

BOOK REVIEW/ COMPTE RENDU

Chan, Wendy and Dorothy Chunn. 2014. *Racialization, Crime, and Criminal Justice in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 216 pp. \$CAD 29.95 Paperback (9781442605749).

Although many Canadians may be uncomfortable with discussions about issues pertaining to race and crime, *Racialization, Crime, and Criminal Justice In Canada* demonstrates that race and racism remain at the forefront of crime as well as criminal justice relations and discourse in Canada. Chan and Chunn provide a compelling critical analysis of the current state of affairs in Canada; the authors interrogate the multiple avenues through which racial minority groups are criminalized, marginalized and excluded, and how this is affected by the racialization of the criminal justice system. By examining issues such as policing, sentencing, victimhood, role of the media, and citizenship, the book explores how common attitudes translate into policy decisions, affect identities, and often dictate the treatment of racialized groups by the justice system and other institutions.

Chan and Chunn also consider the ways in which gender, social class, sexual orientation, citizenship and nationality further impact the relationship between race, crime and criminalization in their engaging theoretical synthesis of a large body of existing research. For instance, the authors apply Sherene Razack's (2000) work on spaces of racialized poverty, Scot Wortley and Owusu-Bempah's (2009, 2011, 2012) data on racism in the justice system and Loïc Waquant's (1997, 2001, 2005, 2009) work on race and politics. By adopting an intersectional approach and interrogating the ways in which the complex and multifaceted components of individuals' identities may significantly alter their experiences in Canada, most notably in their relations with the criminal justice system, the book sheds light on the importance of identity in Canada's neo-liberal and white-settler milieu. For example, Chan and Chunn explore the ways in which Aboriginal groups historically were and continue to be, mistreated by colonial authorities in the justice system, examining cases such as Starlight Tours, Aboriginal over-incarceration, and the victimization of Aboriginal women. Additionally, they consider the neo-liberal notion that offenders should be treated identically, which neglects the importance of race, gender, class and sexuality differences

in criminalization. Chan and Chunn insist that while Canadian society generally avoids overtly racist attitudes, actions and policies, racism is institutionalized, thereby perpetuating and recreating racism in both its structural and ideological forms. Additionally, the authors argue that Canada's recent shift to a more punitive penal policy will further exacerbate the discrimination of racialized groups.

This exceptionally well-researched book is divided into four complementary parts.

The first section, "Concepts, Theories, Approaches" provides a general overview of theories about race, racial difference, racism and racialization. It highlights how such notions affect contemporary criminal justice discourse, and the consequences of the racialization and criminalization of particular groups. The subsequent section, "Constructing Criminal Justice" infuses the book with intersectional perspectives, describing the multiple ways in which individuals are marginalized and how various aspects of identity can contribute to whether individuals are viewed as criminals or legitimate victims. This section also explores how the dominant society constructs and subsequently affects gender and class dynamics within racialized communities. The third section, "Administering Criminal Justice," outlines the mass discrepancies found across the Canadian justice system in responding to various groups, based on perceptions outlined in the first two sections. By examining multiple aspects of policing, prosecution/sentencing as well as victimization, this section demonstrates how other intersecting factors further affect criminal justice outcomes for racialized offenders as well as racialized victims. The last section, "Criminalizing Racial Groups," weaves in the relevance of nationality, immigration and class in labeling "desirable" and "undesirable" subjects, which in turn results in the criminalization, marginalization and exclusion of certain subjects. This section interrogates how non-criminal behaviours of certain groups are often deemed problematic and are subsequently marginalized, excluded and criminalized both in and outside of the justice system, emphasizing phenomena such as terrorism, poverty and immigration.

A strength of this book is that it demonstrates that the ways politicians, criminal justice personnel, the media and even the general public conceptualize and utilize race are non-static, variable and dependent upon historical contexts. By adopting this lens, the book illuminates the plethora of deeply interrelated, though often unrecognized, factors influencing how these actors label, package, and handle certain cases and groups. Chan and Chunn utilize many examples to trace the progression of racialization and criminalization of certain individuals and groups from media reports to court proceedings and sentencing, as well

as subsequent influences on policy decisions in a multitude of areas (i.e. sentencing, immigration, welfare). The deconstruction of multiple contemporary, high-profile cases such as those of Omar Khadr, Just Desserts, the Toronto 18, and Charles Ssenyonga allows readers to connect the theoretical ideas to concrete and familiar examples, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of such processes. I commend the authors for exploring issues that are not generally considered to be within the realm of criminological examinations, namely mental illness, poverty and immigration. Such inclusion significantly broadens the scope of this work, especially considering the authors' successful demonstration that the traditional framing of these issues is often used to advance economic and, increasingly, political interests.

There are some limitations in this work. As a general overview of the field, it serves as a good refresher for scholars and persons interested in the study of race and crime. However, those already well versed in critical criminology and/or feminist theory may find its contribution to the extant work in the area wanting. For example, the book draws upon case studies and incidents which have already been explored at length (e.g. the Just Desserts case, the death of Neil Stonechild, the Omar Khadr case), with limited variance in approach. Secondly, although the book neatly outlines Canada's position on various public issues such as incarceration, welfare, immigration, the War on Drugs, and even the War on Terror, there is minimal contextualization of the Canadian experience against that of other countries. The arguments presented here would benefit from cross-national comparisons, enabling readers to better understand points of convergence and similarity between Canada and other nations, particularly since Canada is often considered an outlier in terms of its justice system when compared to other Western countries. Further, although various aspects of policing are discussed at length (e.g., racial profiling, stop and search practices, use of force), no mention is made of protest policing, which arguably has increasingly become racialized, especially with regards to recent Indigenous-based protests. Exploring the policing of these protests through the lens of racial attitudes and relations would significantly contribute to the comprehensiveness of this work.

Overall, the book is an intelligently argued deconstruction of the ways in which race intersects with crime and criminal justice in Canada. Highly accessible, the book provides a wonderful overview of some of the primary issues afflicting Canada's justice system. Additionally, given Chan and Chunn's critical approach, even those who are reasonably familiar with issues surrounding the importance of race in Canada will find this book stimulating. *Racialization, Crime, and Criminal Justice in Canada* may be especially useful as a teaching-tool geared at intermedi-

ate level undergraduate students, given its breadth, nuanced analysis and the inclusion of discussion questions as well as suggestions for further reading at the conclusions of each chapter.

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