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## Dear British criminology: Where has all the race and racism gone?

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## **Introduction: content and discontent**

At the start of this century, Garland and Sparks (2000) called for a reconfiguring of criminology to facilitate the vibrant transformation of modes of theorizing, empirical research, and political engagement (see also Loader and Sparks, 2011; Carrabine, 2016). Their exhortation was fuelled by the recognition that crime and punishment are deeply enmeshed in the routines, emotions and cultural imaginations of our everyday lives and centrally implicated in political decision-making. In turn, Carbado and Roithmayr (2014), as critical race scholars, insist there is a powerful and longstanding dialectical relationship between race and crime. This operates so that when we think of crime we have black people in mind, and when we think of black people we have crime in mind. Other variations work but the prevailing paradigm is one of Otherness (or 'non-whiteness') being synonymous with crime or its threatening presence (see also Cunneen 2011). Rather than engaging with this enmeshment of race, crime and the public and political imaginary, criminology has tended to focus on the numerical incidence of race and disproportionality in criminal

justice outcomes, defaulting to a positivist lens of quantification, rather than theorizing race's complex material and symbolic manifestations in the intersection with crime, control and social order (Bosworth et al., 2008; Parmar, 2016). Our concern is that the relative stasis of the 'recited truths' of the social construction of race are deployed in criminology through its research and teaching agendas without substantive engagement with race's constitutive dynamism. This is in stark contrast to the vigour and vitality that currently propels the sociology of race (Lentin and Titley, 2011).

By way of comparison, reconfigurations of criminology with regard to gender have been more transformative. The scholarly inroads made by feminist criminology are widely regarded as distinctively and irreversibly reshaping the discipline (D Downes and Rock, 2003; Burman and Gelsthorpe, 2017). This began with bringing girls/women into criminological focus from a position of neglect and challenging the unthinking generalization of androcentric criminological theories to girls'/women's experiences (see Heidensohn, 1968; Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988). Subsequent work has acknowledged subjectivities intersected by class, race, and sexualities, unpacking

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variation in lifeworlds and exploring their impact on victimization, offending, and treatment within the criminal justice system (Daly, 2010). Epistemological and methodological questions emanating from feminist theory have brought further refinement in articulating whose knowledge counts in the academy (Heidensohn, 2006, 2012). The feminist struggle in criminology is far from concluded and neither is gender totally analogous to race. However, our fear is that whilst most British criminologists would routinely introduce students to theorists of gender and class (such as Butler, Connell, Marx, Weber and the like), we suspect they might struggle to identify theoretical equivalents for race or recognise their salience to the study of crime.

The test set for criminology in Garland and Sparks' (2000) challenge was to move beyond extant 'habits of thought', to embrace intellectually reflexivity, so as to better reflect the stark realities of late modernity. Two decades on, we are in the midst of politically tumultuous times. A seismic shift to the right and the forceful march of nationalistic populism means that a criminology for our times in which race is not central and fundamental is surely untenable.

Coalescing at the same time has been a resurgence of pressure 'from below', from students, prompting a new wave of epistemological and pedagogical attempts to decolonize the university (Arday and Mirza, 2018). Such efforts have a foundation in decolonizing movements' political struggles in countries of the 'Global South' that exposed how knowledge production in elite institutions of the imperial metropole were implicated in sustaining global racialized hierarchies (Bhambra et al., 2018; see also Ladner, 1973). Today, we have seen student-led political campaigns such as UCL's *Why is My Curriculum White?* (Peters, 2018), *Why Isn't My Professor Black?* (following a panel organised by Nathaniel Adam Tobias Coleman), and *Rhodes Must Fall* at Oxford (Gebrial, 2018), challenging the narrowness of curricula and academic representation. Such developments have profound implications for criminology just as much as any other discipline.

Yet there are worrying signs, we argue in this paper, of criminology 'turning away from race' (Back and Tate, 2014), or as Garner (2015) puts it, criminology's disciplinary norms continuing to contend with race only at the margins. This is particularly evident in criminology's tendency to elide race with class, a point we

return to later in the paper. In noting criminology's suppressions, contradictions and lacunae when it comes to race and racism our intention is to highlight criminology's carelessness rather than claim proactive discrimination (see also JD Unnever and Owusu-Bempah, 2019). To develop this claim further, we employ Emirbayer and Desmond's (2012, 2015) typology of disciplinary reflexivity to consider where some of the weaknesses in the development of racial knowledge within criminology lie, additionally using an illustrative mapping of the coverage of race in a premier criminological journal, *Punishment & Society*.

Disciplinary reflexivity, according to Emirbayer and Desmond (2012, 2015), is key to scientific progress. It requires us to turn our analytic gaze back upon ourselves to inquire critically into the hidden presuppositions that shape our thought. This is emphatically not about 'introspective confessionality' at the individual level but rather moving collectively towards 'analyses of the institutional settings in which [race] scholars are formed, the structures and processes whereby their hidden assumptions about the world are forged' (Emirbayer and Desmond, 2012: 592). As they note, such self-critical reflection has become increasingly commonplace in

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diverse disciplines including sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy and literary criticism. Specifically in the UK, the Royal Historical Society has noted the intellectual, legal, demographic and ethical rationales for challenging racial and ethnic equalities in the practice of History (Atkinson et al., 2018), and the Social Policy Association has begun its own interrogation of teaching and learning practices (Craig et al., 2019). And so we may ask, why not criminology?

Drawing from Bourdieu's insistence on the epistemological value of reflexivity, Emirbayer and Desmond (2012, 2015) propose a three-tier model of systematically scrutinizing the *social unconscious*, *scholastic unconscious*, and *disciplinary unconscious* to appraise the content and conduct of a discipline. Notwithstanding some theoretical caveats (Venkatesh, 2012; Winant, 2012), Emirbayer and Desmond's call for vigilance towards the disciplinary frames that reproduce a hegemonic whiteness in sociology is also significant for criminology. And while the need for intersectional rather than a singular race-based analysis is irrefutable - we maintain that a necessary first step is to invest explicitly in theorizing race and racism (Parmar, 2017).

## **Criminology's social unconscious: 'doing criminology while white, black, and Asian'**

Emirbayer and Desmond (2015) focus on the dominant normativity of whiteness against which all aspects of social and academic life are judged and the way this spills over into knowledge production. They recognize how the biographical positioning of scholars along axes of privilege and disadvantage shape our thinking and practice according to objective structural experiences and subjective understanding. Given the ubiquity of white academic criminologists – referred to as 'this very White criminological world' in African American Ruth D. Peterson's (2017) presidential address to the American Society of Criminology - these 'doxic experiences' mask the whiteness of mainstream academic activity as race becomes other people's (research and teaching) business, typically relegated to the periphery of the discipline.

An example that Emirbayer and Desmond (2015) use – of the default to whiteness as



the reference category in regression analyses - has obvious applicability to empirical criminology's analysis of risk and protective factors in predicting offending and victimisation. No recent academic longitudinal studies (e.g. Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions or the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Developmental Study (PADS+)) have contained large enough sub-samples of different minority ethnic groups to sustain any intra-minority analysis, hence the putative default to whiteness against which all else is compared. A second illustration of the routine skewing of racial knowledge in criminology is the effective de-racialisation of corporate and state crimes in contrast to the ready racialisation of violent crime, particularly serious youth violence. Indeed, as Russell-Brown (2019: 116) notes, "White crime" and victimization are rarely investigated as racially specific criminological phenomena' (but see just published Sohonie and Rorie, 2019; Benson and Kennedy, 2019).

The authors' differing vantage points present further examples, demonstrating how the racial order is literally self-evident through our working lives. Collectively, as we developed this project (the 2018 international symposium on race at the LSE, this

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Special Issue, and reconstituting the British Society of Criminology Race Matters network (<https://www.britsoccrim.org/networks/race-matters-network/>), we have repeatedly recalled examples of these positional perspectives according to our respective racialized (and classed and gendered) identities. Briefly retold here, they offer insights into the racialized conditions of work in criminology and academic life more generally. For Phillips and Parmar, they belong within the insidious category of 'nigger moments', recurring reminders that 'there is no protection, no sanctuary, no escaping' from racism, even in the hallowed spaces of the liberal academy (Anderson, 2011: 253). For Earle and Smith, the dividends of whiteness, class and masculinity in criminology become more apparent, not least in the invitations to join all-white lists of speakers at penological events where race and racism are critical, an issue we explore more below.

For the lead author, Phillips, a telling incident occurred at an informal lunch before an editorial board meeting of the *British Journal of Criminology*. A white female professor joined a conversation in which she repeatedly tried to hand Phillips a bundle of administrative documents, apparently blind to the possible academic

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status of the only minority ethnic woman in the room. Another moment: the offer of a junior white female research officer, vacating her overnight accommodation at an academic event, to leave her door open for Phillips, who was leaving her own, neighbouring room at the same time. The woman assumed Phillips to be a cleaner rather than a fellow (more senior) academic. In another incident Parmar's presence was rudely challenged by a white academic in front of her students in a classroom scheduling clash. Baldly told, 'you are in the wrong room, please check with your lecturer before disturbing an ongoing class', Parmar experienced shock and frustration, but was ultimately muted by this racial degradation ceremony, wrong-footed by the ironic continuities between her teaching and scholarship on race and gender and her own mistreatment in the academy. Normative whiteness embodied in a specific academic space can become disturbed by the arrival of black and Asian bodies in occupations which are not historically and conceptually marked out as their 'natural' domain; in these cases Phillips and Parmar were 'out of place, a space invader' (Puwar, 2004).

While 'victim's tales' (Christian (2017) risk being dismissed for anecdotal and

plaintive partiality, stories of being perceived as incapable of occupying high-status positions, assumptions of inferior intellect, or ascriptions of criminality are common currency among minority scholars (Alexander and Arday, 2015; Johnson and Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). They are illustrative of the subtle but pervasive undercurrents of everyday racism where talk, actions, gestures signal an implicit lower status, undermining of minority scholars' authority and expertise. They can and *do* add up to systemic racism when they are embedded within inequitable, racialised hierarchies of power in which temporary contracts, exclusion from Russell Group institutions, and a lack of career progression, amidst oral but not abiding political commitments to equality are prevailing tendencies (Ahmed, 2012; Rollock, 2019). The pretence of inclusion in a colour-blind, egalitarian academy is all too easily upended by the painful and humiliating experience of 'nigger moments', where regardless of class position and academic status racism penetrates everyday life in the university. The faith of white academics in the meritocracy of intellect, that it is this alone which decides who wins and who loses on the academic playing field, is the faith of those untouched by racism (or it seems, anti-racism). As Tate and

Bagguley (2017: 294) put it, 'the pervasive power of whiteness continues to be denied and indeed is balked at, remaining unsayable within universities'.

### **Criminology's scholastic unconscious: navel-gazing in the ivory tower**

Before moving to our substantive concern with what we consider the most important level of Emirbayer and Desmond's model, the *disciplinary unconscious*, we turn briefly to their identification of a *scholastic unconscious*. Here Emirbayer and Desmond (2012) analyse the significance of remote and elevated abstraction where scholarly modes of reasoning lack both self-criticality and self-awareness. The scholastic unconscious tends towards the elevation of theoretical abstraction into a kind of discrete zone of moral, cognitive and aesthetic inquiry taken to be necessarily superior to an interpretation of the lifeworlds of the people who are its subject. It lives in the ivory tower - with the emphasis on 'ivory' (Alexander and Arday (2015: 4) - free to question everything but itself.

According to Emirbayer and Desmond (2015), the scholastic unconscious proffers a

false moral universalism, assuming formal equality through the assertion of colour-blindness as race and its properties are denied. It includes, for example, the misguided claim that invoking race in and of itself is profoundly racist when studying crime and the criminal justice system. Likewise, the chimerical pursuit of predictive modelling to tease out the so-called 'independent effect' of race/racism in criminal justice outcomes (cf. Hood, 1992; May et al., 2010) using de-historicised data 'magically cleansed of race animus and meaning' (Ward, 2016: 309). This has unhelpfully reinforced the notion that racism operates only in singular or binary form, marked by an identifiable presence or absence that can only be determined definitively when it can be pinned down using sophisticated statistical techniques. This positivist neutralization obscures the privileging foundations of whiteness and the historically embedded materiality of systemic racism and its legacy in contemporary realities (see also Henne and Shah, 2013).

But Emirbayer and Desmond's (2015) ire is also directed towards the uncritical referencing of 'heroic scholars' work without careful interrogation in race scholarship. They remind us to be scrupulous in the analysis of racial domination, to

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be open to striking down the shibboleths or conventional wisdoms where appropriate (e.g. Waddington, 1986). Specificity and precision is similarly to be preferred over broad-brush acceptance of claims of structural racism without delineating the mechanisms through which such forces are effected in the everyday practices of criminal justice (Garland, 2018). Otherwise, the result is work which eulogises or inferiorises minority cultures, as authenticity, resistance or some other quality is attributed as a group characteristic. Regarding minority cultures as entirely determined by structural forces without agency or conversely engaging solely in rational (if problematic and sometimes criminal) actions is equally limiting (Emirbayer and Desmond, 2012). Casual sanctification and careless exoticisation is as problematic as malicious pathologisation.

### **Criminology's disciplinary unconscious: assume the position**

Attending to the *disciplinary unconscious* helpfully brings various aspects of criminological practice, otherwise invisible, into critical focus. Consistent with the

primary concerns of this journal, the intellectual task requires the critical unpacking of criminology's 'traditions and national particularities, its obligatory problematics, its habits of thought, its shared beliefs and self-evidences, its rituals and consecrations, its constraints as regards publication of findings', all of which combine to determine the nature of criminology's knowledge of race (Emirbayer and Desmond, 2015: 39). This means interrogating the *position-takings* of criminology, the influential trends and coalitions of intellectual practice around which different traditions or groups of scholars gather. Here, we begin to sketch how these dynamics have shaped racialized modes of thought within criminology, additionally using a preliminary analysis of the coverage of race in the journal *Punishment & Society* to convey some of the current gaps as we see them.

#### *Position Takings: Sketching Criminology's Theoretical Currents*

Rock's (1994) authoritative examination of criminological theories finds a disparate array of ideas circulating throughout criminology's history. As an academic pursuit



in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries he notes Lombroso's influence and the rise of positivism, whose foundational ideas have long been dismissed for their inherent racism. Notwithstanding the pre-eminence of Sydney and Beatrice Webb's eugenicist predilections, inflected by Lombrosian themes, in their early contribution to prison studies (Webb and Webb 1922/1963), their work has remained an anomalous feature of British criminology. The legacy of biological positivism aligned with ideas about race briefly re-surfaced in the fraudulent genetic essentialism of Herrnstein and Murray's (1994) *The Bell Curve*, with similar ideas pursued in Canada by Phillippe Rushton, but it was not a 'national particularity' that took hold in Britain (Bowling and Phillips, 2002).

The heyday of sociological criminology in the US saw the emergence of strain, ecological, and subcultural theories which were, as Cullen et al.'s (2019) careful review shows, somewhat blind to race. With only a brief mention in Merton's (1938) strain theory, racial divisions were less explicitly analysed than we might have expected, particularly given their salience in the Jim Crow era. To give but one example, Burgess' work has been criticised for its failure to account for the role of

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racism in explaining why African Americans did not successfully assimilate through the concentric zones of the city over time (Valier, 2003). In Britain there was a tendency not to incorporate the exclusionary experiences of black and Asian colonial citizens in criminological work (Morris, 1958; DM Downes, 1966; Gilroy, 1987) although some notable exceptions exist (e.g. Hebdige 2006). The relative silence about race in Marxist, radical and control theories, and to a degree labelling perspectives and the new penology, has largely gone unnoticed (Bowling and Phillips, 2002), although there have been some attempts to remedy this neglect (Sampson and Wilson, 1995; Gross, 2008; McCorkel, 2014; J Unnever, D and Gabbidon, 2011; Burt et al., 2017). Such omissions reify race-blind theoretical development as race continues to be 'forgotten, squeezed into an analytical framework as an afterthought, or relegated to the bottom of a regression table' (Cullen et al., 2019: 46).

It is hard to underestimate the significance of critical criminology in the development of British criminology nor to dispute Carlen's (2011) claim that it represents the mainstream of the discipline. For this reason, it is worth tracing how it has

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contributed to racial knowledge. The most enduring features of critical criminology, according to McLaughlin's (2010) review, centre on the state's ideological preference for law and mechanisms of social control to serve elite economic and political interests (McLaughlin, 2010). The resultant hegemony of crime control has operated to oppress, alienate, and criminalise poor individuals and communities, while obscuring the racial partiality of the law and its enforcement. Returning to Emirbayer and Desmond (2015), this can be regarded as one of criminology's 'obligatory problematics'. In this regard, Hall's et al.'s (1978) *Policing the Crisis* stands as an exemplary intervention, effectively fusing ideas from sociology and criminology (see also Murji this issue)<sup>1</sup>. It centralised race, demonstrating how 'mugging' and black street crime became the prism through which the broader crisis of politics, economics and ideology in the late 1970s were viewed (cf. Waddington, 1986). *Policing the Crisis* is celebrated for the way it analysed the articulation of race within criminal justice agencies and how it maintained a fragmenting post-imperial social order (Brown 2008). Hall's adroit deployment of the terminology of 'articulation' combines both vocal connotations of expression with the pivotal linkage to structural formations,

institutional processes and individual experience.

The intellectual dispute between sociologists of race and left realists in the 1980s is also valuable for understanding the production of racial knowledge in criminology. Engaging as it did with the question of why black individuals were over-represented in official crime statistics, it offered a rejection of these data in favour of an explanation centred on moral panic, authoritarianism, oppressive policing, and anti-colonialist resistance (Gilroy, 1982b, 1982a). In response, mirroring the broader criminological trend, as victims' accounts of their experiences became more audible, theoretical fault lines faded as it became impossible to think only of the social reaction to deviance or of abstract Marxist ideas about crime control (Rock 2017). As left realists Lea and Young (1984) put it, it was all very well to see street crime as expressive and with liberatory potential, but it was also individualistic, macho, predatory, intra-class and intra-racial. Their reflections on the lived reality of victimisation were well-observed and those realities persist today, whether we are considering serious youth violence or hate crimes. However, Lea and Young's account underestimated the racist impulse to violently repress the perceived inferior,

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threatening, anarchic, cultural outsiders through appeals to civilised (white national) law and order ideologies, as persuasively argued in Gilroy's work (1982a), including in *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987). Gilroy's recollection of being 'drummed out of writing about crime by the realists during the 1980s' has concerning implications (cited in Back, 2014). This debate has stalled for far too long, unresolved, neglected and largely dormant.

In the 1990s there were three further developments with implications for race scholarship, albeit at the margins of the discipline. The first was the provision of a deeper insight into racist violence and the failures of state agencies to respond effectively to victims' needs (e.g. Bowling, 1999) and the second was the annual publication of administrative data to meet the Home Secretary's obligation under s.95 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 to assist in preventing discrimination on the grounds of race. The latter provided national data, albeit lacking meaningful contextualisation, analysis, and theoretical engagement, fostering a narrowing of the race and crime debate. This was not least because the data did not afford the opportunity to pursue the 'rituals and consecrations', to use Emirbayer and

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Desmond's (2015: 39) words, of positivist multivariate modelling (cf. Hood, 1992; May et al., 2010). The third development occurred in the wake of the Macpherson Report (1999) which stimulated research examining institutional racism, shining a light on areas previously lacking robust or recent research (Lewis et al., 2006; MVA and Miller, 2000; Souhami, 2012; Shute et al., 2005), evincing a brief engagement of both criminologists and sociologists of race (Anthias, 1999; Solomos, 1999; Yuval-Davis, 1999; Murji, 2007; Lea, 2000).

### Race and Punishment in British Criminology

As Garland (2018) has observed, penological scholarship has experienced rapid development in recent years. Imprisonment, in particular, represents the apogee of state power, and it is one of the sites where racialized patterns of social control are at their starkest. For these reasons it is apposite to think long and hard about punishment and the production of racial knowledge. Rather surprisingly, in British criminology the interrogation of racialized patterns of criminalisation and punishment are largely presented as if they are most meaningfully and

problematically a US phenomenon. Racism in criminal justice has come to be characterized through the American paradigm and recognized as principally an issue for the US, undoubtedly because of its sheer scale, but this erases corresponding patterns elsewhere and feeds an illusion that the conjunction of racism and criminal justice is a singularly US construct (cf. Wacquant, 1999). The US being treated as the worst-case scenario rather than part of a more expansive late modern iteration of a global racial order all too often provides other states with an alibi for neglecting their own racial differentials and accounting for their own specific racial histories (Earle, 2019).

This is all rather curious given Tonry's (1994) work in the 1990s. Published in the *British Journal of Criminology* as incarceration rates were well on their way to reaching their peak in the US, Tonry's analysis clearly showed that if we look at the *degree* of prison disproportionality using incarceration rates the *black-white ratio* was highest in Australia (involving indigenous populations) followed by England and Wales, with the US relegated to - unusually in relation to punishment - third place (see also Phillips, 2012). Thus, one of the stark realities of late modern Britain is ongoing racial

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disproportionality in state detention that at times has *outstripped* that of the US (but see Ministry of Justice, 2017). The 'habit of thought' of British criminology that defers to the US carceral atrocity is dangerous, not least because as Emirbayer and Desmond (2015) stress, while we hear frequent, loosely post-racial talk of racism being more restrained and less harsh than in previous eras or than in other countries, 'there is nothing particularly quiet, subtle, or invisible about the staggering racial disparities along the poverty line or within the criminal justice system', and this holds true on both sides of the Atlantic (Phillips and Bowling 2017).

A preliminary, admittedly limited, systematic mapping of one premier criminology journal, *Punishment & Society*, documents this tendency toward US penological scholarship on race. Table 1 indicates an increasing substantive focus on questions of race in the last two decades which is very much to be welcomed. Further analysis shows, however, that of the 46 articles with substantive references to race over the period 1999-mid-2018, 70% (n=32) focused on the US with just 9% (n=4) analysing punishment in England and Wales. Self-evidently only indicative of the contours of race within one journal, it offers some substantiation of our suspicion

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that race in the UK is not well articulated in mainstream criminological literature on punishment.

Table 1

Systematic Mapping of References to Race in *Punishment & Society* 1999-mid 2018

Search Results <sup>1</sup>	1999-2005	2006-2012	2013-2018 <sup>2</sup>
	%	%	%
No mention:	76	40	23
Mentioned:	24	60	77
Substantive <sup>3</sup>	5	11	13
Cursory/ tokenistic <sup>4</sup>	16	31	44

Demographic descriptor <sup>5</sup>	2	11	19
References only <sup>6</sup>	1	7	2
<b>TOTAL ARTICLES</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>168</b>

Notes

1. Terms used= Race OR Racism OR Racist OR Racial\* OR Ethnic\* OR minority\* OR BAME OR B.A.M.E. OR BME OR B.M.E. OR Black OR Asian OR White\* OR Intersectional\* OR Divers\* OR Hate crime OR Islam\* OR Antisemitism OR Anti-semitism OR Jew\* OR Muslim OR Christian (asterisks denote wildcards and 'OR' signals a logical operator for the search).
2. January 2013 - June 2018.
3. Multiple mentions.
4. A single/brief mention indicating potential relevance but not directly examined.
5. Term used as a demographic variable only with no detailed examination.
6. Term used in the list of references or in the biographical details about the author.

A likely factor explaining this blind spot, we think, is that poverty and economic inequality remains the primary vector through which crime and justice is

understood. Seeking to assert the primacy of class in his disavowal of 'over-racialised' accounts of incarceration, Matthews' (2017) realist account risks underplaying the condition logic of racism in postcolonial settings. This preoccupation with class, being one of criminology's commonsensical doxa, one of its 'shared beliefs and self-evidences', (Emirbayer and Desmond, 2015: 39) assumes a singularity of explanation in which, as Shilliam (2018: 96) observes 'economic inequality is a class issue that race is safely derivative of...[with] class removed from its racial constitution and imperial constellation'. Evidently, this is not a peculiarly criminological deficiency, for as Alexander (2017: 1044) scathingly notes in relation to sociological research on inequalities, the dynamics of race are similarly frequently masked or neglected as an 'inconvenient complication'. This seems to be a characteristic of much contemporary UK scholarship, despite the consistently stark realities of racialized criminalization and punishment.

In tracing more recent 'habits of thought' in criminology there have been new empirical and theoretical developments including expansion in studies of terrorism, social harms, hate crime, cultural, and green criminology, migration and border

criminology. Whilst these new advances grow and enrich the discipline, each have developed with race and racism only implicit in their analyses, typically vaguely specified, largely under-theorised - or arguably in the case of the idiosyncratic postures of ultra-realist criminology, akin to the 'colour-blind socialists' mentioned by Virdee (2015) - actively minimized and effectively denied as a feeble-minded throwback to obsolete and inadequate critical traditions (see Steve Hall 2012). This, despite Virdee's (2014) comprehensive account of the English working class pointing to its essentially multi-ethnic formation and (sometimes anti-racist) character throughout its history, while also documenting the corrosive effects of its racist factionalism. A reminder of the 'non-reductiveness of race and ethnicity as social features', their relatively autonomy from class, and their centrality as an organizing principle of postcolonial societies is long overdue and increasingly urgent for the contemporary criminological landscape (Hall, 1980: 306).

The idea of racial capitalism may be useful in developing this theoretical thread further (Bhattacharyya, 2018). As Virdee (2019: 6) suggests, this necessitates co-locating 'colonization and racism within the unfolding story of historical capitalism

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over the past half a millennium', albeit with the cultural, political and ideological modalities of contemporary racisms also specified. The reinvigoration of the criminological field demands an historical analysis which takes into account the variegated logics of racial domination and violence in colonial and post-colonial times, the symbolic and emotional aspects of racial meanings, migration histories and trajectories, endowments of human capital, modes of integration, as well as cultural practices and lifestyles. This will need to incorporate macro-level structural forces, micro-level everyday experiences, as well as the meso-level field of the institutions of the criminal justice system. It demands analysis that is nationally specific and adequate to the variable historical formations of race and colonialism.

#### *Organisational Structure and Social Relations*

Garland (1994) characterises criminology as eclectic and disparate in its approaches and theories. Its development in England was driven and secured through the efforts of Jewish emigrants - Radzinowicz at Cambridge University, Grünhut at Oxford

University and Mannheim at LSE (Rock 1994). Becoming more fully fledged from the 1930s to the 1960s, Garland (1994) maintains, postgraduate teaching provision, journals, a professional association, and government-funded research programmes cemented its position as an academic discipline. In this sense, criminology in the UK has historically been both a conventional scientific endeavour and a pragmatic, problem-oriented one with an eye towards governmental priorities, intervention and funding. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, criminology is also unusually invested in its own deconstruction (Cohen, 1988). Cohen's (2011: xxxv) work aligns with our misgivings and his prognosis that criminology is prone to 'taking some things too seriously and other things not seriously enough' seems apt.

Garland (2011) affirms criminology can best maintain its intellectual strength when it is integrated and in dialogue with its constitutive, parent disciplines of sociology, psychology and law. It is the 'rendezvous' character of the discipline that can prevent it being exclusively focused on policy-oriented criminal justice concerns, seen by some to predominate in the less highly-ranked educational institutions (Matthews 2017). Their emphasis on vocational utility can be regarded as troubling when it

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reflects what Hobbs (2012: 262) calls criminology's 'loss of its sociological soul'. Clearly a valid concern, it is nonetheless the expansive context of criminology in post-1992 universities, rather than in the more prestigious and traditional research-active institutions, where minority ethnic scholars and students are most likely to be located (Equality Challenge Unit, 2017). These forms of academic segregation and hierarchy that hinge so persistently around race may be relatively obscure to white scholars but remain a key feature of the national and international criminological landscape, determining job opportunities, academic progression and research recognition (Warikoo 2016; Alexander and Arday 2015).

Statistical data documenting more minority ethnic than white academics on temporary contracts, fewer in senior roles, with fewer minority ethnic students attending Russell Group institutions, and their lower attainment in degree performance - have emphasised intersecting concerns about inequality and racism in the UK's higher education institutions (Equality Challenge Unit, 2017; Tate and Bagguley, 2017). Conditioned by this reality, the racialised dynamics of criminological expansion are completely neglected, yet they are very much part of

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the disciplinary unconscious, particularly in elite institutions where whiteness is rarely problematized but even more ubiquitous (Reay, 2018; Peterson, 2017).

Undoubtedly of relevance too is the broader concern about the absence of theoretical development in the discipline as a whole (Hobbs, 2012; Carrabine, 2016).

Notwithstanding, in what Back and Tate (2014) identify as the 'bleaching' of sociology we recognise features and dynamics of their analysis that are also salient to criminology (see also Virdee, 2019). Despite criminology being centrally concerned with issues of governing, categorisation and social order, race and ethnicity have been largely relegated to subfields within the discipline, confined to a periphery that limits access to the dominant frames of reference creating contemporary criminological knowledge (Bosworth et al., 2008). As a result criminology remains 'analytically white' (Hesse, 2014) because it consistently fails to situate contemporary formations of crime and its institutional controls within historical racial configurations constructed as part of the dominant social order.

Sociology is beginning to see an intellectual shift undermining its foundational modes of knowledges as the canon of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Giddens, Foucault,



and Bourdieu has been shown to have paid scant attention to societies outside of the West (Connell, 2006; Go, 2013; Virdee, 2019). This complicity in colonial optics that homogenised, inferiorised or exoticised people not of the West arose from neglect of the processes of empire-building, colonisation and decolonization. Criminology must take note, otherwise it risks being forever 'haunted and constrained by its inability to shake the colonising whiteness that continues to colour its imagination' (Back and Tate, 2014: 124), particularly if it does not engage more critically with its canonical affinity with sociology. More than 25 years ago Russell-Brown (1992) identified this trait in the US criminological canon and the corresponding need for a black criminology, as did Phillips and Bowling (2003) in proposing the development of minority perspectives in UK criminology - both seemingly falling on deaf ears (JD Unnever and Owusu-Bempah, 2019; Russell-Brown, 2019).

What Bhambra (2015: 475) calls the 'politics of canon formation' and their deconstruction in sociology has yet to gather momentum in criminology with regard to race, even though we have African American criminologists Taylor Greene, Gabbidon and Young (2000; 2001; 2001) to thank for their illuminating anthology of

African American scholars previously excluded from the criminological canon, including Wells-Barnett, Du Bois, Work, and Franklin Frazier. Their work sought to dispel pathological views of African American culture, chronicling and analysing their lived realities in the Jim Crow era. In recent years, postcolonial influences have emerged to demonstrate their potential but a specific and consistent focus on race and racism remains missing from mainstream criminology (Cain, 2000; Agozino, 2003; Cuneen, 2011; Carrington et al., 2016).

### *Narrating race and telling racism*

Sketching the contributions of race scholarship in criminology and suggesting some future lines of inquiry can be disruptive of old habits of thought but it is not enough by itself. Re-historicising the contemporary contours of race is an urgent intellectual task. We can only contextualize the present and shape the future by understanding the past. Criminological amnesia towards Britain's history and role in the legitimization of systemic violence and punishment of populations through slavery

and colonization is a particular omission, and the indifference to its ongoing consequences and implications remain pressing concerns, particularly in discussions of state crime (Agozino, 2003). Similar issues are at stake with the traction achieved by the fallacious formulation of a post-racial condition which has been widely debated in sociology (Goldberg, 2015). Furthermore, yet to be integrated into critical analyses of the working of the criminal justice system is the relevance of the resurgence of racial biologism through genomics (Duster, 2015) and how the corporeality and comportment of racialized bodies (Omi and Winant, 2016) affect processes of criminalization. Deeper excavation into the consequences, the existential and psychic costs of ongoing racializing practices, for black male bodies has also thus far largely escaped criminological attention (Yancy, 2017). Digital technologies and artificial intelligence are increasingly implicated in these dynamics and their racializing potential expose the limitations of an analytically white criminology (see, also XXX and XXX this issue). Facial recognition, big data analytics and algorithmic assessments are increasingly implemented in criminal justice spheres to reduce human effort and democratize encounters in areas such as policing. Yet they have

been shown to reproduce coded forms of racism that are harder to trace thereby diffusing accountability (Buolamwini and Gebru 2018; Noble 2018; Parmar 2019; Benjamin, 2019). The emergence and impact of citizens' movements and insurgencies like Black Lives Matter in the USA, JENGBA and StopWatch in the UK (Emirbayer and Desmond 2015; Shiner et al. 2018) are crucial for advances in criminological thought. And while there are political risks involved in unpacking racialized tensions and interactions between minority ethnic groups such work is necessary to more fully understand the dynamics of our complex social world.

Epistemologically and methodologically there is also a need for a re-fusing of humanistic, artistic styles and scientific styles of reasoning to more holistically represent and interpret intersectional realities (Stanfield, 1985). Back and Tate (2014) describe how Du Bois, for example, evocatively incorporated the 'personal pains of racism' and humiliations wrought in the Jim Crow period with a sociological sensitivity in works such as *The Souls of Black Folk* (1901). Their illustration of this synthesis is in Du Bois' telling of the racism of white onlookers as he travelled alongside the coffin of his baby son, while also referencing high infant mortality rates

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among 'Negro Americans'. Du Bois is lauded for integrating history, biography, sociology, black literary arts and culture, and on occasion, fiction into his analytical frame (see XXX, this issue). Implicit in this approach is the value of intertwining personal reflections on political positioning in literary prose, to use personal troubles and inner lives at the micro level framed by history and social structure to enable a properly sociological imagination (Mills, 1959/2000). Hence, the telling of our experiences of race in criminology's *social unconscious* earlier in this article. It is an approach that involves eschewing the restrained neutrality expected of academic work in order to narrate the affective and ontological dynamics of economic and political lives lived by minority ethnic people (as bearers of intersectional identities that include our occupational ones as criminologists).

We have been inspired to take Agozino's (2003) lead as he rejects 'criminological orientalism' by creatively combining theory, history and poetics in his own work using the 'insurrectional lyrics' of Jamaican reggae artist, Peter Tosh, to conceptualise oppressive policing. As authors of varied ages, each of our generations has its

equivalents: Linton Kwesi Johnson's (1979) *Sonny's Lettah*, a vivid oration of the

spectacularly violent use of 'sus' powers and Macka B's (1984) *We've Had Enough* (1984) describing the 'Babylonian murder' of Clinton McCurbin and the 'neverending list' of others killed in police encounters; Dizzee Rascal's (2007) *Sirens* where white fox hunters pursue the black police suspect and P Money's (2016) *Stereotype* wistfully noting '[i]f they acted like black lives matter, I wouldn't have to make a track like this' - are all brutally eloquent in capturing the essence of how policing can be felt, endured, and defied. They offer powerful means to elucidate political consciousness, develop criminological insights and mobilise resistance by foregrounding experiences defined by race and racism.

Glynn (2019) is pioneering exciting forms of engagement using spoken word, hip-hop and theatre to generate new alliances among criminologists, community activists and performance artists to resist the degradations of racism and the injustices of criminal justice. The model of co-production of music, performance and social media anchored within criminological theory is also being used by innovative white scholars in the *Distant Voices* project using Scottish traditions of music-making and story-telling (Urie et al., 2019). Such projects offer new crafts for a reflexive discipline

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not as a rejection of 'the master's tools', as Audre Lorde warned, but in recognition of their current limitations. It is a demand for the academic freedom to use other tools 'in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish' (Lorde, 1984: 112). In seeking intellectual progress and innovation there is a long but exciting to-do list to take criminology beyond the pale.

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## **Notes**

1. Although it too has its critics. For a review see McLaughlin (2008).
2. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/mar/22/information-isnt-just-for-the-elite-the-academic-turning-research-into-hip-hop>

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