

BOOK REVIEW/COMPTE RENDU

Anne-Marie Singh, *Policing and Crime Control in Post-apartheid South Africa*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008, 158 pp. \$US 99.95 hardcover (978-0-7546-4457-6).

Anne-Marie Singh's book is a valuable contribution to scholarship on a number of fronts. The book contributes robustly to academic literatures in security governance, governmentality, and nation-building. Singh documents the ways in which South Africa's security assemblages have been reshaped within a neoliberal political climate since the early 1990s. When South Africa's apartheid regime fell, the nation adopted many of the dictates of western neoliberalism, such as local and private sector empowerment, governance-at-a-distance, and public sector corporatism. To accomplish this, however, the new liberalism required a new citizenry. Accustomed to authoritarian rule, citizens of the new South Africa were reshaped to exercise rights; act rationally, prudentially and responsibly; empowered, etc. Yet Singh's study shows how citizens were simultaneously controlled through the threat of highly coercive laws, punishments, and corporate security practices. This seemingly contradictory punitiveness of the state and the private sector functioned through the production of discourses of the new civil cause: *security from crime*. Singh's book investigates this through self-contained chapters on four central and interrelated threads of crime control authority: political authorities; the private security industry; corporate enterprises; and community authorities. Because of the complex, contingent, and overlapping histories of South African security governance, Singh strives "to give some sense of the heterogeneity of this field, to highlight the persistent struggles over the exercise and regulation of crime control authority and responsibility" (p. 6). Her approach reflects the multiform sites of power, discourse, and practice that constitute a new South Africa.

As a contribution to the rather anorexic body of academic study that intersects governmentality and security there are a number of refreshing aspects to Singh's book. Her analysis of corporate authority and crime control might indeed be unique to this literature, in which studies that intersect governmentality and corporate governance are rare. Singh's analysis of business authority goes well beyond the areas of private policing in showing how corporate South Africa adopted, augmented, and played a significant constitutive role within the government's anti-crime agen-

da. Singh's book is also noteworthy for uncovering the ways in which the political, corporate and private security authorities within "neoliberal" South Africa have each emphasized direct and coercive practices in the control of crime. Although scholars such as Garland and O'Malley have contributed to our understanding the relation of neoliberal political rationality to punitive and coercive practices within the United States, Singh is right to point out that techniques and technologies of direct coercion are overlooked within the predominantly European governmentality literature. There is more that is noteworthy in this book, including insights garnered from interviews of members of South Africa's Street Committees, highlighting the contrast between the practices of political, corporate, and private security authorities and the holistic techniques of problem and conflict resolution of community-authorities. There is, therefore, much food for thought, and this book will be well read and cited.

Despite its valuable and obvious contributions, the book has some not entirely trivial flaws concerning historical context, temporal consistency, and conceptual weakness. First, for readers who are unfamiliar with governance during apartheid South Africa, Singh's book does not offer any elucidation. Of course, this was not her purpose. However, I found it challenging to fully understand the significance of the analysis of the governmental constitution of a "new" South Africa in the absence of a broader governmental and historical context. For instance, the point of Singh's discussion of the post-apartheid government's increasing dependence upon crime statistics was unclear :

... statistical information no longer serves the 'administrative needs of officials' ... needs historically tied into projects to control the races, and to multiply state control and authority over territory. Rather, liberal governance of crime ... requires stable and combinable knowledge of crime — its cycles, trends, frequency, spatial and temporal patterns and the like. (p. 21)

We would better understand the significance of this change and others if we had some sense of the previous regime's practices, techniques, and technologies. There were a few instances in which the events discussed in the book seemed somewhat insignificant absent some broader time/place and governmental context.

Second, there are temporal inconsistencies in the sources used. A number of empirical and scholarly sources cited are somewhat dated, in particular texts (and interviews) from the mid to late 1990s. At times these are augmented with recent ones. Texts from the mid-1990s may not fully reflect the present contexts of governance, and recently produced

texts may not reflect mid-1990s South Africa. This has led, third, to some conceptual weakness. Empirical conclusions are rather lackluster as these reflect contributions in the past decade by scholars like Bayley, Johnston, O'Malley, Shearing, and the opportunity to tread on ground lightly disturbed has been missed. It is also unclear whether some techniques and technologies (particularly coercive ones) align well with the ways in which neoliberal assemblages have been discursively framed, during the 1990s. As O'Malley has observed, some practices of risk governance in the United States may be better understood as forming part of a neoconservative assemblage. Could some practices of crime control stem from apartheid techniques, and if so, might this help explain some of the coercive measures discussed? Singh's book presents some solid questions in conclusion. Nevertheless it seems to me that there was some discursive space for further elaboration on questions like these.

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