outreach, counseling, and comprehensive direct services (e.g., housing, treatment, education, job training, and expense stipends). For many, LEAD represents an opportunity to receive a benefit such as shelter for the first time in years without the threat of removal because of continued alcohol or substance use; however, participants must demonstrate signs of progress toward reducing the harm

caused by their behavior or, otherwise, chance having their services withdrawn (Nyrop 2011b). As LEAD participant “JB” (August 3, 2012) explained:

Our case workers, you know, help us, uh, focus, you know what I’m saying, and stay focused, you know? We start to slide off, they slide with [us]. Say, “Where are you going, where are you at?” If you slide a little bit, you know what I’m saying, you kind of work your way back up, you know. I’m walking up a hill, you know, and it’s raining, sometimes it starts raining. And I start to slide back, ... they reach a hand, you know what I’m saying? It’s like, “Come on, don’t slip, I’m going to keep pulling you up because you’re going to make it.” ...The rain will stop. ...They’ll never let you get to rock bottom, and they’ll always be there for you.

Concluding Narratives

Reflected in client narratives are encouraging outcomes of the activities and services provided with LEAD—services that include: individual intervention plans; intensive case management; peer outreach and counseling; well-funded, comprehensive (“wrap-around”) direct services (housing, treatment, education, job development, and stipends); legal advocacy; and leadership development training. LEAD inserts itself in people’s lives to address everyday concerns, everyday violences, and the seemingly small things that build up to become insurmountable by any one individual. Capturing the spirit of harm reduction infused in LEAD practices, Tina (July 8, 2015) and Jade (July 18, 2016) each explained:

They’re more concerned about my needs. My medical needs really.... It’s just giving me more of a chance to focus on what I really need to be focused on instead of worrying about going to classes and, you know, I mean I agree that those things need to be addressed but also in order for me to address those issues I’ve got to be able to walk. I’ve got to be able to get around. I’ve got to be able to go to sleep regularly, got to eat regularly, got to take of yourself and the LEAD Program has been able to make it where I can do that. (Tina)

The focus is to get you safe, get you fed, getting you a place to live. Because, in all honesty, I believe that most people don’t want to use. But when you’re homeless in the streets...here is just not much else for you out there. And unfortunately, it is the worst coping mechanism in the world, but it is what we do. You know? When you’re an addict. Which once people get housing, which LEAD helps tremendously with housing, you know, the whole fact of putting me in that motel changed my life completely. I would say that was the turning point for me. (Jade)

LEAD beneficiaries tell us that the program addresses the lumpen subjectivity of homelessness (manifest in everyday suffering and unmet needs) while simultaneously inducing structural changes in policing protocols, creating a landscape that looks and feels less divided, less “fortressed,” and more caring, more supportive of *all* citizens. As a consequence of participating in LEAD, clients are 60 percent less likely to be arrested within a six-month period than non-LEAD controls,

which is especially significant when considering that nationally, drug offenders have a 76.9 percent likelihood of re-arrest (Collins et al. 2016). In addition, 89 percent of LEAD clients are more likely to secure long-term housing than non-LEAD controls. And, in terms of relations with law enforcement, diversion is a crucial first step for clients in their own self-care; a police officer's decision to not arrest members of the community who they likely would have arrested in the past allows for a fundamental change in individuals' relations with the criminal justice system broadly, with police officers who they see, sometimes daily, and with themselves. Listening to Luke (July 3, 2014), it is hard to dismiss his tone of hope as trivial:

My last experience with the police.... I was tellin' them I'd gotten enrolled in a community college program.... To know that I'm doing that kind of stuff and tell me he was proud of me. Wow, I never thought we'd have that relationship. This is the same guy that'd chase me down to take me to jail for selling drugs to somebody. He testified against me in trial. Yeah, and now he's saying, "Hey." I haven't gone to jail. I haven't been in any trouble in almost two years now. Not even a jaywalking ticket.

And, in terms of overall quality of life, client "BS's" (July 27, 2013) responses to questions about the impact of LEAD are representative of many clients' sentiments:

[LEAD] gave me a chance to get my life together and I'm on the ball now. I'm doing all the right things and it's getting better everyday. We asked, so LEAD is a little different than other programs? Yeah, he said, cause I wasn't getting the help that LEAD is giving me, you know? A lot of applications and medical paperwork that I needed to fill out I could never get them done because I don't spell that good. So I would call my LEAD worker and ask them to help me and it's been a big change in my life having that kind of help, you know, for real. ... And I talk with my grandbabies now, man. And I feel good. I really do. I'm not dirty no more. I'm not grimy no more. I can shave in a clean bathroom. My whole life is different now, man. I'm still not at my best yet, but I know I can do better than I am right now and I'm working on it. That's all I can say, I'm working on it. I keep working on it. Yeah. That's going to be my goal, to work on me and my health.

Finally, "RH" (July 24, 2012) follows a common narrative arc that places LEAD at the center of change in clients' lives when he said, LEAD is like an "umbrella":

If somebody came and put an umbrella over my head to keep me from getting wet there, I would prefer that as opposed to getting wet. And that's what LEAD presented... and I haven't gotten wet since. You know, it's a beautiful thing.

In addition to giving RH shelter from the rain, LEAD architects have moved beyond pragmatism to matters of epistemology and approached serving those in need with awareness of how urban spaces are conceptualized, acted upon and within, and reproduced. As a society, we act according to mental maps that distinguish between "publicness" and "privateness"—a

theory about social relations that considers how "the categories of public and private regulate a people's institutions, practices, activities and aspirations" (Benn and Gaus 1983:5). The terms publicness and privateness can be applied to experiences of LEAD clients and Seattle police officers and are used to include: features of access (i.e., the right to access places and spaces, activities, information and resources); agency (to what extent can a person be held responsible to his or her actions, and what significance do those actions have for others?); and interest (who benefits or not?). In turn, prescriptive uses of publicness and privateness affect the normative values ascribed to those spaces. Hence, when sometime, somewhere, public space is assigned prescriptive use that involves children's access to play, workers' interest in having communal space for breaks, and capacity for all people to use space without threat of violence or fear of offense (bearing in mind that definitions of what is considered offensive changes over time and place), then norms surrounding definitions of how spaces are used and by whom take hold. LEAD has affected use and understanding of cityscapes, arguably for the better—for the better of people struggling with addictions as well as for those charged with public safety. Undoubtedly, as a process rather than an essentialized category (Low 1996), "the urban" places limitations on how LEAD clients and police officers interact, especially when a "law-abiding" public is watching. Yet, for clients and police officers alike, LEAD has opened a space through which mutual respect, concern, and dialogue can occur all the while residents can put down their guard.

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Appendix 1. LEAD Client Interview Guide

LEAD Participant Interview Guide

Revised June 24, 2014

Conditions of Arrest/Diversion

- Please tell me how you made it into the LEAD program and how you felt at the time?
 - *In particular, we want to establish if it was an arrest referral or social contact referral.*
 - *What was the process of his/her arrest/diversion? How are the cops making their decisions?*
- What is your relationship with the officer who recommended the program to you?
 - *Did you know him/her prior to LEAD? What kind of contact have you had since?*
- What are people saying about LEAD on the streets?
- What did you know about LEAD before getting into it?
 - *Establish what people know about the program.*

Police Relations

- Before LEAD, what kinds of interactions did you have with police? Always in Belltown?
- Why were you **most typically** involved with the police; what were you doing?
- Have you been involved with the police since you entered the LEAD program?
 - Yes or No; if Yes, then:**
 - What kinds of interactions have you had with police since LEAD?
 - Can you please describe a typical interaction with the police **now**?
 - What would be the most typical reason for involvement with the police now? What would you most likely be doing?
 - Can you please describe your **last** experience with the police since being in LEAD?
 - *Can you describe a typical interaction with the police?*
 - *Establish their crimes, drug activity, and situations.*
 - *How long have they been active on the streets? Why?*

History with Social Services

- Is the LEAD program different from other social service programs in which you have been?
- Yes or No; if Yes, then:
 - Can you please describe how the LEAD program is different?
- Tell me more about why you sought out that/those other programs?
 - *We want to know if the person chose to be in other programs or was mandated to participate in them.*
 - *Do they perceive LEAD/features of the program as effective and positive?*

Personal LEAD Experience

- Why did you decide to accept the LEAD program? How would other options have impacted your life?
 - *How would going to jail currently impact your life?*
 - *What are the advantages of participating in LEAD? What are the disadvantages?*

- What did you expect to get from the program?
- What do you *need* from the program? What are you *actually* getting from the program?
 - *Looking for a description of his/her experiences with the LEAD program. For instance, interactions with the staff at LEAD, timeliness of services, tailored intervention, etc.*
- Would you say that your life changed because of LEAD?
 - *Have things changed for better or for worse? Can you describe them?*
- Would you recommend LEAD participation to others? Why and have you?
- What advice do you have for people running the LEAD program? Were there aspects of the program that were not helpful?
- What parts of the program are working for you? Is there anything you feel that would have enhanced your experience as a LEAD participant?
- Is there anything about LEAD that didn't work for you? (if so, can you tell me about that?)

Personal Goals

- What are your hopes for the future?
- Thinking about the future...in three years where would you like to be in life? (if they struggle with that: "Some people call these things goals. What kinds of goals do you have for yourself?")
- How might LEAD help you get there?

Appendix 2. LEAD Codebook

LEAD Interviews - Coding

Meghan Ash
Haley Case

Code Book Guide:

- Interviews are coded with all caps, abbreviated codes at the ends of sentences
- The colors are used to code themes throughout the data
- To search document for code, type in the all caps code in the search bar to sort through each of the times the code was used
- Bold the "gold nuggets"

Colors:

Conditions of arrest/diversion
Police Relations
History with Social Services
Personal LEAD experience
Personal goals

Codes:

<p>LEAD Experience ILIM - Initial lead impression PCM - personal relationship with case managers DLD- differences of LEAD from other programs TM- Time frame HMN- humanized treatment/ human dignity OPTR - out-patient treatment IPTR - in-patient treatment or rehab WWHH - personal account of what would have happened to an individual without LEAD CLTH - Clothing provided LV - lead helping advocate for people, CM's amplifying client voices LGL- legal help NSC- Building new, clean social circles BHC- behavioral change LMT- awareness of limitations of social services, willing to give up help so others can benefit SPC - people discussing LEAD as a place to come, a safe place to be; the physical office RCA - Readiness to change; taking personal responsibility/exercising agency in their life</p>	<p>Negative Perception of LEAD or other Social Services CRT- critiques of LEAD BRB- bureaucratic barriers RST - resistance to LEAD</p> <p>Client Results- Hard VCT- vocational training, employment LEDC - LEAD helping someone go to college/school MTL- material help to client i.e. ID, bus pass, sleeping bag HOS - housing achieved for an individual CME- community engagement LHC - health care achieved for a person with LEAD</p>	<p>Client Results- Soft Qualities PSR - personal resilience; display of resilience EMPR- empowerment GL - individual is living the "good life" post LEAD involvement; "good life" is defined as stable, clean, and (seemingly) happy EXPO- extremely positive remarks regarding LEAD's services RFR- referred a friend, would refer a friend PFR- client's goals include paying it forward to the community</p>
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Appendix 2. LEAD Codebook (continued)

<p>Pre-LEAD and Enrollment LBL - life before LEAD INDP - independent motivation to participate in LEAD from the individual; "I" statements PUR- pressure to enter LEAD program DFRC – dead friend reality check where a person decides that they do not want to be dead and become motivated for treatment PSS - past social services PLK- past knowledge/perception of LEAD STRT - public/street knowledge and/or perception of LEAD WL - why someone decided to pursue LEAD</p> <p>Incarceration ARST - arrest PRSN - past time in prison SBST- drugs/crime as subsistence CPOL - change in relationship with the police PPOL - positive perception of the police NPOL - negative perception of the police NPC - "no change in prison"/cycle of incarceration and drugs NCR - no criminal record or past incarceration CRR- awareness of criminal justice reform/issues TDC - the "two door choice" by the police TRP - truthfulness valued in referral/program process INA- client presents drugs to cops to get enrolled INC- maintains innocence PRB- probation NPLA - no post-LEAD enrollment arrests PCMR - police community relations</p>	<p>Health MH- mental health ABS - past history of emotional or physical abuse PHL- physical health HC - health care access before LEAD CHC - change in source of health care after LEAD</p> <p>Drug Related Activities ADC- personal addiction NR - an individual feels like they have no resources or legitimate way to escape addiction GDR- general drug use HRIN - heroin use CCN- cocaine use ALH- Alcohol MJ- marijuana SHM- mushrooms MTH- methamphetamine BZ- benzodiazepine use PRSC- prescription drug abuse, general PCADC - painkiller addiction that leads to opiate use MTRT - methadone treatment, or suboxone WTD- withdrawal CS - an individual is successfully clean STL - stealing, robbery, looting DLR - dealing drugs DESC - drugs described as an escape from hardship/plight RLP - relapse of drug use or fear of relapse SW- sex work STRL- street relations OVD - overdose</p>	<p>Social Factors EDC - educational levels MH- mental health FML- family RLN- relations, maybe romantic as a factor CSV- child protective services/ foster care DFML - family as the main thing that an individual identifies as the start of their drug use and addiction FD- food and hunger RNAW - run away from home CHLD - childhood experiences or descriptions SPR- spirituality and religion GNDR- gender MV - military vet RCE- race VLN- history of trauma or violence DSC- discrimination NWV- extremely negative world view DMVL - domestic violence</p> <p>Homelessness and Poverty BHMLS - before homelessness DHMLS - during homelessness AHMLS - after homelessness UEML - unemployed HDJ- holds down a job QLP- negative qualitative conditions of poverty e.g. smelling bad, bugs crawling on body LNC- low income, poverty CMR- community relations MVW- "me vs. world" reflection on personal place in world and society LTR - loitering, getting accosted by police for "being" in an inappropriate space EVC- eviction</p>
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