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Decriminalizing Domestic Violence: A Balanced Policy Approach to Intimate Partner Violence. By Leigh Goodmark. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2018. 204 pp. \$29.95 (paperback and ebook), \$85 (hardcover).

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In April 2019, the *New York Times* published a prominent piece recounting the experience of a 20-year-old Bangladeshi Muslim immigrant woman in New York City named Zahan, who was fleeing a forced and abusive marriage (Carranca, 2019). Reading Goodmark's book in light of this particular experience is helpful in assessing her proposal on decriminalizing domestic violence and finding a balanced policy approach.

Intimate partner violence in the United States in the form of rape, stalking, and physical assault is experienced by 36% of women and 29% of men. However, Goodmark notes that women experience mental violence as well, and more persistently than men. Sexual, racial, ethnic, and immigrant identities; socioeconomic background; and disability centrally mediate such experiences.

Goodmark's use of the Audre Lorde quote, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not lead single-issue lives," as an epigraph is pertinent to approaching the book. Alongside limits of the current efforts to address domestic violence, the author proposes a policy directly in response to high rates of mass incarceration that define the United States. Furthermore, the multifaceted aspect of domestic violence as a criminal justice, economic, public health, community, and human rights problem, each explored in a different chapter of the book, creates sites of conversations across these axes.

Goodmark traces the history of criminalization of intimate partner violence in the United States to the 1980s antiviolence movement, which resulted in a US Attorney General's Task Force on Domestic Violence. The Violence against Women Act (VAWA) enacted in 1994 and reauthorized several times created incentives for police, prosecutors, and judges to aggressively implement the law. Although the act was meant to ensure resources for both legal efforts and social services, most of the funds went toward the former. In fact from 1994 to 2013, the proportion of funds for social services declined from 38% to 15%, indicative of the emphasis on criminal legal response. There is no evidence that such criminalization has decreased domestic violence. Goodmark acknowledges that rates of intimate partner violence have decreased, but so has the overall crime rate (1994–2000), thereby suggesting no clear relationship between criminal legal response and the decline in such violence.

Rates of mass incarceration have, however, increased during this period; 2.3 million are incarcerated and 5 million are under supervision (parole or probation) in the United States, predominantly impacting Blacks, Latinos, and sexual minorities. The criminalization of domestic violence has definitely contributed to the incarcerated population. The discussion on decriminalizing violent crimes to reduce the prison population has rarely included domestic violence. Goodmark's main plea is to connect the discussion on domestic violence to the concerns of mass incarceration because they share some of the basic characteristics of not necessarily providing justice to the victims and selectively focusing on certain populations.

The strength of the book lies in acknowledging that criminalizing often harms the victims or survivors themselves, especially when dual arrests occur, as when women and their partners are both arrested or women with children are reported to Child Protective Services. Mandatory arrest and no-drop prosecution, which emerged to force the state to take

intimate partner violence more seriously, have had the opposite impact, with subpoenas against the abused women, threats of fine, and arrest. As Goodmark notes, “Women of color frequently have negative, abusive, and even deadly experiences with police officers who are called to respond to intimate partner violence” (21).

The emphasis on criminalization has meant that economic resources have been predominantly allotted to the criminal legal process rather than on other economic supports. Goodmark notes, “As many as two-thirds of low-income women are subjected to intimate partner violence” (36). An inability to hold on to housing as a result of no-nuisance property laws becomes a primary source of continued violation.

Goodmark recognizes that community can be a site of perpetuating violence but also a source of support. She notes restorative and transformative justice initiatives that have drawn upon community members to deal with violence at the individual and structural level. Goodmark mentions the work of Generation Five and Support New York, which, in line with the transformative justice framework, have their accountability options reviewed by the abused. The attempt is to ensure justice to the survivor while helping the offenders recreate a relationship to the community. The restorative justice framework emerges as an alternative to the punishment model, which is unable to ensure any sort of acknowledgement of harm or empathy from the offender. In contrast, the restorative framework helps the abuser acknowledge responsibility and understand how the victim’s life was harmed.

The refusal by the United States to adopt and ratify the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) and DEVAW (Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women) is well known. However, this refusal has not stopped domestic courts from utilizing human rights language, nor cities from passing their own resolutions declaring “freedom from domestic violence a fundamental right” (114).

Returning to Zahan’s story, criminalizing domestic violence as a primary model of response would be limiting; her community in particular is targeted as Muslims and racialized others in a post-9/11 and Trump era. Most immigrant communities are incessantly under surveillance and often live in fear of deportation. However, the community as a solution may or may not work. Even as Zahan was unable to find support from some sections of the community, the mosque and the women’s shelter in which she found refuge also emerged from community efforts. There

is only one Muslim women's shelter (Asiyah) in New York City, a city that has 800,000 Muslims. Her difficulties in finding justice would thus only be addressed through a multifaceted approach such as the one Goodmark proposes. The challenge, of course, is to move toward decriminalization of domestic violence in a context where such violence continues to be trivialized and ignored.

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