



Editors' Introduction to the Special Issue, "Southern Criminologies: Methods, Theories and Indigenous Issues"

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The Naming of a Southern Criminology

In August 2015, *The British Journal of Criminology* published an article entitled "Southern Criminology." The principal aim of this article, which subsequently appeared as the lead article in Volume 56, Issue 1, was to set forth an approach that could help to "decolonize and democratize the toolbox of available criminological concepts, theories, and methods" (Carrington et al. 2016: 1). The authors defined "southern criminology" as a "theoretical, empirical and political project aimed at bridging global divides and democratizing epistemology by leveling the power imbalances that privilege knowledges produced in the metropolitan centres of the global North" (Carrington et al. 2016: 15). They further described "southern criminology" as a tool to "elucidate the power relations embedded in the hierarchical production of criminological knowledge" (Carrington et al. 2016: 2–3). The urgency of the project, the authors maintained, rested on: (1) "the [detrimental] impact of global divisions in political, economic, cultural and military power on the production of knowledge" (Carrington et al. 2016: 1); and (2) the consequential and problematic majority view within criminology of Northern theories as universally valid and of Southern contributions as second class or exotic. The common denominator of both dynamics, as Carrington and her co-authors maintained, was the (neocolonial) portrayal of Northern societies as leaders in the "development" of the world.

Describing this phenomenon as a form of "myopia," Carrington and colleagues (2016: 6) argued that the uneven distribution of epistemological power between the Global North and the Global South has engendered biased theories that fail to acknowledge: the role of (neo)colonialism in the analysis of the incidence of—and issues relating to—crime and violence; the inadequacy of importing Northern theory into Southern societies caused by failing to acknowledge the geopolitical specificity of all social theories; the ethically problematic exploitation of the Global South as data mine and Southern scholars as data miners; and the invisibility and subordination of Southern theorization. Accordingly, the

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authors championed the idea of advancing a transnational criminology inclusive of the knowledge of the Global South—Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania. Southern criminology was thus tasked with the further goal of “adopt[ing] methods and concepts that bridge global divides and [embrace] the democratization of knowledge production as political aspiration” (Carrington et al. 2016: 1).

For Carrington and colleagues (2016), their use of the concept of the “South” was both metaphorical—to refer to peripheral voices everywhere—and geographical—to refer to Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania. For them, the demarcation of the Global North/Global South tandem was useful in that, first, it sheds light on the criminogenic consequences of their interactions. As the authors pointed out, the demarcation is possible considering that at a macro-level, there are “vast disparities remain[ing] between the North and South in wealth, income and access to education, health care, adequate food and shelter, effective political institutions and safe and secure environments” (Carrington et al. 2016: 6). Furthermore, Carrington and colleagues (2016) asserted, the current “world order” reflects a divide between the Global North and Global South that is the product of the century-long trajectory of imperial colonization. A second use of the Global North/Global South delineation lies in identifying metropolitan (mistaken) assumptions within criminology. For these authors, Northern criminology—i.e., that produced in North America and Western Europe—has largely failed to study many phenomena that, while taking place in the Global South, are relevant for Global North-Global South relations and for criminological theorization. Such phenomena, traditionally under-acknowledged by criminology, might range from resource exploitation of the Global South by the Global North, to social conflicts in rural communities in the Global South, to the particularities of gendered crime in the Global South.

Rather than discarding Northern criminological theories, Carrington and her colleagues called for the decolonization and democratization of criminological theorization in order to modify and augment the discipline and “re-orientate its compass,” to use Carrabine and his co-authors’ phrase (2020: 21). This could involve, for example, re-evaluation of the dominant concepts of war and peace, as these fail to capture the complexities of Southern violence; development of a more nuanced understanding of the insidious influence of organized criminality/corruption in Southern governments; and challenging the acceptance of Northern explanations and assumptions, such as those underpinning the “neoliberal penalty thesis” (Carrabine et al. 2020: 14).

Precedents to and Critiques of Southern Criminology

In subsequent publications, Carrington and colleagues (2018, 2019a, b) have successfully created not simply an idea or concept but an academic brand or label that, in a relatively short period of time, has made an international impact via articles, books and conferences. Nevertheless, to present a more elaborate picture of a Southern-oriented criminology, two clarifications are in order. First, these authors are not the only representatives of southern criminology nor is this “movement” a novelty within criminology. Southern criminology is—rather like green criminology (Brisman and South 2020) and consistent with Brisman’s (2019) argument about “critical criminologies” rather than one “critical criminology”—an accommodating and varied project with multiple contributors and perspectives, which could therefore be described appropriately as *southern criminologies* (Moosavi 2018; see also Böhm 2018; Carvalho et al. 2020; Goyes 2019; Goyes and South 2016; Sollund and

Runhovde 2020). Likewise, as described by Goyes (2018, 2019) the proposition that there is a need for a criminology attuned and attentive to the realities of the Global South has a history that originates long before the 2015 baptism of "southern criminology." Scholars from non-core Western countries—such as those in Africa (Agozino 2003, 2004), Asia (Liu et al. 2013), and Latin America (Andrade 2012; Aniyar de Castro 1986; del Olmo 1981; Zaffaroni 1988)—as well as researchers with an interest in applying post-colonial and globalization perspectives to criminology (e.g., Aas 2013; Coomber and South 2004; Cunneen 2011) have all highlighted the need to redress the criminological knowledge gap by increasing the volume of criminological activity attuned to the realities of the Global South.

Southern criminologies and their precedents all share the goal of *decolonizing science*—which, in the words of Quijano (2007: 177), means to "liberate the production of knowledge, reflection, and communication from the pitfalls of European rationality/modernity." The decolonial project in criminology has a long history, which can be observed in the criminology of liberation in Latin America (Aniyar de Castro 1986) and in Samir Amin's theory of "Eurocentrism"—formulated in the 1980s with the goal of exposing the cultural (religious) hegemony of the Global North and critiquing colonialism and capitalism (Amin and Moore 1989; see also Amin 2014). Furthermore, the challenges led by critical criminologists against scientific and cultural colonialisms, including those presented by European and North American critics, constitute a contribution that also deserves to be recognized—particularly given that, historically, critical thinking has often been marginalized and characterized frequently as "second class," "non-scientific," "too activist," or "exotic" by gatekeepers of academic knowledge (Carvalho 2014). As such, discussing southern criminologies today is possible only because of these precedents.

Our aim, here, is not to diminish or delegitimize the success of the current southern criminology movement, but by reminding readers that previous (plural) southern criminologies have existed and continue to exist, we wish emphasize that these southern criminologies have been unable to find a position on an "equal footing with Western criminology, despite repeated affirmations of their legitimacy" (Goyes 2019: 46–47), and that many researchers and scholars have worked for decades on the decolonization of criminology without success. Consequently, in order to take steps toward achieving some of the goals of the previous (plural) southern criminologies, we assert that there should be some reflection on the shortcomings of previous and current proposals. For example, Moosavi's (2018) article—"A Friendly Critique of 'Asian Criminology' and 'Southern Criminology,'" also published in *The British Journal of Criminology*—has been instructive regarding the process of identifying some of the shortcomings of present southern criminology. Indeed, Moosavi (2018: 262), while agreeing with the need to decolonize criminology, suggests using "the well-established literature about decolonizing knowledge that has been developed by scholars from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania over multiple decades" to strengthen the current initiative.

Moosavi's (2018) first criticism regards *definitions and conceptualizations*. For him, southern criminology lacks "interrogation of [its] philosophical, epistemological and ontological premises" (Moosavi 2018: 261). He asks whether southern criminology "is a theory, paradigm, school, project, model, approach, perspective, toolbox, method, lens or attitude" and "is [the Global South] a place, a political environment, an economic condition, a cultural type or a historical position?" Indeed, considering their internal heterogeneity, breadth and vagueness, the terms "Global North," "Global South," and "southern criminology" are easy prey to criticism (for a discussion, see, e.g., Goyes 2020).

Moosavi's second criticism deals with *structural arrangements*. Considering that in the past, the decolonization of criminology has failed due to "the limitations of non-Western criminology," as much as the "patterns of exclusion in the West" (Moosavi 2018: 260–261), Moosavi highlights the lack of a discussion on "whether the decolonization of criminology is even possible given the discipline's Western origins, its historic relationship with elite coercion and the way in which we have already reached a point in history where it is no longer possible to disentangle Western hegemony from social science knowledge production." Indeed, Goyes (2019) has documented southern criminologists' active embrace of cultural colonialism—their willingness to follow Western patterns of knowledge creation and substantiation and their associated social norms—as one of the elements that has hampered the successful development of a criminology attuned to the realities of the Global South.

Moosavi's (2018) third criticism pertains to *operational matters*—essentially, what research practices actually constitute the decolonization tools of southern criminologies? Fourth, and of particular interest for this special issue, is Moosavi's (2018) observation that southern criminology *lacks representativity*. Moosavi (2018) finds it paradoxical that while the goal of the project is to elevate and expand the voices of the geographical and metaphorical South, southern criminology has been associated so strongly with Australian "southern theory" and criminology, with little engagement with Africa. Although the original proposal for a southern criminology included a reference to "the plight of Indigenous peoples: extreme levels of poverty, fractured cultures and communities, high levels of violence and conflict, low life expectancy and massive over-representation in the criminal justice system" (Carrington et al. 2016: 6), it is in this special issue that we wish to add further contributions to what has so far been a relatively scarce engagement with Indigenous issues and the almost non-existent Indigenous representation as authors within the project.

The Development and Aims of this Special Issue and Contributions

Our motivation behind drawing critical attention to both the successes and shortcomings of the most recent—but not the first—proposal for the "southernizing" of criminology comes from our belief in the academic and social importance of decolonizing criminology, and our hope that it is possible to make this project a more solid and influential academic initiative. Indeed, this special issue is an outcome of the conference, "Conflict, Power and Justice in the Global South,"¹ which was a space of debate and joint construction of the "southern criminologies" project. In line with the spirit of the conference, with this special issue, we seek to explore and extend theoretical and pragmatic discussions crucial for the maturation of the southern criminologies. Furthermore, we attempt to decenter the project by including new voices in the discussion of southern criminologies' meaning and practice. As such, all the contributions included in this special issue engage with the critiques outlined above regarding Carrington and colleagues' version of southern criminology. Hopefully, this will represent a step forward in creating further spaces for debate and for propositions regarding the decolonization of criminology.

¹ Co-organized by David Rodríguez Goyes and Kerry Carrington and hosted by the Católica University of Colombia in Bogotá, Colombia, in November 2019.

In "Decolonizing Southern Criminology: What Can the Decolonial Option Tell Us About Challenging the Modern/Colonial Foundations of Criminology," Eleni Dimou (2021) borrows the concept of "coloniality" from the Latin American tradition to argue that a full decolonization of criminology entails identifying, denouncing and breaking from the pitfalls of Western modern rationality. This contribution thus advances the construction of the conceptual bases of southern criminologies.

In "Truth and Method in Southern Criminology," Mark Brown (2021)—inspired by both Asian and Western thought—suggests a dialogue between the Global North and Global South as the best way to avoid falling into the pitfalls of coloniality while *doing* southern criminology. Brown's ethical reflection speaks to both structural and methodological debates within southern criminology.

All the remaining articles in this special issue, besides engaging in fundamental debates of concern to southern criminologies, focus on Indigenous issues, providing at least some redress to the dearth of Indigenous studies and voices within the southern criminologies. In "Southern Green Cultural Criminology and Environmental Crime Prevention: Representations of Nature Within Four Colombian Indigenous Communities," David Rodríguez Goyes, Mireya Astroina Abaibira, Pablo Baicué, Angie Cuchimba, Deisy Tatiana Ramos Ñeñetofe, Ragnhild Sollund, Nigel South and Tanya Wyatt (2021) present an example of what a southern green cultural criminological analysis of environmental destruction looks like when thoroughly informed by Indigenous thinking. In addition, this article suggests the use of a "peer methodology" as a well-attuned form of research for the decolonization of criminology.

In "Indigenous People and Organized Crime: Borders, Incentives and Relations," Daan P. van Uhm and Ana G. Grigore (2021) explore the complex structural arrangements and power relations that push Indigenous communities into organized crime. Similarly, in "Medicinal Marijuana, Inc.: A Critique of the Market-led Legalization of Cannabis and the Criminalization of Rural Livelihoods in Colombia," Irene Vélez-Torres, Diana Hurtado and Bladimir Bueno (2021) discuss the global power arrangements that victimize and criminalize rural populations, the majority of which are Indigenous. Finally, in "Coronial Inquests, Indigenous Suicide and the Colonial Narrative," Belinda Carpenter, Megan Harris, Steph Jowett, Gordon Tait and Rebecca Scott Bray (2021) illustrate how colonial thinking—i.e., coloniality—is very much alive and informs most social dynamics involving Indigenous peoples. The authors discuss how coronial inquests of Indigenous suicides allow government officials to reify the idea of Indigenous peoples as biologically inferior.

We hope that neither this Introduction nor any of the other pieces comprising this special issue escape scrutiny. Critique, beyond being mandatory for achieving the intellectual robustness of the myriad southern criminological projects, is a means to invite all criminologists to engage with debates around coloniality, global divisions, and power imbalances. We look forward to continuing a cooperative and constructive exchange, as is proper, of real decolonial, southern criminologies.

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