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## Chapter 5

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### **Articulation of Liberation Criminologies and Public Criminologies**

**Advancing a Countersystem Approach and Decolonization Paradigm**

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# ARTICULATION OF LIBERATION CRIMINOLOGIES AND PUBLIC CRIMINOLOGIES

## Advancing a Countersystem Approach and Decolonization Paradigm

*Biko Agozino and Kimberley Ducey*

### Introduction

Ever since Michael Burawoy presented *public sociologies* as the theme of the 2004 American Sociology Association's (ASA) annual general meeting when he served as ASA president, talk of *public sociology* has been all the rage among sociologists. Some criminologists, via *public criminologies*, have come to embrace many of the positions and themes championed by Burawoy. By public sociology, Burawoy (2005) means research in which practitioners engage directly in dialogue with some public, while remaining free to oppose a public's perspectives. Notably, in his 2004 address, Burawoy did not assess the destructive nature of key instrumental positivistic "true and tested methods" that overshadow professional sociology (2005).

For a myriad of reasons, we deeply appreciate Burawoy's vision, including his critical neo-Marxist perspective, his view that sociology has the potential to protect civil society against the marketplace and the nation-state, his acknowledgement that at times sociologists have been preoccupied with government and market concerns, and his recognition that in other parts of the world sociologists tend to lean towards critical and liberation-oriented goals (even though this is certainly not the trend in the United States). We especially welcome his optimism for a progressive public sociology that might ultimately find root in the United States, most likely generated by civil society organizations and social movements: "It will come when public sociology captures the imagination of sociologists," he said in his presidential address, "when sociologists recognize public sociology as important in its own right with its own rewards, and when sociologists then carry it forward as a social movement beyond the academy" (Burawoy, 2005, p. 25).

While we are indebted to Burawoy and to other scholars (e.g., Uggen & Inderbitzin, 2010) for their discussion of public criminology's connections to public sociology, our conception of liberation criminology more closely follows the approach outlined by Agger in *Public Sociology* (Agger, 2007). As Feagin, Vera, and Ducey (2014, p. 38) observed, "Nowhere in his presidential address does Burawoy acknowledge the earlier work of Ben Agger. This may be because Agger's public sociology is centrally a *critical liberation sociology*." As we show here, Agozino's decolonization paradigm corresponds well to Agger's ideas, as both models are unwaveringly faithful to

progressive societal change—the kind of transformations expressed in the work of many progressive criminologists and sociologists.

Since 2004, the ASA has established a committee on public sociology and intermittently underscored the concept on its website. And yet, there is negligible indication of a substantial move away from instrumental positivism in mainstream sociology journals, educational curricula, or in the discipline more generally. Instrumental positivism and conventional quantitative methods dominate in criminology too. Importantly, Loader and Sparks (2008) have discussed the contradictory “successful failure” in criminology, in which the academic field of criminology is flourishing, while criminological expertise is generally sidelined in the public domain. Just as Agger’s (2007) research on sociology led him to conclude that the discipline is still “training” younger sociologists “to be careerist civil servants and not ... public and activist intellectuals,” the discipline of criminology is primarily training its next generation in the same manner.

This chapter puts forth a rethinking of criminology that is centered around liberation—one that we argue was pioneered by W. E. B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells-Barnett in their public campaigns against lynching at a time that hundreds of laws against lynching failed to pass in the U.S. congress due to opposition to such laws mainly by Democratic Party members pejoratively called the Dixiecrats. Wells-Barnett started her campaign against lynching in 1892, but 46 years later Du Bois and the NAACP were still raising public awareness in opposition to lynching by flying a flag to proclaim that someone “was lynched today” (Karaim, 2012, pp. 50–55). The liberation criminology approach against injustice started with the struggle for the abolition of slavery and continued in the anti-colonial struggles around the world, the civil rights movement in the United States, the women’s right to vote and to choose medical care movement, the anti-war movement, the anti-apartheid movement, the struggle against mass incarceration and the war on drugs, the struggle for immigration rights and for the abolition of capital punishment, and the struggle for same-sex relations.

We begin with a brief introduction to liberation sociology. Included in this account is the pioneering work of fourteenth-century Arab liberation criminologist and sociologist Ibn Khaldoun, as well as a discussion of the emergence of Eurocentric sociology four hundred years later. In the process, we show how European sociology has since its inception simultaneously contained the seeds of radical and conservative thought. We next turn to the question of “What is liberation criminology?” Drawing on *Liberation Sociology* (2014), we offer an overview of what constitutes liberation criminology and provide a comparison of the two emancipatory frameworks. We present several examples of liberation criminologists, including African American scholar-activists Du Bois and Wells-Barnett. Finally, we turn our attention to Agozino’s decolonization paradigm in criminology, offering historical examples of White male elite sanctioned violence to illustrate this important countersystem model.

### **From New Catechism to a Countersystem Approach**

Khaldoun (1332–1406) pioneered sociological research in North Africa as a methodology for explaining the cyclical conquest of city dwellers by rugged desert bands of warriors. Eurocentric sociology emerged four hundred years later, as seen in the work of France’s Henri de Saint-Simone (1760–1825). Saint-Simone’s work was based on the premise that the application of scientific principles could advance the pursuit of human happiness, a concept echoed in the U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776). Auguste Comte (1798–1857), who would become widely known as the father of sociology, followed in the footsteps of Saint-Simone, his teacher. His work emerged in stark contrast to the vision of continuous cycles of revolutionary change theorized by Khaldoun. Notwithstanding Comte’s rejection of many progressive Enlightenment ideas, he was undoubtedly a child of the Enlightenment, and, as such, he believed in the power of

reason to make sense of the world. Outlining his philosophies in the 1820s, he caught the attention of British philosopher, political economist, and civil servant John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). Mill unreservedly endorsed Comte's "positive philosophy."<sup>1</sup> As Comte (1965, p. 1332) saw it, he had discovered a fundamental law of the stages "through which the human mind has to pass, in every kind of speculation."

Comte believed sociology would become the ultimate science—what he termed *the queen of the sciences*. The discipline started as an ambitious science of reform and social harmony, with Comte rejecting the Enlightenment's idea that society should be changed to allow for the steady perfection of all people. He emphasized instead human adjustment to natural social laws and perceived individualism as a disease of Western civilization. For Comte, social order depended on moral consensus. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the activist social scientist Karl Marx (1818–1883) noted that Comte was notorious among

Paris workers as the prophet of personal dictatorship in politics, capitalist rule in political economy, hierarchy in all spheres of human activity, even in science, the creator of a new catechism, a new Pope, and new saints to replace old ones.

(Quoted in *Manuel & Manuel*, 1979, p. 717)

Unlike Comte, Marx did not seek to anticipate the world for all time. Rather, he emphasized that social forces have the potential to bring about revolutionary change. In the spring of 1845, Marx (1962, p. 405) famously observed, "[T]he philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." Criminologists concerned with human emancipation and genuine liberty-and-justice should take seriously this observation.

The overriding aim of liberation sociology is to research the social world and to promote the expansion of human rights, participatory democracy, and social justice. All liberation sociologists thus adopt what Sjoberg termed a *countersystem approach*. Feagin, Vera, and Ducey (2014, p. 1; see also Sjoberg & Cain, 1971) explain:

A countersystem analyst consciously tries to step outside her or his own society to better view and critically assess it. A countersystem perspective often envisions a society where people have empathetic compassion for human suffering and a real commitment to reducing that suffering. It envisions research and analysis relevant to everyday human problems, particularly those of the socially oppressed. The countersystem standard is broader than that of a particular society or nation-state. Using a strong human rights standard, such as the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the liberation social scientist accents broader societal and international contexts and assesses existing social institutions against a vision of more humane social arrangements.

Echoing the countersystem approach, Marx traced the tragic and farcical repetition of the history of oppression and revolution from communal societies, to slave societies, to feudalism, to capitalism. He concluded that the logic of modern capitalistic societies "made injustice, alienation, and exploitation inevitabilities rather than contingencies" (Wolin, 1969, p. 1080). But Marx also believed that just as enslaved persons would emancipate themselves, industrial wage slaves, and peasants would self-emancipate from injustice, alienation, and exploitation.<sup>2</sup>

In keeping with a liberation criminology perspective, with its concern for establishing more just and egalitarian societies, Marx opposed the death penalty because it was applied disproportionately to the poor and called for the abolition of vagrancy laws. He also recognized that European imperialist slavery systems formed the basis of the industrialized capitalistic system, writing,

Direct slavery is as much the pivot upon which our present-day industrialism turns as are machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery there would be no cotton, without cotton there would be no modern industry. It is slavery which has given value to the colonies, it is the colonies which have created world trade, and world trade is the necessary condition for large-scale machine industry. ... [W]ipe North America off the map and you will get anarchy, the complete decay of trade and modern civilization. But to do away with slavery would be to wipe America off the map.

(*Letter to Pavel V. Annenkov, cited in Anderson, 2010, pp. 1157–1158*)

African American scholar and human rights activist Du Bois supported the Marxist paradigm. He, like Marx, remarked that on the “bent and broken backs” of enslaved Black workers and other workers of color were laid “the founding stones of modern industry” (Du Bois, 1935, pp. 342–345). Du Bois, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on the suppression of the African slave trade, explained that the trans-Atlantic slave trade was restricted, and ultimately banned, by the White elite for fear that those enslaved might be so numerous as to successfully overthrow the White plantocracy (slavocracy). Du Bois also legendarily questioned why White workers failed to unite with Black workers against capitalist oppression, concluding that the White elite used a strategy of racial divide-and-conquer. White workers took lower than necessary salaries in exchange for a “public and psychological wage” of Whiteness (Du Bois, 1935, pp. 700–701), which established non-elite Whites as part of the prevailing racial hierarchy. Whites, for example, were admitted to public areas (e.g., segregated parks) and gatherings, from which racialized people were barred, supposedly because they were stereotyped as more crime-prone; whereas, poor whites also pay a hefty price for the authoritarian populism of white supremacy (see also, Agozino, 2018; Roediger, 1991).

### **What Is Liberation Criminology?**

Drawing on *Liberation Sociology* (2014), we suggest that liberation criminologists share five common characteristics with liberation sociologists:

1. A liberation criminologist is staunchly committed to genuine democracy and liberty-and-justice.
2. A liberation criminologist represents the concerns and interests of those communities (e.g., women, racialized people, immigrants, the poor) who have historically and contemporarily been excluded from the political interests of the elite, and from the interests of most mainstream criminologists.
3. A decision to practice liberation criminology is a decision to take sides with the oppressed. Accordingly, a liberation criminologist is an activist.
4. A liberation criminologist does not neglect the experiences, realities, and concerns of those who are socially marginalized and oppressed.
5. A liberation criminologist is generally a major irritant for power elites.

Table 5.1 provides a comparison of the two emancipatory frameworks that underline the chapter.

Like liberation criminologist and sociologist Stanley Cohen, our preference is for a “skeptical” study of crime, deviance, and control as opposed to a statistically framed correctionalism. And, like Cohen, we are concerned about the ever-extending reach of the state into everyday life. In fact, Cohen’s *Visions of Social Control* (1985), a dystopian analysis of how even seemingly nonthreatening reforms in the name of “the community” can give rise to even more pungent social controls, haunts us. Thus, like Cohen’s *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering* (2001), we combine our expertise in criminology

*Table 5.1 A Comparison of Liberation Criminology and Liberation Sociology<sup>3</sup>*

<i>Liberation criminology</i>	<i>Liberation sociology</i>
Concerned with establishing a more just and egalitarian criminal justice system and genuinely democratic laws.	Concerned with establishing more just and egalitarian societies.
Using a broader human rights standard, such as the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, measures current criminal justice policies and intuitions against an image of more humane social standards.	Using a broader human rights standard, such as the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, measures current social institutions against an image of more humane social standards.
Recognizes that the most reputable criminology is one that takes a position of apparent neutrality and is typically unmindful to its moral and political effects on humans and non-human animals.	Recognizes that the most reputable sociology is one that takes a position of apparent neutrality and is typically unmindful to its moral and political effects on other humans and non-human animals.
Liberation criminology takes an explicit moral position, which includes empathy for victims of an unjust criminal justice system, while liberation criminologists work for their emancipation.	Liberation sociology takes an explicit moral position, which includes empathy for victims of oppression, while liberation sociologists work for their emancipation.
Critically examines orthodox criminology as a "scientific discipline" that too often takes for granted state definitions of crime and criminals.	Critically examines orthodox sociology and promotes a self-reflective sociology that scrutinizes the current academic environment.
Engages in research to expose crimes of imperialism, colonialism, racism, sexism, transphobia, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, economic exploitation, and other oppressive corruptions.	Engages in research to expose imperialism, colonialism, racism, sexism, transphobia, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, economic exploitation, and other forms of oppression.
Favors multi- and interdisciplinary endeavors.	Favors multi- and interdisciplinary endeavors.
Eclectic in its approach and influenced by Enlightenment, modernist, and postmodernist theorists. The liberation theology of Latin America and Africa, and Neo-Marxist, feminist, antiracist, and anticolonial ideas influence liberation criminologists.	Eclectic in its approach and influenced by Enlightenment, modernist, and postmodernist theorists. The liberation theology of Latin America and Africa, and Neo-Marxist, feminist, antiracist, and anticolonial ideas influence liberation sociologists.
Committed to studying crimes of power and how such crimes are an outcome of unequal relations, while acknowledging that mainstream criminology generally focuses on crimes perpetrated by racialized, working-class, poor, or unemployed people.	Committed to the causes of the oppressed, exploited, and dominated, while acknowledging that mainstream sociology is more regularly committed to the vested interests of the status quo.

with a concern for human rights. Indeed, for some time now, Agozino has called on criminologists to show candid concern for human rights abuses, particularly crimes of colonization, and to include struggles for decolonization among the paradigms of criminology. He has argued elsewhere (Agozino, 1997) that the discipline of criminology emphasizes individual crimes, while ignoring state sanctioned violence. Indeed, much less theorized is the mass victimization of racialized people via the colonial guise of punitive expeditions and "in the name of and for the defense of a Superior Race born to rule the world" (Du Bois, [1945] 1965, p. 23).

Du Bois and Wells-Barnett are remarkable examples of liberation criminologists and sociologists who epitomize Agozino's paradigm. Of course, however, scholars do not have a monopoly

on such ideas. An important contemporary liberation criminology movement, for example, is Black Lives Matter (BLM), created in 2013 by African American women activists Patricia Cullors, Opal Tometi, and Alicia Garza. Commencing at the community level as a reaction to abusive police behavior, particularly the killing of unarmed African American men, it is now global and intersectional (i.e., fighting anti-Black discrimination but also fighting discrimination against transgender and queer people of color). Encapsulating its significance, Ransby (2017, p. SR6) has stressed that BLM “is reinvigorating the 21st-century racial-justice movement.” Similarly, Agozino (2018) has argued in “Black Lives Matter Otherwise All Lives Do Not Matter” that the police kill more White people in the United States than people of color who are killed disproportionately, hence the need for all to oppose White supremacy and support BLM as many White people do in solidarity with African Americans and in their own interests.

### **Pioneering African American Liberation Criminologists**

Given the peculiar history of oppression that people of African descent have faced and survived through liberation struggles, any account of liberation criminology that fails to center the Africana paradigm will be incomplete. However, the Africana paradigm in liberation studies is also too vast to be completely summarized in one chapter. Therefore, we will be selective in highlighting the key exemplars of this tradition.

#### **W. E. B. Du Bois**

The doctoral dissertation of Du Bois at Harvard University, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade in America*, was completed in 1896 and published as the foundational issue of the Harvard Historical Studies Series. From that study, which has been recognized as the founding text of human rights criminology (see Agozino, 2016), to his death in 1963, Du Bois dedicated his scholar-activism to the liberation of human society from various oppressions. His 1899 field study, published as *The Philadelphia Negro*, was the first such empirical exploration of African American urban life. Using mixed-methods, he blended historical analysis of the Philadelphia community and other qualitative data, with descriptive statistical analyses and survey methods. Additionally, he combined social-theoretical interpretations of his data with a human rights analysis—even before human rights were codified. Using survey questionnaires, he collected data that allowed him to chart conditions in which working-class and poor Black Philadelphians lived and worked.

The White men who commissioned the study were exceedingly distressed by the possibility that Whites could ultimately be engulfed by a pandemic of urban Black poor, whom they categorized as criminal and otherwise corrupt. The White funders thus gave Du Bois the following directions: “We want to know precisely how this class of people live ... and to ascertain every fact which will throw light on this social problem.”<sup>4</sup> Disregarding their directive as much as possible, Du Bois ([1899] 1973) spent countless hours in the field. His work resulted in approximately 2,500 household interviews. Although he recognized that his research and resulting publication had to be acceptable to the Whites who commissioned it, he managed to challenge White racism. Working inductively and historically (profiling the background of Philadelphia’s Black population and their journey from the Southern United States), he weaved antiracist analyses into *The Philadelphia Negro*. For example, within its pages, he contrasted Black residents with White immigrants then entering Philadelphia, observing that they received many societal benefits not available to Blacks. He also courageously described in moralistic terms the poverty endured by many Black Philadelphians. In so doing, he offered what is arguably the first significant racial and class analysis of poverty and crime among Black urbanites (Du Bois, [1899] 1973).



Notably, in the final chapter of *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois ([1899] 1973) delivered a strongly worded indictment of White racism, concluding it to be the fundamental cause for the troubled conditions in which the urban Black poor found themselves. He ended the 520-page tome with a section candidly titled “The Duty of Whites,” daringly pronouncing that Whites may have

a right to object to a race so poor and ignorant and inefficient as the mass of Negroes; but if their policy in the past is parent of much of this condition, and if today by shutting black boys and girls out of most avenues of decent employment they are increasing pauperism and vice, then they must hold themselves largely responsible for the deplorable results.

*(Du Bois, [1899] 1973, p. 394)*

He included a further comment on the ethical duties of White Americans, writing (Du Bois, [1899] 1973, p. 394) that racism is “morally wrong, politically dangerous, industrially wasteful, and socially silly. It is the duty of Whites to stop it, and to do so primarily for their own sakes.”

In his many other books, and as editor of the *Crisis*—the prominent National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) journal—he was also a pioneering voice for genuine liberty-and-justice. And along with the likes of the scholar-activist Wells-Barnett discussed below, Du Bois signed the initial call for the NAACP, which was established in 1909. With like-minded activists, he used the NAACP to campaign against lynching, segregation, disenfranchisement, employment discrimination, warmongering, and genocide. In 1947, the NAACP remitted to the newly established United Nations (UN) a striking document titled “An Appeal to the World.” Largely composed by Du Bois, it described the brutal White racist subjugation of people of color in the United States:

A nation which boldly declared “All men equal,” proceeded to build its economy on chattel slavery. ... Sectional strife over the vast profits of slave labor and conscientious revolt against making human beings real estate led to bloody civil war, and to a partial emancipation of slaves which nevertheless even to this day is not complete. Poverty, ignorance, disease, and crime have been forced on these unfortunate victims of greed. ... and a great nation, which today ought to be in the forefront of the march toward peace and democracy, finds itself continuously making common cause with race hate, prejudiced exploitation and oppression of the common man. ... Peoples of the World, we American Negroes appeal to you; our treatment in America is not merely an internal question of the United States. It is a basic problem of humanity; of democracy; of discrimination because of race and color; and as such it demands your attention and action.

*(Du Bois et al., 1947, p. 45)*

Here again, Du Bois demonstrates a passionate faithfulness to authentic democracy, not to mention a shrewd international acuity. Alas, the leading White liberal Eleanor Roosevelt served on both the NAACP board and the U.S. delegation to the UN. She rebuffed any attempt to show the NAACP petition to the UN General Assembly for fear of damaging the image of the United States globally (Du Bois et al., 1947).

But nothing could dissuade Du Bois, not even the former First Lady. A mere four years after she blocked the first request for UN assistance, Du Bois and other African American leaders composed a much harsher condemnation of U.S. racism. The 1951 petition titled “We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People,” meticulously described how the White U.S. elite bred and enacted Jim Crow racism against African Americans. The petition,



which thoroughly documented the many genocidal crimes of legal segregation in the United States, read in part, as follows:

The responsibility of being the first in history to charge the government of the United States of America with the crime of genocide is not one your petitioners take lightly. ... Your petitioners. ... submit evidence, tragically voluminous, of “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethical, racial or religious group as such”—in this case the 15,000,000 Negro people of the United States.

*(NAACP, 1951)*

The petition was virtually ignored by the White-dominated media in the United States, but made headlines around the world. The U.S. delegation to the UN assailed and diminished the incontrovertible fact that the White controlled U.S. government had long engaged in genocide against African Americans. Consequently, the 1951 petition was rejected.

Du Bois paid dearly for his efforts in trying to push the United States towards genuine democracy. He had trouble securing research funds from corporate foundations. Irrespective of his long list of credentials (e.g., a Harvard PhD who studied abroad with leading social scientists like Max Weber and who completed major field research), the White establishment in the United States shunned him. As Agozino (quoted in Feagin et al., 2014, p. 267) has hauntingly put it,

W. E. B. Du Bois was never tenured and was nearly jailed during the McCarthy era for trying to start a peace organization. We remember him, but few remember the cowards who got tenure and sold their sociological souls to the metaphorical devil.

In other words, being a liberation criminologist is worth all the risks because the paradigm makes you a better criminologist than the careerists who make no contribution to the advancement of human freedom.

### ***Ida B. Wells-Barnett***

Like Du Bois, Wells-Barnett should be listed among the great liberation criminologists. Her work epitomizes the potential of liberation criminology to defy injustice. She devoted her entire adult life to documenting and challenging White racism. Near the turn of the twentieth-century, she investigated and wrote diligently about White lynching of African Americans, using accounts from White newspapers to construct a database that she documented in her own newspaper so that no one would accuse her of peddling fake news. She approached the topic with an acute awareness of systemic racism in U.S. society. “The purpose of the pages which follow,” she wrote,

shall be to give the record which has been made, not by colored men, but that which is the result of the compilations made by white men, of reports sent over the civilized world by white men in the South. Out of their own mouths shall the murderers be condemned .

*(Wells-Barnett, 1895, pp. 150–165)*

She openly contested the myth of the “Black male rapist,” a popular idea among Whites then and now, alleging that Black men desired to rape White women.

At this early stage in the history of U.S. sociology, Wells-Barnett was already advancing sophisticated empirical and theoretical understandings of the links between gender and racial

stratification. She helped construct a sociology from the standpoint of the oppressed and one dedicated to genuine social justice. Specifically, she risked her life and livelihood to campaign against the terrorism that was visited on her fellow citizens, including poor Whites, but predominantly against African Americans even when they were not suspected of doing anything wrong. She was among the first social scientists to examine data on the collective condition of African American men and women and poor Whites in terms of such important ideas as social repression, subordination, terrorization, and domination.

As is typical for liberation sociologists and criminologists, Wells-Barnett paid significant personal costs for her scholar-activism. For example, she narrowly avoided being murdered after suggesting that White men's sexual yearnings for Black women might be related to Whites' preoccupation with the rapist mythology. Her data showed that only about a third of those lynched were accused of rape, and yet the fear of rape was used as the main propaganda to support the lynching of Black men, women, and children. Her courage in standing up against what she called the American "horrors" of lynching represents an advanced strategy in liberation criminology by inviting scholar-activists to oppose injustice even when they are not personally targeted. As a woman, some feminists would have expected her to focus only on the oppression of women, but she was aware that the oppression of men and women was articulated or intersectional. As an African American woman, some may have expected her to only focus on the oppression of Black people, but she reported that many poor Whites were also lynched to reveal that she was doing race-class-gender articulation of intersectionality research long before it came into vogue.

### **White Male Elite Sanctioned Violence: Further Illustrating the Countersystem Model**

The ideas and works of pathbreaking scholar-activists like Du Bois and Wells-Barnett—to mention but two of the giants whose research and commitment to a better world have shaped our society—helped to build a foundation that aligns with liberation criminology and its tenets. They refused to accept White racism as unproblematic and routine. They imagined a world with more democracy and a freer flow of information. They also thought about the way their research could bring about such a world.

The lynching of African Americans, who were alleged to have spoken in contradiction of a White oppressor, organized against Whites, committed a crime against Whites, or offended Whites in some other way, was vital to the bolstering of the emergent network of legal segregation in the United States. Between 1882 and 1927, lynchings of approximately 3,500 Black men and 76 Black women were recorded. Many more of these crimes remain undocumented. Between the Civil War and the mid-1980s, possibly as many as 6,000 lynchings of Black men and Black women had been committed in the southern United States, in border states, and in the North (Harris, 1984).

It is, of course, impossible to express just how inhumane lynchings were or how unsettling was the starkly ritualized atmosphere surrounding them. Perhaps only a description of a lynching could even remotely capture the suffering of Blacks at the hands of Whites. One such account from the 1940s concerned a Black man accused of attempting to rape a White woman (Harris, 1984, p. 10): "I ain't tellin' nobody just what we done to that nigger but we used a broken bottle just where it'd do the most damage," recalled one of the Whites who tortured and murdered the man. Following injuries from the broken bottle, the victim was soaked with kerosene and set ablaze. "[T]he groanin' got lower and lower and finely it was just little gasps and then it wasn't nothin' at all," explained the participant. Lastly, the victim was tied to a tree for his relatives to cut down.

Such gory rituals were preceded by the rape, torture, and mutilation of Africans and African Americans on slave ships, farms, and plantations. These historical facts are hidden like radioactive substances because “white supremacists and liberal racists ... are invested in Whiteness as a type of racial innocence” (DeVega, 2015). White scholars are no exception. Racial innocence explains well why African American political commentator Chauncey DeVega was met with White rage (even from liberal Whites) when he daringly associated vicious lynchings and torture of Blacks between 1877 and 1950 with the disturbing 2015 murder by burning of a Jordanian pilot by the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Another tyrannical example of White American male power occurred during slavery and under legal segregation. Black women and children routinely experienced sexual violence at the hands of White men. But even today this history does not warrant much attention from scholars, including criminologists. Yet, copious amounts of evidence for these ubiquitous crimes have long been available. Take for example the story of Robert Newsom and fourteen-year-old Celia (McLaurin, 1991). In 1850, the prosperous Missouri farmer, who was in his seventies, “purchased” Celia. He raped her continually over the next five years. She bore two of her predator’s children. In 1855, Celia struck back, fatally wounding Newsom. She was convicted in a Missouri court of the “crime” and executed the same year.

Like other elite White men who routinely commit crimes against Black and Brown bodies, Newsom was considered a decent and reputable fellow. Certainly, the third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, is widely considered so. But he, too, was a rapist. He fathered at least one of Sally Hemings’s children, a teenager he enslaved.<sup>5</sup> Pending DNA evidence, most White pundits and most of his White descendants vehemently denied that he had sexual relations with a Black woman (Associated Press, 2000; Finkelman, 1996).

Liberation criminology requires calling out these kinds of issues in past and contemporary criminology. Indeed, White racial innocence helps explain why criminology arose during the pinnacle of European global colonization and why present-day criminology is dominated by institutions in the former colonial countries, while being largely absent from institutions in the former colonial territories. That these facts are hardly ever acknowledged is at least in part due to White racial innocence. Renowned criminologist David Garland (1990) makes no mention, for example, of such patterns in his explanation of the emergence of British criminology in terms of the confluence between the governmental and the Lombrosian projects. There is no mention of the genocidal projects of imperialism and the paradigm shattering movement of decolonization in his work. Additionally, in the former colonial countries where criminology was long ago established, practically all the leading criminologists are people of White European descent. This pattern is not a coincidence either. It arises from a systemic and deliberate exclusion of racialized people, who play little or no role in the contest over control of the powerful technology that is criminology. And sadly, this White racist framing of Western criminology has slowed the collective progress of the discipline, which we explain with reference to the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles in Africa.

It is difficult to imagine that Nelson Mandela remained on the terrorist watch list of the U.S. State Department until his name was removed from the list in 2008 by President George W. Bush, knowing that President Barack Obama was likely to stop that nonsense on day one (Dewey, 2013). Steve Biko and countless others, including school children, were murdered by the apartheid regime while the U.S. and the U.K. governments preferred a policy of constructive engagement in opposition to the cultural boycott of, and divestment from, apartheid South Africa. Samora Machel, the first President of Mozambique after the country’s independence in 1975, used to joke that he was a terrorist too because that was how the brutal Portuguese colonizers portrayed him and the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO) fighters. Amilcar Cabral, one of Africa’s foremost anti-colonial leaders, was also hunted down by the Portuguese and finally assassinated in Guinea for leading the struggle for

national liberation from fascist Portuguese military dictators. Similarly, Angolan political and military leader Jonas Savimbi was welcomed as a hero by U.S. officials when he was colluding with the apartheid regime in South Africa to overthrow his country's independent government under the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Cuban troops responded to the call for help from Angola and contributed to the independence of Namibia and to the lifting of the ban on the African National Congress (ANC). In Algeria, Frantz Fanon used similar cases of colonialist violence to theorize that the foundation of such violence started at the international level with the 400 years of hunting and kidnapping of Africans for slavery by Europeans before giving way to the still international violence of colonialism during which Europeans tried to persuade Africans that they were superior by means of the napalm bomb. He called for reparations to be paid to Africans.

### **The Decolonization Paradigm in Criminology versus the Culture of Silence**

The decolonization paradigm was first extensively explored in Agozino's 2003 book, *Counter-Colonial Criminology: A Critique of Imperialist Reason*, in which he argued that criminology is a *technology* designed to control human beings. Originally, those to be controlled were mainly the colonized and the poor in the metropolises. Women were dealt with primarily through the repressive technologies of patriarchal family institutions, constructed and maintained by the state as part of what Greek-French Marxist Poulantzas called the *ideological state apparatuses*.

Agozino's model brings to mind Du Bois's pioneering analyses of globalizing capitalism and imperialism. Writing about the years around 1900, Du Bois ([1920] 1999, p. 504) maintained:

[W]hite supremacy was all but world-wide. Africa was dead, India conquered, Japan isolated, and China prostrate ... The using of men for the benefit of masters is no new invention of modern Europe ... But Europe proposed to apply it on a scale and with an elaborateness of detail of which no former world ever dreamed.

Examining Europe's colonization of Africa, Du Bois ([1945] 1965, p. 37) hauntingly expressed how the enormous poverty and deprivation endured by Africans were "a main cause of wealth and luxury in Europe. The results of this poverty were disease, ignorance, and crime. Yet these had to be represented as natural characteristics of backward peoples." And again echoing the spirit of the decolonization paradigm, in 1945, Du Bois ([1945] 1965, p. 23) summed up European imperialism and the damage it did to peoples of color around the globe: "There was no Nazi atrocity—concentration camps, wholesale maiming and murder, defilement of women and ghastly blasphemy of childhood—which the Christian civilization of Europe had not long been practicing against colored folk in all parts of the world."

Embracing Agozino's decolonization model as part of a broader liberation criminology perspective, modern criminologists have the potential to give effective voice to state sanctioned atrocities in Du Boisian fashion. By examining systemic racism, for example, we can better expose and illuminate the criminal victimization of people of color by elite and non-elite Whites. As a case in point, from the days of slavery, through colonialism, neocolonialism, and internal colonialism, history demonstrates that Blacks need not commit a crime to come under the authority and control of imperialistic White power. As Agozino has put it, rather than distort the nature of imperialism, we ought to encourage criminologists to devote at least one chapter in their fat textbooks to crimes of imperialism, which account for unprecedented levels of robberies, rapes, homicides, and other forms of violence around the world, but which criminologists expediently disregard in what Cohen (1993) called a "culture of silence" (see also, Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1970).

## Conclusion

Today as in the past, racialized and other oppressed peoples have lives imposed on them that are second-rate. Some of them are denied life itself. In search of the right to be, and in pursuit of genuine liberty-and-justice *for all*, we call on criminologists to give serious consideration to liberation criminology.<sup>6</sup> This project links directly to projects of so-called public social science.

To paraphrase and apply Burawoy's (2005) sociological insights to criminology, when liberation criminology seizes the imagination of criminologists and when criminologists accept liberation criminology as important in its own right with its own rewards, criminologists will carry it forward as a social movement beyond the academy. Like Burawoy (2005), we envision myriads of nodes, each forging collaborations of criminologists with their publics, flowing together into a single current. They will draw on a century of extensive research, elaborate theories, practical interventions, and critical thinking, reaching common understandings across multiple boundaries, not least but not only across national boundaries, and in so doing shedding insularities of old. Our angel of history will then spread her wings and soar above the storm.

## Notes

- 1 *Positive* was a term selected by Comte to distinguish his ideas from what he saw as the *negative* philosophy of the German Hegelian system. While philosopher Georg Hegel (1770–1831) began from the errors made by philosophers who came before him, Comte held that one should depart from past errors with a positive statement of what is discovered through observation and comparison.
- 2 Importantly, Friedrich Engels—the long-time collaborator of Marx—added that a similar prediction could be made in connection to the oppression of women. Emerging within the family, private property, and the capitalist state, it too would wither away under communism to make way for the New Testament principle (i.e., to each according to their needs and from each according to their abilities).
- 3 We draw on a table previously published in Ducey, (2008).
- 4 Charles Harrison, Acting Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, as quoted in Lewis, (1994, p. 188; see also pp. 187–189).
- 5 Hemings was the half-sister of Jefferson's wife (Fresia, 1988; Smith & Wade, 2018).
- 6 We are indebted to Tatz (2003).

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