



## **BOOK REVIEW: Carrington, K., Hogg, R., Scott, J., Sozzo, M. and Walters, R. (2018). *Southern Criminology*. New York: Routledge.**

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Criminological scholarship has long been dominated by northern theorizing and (mis)conceptualizations about parts of the world well beyond northern remit. Knowledge production and intellectual rhetoric from the English-speaking Global North account for most of the academic scholarship produced and disseminated globally. Scholarly perspectives from the northern knowledge centre have therefore shaped intellectual perspectives that largely exclude most of the world's population relegated to northern margins or the Global South. What has also been the norm is the application of northern foundational principles to scholarly knowledge coming out of the Global South. An increase in intellectual knowledge produced by scholars from the Global South about criminological issues not aligned to northern ideological positions and specific to the non-northern context represents a conscious shift away from the acceptance of a northern monopoly over criminological knowledge. *Southern Criminology* is an ideal representation of this shift as its authors deconstruct notions about the universal generalizability of scholarship from the Global North. While scholarly knowledge on criminological issues specific to the Global South is not new, Carrington and her co-authors present a monograph that purposefully sets the stage for the creation, decolonization and internationalization of criminological knowledge.

The authors begin their discussions by highlighting purposeful knowledge polarization processes that they describe as an act of colonizing extending to knowledge and place. They explain the binary yet fluid categorization of the progressive Global North and "backward" South as "privileg[ing] ideas of temporal succession, in which the first named (the Global North in contemporary parlance) designates the normative benchmark (the developmental destination) to which the rest of the world will naturally aspire" (Carrington et al., 2018, p. 6). They draw attention to the convenience of descriptions of the Global North to include rich countries that comprise parts of the "Anglo world" geographically located in the Global South. They further point to the classification of overseas British and European territories or dependencies as comprising the Global South. These definitions also extend to include countries in the Pacific and Caribbean "double colonized" by powerful neighbours. *Southern Criminology* is therefore treated as a project aimed at regularizing alternative forms of knowledge production. They describe the project as follows:

*Southern Criminology* [attempts] to transnationalize and democratize criminological practice and knowledge, to renovate its methodological approaches, and to inject innovative perspectives into the study of crime and global justice from the periphery. [It] seeks to modify the criminological field to make it more inclusive of histories and patterns of crime, justice and security outside the Global North. More fundamentally, [it] is a theoretical project [that] seeks to generate theory and not just apply theory imported from the Global North (p. 25).

In *Southern Criminology*, much emphasis is placed on contextualizing southern realities, while also challenging criminological knowledge imbalances informed primarily by discourses specific to northern contexts, historically promoted power hierarchies and imbalances, and established and accepted benchmarks for knowledge production. The authors draw attention to the magnitude of social problems prevalent in the Global South, which are either disproportionately represented in scholarly literature or examined using a northern theoretical lens, not cognizant of the historical, social, ideological and contextual reality of the South. They also draw on the contemporary debates of southern scholars (Chakrabarty, 2000; Connell, 2007; de Sousa Santos, 2014; Walmsley, 2016) to substantiate the need for scholarship to more closely reflect global interconnectedness and for new knowledge to depict a shift away from ideas about the universality of northern criminological positions. Their arguments, as well as the scholarly positions represented, tactfully emphasize the validity of northern positions as conceptually and contextually valid, while also being inadequate as an indicator of a disciplinary scholarly standard. They acknowledge the difficulties associated with attempts at full dismissal of historically ingrained ways of knowing and being. Reference is made to Chakrabarty (2000) and his promotion of knowledge decentralization, as well as de Sousa Santos (2014) and his promotion of an “epistemological break” from Western thought processes. Carrington and her co-authors present *Southern Criminology* neither as an attempt to discredit existing scholarship nor further substantiate existing binaries, but as a scholarly acknowledgement of the need for criminological contributions aimed at “correcting the imbalance in the global organization of criminological knowledge” (Carrington et al., 2018). Northern criminological theorizing is also presented here as the backdrop against which ideas of universality can be examined and understood. The promoted shift away from a global knowledge centre signals a movement away from scholarly ideas about criminological theories closely linked to northern notions of modernization to more of an evolutionary form of knowledge identifying the criminological knowledge hub while also acknowledging the need for its expansion to include the South.

Carrington and her co-authors go further to highlight the criticality of expanding the criminological gaze to include the Global South. They highlight the top-down nature of northern criminological positions that were predominantly state-centred and not focused on occurrences beyond national boundaries or peripheral spaces. Their arguments also present the acts of violence associated with state building and the costs of such acts borne by the new worlds. They provide sound arguments to substantiate the need for the development and promotion of more inclusive scholarship and draw attention to the expanse of spa-

-ces beyond northern centres rife with criminological issues including, but not limited to, remnants of colonialism and the violent impacts of colonial empire building; nation (re)building forged in violent histories; fragile, failed and titular democracies; large sects of marginalized and vulnerable populations; and parts of the world significantly affected by acts of criminality and crimes unlike any specific to those experienced or conceptualized in northern criminological theorizing. They highlight the normalization of violent conflict in postcolonial Africa, Asia and the Middle East and draw attention to the predominance of countries from the Global South on the list of countries ranked as having the highest rates of death by violence. What is also interesting is their highlighting of similar problems in the Global North that defy foundational northern theorizing and are largely experienced by populations comprised of persons from the Global South. The United States context is referenced as four of the world's most violent cities (St Louis, Detroit, Baltimore and New Orleans), well known for the largest slave-trading markets, are located in the US. This points to an acknowledgement of what Carrington and her co-authors describe as "legacies of colonization, poverty, gross inequality, civil war, dictatorship, apartheid, and foreign control and intervention" (p. 35) being not just prevalent but also unchecked in parts of the world used as a normative benchmark.

Like other criminologists focused on scholarship reflecting realities about and within the Global South, they acknowledge international interconnectedness and the ease with which crime and criminality can impact on contexts beyond place of origin. Criminological discussions non-inclusive of discourses with contextual and conceptual significance are likely to work in the disservice of understanding and framing North/South criminological relations. The authors also emphasize the imbalance in the distribution of crime and gendered violence, with most documented occurrences taking place in what can loosely be categorized as southern margins and non-Western outliers – specifically, in Africa, Asia, Latin America and other contexts marred and moulded by colonial power haggling. They go further to explain several social, cultural, traditional and non-colonial historical intricacies of southern spaces that cannot be accurately explained using northern theories or "outsider" knowledge frameworks limited in scope and capacity to underwrite elements specific to the Global South. Like other scholars from the Global South, they also acknowledge the non-transferability of concepts and theories specifically developed to respond to criminological issues in the Global North, which differ to issues in the post-conflict, postcolonial or neocolonial Global South (Carrington, 2015).

*Southern Criminology* also presents focal areas that are either under-represented or not at all the focus of mainstream criminology. The authors specify contextual and ideological variances between North and South scholarly dialogue on topics relating to governance, justice, violence, race, gender and concepts of belonging. In so doing, they bring to the forefront under-represented yet important areas, which have been the focus of southern criminologists as well as international aid providers, government organizations, non-governmental organizations and other social scientists. They also point out that many international concerns with substantial social, economic and personal consequences have greater prevalence in the Global South. In Chapters 2 and 5, they draw attention to two issues – gender and environmental

concerns – which are of priority concern for international aid providers, the United Nations and governments the world over. They show the relationship between violence and climate change in parts of the Pacific and violence and colonialism in parts of South America, which point to the shortcoming of northern theories on understanding, explaining or preventing violence. Carrington (2015) states: “[Northern] theories are not necessarily translatable to understanding the complexities of violence in culturally diverse, low-income and post-conflict, postcolonial or neocolonial contexts” (in Carrington et al., 2018). The arguments presented underscore their “southernizing” agenda as they emphasize the colonality of gender in the Global South and the high susceptibility of women to gendered violence in low- and middle-income countries, with two out of three women in the Asia-Pacific region having experienced gendered violence at some point. The uniqueness of their contribution to criminological dialogue is also evidenced in their tactful unpacking of northern power homogenies that frame and support prevailing principles that contribute to environmental crimes in the Global South. In so doing, they highlight the far-reaching impact of northern influences on environmental crimes that go beyond climate change and the displacement of large populations from Pacific Island countries. What is also significant about their arguments that further validates the need for a southernized approach to criminological dialogue is the propensity of northern power to influence what takes place in the South, unmatched with contextual knowledge about issues in the South.

In Chapters two, three and four, the authors elaborate on issues of crime and criminality, and responses to these issues in specifically “southern” contexts. They also identify arguments substantiating the need for southern arguments of belonging, primarily in colonized spaces. All of the chapters aptly acknowledges the significance of histories and geographies in the development of northern theorizing and points to the shortcomings of transposing such positions to other contexts. Here, attention is drawn specifically to northern histories of imperial state building forged in involuntary migration, multiple forms of servitude, upheld class/race structures and labour control; and southern histories of colonization involving dispossession, mass killings, forced segregation, vigilantism, discrimination and other forms of oppressive actions (Carrington et al., 2018, p. 46). Carrington and her co-authors describe the likelihood of such contextually foreign positions being ambiguous, inappropriate and lacking in contextual specificity. They further describe instances where the South is used as a testing ground for northern-centric theorizing on feminism, penology and other scholarship informing criminological knowledge formation. They also discuss the impact of such northern knowledge frameworks on southern policies and practices intended to address issues within largely marginalized contexts. The inappropriateness of such frameworks results in policies based on problematic, ill-informed or false assumptions about “othered” populations. The authors do not suggest that the development of alternative southern frameworks is the sole solution to addressing the shortcomings of existing scholarship as they also acknowledge the challenges faced when attempting to make sense of contemporary issues and the difficulties involved in navigating narratives underscored by race, class, ethnicity, gender, culture and religion. Reference is made to several contexts in the Global South including, but not limited to, the Asia-Pacific region, Australia and Latin America.

For many scholars from the Global South, myself included, Southern Criminology not only promotes a shift in how we think about criminological knowledge, it also provides an empowering yet profoundly rational way to conceptualize scholarship. The authors encourage scholars to adopt a more emancipatory approach to knowledge creation and to consciously move away from an acceptance of northern criminological theorizing as the standard used to inform how we think about southern realities. They do not suggest a full dismissal of foundational concepts from the global power centres; instead, they advocate the exploration of alternative knowledge frameworks and the consideration or rather prioritization of southern solutions to both southern and non-southern problems at the forefront of criminological discussions. In a sense, Carrington and her co-authors challenge us to reflect on the way we perceive knowledge, to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of global challenges largely specific to the Global South, and to be mindful of the need to produce contextually and conceptually applicable criminological scholarship.

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How to cite this article (APA – 6th ed.): Watson, D. (2019). [Review of the book Southern Criminology, by K. Carrington, R. Hogg, J. Scott, M. Sozzo, & R. Walters]. *Criminological Encounters*, 2(1), 105-109. doi: 10.26395/CE19020107

