



## Editorial Introduction

Ineke Haen Marshall<sup>1</sup>

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### International Criminology: If Not Now, When?

“International Criminology. If not now, when?” is the theme of the very first issue of *International Criminology*, the official publication of the Division of International Criminology of the American Society of Criminology. For this inaugural issue, we asked a number of international scholars to reflect on two questions. First, looking at the present situation, is the internationalization of criminology fact or fiction? Secondly, will international, comparative and global criminology become more prominent in the future—and if so, in what way? The creative and thoughtful answers to these questions make up the content of this first issue of the journal. These responses are wide ranging, approaching crime, criminology and (criminal) justice from either a comparative, transnational, global, international, and/or novel hybrid perspective. Leandro Ayres Franco introduces his thoughtful critical essay by noting that criminology is not a monolithic framework, but rather a set of discourses—with their own particular premises, aims and methodologies. Although this may be obvious to some, it is something that we overlook all too often. Indeed, as editor, I could not have been happier with this array of papers, since it reflects the scope and ambition of *International Criminology*: To be a journal that embraces different methodologies, perspectives, and ideologies—a truly inclusive and diverse publication that speaks with many voices.

It is not possible to summarize the nine papers in a few brief paragraphs and still do justice to the carefully presented arguments by the authors—and that is not my task here. Instead, I first will briefly say something about the authors’ responses to the first question, and thereafter I will make a few comments about the authors’ reflections on how

to best chart a path forward in our thinking about academic knowledge production in international criminology.

### Internationalization of Criminology: Fact or Fiction?

Steven Messner, in his paper on the internationalization of criminology provides a pragmatic definition of “internationalization” as referring to the growth of research that is explicitly concerned with the implications of the analyses beyond a single nation, as well as the expansion of transnational partnerships in the production of knowledge (see Messner footnote 1). Messner provides original evidence on internationalization as reflected in the publications appearing in *Criminology*, the journal of the American Society of Criminology, over the course of the last twenty years. Reflecting on previous analyses of American scholarship, he notes: “Evidence of persisting ethnocentrism can be found, along with suggestions of progress toward the expansion of scholarly work that ‘relates to the international’ and of collaborations among scholars from different national backgrounds.” His own analysis reveals an increasing openness to research based on data from outside the US, and a gradual—but still small at 10% over two decades—movement toward greater internationality in the form of transnational partnerships among authors.

Not surprisingly, it appears that most authors in this issue do agree, implicitly or explicitly, that our field has indeed become more international. Michael Gottfredson in his paper on the essential role of cross-national research in assessing theories of crime writes: “From its beginnings in the classical school, theoretical criminology has always been an international discipline” and it is “...not possible to consider the present field of scientific criminology in anything less than an international perspective.” Gary LaFree illustrates the expanding international scope of criminology by focusing on developments in quantitative comparative research in his contribution on the progress and obstacles in the internationalization of criminology. Amy Nivette’s

✉ Ineke Haen Marshall  
i.marshall@northeastern.edu

<sup>1</sup> Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115, USA

paper on the availability and potential of quantitative international data for criminological study likewise builds on the growing amount of international data—and its potential for collaboration between cultures and regions—as evidence of the internationalization of criminology.

John Hagan's essay on the implications of international law for reparations for victims of police violence in Chicago presents a more restrained view on the progress of the internationalization of criminology (in the US). He discusses the development of international criminal law as a field of study for American criminologists as well as the lagging critical interest of US criminologists in war crimes: "Thus it took nearly 50 years, in American law schools and through the establishment of advocacy organizations and international ad hoc criminal tribunals, to forge a place for international criminal law in shaping world events and to even be much noticed by American criminologists."

The papers by Katja Franko, Sappho Xenaxis and Leandro Ayres Franca view the growing internationalization of the field through the critical gaze of the role of geopolitics and power in criminological knowledge production and consumption. Katja Franko in her paper on criminology and global security inequality notes that the past two decades have seen a remarkable growth of internationally oriented strands of criminology, but this is not necessarily all good news. She refers to powerful critiques that claim that as a discipline, criminology is marked by deep inequalities and divisions, between the global North and South and internationalization has taken place within a Northern-centric frame. Sappho Xenaxis in her thought-provoking paper on international criminology and international connectivity comments on the growth of international criminology since the 1960s by noting that present-day international criminology distinguishes itself from its predecessors by its "unprecedented diversity of scope and approach" and the "increasing visibility of radical critiques and institutions, policies and practices engaged in 'law and order' work broadly understood". A third critical voice here is Leandro Ayres Franca exploring the possibility of carving out an alternative, working concept of international criminology, which necessitates a recognition of and challenge to the established intellectual hegemony of the North/center in criminological knowledge production.

## The Future of International Criminology: Expectations, Hopes and Obstacles

Reflecting a multiplicity of premises, aims and methodologies, the nine authors differ in their expectations and aspirations for the further development of international criminology. Some are more hopeful and optimistic than others, but they all embrace the view that criminology in the twenty-first

century will be international. Some of the aspirations are straightforward and pragmatic, while others demand more profound and fundamental changes, and—as always—there is no shortage of small and large obstacles and challenges (see in particular the papers by Sappho Xenaxis, Leandro Ayres Franca, and Katja Franko).

- We need more and better data, from all global regions
 

We now have many more international data on crime and justice available than in the past, that is a theme throughout most of the papers. Our knowledge base about crime and justice has been enormously expanded, drawing from this fast-growing number of international surveys, government records, reports produced by NGO's, and the mining of open source data. There are two significant caveats that should dampen enthusiasm about the apparent exponential growth of data, data that are available to the criminologist with a simple click of the mouse (unless she happens to be living in a country with limited or no access to Wi-Fi or data archives). First, as mentioned by a number of the authors, most of the data are from the global North, with a relative paucity of information on the global South. Our academic knowledge about crime and justice in the more powerful and well-resourced countries outweighs by far the evidence available in their less prosperous counterparts. This is a huge problem, in urgent need of a solution. NGO's and private foundations have tried to fill this void somewhat, but these data do not substitute for scientific statistics, as Franko warns. A second caveat concerns the political nature of data—including international statistics and global indicators. As international criminologists, we need to take serious Savelsberg's warning that "[W]hen research is funded by political agencies, which to a large extent is the case in criminology and criminal justice studies, then it is rather likely that academically produced knowledge will follow political knowledge. 1994:934, cited by Hagan)" Sappho Xenaxis echoes this concern when she cautions that the quality of global indicators are likely to remain highly variable, requiring critique, caution and contextualized interpretation.
- We need careful and deliberate theoretical development
 

As noted in the introduction, criminology is not a monolithic framework; it is a set of discourses with its own methodologies, epistemologies and aims. As the papers in this issue suggest, depending on the authors' particular framework, the specific theoretical needs and aims of international criminology differ. For instance, there is a lot of emphasis in scientific criminology—to use Michael Gottfredson's term here—on the importance of testing the cross-national applicability of crime theories. A number of the papers present a convincing case that cross-national research has yielded important

substantive insights that clearly advance what Messner calls the “theoretical science” agenda in the discipline. Notwithstanding the apparent success of testing the cross-national applicability of micro-level theories such as modern control theory (see Michael Gottfredson’s paper), routine activity theory and general strain theory (see Messner’s paper), there continues to be a need to generate new theoretical formulations that accommodate local contingencies. Whether these new formulations should consist of adjustments and specifications of existing (western-biased and North-centered) theories, or whether we should search for ‘regional’ theories and methodologies is an important question, to be reserved for further discussion in future issues of this journal.

Moving to a different level of discussion (and taking the ‘global’ as the unit of analysis), Katja Franko asks that we systematically incorporate global perspectives into our analysis in order to develop the discipline in a more globally and inclusive direction. How to develop and use concepts and methodologies that allow one to study crime and justice as a global phenomenon is a very tall order indeed, and requires, as suggested by Franko, collective effort.

Theorizing the contingency of the development of international criminology, as illustrated by Sappho Xenaxis, expands our intellectual bandwidth to encompass broader social and political forces of global connectivity and the further compression of time and space wrought by new technologies. Incorporating the impact of the broad and multifaceted developments in societies and economies across the world into our conceptual framework (with inequality as a core concept—see Heimer, 2019) appears to be a necessary next step for a number of forward-looking critical thinkers.

- We need to think more and differently about the (potential of) internationalization of policy

The international diffusion of criminal justice policies and practices is hardly a new topic for debate, but it is taking on a new urgency in today’s globalized world. A few of the papers explicitly discuss the policy implications related to the internationalization of our field, some of them along traditional lines, others in more novel fashion. Michael Gottfredson’s paper provides a strong argument in favor of early childhood intervention programs, rather than primary reliance on criminal justice measures to prevent crime. John Braithwaite sees “glimmers of cosmopolitan criminology” with implications for the international cascading of restorative justice practices. He argues in favor of developing a “cosmopolitan preventive imagination” for a world where gross wrongdoing and harmful conduct by powerful corporations in one national context may be prevented on a global scale by pulling interna-

tional levels. Braithwaite argues that we should learn from global public health experiences and make use of the realization that crime prevention—just like war and crime—may cascade internationally. John Hagan’s paper in its conclusion makes a case for taking advantage of the resilience of international legal institutions; his paper does show that local governments and actors can bypass the domestic authority of nation states to stimulate action through international legal institutions. In short, international criminology’s ambition should go beyond transporting zero-tolerance policing practices from New York City to Mexico City.

- We need to become a more self-critical and self-reflexive field

There are many ‘criminologies’ and there is (or should be) room and appreciation for many viewpoints. As this first issue of our journal shows, there is tremendous value in hearing different voices and views. Being open-minded implies that we should not expect that all our colleagues are thinking about international or global concerns—in the same manner, or at all. However, we may expect that scholars studying crime, social control, and justice should be cognizant of the potential ethnocentric bias in their data and theories, as well of the local contingency of findings and policy implications. One only has to read Leandro Ayres Franco paper in this issue to get the point. He thinks 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* (Ayres Franca, this issue). This vision of international criminology is but one way of thinking about the future of our field, yet it is a standpoint that should be heard and become part of the intellectual debates in our field. This leads to the next and final comment.

- The field needs to be more inclusive and equitable

Inequality is a key concept in criminology—national and international. Inequality also describes contemporary international criminology as an academic field. Several papers in this issue make a passionate and strong case for removing the economic and material challenges to a more inclusive and equitable criminology, having to do with access to research grants and resources, publishing firewalls, unjust economies of co-authorship, hierarchies of gender, race, age, and the like (Franko, in this issue). Leandro Ayres France provides a number of creative suggestions to remedy the North-centric intellectual domination of international criminology, some of which are quite realistic and doable and some of which will become active part of the editorial policy of *International Criminology*.

For this inaugural issue of the journal, we invited scholars who through their writing exhibited a clear interest in things international, from a variety of viewpoints. Four of the authors are leading US-based scholars (Steven Messner, Michael Gottfredson, John Hagan, and Gary LaFree), and we were happy to include John Braithwaite (Australia), Amy Nivette (based in the Netherlands), Katja Franko (Norway), Sappho Xenaxis (UK)—all from the global North—but only one author from the global South, Leandro Ayres Franca (Brazil). Since this is an English-language publication of the Division of International Criminology of the American Society of Criminology, its heavy representation of western scholars is not surprising. Yes, we know there exist huge structural obstacles to removing the inequality in knowl-

edge production, consumption and visibility in the field. However, our ambition for *International Criminology* is to become truly international in our reach, by publishing viewpoints and authors from both inside and outside the privileged academic worlds of the global North. Looking forward to an exciting journey!

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