

# Book review

## Sexual Offending in Asia: A Psycho-Criminological Perspective

by Heng Choon (Oliver) Chan  
Wiley,  
2023  
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### 1. Summary and evaluation of the book

The book is organized into two parts. Part I covers theories of sexual offending and Part II covers sexual offending in Asia. Every chapter in the book exudes organization, clarity, and scholarly commitment. Chapter 1 provides a topic overview and summary information distinguishing nonhomicidal (e.g., rape, child molestation, etc.) from homicidal sexual offending, highlighting the similarities and differences in research worldwide. It also covers the main covariates of sexual offending, and touches on victim and crime scene information associated with sexual crimes.

Chapter 2 contains what Dr Chan categorizes as level I theories that are multifactorial or comprehensive. These include Finkelhor's precondition model, Marshall and Barabee's integrated theory, Hall and Hirschman's quadripartite model, Malamuth's confluence model, the sexual promiscuity or impersonal sex pathway, the hostile masculinity pathway, Thornhill and Palmer's evolutionary theory of rape, Ward's theory of mind perspective, Ward and Siegert's pathways model, and Seto's motivation-facilitation model. Chapter 3 contains what Dr Chan refers to as level II or single-factor theories. These include McGuire *et al.*'s sexual deviation theory, Abel *et al.*'s cognitive distortion theory, Marshall's intimacy deficits theory,

Law and Marshall's conditioning theory, Breckenridge's radical feminist perspectives on child sexual abuse, Featherstone *et al.*'s postmodern feminist perspectives of sexual offending, Marshall *et al.*'s four-stage model of the empathy process, Kafka's monoamine hypothesis, Ward's implicit theory of sexual offenders, Cossins' power/powerlessness theory, and Mann and Beech's schema-based model of sexual assault.

Chapter 4 contains what Dr Chan deems level III or micro-level theories. These include the Marlatt relapse model, Pithers and Marques' relapse model of sexual offending, Wolf's addiction cycle of sexual offending, Freeman and Longo's four-stage model, Carich's six-stage sexual assault cycle, Lane's sexual abuse cycle, Salter's deviant cycle, Ward *et al.*'s child molester offense chain model, Ward and Hudson's self-regulation process model of sexual offending, the rape model of Polaschek *et al.*, Ward and Beech's integrated theory of sexual offending, and Bourke *et al.*'s expertise-related competency (ERC) model of child sexual offending.

Noting that sexual offending theories have historically almost exclusively focused on male offenders, Chapter 5 covers two theories specifically focused on female sexual offenders. These are Gannon *et al.*'s descriptive model of female sexual offending and McLeod *et al.*'s trauma-informed perspective of female sexual offending.

Chapter 6 contains theories of sexual homicide offending. These include Burgess *et al.*'s motivational model (made famous by the FBI profilers who

helped to launch the true crime genre in the USA), Hickey's trauma-control model, Arrigo and Purcell's paraphilic model, and Chan's social learning-routine activity integrated theory. The latter approach is noteworthy because it integrates two major theoretical orientations in criminology, and empirically is supported by several papers by Professor Chan and his colleagues.

The next five chapters examine sexual offending in the largest nations in five geographic areas (East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, West Asia, and Central Asia). Each chapter provides prevalence estimates and research on the nature of sexual offending (e.g., offender, victim, and offense characteristics) in each nation. Cultural values and norms related to sexual offending, intervention and prevention strategies, penal codes, and case examples are also provided. Each chapter also contains a bibliography of scholarship that has focused on sexual offending in this areas.

Chapter 7 covers sexual offending in East Asia, which encompasses China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mongolia, and Macau. Chapter 8 covers sexual offending in Southeast Asia, which encompasses Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, Singapore, Timor-Leste, and Brunei. Chapter 9 covers sexual offending in South Asia, which encompasses India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives.

Chapter 10 covers sexual offending in West Asia, which encompasses Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Azerbaijan, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, Palestinian, Georgia, Armenia, Qatar, Bahrain, Cyprus, and the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. Chapter 11 covers sexual offending in Central Asia, which

encompasses Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. Chapter 12 is the concluding chapter, which explicates the information from the book, and shows the similar and unique features of sexual offending in Asian contexts.

## 2. Unique value and contribution of the book

As someone who knew absolutely nothing about sexual offending occurring in Asia, I was impressively struck by many of the book's features. For instance, if one reads ten articles about sexual offending, it is likely ten separate theories are in use. Thus, Dr Chan's review and organization of theories of sexual offending, complete with helpful schematics to visually see the interrelation between constructs and across developmental stages, is very helpful. Part I provides a snapshot of sexual offending theories, which is a major service to anyone teaching or conducting research in the area.

The coverage of sexual offending in five Asian regions is outstanding, and provides lessons in geography and demography, in addition to criminology. Nations are organized by population size and the consistency in the presentation of information across chapters is impeccable. Although there are stark differences between many of these nations and the USA, for example, I was intrigued by the universality of offending behaviors seen in the many interesting case examples of serial homicide and various forms of sexual offending.

The psycho-criminological perspective, one that illuminates theory, showcases human development, and informs practice, is evident throughout the book. At the book's conclusion, Chan (2023, p. 351), advises:

Healthy psychosocial development nurtured through suitable child-rearing practices during childhood and adolescence is fundamental for

supporting prosocial individuals with positive psychological traits and social competencies. These individuals are less likely to be attracted to unhealthy or deviant lifestyles, such as engaging in high-risk activities like consuming pornography, using/abusing alcohol and/or drugs, and becoming sexually compulsive and promiscuous. Regardless of the intervention approaches, the importance of cultural influences in these different approaches should not be neglected.

Sexual offending is a critically important social problem, and an admittedly dark subject matter. Professor Chan's psycho-criminological perspective, with its concerted focus on the essential role of wholesome child rearing for launching children along prosocial and conventional pathways, is comparatively a hopeful and empathic orientation. That optimism really

shines through in *Sexual Offending in Asia: A Psycho-Criminological Perspective*, and hopefully guides the next generation of theorists, researchers, and practitioners seeking to reduce sexual violence and thus prevent its disastrous consequences.

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**About the author**

Dr Heng Choon (Oliver) Chan is one of the most talented and prolific criminologists in the world. Although his expertise is far and wide, he is among the foremost experts particularly on sexual offending and homicide offending. Anytime Chan publishes a new book, it is worthwhile for readers, and *Sexual Offending in Asia: A Psycho-Criminological Perspective* is no exception.