

BOOK REVIEW/ COMPTE RENDU

Brodie, Janine, ed. *Contemporary Inequalities and Social Justice in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018, pp vii-210, \$30.00, paper, (978144263408).

In *Contemporary Inequalities and Social Justice in Canada*, editor Janine Brodie has collected works that contribute to framing current and prominent issues of inequality and social justice within Canadian contexts from Canadian perspectives. This volume is sectioned into three parts, which focus on (1) perspective, (2) case studies, and (3) shaping future politics through activism. The volume is comprised of diverse authors who collectively explore inequality and social justice on a broad base of topics, including social theory, immigration, racial inequality, LGBTQTS, Indigenous issues, academia, and activism. Throughout the book, these topics intersect to follow the contours of neoliberalism within inequality and social justice. Brodie notes that social justice is dynamic, and as such, the volume's approach is not prescriptive. Instead, the authors posit that the overarching notions of social justice are evolving and, therefore, perpetually elevating goals of the meaning for equality, inclusion and fairness. Furthermore, Brodie posits that the pursuit of social justice must consider uncomfortable explorations of alternative policies and political approaches that are not crisis-laden but rooted in a renewed, progressive and sustainable, social justice agenda.

In the first part of the volume, the authors pull from perspective-based findings to map out the common threads of neoliberal influence in policy, economic theory, and migration. In chapter one, Brodie begins the volume demonstrating how 'crisis-ridden' neoliberalism has influenced and continues to influence policy development within Canada. The controlled messaging of neoliberal policies place market consideration and maintenance of market conditions as a priority in policy creation. In addition, any challenges to neoliberal policies are often muted due to fears of triggering an 'economic crises' by way of reducing the competitive capacity of Canadian businesses in competitive markets. Brodie furthers the notion that the prominence of neoliberalism within policies limits social policy, which in turn exacerbates inequality in policy development. However, the common practice of neoliberalism in public policy is often applied before the proper depth

of consideration of alternative approaches. In chapter 2, Robichaud discusses commonly held positions of ‘fairness and justice’ in economic discourse. He does so through the lens of “Homo-Crusoeconomicus” to examine the underpinnings of individual success in a societal context. Each component of the chapter further examines the dynamic of success between the many and the few. Moreover, the social construction of norms creates the legitimacy of market operations and allows for a few individuals to rise within the aggregate mass. This legitimacy enables ‘individuals’ to claim individual achievement. Robichaud continually pokes at the definition of success in a neoliberal shaped economic context through various analogies that ultimately call into question commonly held assumptions of colloquial ‘individualism’ and ‘success.’ In chapter 3, Malinda Smith opens by broadening the defining lines that frame how diversity is commonly perceived in Canada. Often, diversity is associated with migration, and thus ‘diversity’ ignores Indigenous people. Through three different stories, Smith articulates the dueling narratives of diversity and its significance for equal representation in Canada.

The second part of this volume examines current case studies in Canada. In chapter 4, Judy Fudge analyzes the narrative of migrant labour. More specifically, she argues that when the negative discourse is presented in media, the migrant labourer is often the recipient of hyper-visibility for negative messaging. Using contemporary media stories, Fudge examines the current revisions of federal policy that are arguably reactive to media biases towards migrant labour. Fudge discusses that neoliberal fears of domestic labour loss are incorrectly applied to international labourers instead of providing the local and national economic contexts which create demand for such labour. Inequality within institutions of higher learning is explored in Chapter 5. Grace-Edward Galabuzi critiques post-secondary institutions for the dissonance between the claims of diversity and the ‘lived experiences’ of those employed within these institutions. Moreover, Galabuzi points out how inequality has persisted in post-racial policies as the underlying hegemony has not been adequately addressed. Rooted within color-blind ideologies, the practices of neoliberal governing structures have ‘glossed over’ inequalities with explicit language promoting achievements of equality, diversity, and inclusion; however, when under scrutiny, diversity and inclusion practices have only served to further exclude under-represented people. Galabuzi discusses the impacts of post-racial language and thinking, which he critiques for the perpetuation of inequality within academia. In chapter 6, Hayden King

addresses the critical purpose of imagining alternative futures. King crosses between historical points to illustrate how the residing presence of settler-colonialism in Canada has created systemic and endemic inequalities in a multifactorial multi-dimensional manner for Indigenous peoples in Canada. King concludes by considering reconciliation with Indigenous sovereignty.

Part three of the volume discusses current approaches in activism for shaping social justice in Canada. In chapter 7, Meenal Shrivastava discusses the immersion of 'petroculture' in the Canadian resource dominated economy. Shrivastava discusses how the influence of oil and gas and neoliberal governance in Canada creates systemic imbalances that compromise political and economic democracy. Drawing from case studies, Shrivastava continues to uncover how the entrenchment of petroculture suppresses the exploration into alternative energy policies. Chapter 8 focuses on how anger shapes activism and social justice for lesbian, gay, and bisexual, queer, and trans, as related to Canadian politics. Alexa DeGagné explores the discursive use of anger, as both a tool of agency and a fueling component for the longevity of social resistance—a 'vital' element for social change and social activism. DeGagné argues that demonstrative anger can be dismissed as 'irrational', 'uncivil', and 'inappropriate'. Therefore, the use of anger serves to delegitimize the source of anger that stems from legitimate sources of perceived injustice and inequality. Judy Rebeck revisits the advances made through social and political activism in the twenty-first century in the 9th chapter. Drawing from different movements, points of time in history, and from across the globe, Rebeck describes a commonality in movements of social justice. That is, though no social movement has served to eradicate inequality, each movement has advanced their values incrementally.

This collection serves to demonstrate where observed inequalities exist in Canada. It also provides consideration of how social justice activism has helped incrementally both eradicate and contribute to the reduction of various aspects of inequality in Canada. Although the topics within this edition are broad, this book is complimentary for advanced undergraduate to graduate-level students with some background in the social sciences, policy, and other related fields of study. A limitation of this volume is that the breadth of inequalities and social justice within Canada cannot be expressed and given voice. That is, issues that are known or politically prominent continue to receive attention, and as such issues that are understudied remain unseen. Also, the subject matter does not apply lenses at national or provincial levels. However,

through this volume, Brodie, in conjunction with all the contributors, seeks to contribute to the continual effort of social justice in Canada.

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