

of new migrants from China's Fujian province, adding to the internal diversity of ethnic communities.

Part II focuses on "the critical roles of institutions in the process of immigrant adaptation over time" (p. 17), from German immigrant aid associations, to Irish parochial schools, to issues of access to healthcare among Mexican Philadelphians. Part III focuses on identity formation in transnational contexts, including the Haitian diaspora, new African diasporas, nurses from Kerala, and Cambodians. Overall, the book captures the changing mosaic of small sections and populations of the city, offering intimate portraits of each group based on deep knowledge of specific cases. It depicts the interaction between locally-based urban community institutions and the formation and sustenance of ethnic identities. Garvey Lundy, for example, reminds us of the origin of theories of transnationalism out of the Haitian diaspora, even as they struggle to maintain "unity" and participate in political discourse and activity not only in Philadelphia, but also back in Haiti. Osirim's chapter on the New African Diasporas—those arriving in Philadelphia from Liberia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and elsewhere on the African continent—is the most theoretically challenging chapter, deploying migration studies to make sense of the transnational ties of African Philadelphians within the current phase of globalization, with its ease of communication, information, and for some, international travel.

As a teaching volume, especially for undergraduates, *Global Philadelphia* offers a very effective set of case studies, allowing students to explore different issues of ethnicity and urbanization; and those who happen to be in the region can also explore the neighborhoods referred to, as did some members of my own sociology class on race and ethnicity. Although the book claims to be comparative, it is really up to the reader to do the comparisons, as each chapter more or less stands alone. It would have been fruitful if the editors had generated more comparative commentary, perhaps as a conclusion to the volume. While the case-study approach offers rich material on each immigrant community and its history, it mostly avoids delving into questions of inter-ethnic

relations or the problems of racism that have plagued relations between some of the city's native and immigrant communities. Thus, this might serve as a companion to other readings that focus either on racism and conflict in Philadelphia, or those that explore how we overcome our divisions, such as Elijah Anderson's *The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life*.

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*A Theory of African American Offending: Race, Racism, and Crime*, by **James D. Unnever** and **Shaun L. Gabbidon**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011. 267pp. \$35.95 paper. ISBN: 9780415883580.

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African Americans represent 13 percent of the U.S. population. Yet, they represent half of the murder arrests. Black youth account for 67 percent of all juvenile robbery arrests. By all measures, African Americans are disproportionately engaged in street crime, especially violent crime. James D. Unnever and Shaun L. Gabbidon's timely book opens with a review of criminological theories explaining crime, and concludes that none of them account for the racial disparities in offending—hence the need for an *A Theory of African American Offending*.

The basic premise of their theory is that African Americans share a unique worldview according to which race matters and America is a systematically racist society. African Americans are much more likely than whites to perceive the police as abusive, the war on drugs as a racist enterprise and the death penalty as a modern form of lynching. This makes African Americans more cynical than whites about the criminal justice system. Legal cynicism is a prime determinant of offending; the criminal justice system's lack of legitimacy among African Americans explains why they offend more. Pervasive discrimination and stereotyping weaken the bonds that young African Americans might otherwise form with white-dominated institutions such as the school system or the labor market, in turn facilitating their offending. Some African American parents may also

teach their children to mistrust whites and white institutions (in an effort to prepare them for pervasive racism), which contributes to likelier offending. An epilogue on environmental racism makes the case that African Americans are more likely to see their life-chances hindered by pollution and lead exposure, also contributing to likelier offending. In short, racism causes its victims to offend more.

Given the amount of racism that African Americans endure, Unnever and Gabbidon argue, American society is fortunate that there is not more African American crime. African Americans are extraordinarily resilient, they argue, which explains why such a minority of African Americans actually offend. The authors' theory is conceived to explain much, if not all, of African American offending. They cite many studies in support of each component of their argument, but they offer no empirical test of their theory. Moreover, their emphasis on the uniqueness of African Americans logically prevents them from testing their theory by comparing the African American case with other minorities. It is plausible that the authors' theory is valid *to a certain extent*; but what is the actual variance that it explains? Readers are left to guess, and to wait for further empirical research inspired by their theory.

One may question the idea of an "African American theory of offending." What Unnever and Gabbidon want to show is how the experience of racism leads to more offending. This is a worthy goal. The question is then whether the specific experience of African Americans is different from that of other groups victimized by racism—whether African Americans are *that* unique. Unnever and Gabbidon say yes, except maybe for Native Americans, which is a strange answer: African Americans are either unique, or they are not. As it happens, many groups have been victims of racism and racial oppression. Roma people in Europe have been enslaved for centuries, murdered by the Nazis, and discriminated against on a scale that amply justifies a "Roma theory of offending." As the fourth footnote of the book concedes, Native Americans, regarding their own history of racial oppression, should also have their group-specific theory of offending. Does it mean that each ethnic/racial/social

group should have its own theory of offending? It may be more fruitful to build a theory of how racism fosters crime, and under which conditions victimized groups become more prone to criminal behavior.

But not all groups who are victims of discrimination and heinous violence offend more. One may think of various ethnic groups, but other types of groups can be considered: gays and lesbians may be an example. Is a "gay theory of offending" needed? The book lacks a comparative argument, where the African American case would be systematically contrasted with other cases of victimized minorities, inside and outside the United States. This comparative endeavor may or may not support an argument that African Americans are as exceptional as Unnever and Gabbidon argue; it may or may not support the argument that widespread discrimination and biased law enforcement lead to more offending.

An achievement of *A Theory of African American Offending* is to demonstrate the pervasive extent of racism in the contemporary United States. This book is an efficient reminder that racism matters. The sum of studies, facts and events gathered by Unnever and Gabbidon paints a disturbingly grim (and convincing) picture of how bad the situation has been, *and continues to be*, for African Americans. Another achievement is to bring together hundreds and hundreds of references about race, racism and crime. I have counted about 640 references in the bibliography, which mainly consists of recent, empirical research. The amount of scholarly work to amass and organize such a wealth of references is impressive. Many of these studies are little-known. The book is therefore useful to students of the topic, since it puts together so many studies.