Within the Confines: Women and the Law in Canada

Western feminists have long treated the rule of law as an essential ingredient of social justice; however, as the contributors to this collection remind us, meaningful justice remains out of reach for many women and racialized minorities precisely because the law turns a blind eye to the inequities that structure their daily lives. In fourteen chapters that open vital debates about the erosion of the welfare state and the media’s complicity in concealing political injustice, _Within the Confines_ details the brutal ironies of a society that criminalizes the vulnerable while absolving the elite. Distinctive in its focus on Canada, the book traces the linkages among racial, ethnic, sexual, and economic vulnerability and reveals the inadequacies of legislative approaches to socio-historical problems such as drug trafficking, homelessness, infanticide, and the legacies of settler colonial violence. In accessible prose, the authors dismantle the myths behind topics that are often sensationalized in the media—pornography, single motherhood, sex work, filicide, gangs, domestic abuse, prison conditions, HIV nondisclosure—and present alternative arguments that expose the justice system’s role in widening the gap between the rich and the poor. What emerges is a poignant challenge to the neoliberal fable that women and racialized minorities in Western democracies now enjoy full equality and an urgent call to action for those who seek to shift institutional norms in more equitable directions. A valuable resource for a wide range of fields, including criminology, sociology, social anthropology, gender studies, political science, social work, and legal history, this multidisciplinary volume offers a fresh perspective on the disturbingly predictable judgments that criminalized women face in Canada.

Author Information
Jennifer M. Kilty
Jennifer M. Kilty is Associate Professor of Criminology at the University of Ottawa. The author of numerous articles and chapters, Dr. Kilty is co-editor of _Demarginalizing Voices: Commitment, Emotion, and Action in Qualitative Research_ (2014).

Reviews
A much-needed collection of cutting-edge scholarship that draws on, as well as reframes, key debates involving women and the law in the contemporary Canadian context. Importantly, the authors provide an intersectional feminist analysis of how law shapes gendered issues of violence, imprisonment, poverty, sexualities, reproduction, and disease.— _Hijn Park, Department of Sociology, Brock University_...

Within the Confines_ offers a stimulating law-as-social-process approach to understanding women’s contact and conflicts with law, especially criminal law. The contributors paint nuanced pictures of how various aspects of law entail a social process of constructing (and sometimes reconstructing) gender norms. This book is theoretically and methodologically diverse, providing readers with insightful and complementary alternatives to standard social science approaches to women and criminal law.— _Rachel Arias, Legal Studies Program, University of Ontario Institute of Technology_...

Table of Contents
Acknowledgements
Introduction

**Part 1: Institutional and Intersectional Oppressions**


**Part 3: Sex and the Social Context**

Chapter 11: A Chip Off the Old (Ice) Block? Women-Led Families, Sperm Donors, and Family Law, _Angela Cameron_ Chapter 12: Dangerous Liaisons, A Tale of Two Cases: Constructing Women Accused of HIV/AIDS Nondisclosure as Threats to the (Inter)national Body Politic, _Jennifer M. Kilty_ Chapter 13: “Flattening Our Opposition”: Neoliberal Governance and the (De)regulation of Adult Pornography in Canada, _Camilla A. Sears_ Chapter 14: Legal Moralism, Feminist Rhetoric, and the Criminalization of Consensual Sex in Canada, _Stacey Hannem_ and _Chris Bruckert_ Contributor Biographies

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