



How International Should International Criminology Be?

Leandro Ayres França¹

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Abstract

This essay starts by outlining a definition for international criminology. To do so, akin, alternative criminologies are examined to carve a distinct, working concept of international criminology. Following, the global geopolitics of knowledge is analyzed, with specific illustrations of how the dynamics of criminological knowledge concentration, influence and visibility operate. Acknowledging an established intellectual hegemony of the North/center in criminological knowledge production, some of its features are presented in the third part of the article, thus unveiling the challenges international criminologists are faced with. Based on this examination, some rough proposals are introduced in the final section, as a prospect to fashion a truly international criminology. The main argument of this article is that both the discipline and the journal of International Criminology emerge as an alternative to supersede the present geopolitics of knowledge.

Keywords International criminology · Geopolitics of knowledge · Knowledge production · Northernness · Colonialism

Introduction

Tupi, or not tupi, that is the question.

The formula above is very functional as an allegory for the ideas presented in this article. For those who are not aware of the context in which it was published, the sentence makes no sense; uninformed of the wordplay, it might even be taken as a misspelled classical quote. But what has a modified existentialist angst emanated from an English tragedy to do with international criminology? Apparently, nothing. From another, situationally reversed perspective, however, one might find out new meanings. The aphorism was written by the Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade in a 1928 art manifesto. Based on the revalorization of the aboriginal elements, the ‘anthropophagical movement’ proposed by the Brazilian modernists was determinate to ‘devour’ and critically assimilate not only the values transplanted to the colony but also those which had been denied, particularly the local, native and popular. Andrade’s parody of the Hamletian impasse condenses the identity tension and segmentation, and also the will of producing a national synthesis through the devourment of the Other (Rodrigues, 2016). It translates

poetically the contradictory search for the Brazilian national identity through Shakespeare’s probably most memorable verse. So, again: What has it to do with international criminology? Possibly, everything. Reading the aphorism demands a culturally sensitive approach, a particular attention to what it means or implies to people in one specific context as well as in others—the very same stance required to put international criminology into practice. This verse illustrates an attitude of thinking and producing social emancipation.¹ And also pays tribute to Native Brazilians inscribing the name of the aboriginal Tupi people that (once upon a time) was one of the most numerous in South America.

This essay starts by outlining a definition for international criminology. To do so, akin, alternative criminologies are examined to carve a distinct, working concept of international criminology. Following, the global geopolitics of knowledge is analyzed, with specific illustrations of how the dynamics of criminological knowledge concentration,

¹ The length of this essay limits a thorough examination of Mignolo’s distinction between ‘emancipation’ and ‘liberation’, so here and there technical jargons are used in quite a flexible manner. For Mignolo (2007), ‘emancipation’ is a concept related to the claim of freedom of a new social class (the bourgeoisie), and it was recovered in Marxist discourse in the twentieth century to argue for the emancipation of the working class. On the other hand, ‘liberation’ and ‘decolonization’ point toward conceptual projects of delinking from the colonial matrix of power. This rationale makes more tangible the following assertion, published later: ‘Decolonial thinking presupposes de-linking (epistemically and politically) from the web of imperial knowledge.’ (Mignolo, 2009, p. 178).

✉ Leandro Ayres França
leandro@ayresfranca.com

¹ Unisc, Rua José do Patrocínio, 462/112, Porto Alegre, RS CEP 90.050-002, Brazil

influence and visibility operate. Acknowledging an established intellectual hegemony of the North/center in criminological knowledge production, some of its features are presented in the third part of the article, thus unveiling the challenges international criminologists are faced with. Based on this examination, some rough proposals are introduced in the final section, as a prospect to fashion a truly international criminology. The main argument of this article is that both the discipline and the journal of International Criminology emerge as an alternative to supersede the present geopolitics of knowledge.

Carving International Criminology

Defining a scientific field is not an easy task. The meaning of criminology, either as an academic discipline or a professional praxis, has always been contested. And it is even more challenging when we realize criminology is not a monolithic framework, but rather a set of discourses—with their own particular premises, aims and methodologies—interested in the making, breaking or enforcement (or not) of the criminal laws of any jurisdiction (Carlen, 2011; Sutherland & Cressey, 1978). Criminologies, in the plural form (Carlen & França, 2017), are both a good representation of the never-ending list of criminological adaptations and variations and a reminder that we will find criminology even where the term is not apparent—as in other longer-established sciences and praxes. One of these criminologies is *international criminology*.

At this point, it might be useful, if not unavoidable, to explain this particular criminological perspective, distinguishing it from apparently coincident concepts. To do so, and to prevent conceptual bruises, I suggest arriving at a definition by making clear what international criminology *is not*.

First, we should not understand international criminology as a *non-local criminology*, opposed to an alleged local or nation-state-based criminology. In this case, this idea of a non-local criminology binds international criminology to a particular subject matter perspective: the study of international and transnational crimes. International crimes are those that affect humanity, regardless where they are perpetrated, and they are today established by the Rome Statute: crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes and crimes of aggression. Transnational crimes are the crimes that cross national borders, increasingly less geographically bound under national jurisdictions, like environmental crimes and their widespread harms, financial crimes and subsequent regional or global economic crisis, drug trafficking, terrorism, cybercrimes and so on.

The underlying reason to reject the notion of international criminology as a non-local criminology is that it is not appropriate to limit criminology to crime types. (For

a contrary view, upholding international criminology as focused on international crimes, international law and the related institutions: see Friedrichs, 2007.) As argued before, different criminologies are defined by particular preconditions of existence, premises, aims and methodologies—i.e., by what is questioned, to which ends and how it is done—, and not solely by a given category of crimes. There is no ‘homicide criminology’, or ‘property-crimes criminology’, because these are legal categories of crimes, not criminological types. Likewise, green criminology is not limited by a legal category of crimes, established in environmental laws and regulation; it is also concerned with global political economy, systemic causal chains, harm and victims (White, 2009). Not even the criminological theory of white-collar crime is based exclusively on categories of offenses, but both on the violation of criminal law in the course of offenders’ occupational activities and on their social status as persons of the upper socioeconomic class (Sutherland, 1941). Neither a fraud committed by a wealthy conman of the underworld nor a love-related murder committed by a businessman would be white-collar crimes.

Wouldn’t international criminology be interested, for instance, in local gender- or race-related violence derived from historical colonialist practices? Or in how specific, central or peripheral, criminal justice systems respond to international, capitalist political economy, or even how they create alternative methods to deal with social conflicts? In addition, democracy, education, incarceration, migration, media, police etc. do not actually fall into neither international nor transnational crimes categories, but are truly potential subject matters for international criminology.

Second, international criminology should not be mixed up with *transnational criminology*, a growing field set out to understand crimes that challenge national borders, and thus jurisdictional boundaries of legal system, and to contribute to supranational criminal justice policies (Bowling, 2011; Friedrichs, 2007). Transnational criminology is not defined by a defined category of the so-called transnational crimes and goes beyond comparative analysis. The key to this alternative perspective is the analysis of linkages between places, or, in Bowling’s (2011, p. 363) words, ‘the observation that things happening in one locality are increasingly shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa’. Drug trafficking is a typical case: transnational criminology is a useful tool to explain how illegal drug production, distribution and consumption are linked across time and place, and specially how criminal policies and enforcement strategies taken in one place impact far distant localities, connecting lived experiences in different parts of the world—for instance, and explicitly: how the American ‘war on drugs’ has seriously affected other countries.

Third, and following this train of thought, we should not think about international criminology as a *comparative*

criminology. Though possibly global in scope, comparative criminology differs in its substantive preoccupations and methods of study. Bowling (2011, p. 364) explains that, in ‘researching illegal drugs for example, *comparative criminology* might seek to describe and explain differences in the prevalence of cocaine use in various countries.’ In other words, laws, policies, strategies, patterns are compared—but not criminological epistemologies and theories. And these comparisons are indeed valuable; they produce richer descriptions and explanations, and they contribute to more contextualized and accurate theories, because they add the ‘much needed nuance to universalistic claims about the potentially global scope of penal trends’, and also encourage ‘critical reflection about the transferability of criminal justice policies and solutions to other countries and locations’ (Aas, 2012, p. 9). Thus, foundational knowledge in comparative criminology is somewhat an essential prerequisite for the development of transnational, Southern and/or international criminology.

Fourth: international criminology should not be limited to *Southern criminology*. Postcolonial theorists have depicted differences in the production of knowledge—but not limited to it, as seen below—in imperialistic (colonizer/colonized), situational (center/periphery), geographic (Global North/South) terms.—Despite not being a postcolonial theorist, it is important to mention the Argentinian criminologist Zaffaroni’s (1988) concept of *nuestro margen*² (our margin) when referring to Latin America marginalization.—In any of these cases, the predominant part (colonizer, center, North) is mainly related to the countries of Western Europe, the UK and the USA.

We cannot speak of postcolonial critique as a unique theory. First, because in fact postcolonialism is a fluid and polysemic category, a varied set of theoretical and analytical perspectives, with the ability to condense multiple meanings and refer to different locations. Second, because it should be acknowledged there is no corpus of work on Latin America commonly recognized as such; Coronil (2004) explains postcolonialism, as a conceptual category, originated in discussions about the decolonization of African and Asian colonies after the Second World War, and that the key critical scholarship in Latin American social thought during this period was neither colonialism or postcolonialism, but ‘dependency’.

² In Zaffaroni’s (1988, p. 76) own words: ‘The cultural superiority, the ascension of the European power and its universalization brutally marginalized and subjected Native Americans and African Americans, resorting to its own marginalized to do so; eventually, those who first marginalized us were marginalized by other “superiors”, and sent us the marginalized of their societies already marginalized in Europe itself. *We are an epiphenomenon of syncretization of the central power’s marginalizations, one of a kind in the world for its humane, geographic and cultural dimensions*’ (emphases in original).

However, in their understanding of the contemporary world, postcolonial theorists do have in common a shared emphasis on the extremely unequal relations derived from a global dichotomy, based on denying humanity to some people to overexploit or exclude them as discardable (Santos, 2010), and also an identifying signature which is the convergence of theoretical currents in studies that address the complicity between knowledge and power (Coronil, 2004).

Southern criminology’s conceptual approach works as a metaphor for the power relations, embedded in different parts of the world, in the realm of knowledge production. It is an inescapable fact that there is a structural imbalance in the economy of knowledge, which ‘has produced a hegemony of social scientific thought based on the experience of a small number of mainly English-speaking societies in the Global North’ (Carrington & Hogg, 2017, p. 182), after the original preponderance of French and German works. This approach is also functional as a situational metaphor: the South is the other, the subaltern, the marginal, the excluded (Carrington et al., 2016). For Santos (2010), the South is understood as a metaphor of the human suffering caused by capitalist modernity.

Southern theory ‘is not a fixed set of propositions but a challenge to develop new knowledge projects’ (Connell, 2014). In this sense, Southern criminology seeks to generate theory and construct new loci of enunciations, not just apply irreflexively theory imported from the global North; to renovate criminology’s methodological approaches and to inject innovative perspectives into the study of crime and global justice from the periphery; to reinvent social emancipation, going beyond the Northern established critical theory and the social and political praxis to which it is subscribed; to democratize and trans-nationalize criminological practice and knowledge; and, by doing so, to change the criminological field to make it more inclusive of histories and patterns of crime, justice and security outside the global North. In sum, it is a theoretical, empirical and political project ‘aimed at bridging global divides and creating intercultural epistemologies’ (Carrington & Hogg, 2017, p. 184, Santos, 2010, p. 227).

One of the contributions of this perspective is the explanation of how the domestic gaze of a peacetime criminology overlapped alternative knowledge production/dissemination and overlooked the criminogenic impact of colonialism. Take for instance Carrington and Hogg’s (2017) ingenious and insightful hypothesis of what late nineteenth century criminology would have been like—and how different it would have shaped subsequent theoretical trajectories in the twentieth century—if the crime problem had been viewed through the lens of the global South (they are focused on the case of the Australian penal colony); in other words, how exiled criminals and their descendants became socially integrated into an economically prosperous and democratic

society with relatively low crime rates—an unforeseen and truly antipodean outcome to the criminological mainstream theories at that point. Also, how terrible was the underside of the Australian experience: these opportunities of inclusion and new freedoms depended on the violent dispossession of others, who became later the targets of segregationist efforts still manifest today in high incarceration rates. Maia (2011) offers a Brazilian example: the case of the *favelas*. Based on the European universal framework of the ‘sociological city’, the traditional perspective of social scientists sees the *favelas* as an outcome of the bad function of city mechanisms, lacking the State’s authority. Urban ecology criminologists would certainly establish links between environmental factors and crime: internal migration, mobilization, disorganization and violence. Maia suggests the *favelas* should be considered as outcomes of social relations within frontier spaces, a complex network of state agencies, civil organizations and illegal markets, with its own idiosyncratic features of history, spatiality and dynamics that have little to do with the typical unifying image of ‘the city’. These two illustrations and many feasible others should not be taken instrumentally as further material for cultural mapping or as adjuncts of accepted sociological categories, but as contributions to a more inclusive social and criminological theory (McLennan, 2013).

Some critics do remark the use of categories such as North/South may achieve little more than to ‘fix’ a region or a country as immobile and static; in McFarlane’s (2006) words, it may ‘tie a country into a relation of equivalence between a set of problems and a category.’ Aware that a careless rationale would inevitably reaffirms the ‘cartographic structures of power’, and beside arguing that this conceptualization is not based on a fixed geographical or economic binary, and that in any case it is rather a nuanced than a dichotomous representation, Southern criminologists affirm this usage presupposes that one part of the globe ‘does not exist apart from the historical, highly unequal pattern of relationships’ with the other part³, and so it ‘seeks to capture the flows and interrelationships—of force, influence, unequal exchange, domination—that connect peoples and practices across the globe’ (Carrington et al., 2018). Therefore, these concepts should be used in a reflexive and relative way, as entwined and enmeshed worlds (Valdés-Riesco, 2020).

³ In this line, Zaffaroni (1988, p. 66) affirms that, before answering what Latin America is, one should ask what is Europe and when it came to be as such. He argues that Europe acknowledged the need of accounting itself as a diverse, hostile and superior assemblage after confronting and dominating other continents. Mignolo (2009, p. 174) has an analogous argument: ‘This consideration shifts the geography of reason and illuminates the fact that the colonies were not a secondary and marginal event in the history of Europe but, on the contrary, colonial history is the non-acknowledged center in the making of modern Europe.’

International criminology may certainly comprise non-local subject matters, transnational analyses, comparative methods and Southern epistemologies, but it cannot be boiled down to any of them. Bowling (2011) argues the distinction may be one of scope: a global criminology would involve, or aspire to, the whole world considered in a planetary context, gathering scholars from all regions of the world. Despite the considerable conceptual overlap and the unconcerned resorting to both terms—global and international—quite interchangeably, *global criminology* seems to be more focused on globalization and its consequences in relation to crime and criminal justice, and the role of the global economy and its regulation (Friedrichs, 2007). Therefore, I prefer to think about international criminology as a *new way of thinking about and using criminology. Not a pre-established theoretical body of knowledge, but a new critical criminological stance, an attitude of thinking and producing social emancipation as an ethical and political exigency.* International criminology may still need a theoretical maturing, or rather, encouraged by Santos’ (2010) rationale, we may admit the impossibility or uselessness of a general theory. The definition presented by Smith et al. (2011, p. 2) properly translates this notion: “*International criminology is a culturally sensitive and globally mindful approach to crime and social control problems where they happen to be*” (emphases in original). In this line, they argue international criminology would pursue a research agenda beyond etiologic and explanatory considerations, comprising also what deviance and crime mean or imply to people in one context as well as in others.

One could argue some criminological ‘schools’ have already undertaken this purpose: those who have resorted to ethnographic approaches—from the Chicago School’s pioneering studies to the more recent cultural scholarship—have gone through similar experience. The refutation is not wrong. The difference now is that international criminologists have, or should have, the admitted assumption they work with both common and particular patterns about crime and social control in a global transcending environment, and that they ponder over the subjective position they occupy within the discourse they create.

International criminology should not be deemed as an innovative ‘school’, nor a new brand of criminology or a brand-new criminology (Carlen, 2018) designed to distinguish a new club—or academic gang—and its associates within, and also opposed to, the larger criminological society. Planting a flag might be an automatic impulse when elaborating a rationale, and it is certainly useful to define chronological and territorial boundaries. However, as Schwarz (1987) reasoned when writing on literary schools, when the taste for terminological and doctrinaire novelty prevails over the knowledge work, we have the disappointing impression of shifts without subjective need, and therefore

to no avail. So, in any case, here and beyond, scientific re-feeding should be avoided. As Carrington et al. (2016, 2018) and Carrington and Russell (2017) insistently assert, when discussing Southern Criminology, the purpose is not to simply add one more candidate to the growing catalogue of new criminologies and thus contribute to the growing fragmentation of the field. International criminologists should promote and take advantage of the global circulation of criminological studies as a ‘potent intellectual currency’ (Coronil, 2004) for the exchange and development of perspectives on violence and crime, from varied regions and theoretical traditions, perspectives which may take different but complementary forms.

Scanning Geopolitics of Knowledge

In a recent work, Valdés-Riesco (2020, p. 7) ensured that ‘[m]ost of the studies are predominantly developed in the Global North, by authors working in the Global North, and in Anglo-language countries, leaving a marginalised space for the production of knowledge in non-Anglo-language countries in the Global South.’ She specifically analyzed the scholarship on crimes of the powerful, but her statement is also valid for all criminological studies (Carrington & Hogg, 2017). This diagnosis arises from a growing field, especially in social science, that has been tracing the effects of a geopolitics of knowledge conditioned by the history of colonialism and current North-South global inequalities (Connell, 2014). To make the geopolitics of knowledge more explicit, Valdés-Riesco (2020) unfolds the knowledge-production dynamics in two processes (concentration and influence), which will be further explored next. To these I shall add another one (visibility). Aware of the polysemic conceptualization of knowledge, it should be noted that the idea addressed henceforth is mainly related to a ‘university accredited knowledge’.

First, criminology and other social sciences in general present a knowledge-production *concentration*. Some countries have a privileged position in the geopolitics of knowledge to develop theory, discourse and methods. Understanding the production of knowledge as a form of labor, done by specific groups of workers in specific social contexts, Connell (2014, p. 211) explains this concentration as resulting from a global division of labor that runs through the history of modern science and is still powerful today: ‘The role of the periphery is to supply data, and later to apply knowledge in the form of technology and method. The role of the metropole, as well as producing data, is to collate and process data, producing theory (including methodology) and developing applications which are later exported to the periphery.’ White (2009) calls this process ‘knowledge mining’.

Though many factors are in play here, we should never forget that the process of colonization historically established a domination that was marked by the inferiorization of aboriginal peoples through theological, biological and anthropological arguments (Zaffaroni, 1988, pp. 62–65); the expropriation of cultural discoveries of the colonized peoples; the repression of colonized forms of knowledge production⁴; and a colonialist *compelle intrare* which forced the colonized to learn and adopt the dominant culture to consolidate the domination (Quijano, 2000). All these resulted in the imbalance of knowledge concentration in the center and a great knowledge erasure in the periphery. Contributing to this erasure was the myopic colonial perspective that dispossessed colonized peoples of their own and singular identities. Then different, sophisticated native-American and native-African peoples were merged into the single, colonial identity of Indians and Negroes/Black, respectively. Their new racial, negative ascribed identity plundered their place in the history of the cultural production of humanity. From then on, Quijano (2000, p. 552) says, ‘there were inferior races, capable only of producing inferior cultures.’

Second, these central countries also have a knowledge-production *influence*, exporting information to the peripheral, non-Anglo-speaking countries, constituting a continuing problem of dependence and absorption (Connell, 2014). Zaffaroni (1988) and del Olmo (1999) described how, in the nineteenth century, Latin American representatives imported European positivist theories and juridical culture, and most countries adopted American penitentiary models in their prison reforms, substituting the former abominable models inherited from colonial times, resulting in a very peculiar blended product of juridical science and techniques of treatment, ‘since they defined crime and punishment following European law, while handling criminals according to the North American penitentiary model’ (del Olmo, 1999, p. 24); in the twentieth century, both the European criminological discourses and penal laws continued to influence Latin America, at the same time direct crime control was imported from the USA, giving rise to a two-system blend that had contradictory consequences: ‘direct and efficient methods of detention clashed with slow and complicated sentencing practices’ (Ibid., p. 33).

This predominantly unidirectional flow of knowledge lasts until today—and it is not limited to the typical case

⁴ Illustrative of the colonial expropriation and repression of the knowledge of Others was the appropriation of indigenous knowledges to produce pharmaceutical drugs and the following criminalization of their traditional practices. Brazilian Criminal Codes from 1890 and 1940 (in force) established ‘*curandeirismo*’ (folk healing) as a crime (Borges, 2001, França & Silveira, 2012). On the nature of Indigenous knowledge inclusion and the necessary cautions, see Briggs & Sharp (2004).

of the ‘New York miracle’ global trend in policing. Most criminological handbooks published by Brazilian publishers, for instance, recount the Western-European and American historical criminological theories (Gomes, 2020; Pentead Filho, 2018; Serrano Maíllo & Prado, 2019; Shecaira, 2020). I admittedly did this in my own book (França, 2012). Another, entitled ‘Critical Introduction to the *Brazilian Criminology*’ (Batista, 2011, emphasis added) does pretty much the same, mentioning at the end of each chapter a few Brazilian scholars influenced by (guess what) European criminological traditions, either reproducing previous Northern theories or rejecting them following other European ones. In this sense, as Mignolo (2002, pp. 63–64) points out, the depth of this influence is such that the ‘Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism was accepted in former colonies as “our own” critique of Eurocentrism; socialist alternatives to liberalism in Europe were taken, in the colonies, as a path of liberation without making the distinction between emancipation in Europe and liberation in the colonial world.’⁵ This is pretty much what happened, from the *nuestro margen* perspective, with critical and/or cultural criminologies, penal abolitionism, restorative justice etc.

I add another stratum to Valdés-Riesco’s argument: the knowledge-production *visibility*. It is no surprise all global attention is turned to the events taking place in specific, ‘high-valued’ places. Of interest here is that these particular events overlap others more or as relevant, or at least as noteworthy, as the former; and by doing so derivative criminological scholarship is conditioned to incidents, experiences and matters confined to that same territory of knowledge-production and exportation. Referring to the wrongful execution of Jean Calas in 1762, Agozino (2004, pp. 345–346) states: ‘The execution of a single innocent Frenchman counts for more in the conventional history of the invention of criminology than the genocidal Trans Atlantic Slavery in which tens of millions of Africans were destroyed or the genocide against Native Americans and aboriginal Australians’. Another example from *nuestro margen*: Brazilian Law students are usually terrified by Michel Foucault’s (1977) account of Robert-François Damiens’ heinous execution in 1757, unaware (blame the teachers) we had 20,000 tortured people during the civil-military dictatorship that ruled Brazil 1964 to 1985, many of them well documented from

testimonies from both victims *and* perpetrators (Brasil, CNV 2014).

Addressing Northernness Features

At this point of the text, it should be no surprise that, like other social sciences, criminology has been ‘marked by a similar, if not even more pronounced, constellation of northern production’ (Aas, 2012). The geopolitics of knowledge production, influence and visibility establishes an intellectual hegemony of the North/center which might be referred to as Northernness (Carrington et al., 2016). At the risk of being the devil’s advocate here, this Northernness is somewhat inevitable, for the very origin stories of criminology are derivative of northern experiences and shaped by European theoretical traditions, commonly generalized as universal theories of crime causation (Carrington & Hogg, 2017). It does not matter when one picks the starting point of criminology: demonology⁶ (see Zaffaroni, 2007), classicism (Beccaria, Bentham et al.), positivism (Lombroso et al.) or structuralism (Durkheim et al.); in terms of its origin informing theories, criminology has been traditionally a discipline under a strong Northern dominance. Acknowledgeable as this might be, the problem is that the Northernness of general theories bears some challenges for a criminology which is intended to be international. There are four key dimensions I would like to discuss here: the claim of universality, the theoretical closure, the scientific vernacular and the academic structure.

Expertise is typically considered to be presumed neutral, independent of context, and valid regardless of locale. As an ‘expert system’, criminology has always been universal in its orientation (Chan, 2000). In fact, the seemingly context-free nature of the North/center social theories has a *claim of universality* that presumes all subject matters are knowable, and that they are knowable in the same way and from the same point of view. Criminological theory developed in Europe, the UK and the USA often explicitly, and more often implicitly, claims to be universal (Bowling, 2011). And this abstract universalism hampers the production of another knowledge. This brings about the challenge that criminologists in the South/periphery cannot universalize a locally generated perspective because its specificity is considered immediately obvious, exotic, downright crazy (Connell, 2006, 2014), an unchanging artefact of a timeless culture that needs to be preserved (Briggs & Sharp, 2004), an anthropological curiosity or any ‘sub-’ that connotes

⁵ For Quijano (2000, pp. 542, 549, 551), Eurocentrism is the hegemonic perspective of knowledge, whose systematic formation began in Western Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century, although, he asserts, some of its roots are much older. Eurocentrism is based on two main founding myths: the assumption of the history of human civilization as a trajectory that departed from a state of nature and culminated in European or Western civilization, and a view of the differences between Europe and non-Europe as natural/racial differences and not consequences of a history of power. Regarding the distinction between emancipation and liberation, see note 1.

⁶ The idea that criminology origin could be traced to Renaissance demonology undermines Agozino’s (2004, p. 344) argument that criminology is inherently a colonial enterprise.

inferiority (Zaffaroni, 1988). Any attempt of generalization is then objectionable.

It should be clear, but it is important to make it explicit: criminologists are not the ones to blame—neither professional organizations nor universities. For generalizations and assumptions about universality/transferability/visibility of knowledge are essential aspects of theoretical thinking. There is a core element of universality in all knowledge projects and you cannot have a theory that does not generalize (McLennan, 2013). (Aren't the references to Northernness or Eurocentrism generalizations likewise?) Weighting up these assertions, McLennan (2012) asks: 'is it *universalism* that is false, or is the problem rather *false universalism*?' Softening the hostility to universality allows us to recognize the problem is 'bad abstraction' (McLennan, 2013), i.e. claiming a universal relevance without explicitly acknowledging its particular origin, thus fostering generalizations of specific experiences (Aas, 2012). In such manner, one must remind always that also criminological knowledges are significantly situated and contextual. As a friend once told me: What the narrator is telling is true, but it is his truth.⁷ When considering developing empirical and theoretical approaches, which 'build on the situatedness of the global within the national and the local' (Aas, 2012, p. 11), it is worthwhile to remember the well-known lesson that 'a room looks altered if you enter it from a different door' (Mignolo, 2002, p. 65; see also Mignolo, 2009).

The core academic practice is to put one's research into a wider theoretical context in dialogue with the relevant literature. In other words: as a scientific requirement, one contributes to general theory, relating their work to prior literature and presenting some defect and subsequent amending it. Thus, a first key question is: whose literature is actually read and acknowledged? The immediate answer: this readings and amendments are mainly related to a mainstream, metropolitan theoretical literature, with scarce place for other national traditions (Faraldo-Cabana, 2018). In this sense, Northernness is also characterized by *reading/writing from the center*. Learning only from the 'usual suspects' (McFarlane, 2006) does not necessarily diminish the quality of knowledge production, but it does promote a self-referential criminological culture, limiting a range of experience that could prove enriching. This centripetal dynamic is intensified by what Carlen and Phoenix (2018) have called 'corporatist criminologies', where the criminological research-processes are made to comply with research excellency and impact indicators. Once who is on the author's reading list is as interesting

as who is not, two other questions are suggested: Whose ideas are excluded from scientific discussions? And whose perspectives are not addressed? The consciously or not literature exclusion also means something—in some cases, it means erasing particular experiences and social processes (Connell, 2006; White, 2009).

Engaging in disciplinary knowledge-making means to master the language of the discipline. With few exceptions, criminological research is published in English in English-speaking journals, run by English-speaking editors. It is unquestionable that English is an international language, with a present status of a modern *lingua franca* and the global language of academia (Faraldo-Cabana, 2018; Ugelvik et al., 2020; Valdés-Riesco, 2020). However, this specific feature of Northernness is problematic: nonnative Anglophone speakers have to devote greater efforts⁸ in terms of time and economic resources toward language learning, text production and translation, because native English-speaking scholars do not usually read in languages other than English (Faraldo-Cabana, 2018; Mignolo, 2009). And even when caught in translation, nonnative English speakers never truly are expressing themselves, because they are always already interpreted (Briggs & Sharp, 2004). This promotes an inescapable dilemma: those who are not able to publish in English are condemned to an isolation from the mainstream disciplinary debates, becoming a sort of local, not-read criminologist; those who are able to do so fall in another kind of isolation, this time from their own academic and social contexts, foreigners in their own land.

Finally, there is the problem of *academic structure*. Inequalities of resources and specially the wealth of higher education systems shape academic experience (for all: Connell, 2006). For researchers, it is clear the contrast of resources and material conditions between central, traditional and peripheric universities and other research institutions—not to mention socioeconomic circumstances which allow them or not to devote themselves fully to academic work. Academics from peripheral countries travel to long-established Northern/metropolitan universities for advanced training, visit foreign institutions and laboratories to develop their own research agenda, attend traditional conferences (ASC, BSC, ESC et al.), dream of being awarded with sabbatical leaves. And they do it not only to cultivate knowledge exchange, but fundamentally because their original situation does not provide an adequate structure for advancing

⁷ Anyone who had the opportunity of reading Machado de Assis would immediately agree with this assertion. Particularly the novels *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas* (1881) and *Dom Casmurro* (1899).

⁸ A friend who volunteered to read the first draft of this article informed me of a likely delay in his feedback: 'I don't have a quickly reading in English, I take a little while.' Later, while reading it, he sent me a message: 'My inference that "I take a little while to read in English" converges with one of the issues discussed in the article... for the record'.

high-quality academic research. All in all, it is not like all libraries in the world are the same.

Orienting a Truly International Criminology

Based on the analysis of an inequal criminological knowledge concentration, influence and visibility, and admitting an established Northern/central intellectual hegemony with its own features in these dynamics, this section is designed to present some proposals to overcome these challenges, construct a truly international criminology, and also orient (it is remarkable how the etymology of ‘orientation’ is related to the rising sun, and not to the North) this newborn journal’s policies. The suggestions range from analytical to practical, personal to institutional. The list is not exhaustive, and it is open to criticism, expansion and, most importantly, to implementation.

Skepticism to Globalization ‘Opportunities’

One could argue that the progress of globalization and the growing awareness of global connectedness represent an opportunity and a momentum to develop methodological, theoretical and conceptual approaches which transcend the established theoretical frameworks. Nevertheless, Aas (2012) accurately reminds it is possible a Northern-biased globalization may have the opposite effect, reinforcing existing asymmetries of knowledge and prove to be yet another universalizing force (see also Chan, 2000). Therefore, to avoid a false universalism in any instance (North to South or South to North), a ‘geo-politically more sensitive theoretical approach needs to develop not only an awareness of the various aspects of global inter-connectedness and interdependence, but, crucially, also a conceptual apparatus for analysing global divisions, inequalities, frictions and fragmentation’ (Aas, 2012, p. 10).

Admissibility Exam

Drawing on semiotics lexicon, Mignolo (2009) explains that any enunciation has temporal and spatial markers: it happens in the present—the past and the future making sense only in relation to the present—and in a ‘here’, wherever one is located at the moment of the enunciation. International criminologists, as any other scholars, should not take Northern mainstream production of knowledge for granted. Testing theoretical concepts and research methods, knowing the initial context and questioning the original aims are paramount for transplanting alien scientific discourses.

Academic Self-determination

Peripheral authors should not presume their criminological work is *extra*-ordinary, an anomaly to the established theoretical frameworks, confined to a peculiar phenomenon observed. There is a general assumption that if one ‘comes’ from Latin America, for instance, they have to ‘talk about’ Latin America; however, such expectation does not arise if the author ‘comes’ from central countries (Mignolo, 2009).

Advocating for a new academic attitude of self-determination does not mean I align myself with the idea of ‘counter colonial’ or ‘decolonial’ theories; legitimate as they may be, these approaches cause me some discomfort. Ultimately, they set a suspicious or resentful tone, thus focusing in countering, and overthrowing if possible, existing epistemologies and established theories with sheer mistrust or bitter criticism, instead of borrowing analytical tools of interest according to its purpose, and redefining its postulates, values and methods, and imagining/developing new ones, in order to adapt to the ‘changing topography’ of what is new and what needs to be explained (as an example: Agozino, 2004⁹; for a cautionary argument: Santos, 2010, p. 235, footnote; on criminology adaptation: Zedner, 2007). I remember when an accredited Brazilian critical criminologist declined the invitation to contribute to an international criminological collection (Carlen & França, 2018) inasmuch the book had European authors, what, in his opinion, indicated a colonial enterprise. This kind of silo approach, emphasizing separation instead of communication, is not uncommon today. Though it is reasonable to conjecture that someone, aware of and troubled by their situational disadvantage, might be motivated to reject established theories and go on to construct something new, it is nonsense to use ‘counter’/‘de-’ theories as alternative paradigms to be erected in conflicting opposition to the hegemonic concepts. To begin with, this dualistic opposition is an illusion proper to populist nationalisms, which places all evil abroad (cf. Schwarz, 1987, p. 33). Further, this exclusionary demeanor is actually opportunistic. Should we also counter other common cultural and political heritage of the world, like the Eurocentric concepts of human rights, secularism, scientific rationality, democracy, citizenship, socialism, feminism, equality before the law? (McLennan, 2013, pp. 131, 135; Santos, 2010, p. 238) Would Brazilians particularly forgo Eurocentric

⁹ ‘It is no longer credible for the imperialist countries who have the greatest crime problems and who perpetrate the greatest crimes to continue to posture as the standard-bearers of criminology from which the Third World should learn. There is an English proverb that you should set a thief to catch a thief but I have never trusted this proverb since I read it in the primary school. I have always suspected that the imperialist thieves would join hands and conspire to rob you blind.’ (Agozino 2004, p. 355).

creeds?—For the authentic Brazilian religiosity is found in the traditional indigenous rituals and in the syncretism of the *terreiro*.—So, the alternative to the Northernness is not a unified doctrine from the global South (Connell, 2006, p. 262). If peripheric authors were to claim centrality for their discourse, it should be clear that it should be an endeavor of constructing alternative, manifold centers of enunciation. As Connell (2014, p. 218) predicates: ‘We don’t want another system of intellectual dominance.’ For, in the intellectual arena, efforts to invent *another* may disguise new forms of colonization (Mignolo, 1993).

Correlation with Other Souths

As seen above, Southern criminologists are well aware their conceptualization is not based on a fixed geographical or economic binary, and that North/South should be seen as enmeshed worlds. Indeed, a notional impermeable wall dividing global North and South would be misleading (except for Donald Trump) by confining furthermore the periphery scope. For there is evidence of many ‘Souths’ within the North, meaning that one may easily find persistent North/South tensions as a pervasive feature of the internal life of nations and regions (Carrington & Hogg, 2017, p. 182; also Santos, 2010, p. 236; Zaffaroni, 1988, pp. 60–61): historically, Portugal was once the center of a colonial empire and later became an informal colony of England; presently, one could mention the challenging situation of the Eastern European region; and the special case of still colonized Northern nations, like Scotland and Northern Ireland; also the precarious condition of formerly enslaved and native Indigenous peoples in many countries (e.g., Quijano, 2000, pp. 560–561, on the foundation of the USA and national colonial domination and extermination); and last but not least, the American racial disparities in the experience of violence (Currie, 2017). Even the prime stories of mainstream criminology were premised on the conception of a criminal derivative from different ‘Souths’: in Lombroso’s account, the theory of atavism was founded on the observations of the evolutionary degenerate prisoners from the South of Italy; the later structuralist discourses’ explanation of the urbanization processes in the USA linked social disorganization/crime to the great internal flow of migration from Southern states and to the poor outlander (Asian and European) immigrants living in the interstitial areas or transition zones or ghettos of large cities (Carrington & Hogg, 2017, pp. 181–182). Based on this, and thinking about possible, beneficial solidarities and complicities, it would be fruitful if peripheric authors were to correlate their scholarship specially with other Souths. In any case, this call for a South to South dialogue, since long argued by several authors, should concurrently avoid a dismissal of the North.

Reading/Writing also from Outside the Center

Referencing the related and relevant literature is paramount to scientific work. It is of no one’s interest to toss aside the need of theoretical basis and contextualization. Yet to avert the knowledge-production closure, international criminology should consider broadening the access to silent and silenced literature. To ensure multiplicity, journals could provide, for instance, a periodically fed world map showing authors’ origin, academic affiliation, and the regional study focus and impact. This illustrative demography could work as a reminder to editors of how the geopolitics of knowledge is affecting knowledge production within their own journals, helping them in deciding what actions should be taken to expand the publication scope. Reviewing formal restriction for submissions is also an alternative. Important as they might be, some requirements—as academic titles and impact assessment—are not easily fulfilled by researchers around the globe.

In any case, it should be noted this openness is intended to supersede the theoretical closure of criminology, enriching the discipline with a more sensitive and inclusive approach to and from South/peripheric perspectives, and not a dramatization beyond what is reasonable, attended by a compassionate and naïve idealization of the Other. Though I understand the rationale, I am also not comfortable with the idea of the articulation of these perspectives as a redemptive project for the reason that this may make room for romanticizing knowledge production in the global South/periphery/colonies.¹⁰ We should always regard that, within some contexts, promoting countering ideas based on an allegedly native and authentic rationale is playing with fire; because it can incite nationalisms related to authoritarian times. Many emancipatory aspirations, Santos (2010, p. 238) warns, turned into forms of violence and atrocity, especially in the South. This is the case of Brazil, a country that has historically courted authoritarianism, and in the last century has been subject more to nationalist authoritarian regimes than to democratic periods. In the same line, we should never forget ‘[c]apitalism emerged as an economic system from a subaltern perspective: the commercial bourgeois class felt constrained by the power of the church and landlords’ (in other words, the French Revolution was indeed a subaltern (bourgeois) revolution), and that the USA is a decolonized country that took a leading role in a new process of colonization (Mignolo, 2002, pp. 77, 88).

¹⁰ This and the previous arguments are well developed and addressed in Carrington et al. (2016, 2018), Carrington and Russell (2017). Also, it is important to note that Carrington and Hogg (2017, p. 193) distinguish postcolonial theory and Southern theory, arguing that, among other differences, the latter avoids essentialization and romanticization of the concept of indigenous.

Language Pluri-versality

It would be admirable if all journals were positively assessed for having contributions published in foreign languages—as it is the case in Brazil, where periodicals *must* have articles in nonnative languages to achieve/sustain high rating. However, if journals interested in international perspectives were to publish all articles in the authors' vernaculars, this absolute inclusiveness would certainly be counterproductive. Similar to the origin myth of the Tower of Babel, we would no longer understand each other, and criminological knowledge would be scattered in an unintelligible turmoil. In this sense, a common language, like the presently internationalized English, is scientifically convenient. There is an alternative to prevent knowledge production from a unique, exclusionary established language though, and this is something uncomplicated in times when online publishing is fashion: journals can encourage contributors to submit papers both in English and their vernaculars, if they are not the same, then publishing the English version in the main body of the issue, with the original version attached and accessible. Bilingual publications have been used in publishing for a while from reprints of classical texts to inflight magazines. This alternative would surely remedy the peripheric authors' isolation dilemma of knowledge production mentioned above.

Intellectual Accessibility

Two basic, rightful demands of academic professionals are research funding and improvements in material conditions: buildings, laboratories, libraries, wages etc. This fundamentally relies on political interest and budget allocation. In times of worldwide austerity policies and when science and the academy are often not priorities of government officials, naïve expectations have no place. As academics, authors and researchers, what alternatives are within our reach? Though not totally free of cost and somewhat laborious, these three suggestions might assist peripheric researchers and students, readjusting and reducing academic structural imbalance: digitalization of library collections, with free and open access to all possible materials (copyrights respected); investment in free and open access journals, with an accessory campaign for affiliated universities to cover the publisher's expenses enabling their faculty production to be available to all interested (which would improve the odds of citation and impact); finally, promoting translations of books, chapters and articles (North to South, South to North, South to South).

Coda

In a few words, this essay is about defining, situating, challenging and orientating international criminology. Most importantly though, writing it was a particular experience of defining, situating, challenging and orienting myself as a criminologist. At every sentence, I whispered to myself, as a looping scratched vinyl: 'What the hell am I doing here?' (Maybe it was just the background music playing Radiohead in repeat mode.). My birthplace makes me a Latin-American and as such presumably a peripheric author. But, at this moment, I am part of a select group commissioned to write (in English) for the first issue of an influential, international journal. A Southern author then? As my fellow-citizens, I speak and think in a European language (Portuguese); and my academic peers and I work in educational institutions originally configured and still informed by nonnative traditions (an academic framework that frequently turns its back to the contributions of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire). So, I am certainly a colonized author! Despite partly agreeing with this, acknowledging I do share the Latin American colonial experience, the truth is that I am more related to the European, white settler populations than to the colonized Indigenous inhabitants. And I am not alone in this. One just needs to make a quick check on the Brazilian criminologists' surnames to confirm we all carry European family names.¹¹ We are probably more colonizers than colonized.¹² Yet, 'What I am doing here?' transcends my situation in this issue. Shakespeare's existentialist angst of an identity tension, which started this article, is an important question. But 'What are we doing here?' seems a more urgent matter.

How are we going to implement a truly international criminology? How international criminology, as a new and alternative critical criminological stance, will construct the local as counterpoint to global? How is it going to fathom the locale without becoming a legitimizing discourse of the *status quo*, or reinforcing the standard fixation of us vs. them? And more: Who is considered legitimate as an international criminologist? What makes a person legitimate to write about issues related to colonization? Would someone born and raised in a wealthy Northern country be legitimate? What if they were raised in the poorest neighborhood of

¹¹ The same for the Black authors. In Brazil, the overwhelming majority of Black people (with the exception of the recent immigrants) descend from Africa-trade slaves who had their ethnic and personal backgrounds erased, as well as social and familiar bonds torn, receiving instead new Portuguese names.

¹² Connell (2014, p. 213) has already explained that 'In the periphery, the group closest to the intelligentsia of the metropole was the intellectual workers of settler society.' This conjunctural conundrum was introduced by Mignolo (1993). See also Rosenblatt and Mello (2018).

the richest country? Is there any gatekeeping? Wouldn't this authenticating role be counterproductive or opposite to what international criminology is up to? And, always and very important, how is international criminology going to inform criminal justice policies, reestablishing the influence and the dialogue between academy and society? These and many more questions remain to be answered. And this journal is certainly a privileged locus for these discussions. Welcome, International Criminology!

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