Q:

Compare and contrast Chouldechova and Rudin, Wang, and Coker's arguments regarding fairness and transparency for Criminal Risk Assessments. Where do they agree? Where do they disagree?

A:

**Rudin, Wang, and Coker:**

In *The Age of Secrecy and Unfairness in Recidivism Prediction* by Rudin, Wang, and Coker the authors speak about the importance of transparency in decision-making/prediction algorithms in use today. They argue that although noble, discussions about whether these aforementioned algorithms are unfair to certain groups of people are stagnating because there is no widely accepted definition of algorithmic fairness and competing definitions are almost always incompatible. Instead, the authors offer a different notion of procedural fairness: transparency. This notion of transparency provides both defendants and the public with the ability to scrutinize the methodology and calculations behind risk scores for recidivism, and other outputs of prediction algorithms in a more broad sense. Another key component of transparency mentioned in this article is that, without transparency an incorrect understanding of an algorithm can go unchecked, leading to consequences later on during independent analyses of the algorithm, as was the case with the ProPublica study.

**Chouldechova:**

In *Transparency and Simplicity in Criminal Risk Assessment* by Alexandra Chouldechova, the author disagrees with Rudin, Wang, and Coker’s notion that without transparency, “algorithms may not do what we think they do, and they may not do what we want,” and we may be left with limited recourse against it. Although Chouldechova agrees that algorithmic transparency is fundamentally important when discussing if an algorithm should be implemented or not, she disagrees with the sentiment that all we need is transparency in order to ensure an algorithm does what it wants. Instead, she says that to ensure algorithms do what we want them to do, we need more than the transparency afforded by using a simple and accessible model. Furthermore, she explains that even without transparency we can go a long way in establishing if an algorithm does or does not behave as it was intended to.