Book Review/ Compte rendu

Kalwant, Bhopal. *White Privilege: The Myth of a Post-racial Society.* Great Britain: Bristol Policy Press, 2018, pp. 216, £12.99 paper.

Bhopal completed this book with her great passion for revealing how racism consistently marginalizes and excludes black and minority ethnic (BME) groups in societies where whiteness and white privilege are highly valued. In her personal note prefaced to this book, Bhopal recalls her own experience as a member of a racial minority group who grew up in an immigrant and working-class family, received university education, and established her academic career in British society. The experience of Bhopal and her family allows her to acquire an insider's perspective about how race operates as a form of disadvantage that interacts with negative aspects of other people's identities to impede racial minorities from accessing social justice and equality.

This book explains whiteness and white privilege mainly from three aspects: theories, policies, and cases. Theoretically, Bhopal roundly criticizes how our contemporary legislative goals and policymaking ideologies have been misled by neoliberalism. Neoliberalism possesses the virtue of promoting free individual choices; however, prioritizing self-interests results in the redistribution of wealth reinforcing the privileges of white elites and crushing social inclusion and justice. This approach often unfairly perpetuates white privilege and reinforces discrimination against BME groups. Bhopal also refers to the Critical Race Theory, which asserts that whiteness and white privilege pervade all aspects of traditionally white-dominated societies. Another theory used by Bhopal is Kimberle Crenshaw's intersectional approach of understanding discrimination and marginalization. Crenshaw argues that racism interweaves with multiple grounds of disadvantage in shaping individual's marginalized experiences. Bhopal contends that whiteness and white privilege take center stage with other dimensions of identities (e.g. gender and class) and reinforce this white privilege.

Bhopal situates her research in the contexts of the United Kingdom and the United States to unmask serious problems and provide policy suggestions. This book could easily resonate with readers because it vividly depicts how British extremists suddenly felt empowered to

fault immigrants and racial minorities for social problems soon after Brexit. In the U.S., Trump's administration promotes whiteness as the dominant identity and has triggered an increase in xenophobic comments. Building upon these dramatic results, Bhopal further explores various social problems in the British and U.S. societies and argues that neoliberal policy-making fails to protect equality and social justice.

Bhopal points out that whiteness and white privilege not only exclude BME group from mainstream social activities, but also negatively impact certain white groups who are "not white enough". She alludes to the Gypsies and Travellers to illustrate how certain white minority groups are similarly disadvantaged in education, employment, housing, and mental health resources. Sharing a white ethnic identity is insufficient for the Gypsies and Travelers to receive the same advantages afforded to other whites because discrimination also interplays with other identity markers (i.e. class). Following this argument, Bhopal elaborates on the importance of intersectionality in understanding how white, middle-class groups benefit at the expense of BME groups with disadvantaged racial, gender, and class identities. Bhopal endorses the intersectional view that race is not the single factor that caused discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion.

In Chapter Five and Six, Bhopal chooses educational institutions as her major sites to uncover the policy-making shortcomings caused by the reproduction and perpetuation of whiteness and white privilege. With a series of inclusive laws and policies introducing affirmative actions to the UK and US, educational institutions have reported achievements in increasing the school attendance rate of BME pupils. However, more nuanced and covert forms of discrimination still exist as the "white curriculum" is designed to spread white values and associate "otherness" with stereotypes such as terrorism. Teachers might also lack awareness of multiculturalism and tolerance. Inequality continues to persist in schools despite the laws and policies that have already been implemented to redress these issues. Shifting attention to higher educational institutions, Bhopal reveals that white privilege creates differences in university admission, educational degree completion, and labour market participation. As Bhopal interprets, distinctions are made to reserve desirable spots for white students, which systematically protects the white students' elitism and maintains their powers so as to further maintain white privilege. BME students are also trained to accept white values and conform with white middle-class criteria. Students from diverse backgrounds are all measured only by a particular type of success.

Bhopal notes the devastating consequences of perpetuating this one-dimensional value of whiteness. The numbers of reported cases of racism and bullying increased. Despite the existence of equality policies, whiteness and white identities are still protected when complaints of racist bullying are made. Those who complain about acts of racism might invoke negative opinions against themselves because they could be deemed as aggressive, confrontational and overreacting. In the labour market, the disadvantages of BME groups has been manifested both in quantity and quality. Quantitatively, BME groups are more likely to become economically inactive and have a lower employment rate; qualitatively, they are usually segregated into secondary jobs that are low-paid and insecure. The labour market is a structure in which white privilege continues to dominate and discriminations are inadequately readdressed. The access for BME groups to gain equal opportunities are limited: they could neither rely on their parents' social contacts or financial resources to promote their interests, nor plan to be promoted to the managerial level through their own hard work. Additionally, Bhopal also mentions how the predominance and prevalence of whiteness and white privilege create distinctions at all levels. BME groups are more likely to fall into poverty, live in deprived neighbourhoods, and suffer mental and physical health problems. In each of the aspect, Bhopal provides readers with comprehensible narratives of the experience of people from BME groups.

Bhopal's book is the outcome of her lifelong dedication to anti-racism advocacy. This book contributes significantly to our understanding of how racism consistently functions to promote whiteness and white privilege while discriminating against BME groups in our modern society. Bhopal's effort is commendable because she pushes for a wider recognition of racial equality, even though contemporary legislative and policy-making practices have already strived to alleviate racism which rendered previously apparent forms of discrimination invisible. Bhopal has successfully gathered compelling case evidence from empirical studies to prove that the discrimination against BME groups still exists in a large scale. However, the forward-moving suggestions offered in this book could be further explained in order to unmask how they could result in better outcomes than existing ones. Acknowledging the institutional racism and monitoring racist incidents are surely important suggestions, but their effectiveness remains debatable since they are similar to previously existing measures that are criticized in this book. Nevertheless, Bhopal's suggestions are justifiable because, as she says, "racism may never be eradicated… does not mean we cannot actively challenge white groups…" (159).

Bhopal's work could be situated into the long socio-legal endeavor to relentlessly fight for a more equal society. In this regard, this book is an excellent piece that fits neatly into our endeavor to raise awareness of white privilege and the disadvantages faced by BME groups.

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