

# Humanifesto of the Decolonization of Criminology and Justice

*Biko Agozino*<sup>1</sup>

## **Abstract**

I bear witness as a survivor of a genocide orchestrated by imperialism and carried out by neo-colonial stooges who proclaimed that “all is fair in warfare” and that “starvation is a legitimate weapon of war” even when Igbo children, women and innocent men made up the bulk of the 3.1 million people killed in Biafra in 30 months (Achebe, 2012). I acknowledge the knowledge of the Indigenous peoples of this land and of every land who were colonized, chattelized, racialized, victimized, pulverized, dehumanized, genocided, proletarianized, lumpenized, marginalized and homogenized with the tools of criminology, among other tools, for the benefits of white-supremacist imperialist patriarchy but managed to keep on resisting. I testify that we are survivors who were never expected to survive to meet one another and raise our voices to say: Happy Survival! To say that we are survivors is not to suggest that we have completely restored our independence but to state that for as long as the forces of imperialism are entrenched, we are determined to resist. We will keep speaking truth to unjust power the way that our ancestors defiantly stuck out their tongues and flipped their middle fingers to force the conquerors to sign treaties recognizing our autonomy as human beings equal in beauty, wisdom, culture, courage, and originality. This article outlines the decolonization paradigm in criminology, the rationale for this paradigmatic shift, the major contributions to this paradigm, and a projection of the future agenda of the paradigm as a development that is in the interest of humanity, hence the humanifesto in the title.

**Keywords:** criminology, decolonization, genocide, justice, resistance

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Tech, VA, USA

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### **The Birth of the Decolonization Paradigm**

*He tangata ia i mahi ngā mahi  
Nunui, hei peehi te kino  
Kia tu ko te rangi-marie  
Het orange no nga iwi  
Katoa I tea o ko tana tohu.*

*He was a man who did  
great deeds in suppressing evil  
so that peace may reign  
as a means of salvation  
to all people on earth.*

Te Whiti o Rongomai's monument at Parihaka, quoted in  
Keenan (2015, p. 1).

Decolonization Criminology does not assume that indigenous societies were a paradise of tranquillity before they were conquered and colonized nor that decolonization would usher in a crime-free society. Rather, decolonization is a matter of social justice under the assumption that the invasion, kidnapping, enslavement, and mass murder of Indigenous peoples represent organized crimes against humanity and so, decolonization should be at the core of criminological theory rather than be ignored, excluded or relegated to the margins. I argue that it is in the interest of humanity and of criminologists to decolonize the entire world and the discipline of criminology because it is dangerous for any discipline to evade major developments that are relevant to the core subjects of the discipline especially when we are talking about threats to humanity. Decolonization-centricity suggests that criminologists should place the paradigm of decolonization at the core of the discipline by learning from the history of colonized people and how the struggle to end the crimes of colonization has been waged by allies. It is true that indigenous societies also had crimes and systems of punishment before they were colonized but criminologists trained in the Western tradition have ignored the huge crimes of colonialism and what could be learned by criminology students from the ways that indigenous communities and their allies have been trying to correct such colonialist crimes while developing new knowledge. Ever since our ancestors welcomed lost strangers and offered them hospitality only to discover that they did not come with peace and love, our people have resolutely resisted conquest, enslavement, colonization, apartheid, fascism, and imperialism just as they resisted any forms of despotism that existed before the advent of the European looters and ceaselessly so ever since. Decolonization will benefit the whole of humanity and that is why I titled this a humanifesto.



I acknowledge the Indigenous peoples who own every land. I do not know what the Indigenous Māori went through or how they survived but I am willing to share that as a child, I survived a neo-colonial genocide in Biafra, 1967-1970, in Nigeria. That war was not a tribal war but a neo-colonial conquest orchestrated by the British imperialist supply of weapons of mass destruction to the extent that more small arms fire was expended in 30 months than was used in the entire World War II. In a strange alliance, the British Labour Party government was joined by their Cold War enemies, the Soviet Union, which supplied the jet bombers to target market women, school children, hospitals, and planes bringing in food and medicine in order to enforce the blockade by Nigerian troops and politicians against Eastern Nigerians and mainly against the Igbo. Having suffered 100,000 lives lost in the early stages of the genocide in other parts of Nigeria, the people of the Eastern Region had concluded that they were not wanted in Nigeria and therefore declared secession to exercise the right to self-determination as an oppressed nationality that had previously championed the struggle for decolonization against British rule in Nigeria. The result was an estimated 3.1 million people killed in 30 months of genocidal aggression against the Easterners, mainly Igbo. Those not familiar with this foundational genocide of postcolonial Africa should consult Achebe (2012), Ekwe-Ekwe (2006) and Jacobs (1987).

In a review of the blockbuster movie *Black Panther* on my blog site (Agozino, 2018a), I objected to the message that the method of succession in Wakanda was a fight to the death by the contending candidates. I called for the abolition of the colonial institutions of the monarchy in Africa and recommended the adoption of democratic elections. Unsurprisingly, some Africans in the diaspora, who enjoyed living in liberal democracies, disagreed with me and said that monarchies can be a force for good in Africa and that the royal battle was not necessarily genocidal. I was also challenged for invoking the imagery of Neo-Tarzanism from Wole Soyinka in my critique of the movie. Some believed that Soyinka was a monarchist who wrote a play, *Death and the King's Horseman*, to symbolize that it is expected in Yoruba culture that when the king died, the horseman should commit ritual suicide and be buried with the king. I disagreed with this interpretation of Soyinka and pointed out that he wrote the play a few years after emerging from solitary confinement for his opposition to the genocide against the Igbo. I suggested that the play was anti-monarchist and anti-ritual suicide while

questioning why the educated Yoruba were the ones most enthusiastic in their support for the ritual suicide in honour of a dead king in the play. Similarly, the highest educated Yoruba were the genocidist philosophers who told the international press that starvation was a legitimate weapon of war during the genocide in Biafra. This debate was raging on the internet when I visited New Zealand to launch the new academic journal *Decolonization of Criminology and Justice*.

I grew up hearing tales of how the colonizers arrested my father for selling gunpowder to hunters and funeral canon shooters without renewing his license. He freed himself from detention by peeing all over the floor by the door when they refused to let him out to ease himself. Papa also told us stories of how the local Catholic priest tried to intimidate him into abandoning his indigenous faith and his role as a native priest. He was ordered to convert to Catholicism or else he would be driven out from our house that was said to be too close to the church. But Papa answered the threat by fetching his sharp machete and acting as if he was about to chop off the head of the priest who fled in fear. The priest later sent emissaries to beg my father and confess that he was put up to make the threat by some of our neighbours who were churchgoers and who thought that Papa would be scared enough to convert and become a churchgoer.

My mother was also detained by colonial police for using tonal poetry to rally the villagers to beat up a man suspected of fishing in the sacred stream where fishing was forbidden. She freed herself by arguing that everyone had the duty to help protect the environment. My grandmothers were of the generation that waged the Women's War, Ogu Umunwanyi, against the Warrant Chiefs that colonizers imposed on the democratic Igbo who did not know any king and who believed that all heads are equal. British anthropologists wrote 'Intelligence Reports' to say that the Igbo must have been a primitive headless people or an acephalous society who needed to be civilized by having chiefs imposed on them. I am being reflexive here to emphasize that colonialism and decolonization struggles are not distant historical events, mythology or mere metaphors but part of my own formative experiences.

After the genocidal war that I survived as a child in Biafra, a colonial anthropologist advised the military dictatorship that ruled Nigeria that the Igbo were difficult to govern because they did not have chiefs and so, chiefs should be imposed on them to make them submissive (Perham, 1970). A few



years later General Olusegun Obasanjo proclaimed the 1976 *Local Government Reform Decree* (Onyedikachi, 2016) that stipulated that every town, even among the Igbo who now fight over who should be crowned the Igwe or Sky Chief, must have a traditional ruler. Yet the younger generation of the Igbo has sustained a campaign proclaiming the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Biafra to a referendum on self-determination. The neo-colonial genocidist state in Nigeria has continued to respond with extrajudicial killings, torture, detention, disappearance, and terrorist proscription against unarmed people who non-violently exercise the freedom of expression by flying the flag of Biafra or by saying prayers or even by staying home to mourn the spirits of the loved ones who were killed during the genocide (Amnesty International, 2016). Meanwhile, armed cattle herders who commit mass murder all over the country were not proscribed as terrorist gangs while Boko Haram detainees were released by the government in exchange for women held captive by the terrorist group. Nigerian writers have remained largely silent about this genocide except when they try to deny it even after a few published damning eye-witness accounts (Achebe, 2012; Ekwe-Ekwe, 2006; Nwankwo, 1972; Soyinka, 1993).

Eurocentric criminology pays no attention to the kinds of deviance and social control outlined above. It traces the history of the institutionalization of criminology from the foundation of the Cambridge University Institute of Criminology in 1959, at the time that the British empire was being formally ended across Africa (Garland, 2002). The tracing of *Discipline and Punish* to the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Foucault (1977) is also deliberately silent on the crimes of the enslavement of Africans and the crimes of the genocide against indigenous peoples, contrary to the historical materialist foundations laid by Marx (1965) where such injustice takes centre stage. Before Foucault, another French academic founding father, Durkheim, spent his time talking about *The Division of Labour in Society* (1933), about the *Rules of Sociological Methods* (1982), *The Elementary Forms of The Religious Life* (1912) among Indigenous peoples, *Two Laws of Penal Evolution* (1973), and about *Suicide* (Jones, 1986); but without a word about slavery, colonialism, and genocide which were realities *sui generis* waiting for him to be measured and analysed the same way that he attempted to use traveller's tales to study *The Elementary Forms of The Religious Life* to attempt to prove Marx wrong on the fact that the economy is the foundational social institution. Max Weber (1963) also contributed to

Eurocentric sociology the view that the Germanic family of laws was technically superior to all systems of administration of justice because it relied on professionally trained rational ideal bureaucrats with hierarchies that made officials carry out orders from above exactly the way that the Nazi officers conducted the Holocaust. The Frankfurt School tried to correct the blind spots of the Enlightenment by focusing on Critical Legal Studies with an emphasis on class inequality, but Critical Race Theory emerged to emphasize that class inequality did not cover the racism and the sexism that Indigenous peoples face in addition to poverty (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Due to the fact that W.E.B. Du Bois was a scholar of African descent, who wrote at the same time as Durkheim and Weber but outlived them by more than 60 productive years, his foundational work was ignored on both sides of the Atlantic perhaps because he was opposed to imperialism and allied his scholar-activism to the socialist agenda of Marx against slavery, racism, sexism, and imperialist class exploitation. Due to the neglect of the crucial contributions like those of Du Bois, criminology was crippled and cursed to stumble blindly only to rediscover the wheel that Du Bois had carved a hundred years ago. For instance, criminologists are only recently turning to the study of human rights crimes whereas Du Bois launched such a research concern in 1896 when he completed his doctoral research on *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade* at Harvard University and it was published as the first in the series of Harvard Historical Studies in 1906 but few criminologists have ever heard of it. Also completed in 1897, while Durkheim was completing *Suicide*, was the magnum opus by Du Bois on *The Philadelphia Negro* that explained what is now known as racial profiling and also pointed out the existence of what Edwin Sutherland discovered as white collar crime 50 years later. Unlike European scholars who wrote from the ivory towers, Du Bois was a scholar-activist who organized the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People across the US to oppose lynching and to campaign for voting rights with Ida B. Wells contributing (Chestnut, 2008). Du Bois also organized a Peace Association for which the US government accused him of working as an agent of a foreign power without being registered but he won the case by arguing that peace did not belong to any foreign power. Whereas European scholars ignored the crimes of colonialism, Du Bois organized the Pan African Movement to help bring about decolonization and he pointed out that Europeans also paid the price for imperialism by going to war against one another over who should control



the largest empire in Africa. The example of Du Bois as a scholar-activist and decolonization criminologist indicates that such an original thinker may be denied tenure by universities but the commitment to objectivity in scholar-activism would guarantee that the contributions to knowledge would be more enduring compared to the works of those who self-censored their work in order to escape the precariousness of the academic job market.

In New Zealand and Australia, Indigenous peoples were subjected to genocide through diseases that were communicated and through military eradication of the people to make way for sheep farms. Te Whiti o Rongomai organized non-violent resistance against land theft and mass arrests or slaughter by leading Māori to cultivate their own land in the face of violent repression. In Vietnam, the Philippines, and Korea, imperialism tried to restore direct colonialism by force against the will of the determined people while in Palestine, the establishment of the state of Israel resulted in the seizure of the land of the Palestinians who were killed or driven into exile. The Bolivarian revolution in South America led to the declaration of political independence throughout the region but economic and cultural imperialism continued until the Cuban revolution charted a new course away from imperialist domination. Stanley Cohen (2001) asked why criminologists continued to maintain the states of denial about human rights crimes by apartheid systems of domination and more like them. Obviously, the culture of the stiff upper lip was part of White privilege in Eurocentric criminology given that the elements of decolonization-centric criminology were always there but were ignored or marginalized in the discipline.

Following in the footsteps of Du Bois were such giants as Frantz Fanon who applied his skills as a psychiatrist to expose the insanity inherent in the violence of colonialism and highlighted the need to pursue decolonization through the mobilization of the masses with revolutionary literature in order to avoid falling into the pitfalls of national consciousness under the phantom bourgeoisie. Kwame Nkrumah brought Du Bois to Ghana to live out his last years with respect instead of being hounded by colonialist law enforcement in the US for his efforts to promote global peace. Nkrumah (1965) followed Lenin to theorize that neo-colonialism is the last stage of imperialism and he called for a union government in Africa under the leadership of the All African People's Revolutionary Party. Amilcar Cabral (1966) helped to sharpen *The Weapon of Theory* to aid decolonization. Walter Rodney (1973) pointed out *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* and indirectly

highlighted how Africa would advance decolonization by reuniting to erase the colonial boundaries and by investing in education and technology for the recovery. Agostino Neto in Angola, Samora Machel in Mozambique, Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, and Nelson Mandela in South Africa all successfully led the struggle for the restoration of independence in parts of Africa even though imperialism is far from being ended in Africa and globally. Stuart Hall led the way to extend the critique of imperialism beyond the critique of capitalism to include the critique of authoritarian populism which helps to explain why the working class masses in Europe and even among postcolonial people appear to be some of the most enthusiastic supporters of imperialism. A chance meeting with him in London introduced me to his theory of race-class-gender articulation, disarticulation, and re-articulation (Hall, 1980) when I was doing the fieldwork for my dissertation on *Black Women and the Criminal Justice System: Towards the Decolonisation of Victimisation* (Agozino, 1997). That was how the decolonization paradigm emerged in criminology, according to peer Onwudiwe (2000) who acclaimed the work that launched the Ashgate Publishers *Interdisciplinary Research Series on Ethnic, Gender and Class Relations* under me as series editor, now continued by Routledge after the purchase of Ashgate by Taylor & Francis. I have advanced the decolonization paradigm in subsequent work and especially in *Counter-Colonial Criminology: A Critique of Imperialist Reason* (Agozino, 2003). I am grateful to the colleagues around the world who affirmed the value of this paradigm and have contributed to advancing it with their own work, leading to the founding of this journal that is dedicated to de-centering Eurocentrism, empowering Indigenous criminologists, to healing the wounds of control-freak criminology (Agozino, 2010), to liberating the people from mass incarceration, to developing decolonization-centricity in methodology, to building counter-colonial theory, to ending racism-sexism-classism, to supporting the demand for reparative justice, and to supporting the autonomy and self-determination of Indigenous peoples.

### **The Decolonization Paradigm in Criminology**

Following the epigraph that Nkrumah (1965) quoted from Lenin on imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism and neo-colonialism as the last stage of imperialism, I paraphrased the quotation to indicate that the same conclusions can also be extended to criminology (Agozino, 2003). Like





the concentration of capitalist power in fewer and fewer hands, criminological power is also highly concentrated in a few race-class-gender hands with close ties between the old and the young criminologists who are united in their advocacy of imperialist power over others and in their enthusiasm for the prospect of imperialist reason. Nkrumah concluded that neo-colonialism is the last stage of imperialism and I want to suggest that decolonization is the last struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism and racist-imperialist-patriarchy and anti-racism education can be of help (Dei, 1996).

I postulated that criminology was neglected by developing countries while Indigenous scholars were marginalized in the discipline in the West because the discipline is closely tied to the project of colonization and patriarchal imperialism as a science designed for the control of Others. Moana Jackson made a similar point in a television interview when he was asked if there was anything genetic that made Māori commit more crimes and end up more in prison disproportionately? He answered that imprisonment was part of the colonizing process and that there was nothing in the DNA to explain Māori over-incarceration, contrary to imperialist reason. Prior to colonization, Indigenous peoples had no prisons and remained overwhelmingly law-abiding until the colonizers brought the repressive fetishes of Anglobalization to effect genocide, steal the land, enslave the survivors, and turn around to say that the victimized had a criminal DNA as the excuse to lock them up and throw away the keys. Anthropology and the other social sciences and the arts and humanities were quicker to realize that their disciplines were in cahoots with imperialism and started making efforts towards decolonization but criminology remains embedded with the state power structures and therefore control-freak criminologists are more likely to resist the ongoing decolonization of theory, methodology, and especially policy (Agozino, 2010).

For instance, anthropologists used to believe that the Yanomamo of Venezuela were a warlike nation to justify the war that was waged against them by gold-prospectors at a time that the US was also waging war against the warlike nation of Vietnam under the assumption that waging war was a natural human instinct when faced with scarce resources. Eventually, anthropologists were forced to acknowledge that Yanomamo, Vietnamese, Māori and Igbo were peace-loving people who were subjected to genocidal wars and medical experimentation that nearly wiped them out in the interest

of imperialism. There were deviance and social control in precolonial times but nothing to be compared to the prison-industrial complex imposed on Indigenous peoples by imperialism at the expense of all.

The irony is that when criminologists break their silence to glance at developing countries, the same crime control models that have failed in the West and in settler-colonial locations are exported to the developing countries and to Indigenous peoples as the made-for-export criminology that Stanley Cohen dismissed for being allied to imperialism and for neglecting more workable indigenous models (Cohen, 1988). In accordance with the ideology of Orientalism, indigenous peoples are presumed to be lawless and immoral to justify the imposition of imperialism even when the colonized could be said to be more morally upright and less crime-prone than genocidal invaders (Said, 1979). Fanon (1963) observed the high level of morality among the colonized from a psychological perspective because those who committed infidelity with a neighbour's wife in their dreams were obliged to apologize when they wake up and pay a fine. Diop (1987) also commented that such a high level of morality dates far back to African classical civilization as recorded by foreign travellers who stated that there was hardly any crime and that when travellers died, their belongings were kept safe until their family came to collect them. Precolonial people were not angels but in contrast with colonizers, they never travelled thousands of miles to kill, kidnap, enslave and rape others for private gains the way European colonizers did.

Coming from the Dark Ages when Europeans believed that criminality was caused by demonology, criminology emerged to assume that the neurosis of Europeans would be exhibited by all human beings who are normal. Yet there were no reports of witch hunts outside Europe compared to the nine million, mostly women, killed by covetous patriarchal authorities in the name of the Father and of the Son, according to Daly (1978). As a result of the spread of what West (2004) calls Constantinian Christianity, many of the colonized have since adopted the demonological beliefs of White supremacists with increasing reports of witch killings in Africa at a time that the Europeans who had imposed such beliefs had outlawed witch trials in Europe. With the rise of the Enlightenment at the height of the genocide against Indigenous peoples and the enslavement of Africans by Europeans, the classical theories of the rule of law and the calibration of punishment to fit the crime as a utilitarian free-will deterrence or for retribution emerged



but this was never applied to the crimes of genocide and enslavement which are crimes against humanity and so serious that no punishment would ever fit the crimes as just deserts.

Positivism emerged from the efforts to apply the methods of natural sciences to produce positive results for increased human happiness and Lombroso believed that he had discovered such a theory after he measured the skull of a notorious brigand during the Italian colonial conquest of the Sicilian region with Lombroso serving as the military doctor. He concluded that some criminals are born that way and that no amount of punishment could change them because their criminality was determined by atavistic genetic factors that can only be treated medically but not punished (Bradley, 2010). This paved the way for oppressive treatment of Indigenous peoples and the poor Europeans with the medicalization of deviance and entrenched the assumption that Indigenous peoples and the poor are born criminal although oppressive patriarchal racist imperialists were more criminal but their criminality was explained away as a necessity for higher evolution or as signs of eccentricity, not criminality.

From the psychological determinism of Freud (1919) to the sociological determinism of Durkheim (1973), Weber (1963), Parsons (2005) and Merton (1938), criminologists have concentrated on finding what causes crime and how best to punish offenders but without extending their attention to possible answers from Indigenous peoples and the poor who were only seen as problems to be solved through more effective control mechanisms. Under the sociological positivism paradigm, it is assumed that there is a value-consensus at a global scale under the domination of imperialism but the question is whose conscience would Durkheim label the collective conscience in a colonial situation? Whose ethics were the protestant ethics of Weber (2005) during slavery? Whose superego was repressing the id and the ego in Freud's sexual fantasies? Whose cultural values were the institutional prerequisites for the survival of the socio-cybernetics of Parsons in Jim Crow America? Whose cultural values are assumed by Merton with his American Dream that people adapt to through the mechanisms of conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism or rebellion?

*The Sociological Imagination* was offered by Charles Wright Mills (1959) as a strategy for making sociologists to take seriously the biographies of individuals when articulating the public issues of their societies instead

of constructing a grand theory or focusing on abstract empiricism. Unfortunately, Mills did not extend his sociological imagination to Indigenous peoples but concentrated mainly on the politics of class without reference to racism and sexism. Mills (1963) also assumed that the power elites were the ones who determined any meaningful social change because the poor are supposedly too disempowered or too manipulated to bring about real changes. Had he paid attention to the civil rights movement raging at the time of his writing or had he studied the work of Du Bois, he would not have been so pessimistic about the ability of the masses to bring about significant social change. Frank Pearce (2018) was aware of the role of Black Power in challenging the abusive policing of the African American communities by authorities that turned a blind eye to crimes of the powerful. Though Jock Young (1976) tried to link Black Power with excessive criminality that he said was not justifiable in such communities, Pearce (2018) tried to link drug-taking White hippies as the allies of Black Power. On the contrary, Black Power appealed to Indigenous peoples around the world to such extent that the Black Panther Party was formed independently in different parts of the world. The New Criminology of Taylor, Walton and Young (see Meier, 1977) also ignored Indigenous peoples and only cited reports about how immigrants struggle to survive in inner cities without acknowledging that the vast majority of the population in inner city locations were poor Whites and ethnic minority citizens born in the country, not recent immigrants to be subjected to xenophobia by descendants of settler-colonizers.

Hall et al. (1978) tried to correct the errors of the amplification of poor Black deviance by developing the theory of *Policing the Crisis* as a historical process that started from slavery and the repression of Indigenous peoples under colonialism before being reintroduced in the internal colonies of inner cities where the poor were repressed under authoritarian populism and Thatcherism. Steven Box (1984) also advanced the theory that the facts do not fit the hypothesis linking poverty and crime given that the vast majority of the poor are overwhelmingly law-abiding while many of the rich get away with murder. Paul Gilroy (1982) was later to challenge left-realism with the powerful essay on *The Myth of Black Criminality* in which he proved that there is no such thing as Black criminality. Angela Davis (1981) also challenged White feminists against being mobilized by White-supremacist imperialist patriarchy to campaign that Black men were an existential threat



to White women given that White women are more likely to be raped by intimate White male partners who had also been routinely raping Black women since slavery. Yet, about 90% of the people executed for rape in the US between 1932 and 1972 were Black men who could not have committed that many rapes. Similarly, native Hawaiian educator, Trask (1982) regretted that her feminist politics may have distracted her from the urgent task of contributing more to the organization of her rural community to decolonize their nation. Feminist criminologists also attacked male-stream criminology and developed the awareness that the atavistic criminal of Lombroso was essentially male while women are more likely to be victims of crime rather than offenders in every country where over 90% of the prisoners tend to be male. This is not because there is something wrong with women that makes them commit fewer crimes or because women are clever at concealing their crimes or just because male law-enforcement officers tend to take chivalrous approaches to offending women. Rather, there must be something wrong with the ways that White-supremacist imperialism socializes men to seek domination over women, the poor and Indigenous peoples (Smart, 1990).

Following the race-class-gender theory of Hall (1980), I developed the theory of the decolonization of criminology and criminal justice to make contributions towards ending racism-sexism-classism for the liberation of humanity. The decolonization paradigm departs from the assumptions of White privilege and White supremacy by recognizing that imperialism is a threat to the whole of humanity and so the whole world must coalesce to combat it and end it along with racism and sexism. It is recognized that the negative impacts of imperialism are not shared equally around the world but no society will be able to be completely free from the consequences of white supremacy, patriarchy and imperialism in societies structured in dominance.

### **Decolonization Scholar-Activism**

Decolonization-centricity demands that scholars must go beyond the performance on text and take the struggles against imperialism out there to the barricades to help chant down Babylon. The practice of Liberation Criminology as scholar-activism was demonstrated by many but a couple of examples will help decolonization criminologists to model their scholar-activism and produce original thinking that is capable of shaking the foundations of imperialism in the real world but also in the virtual world of

criminology. Let us model the discussion in this section after the style and contents of the speech by Fidel Castro (1961) on the second anniversary of the Cuban revolution and the speech by Che Guevera (1964) at the UN on behalf of the Cuban delegation.

If the White-supremacist criminologists and their antagonistic allies believe that they can prevent the decolonization of criminology with threats and intimidation, they should notice that the call for the decolonization of all disciplines is reverberating around the world with thousands upon thousands of courageous young scholars rallying to the call for decolonization even in a field like criminology that is tied to the apron strings of the imperialist state. Fortunately for all of us, decolonization criminology is armed with knowledge and not with military weapons and so there is no need for the paranoia with which some conventional criminologists regard decolonization as an “angry” (Cain, 2007, p.534) text that some regard as “unnerving” (Pfohl, 2016, p.119)

Colleagues from all over the world are honouring us with invitations again and again to affirm their support for the task of decolonization in criminology. We thank you for the warmth with which you have welcomed our modest contributions and for your encouragement to continue this line of thought and action. We also acknowledge the support of thousands of scholars who support our work but could not afford to join us physically in every meeting due to different reasons. We look forward to sharing the works of these teaming scholar-activists in the journal *Decolonization of Criminology and Justice* and we look forward to joining the debates and critiques that our works will provoke as we push for more democratic penal abolitionism.

We also acknowledge all those who are sceptical about the feasibility of the decolonization paradigm or those who refuse to attend meetings because they are openly hostile to the project of decolonization. We encourage those who oppose decolonization for any reason to bring their views and let us exchange views to clarify to everyone that decolonization is a paradigm whose time has come in every field of study, including criminology. Those who genuinely oppose decolonization are the ones who make decolonization inevitable. The scholars who advance the struggle for decolonization should not be blamed for their efforts because if there was no racist-imperialist-patriarchal oppression, there would be no need for decolonization struggles. If criminology was not complicit in the huge abuses



by imperialist reason against our peoples, there would have been no need to embark on the scholar-activism to decolonize criminology and justice against the resistance of control-freak criminologists (Agozino, 2010).

What is decolonization? It is an established fact of history that decolonization is always a struggle between the colonizers and the colonized by all means necessary. Decolonization is not a transfer of power as some scholars suggest. Rather it is always a struggle, sometimes open and sometimes hidden, sometimes violent and sometimes peaceful but always convulsive. Fortunately, decolonization in criminology is a non-violent struggle involving the battle of ideas and hearts with a reliance on the weapon of theory and the instruments of cultural activism. It is also violent because when a decolonization criminologist is denied a well-deserved appointment or promotion, the person is bound to suffer some pain but with persistence, decolonization scholars tend to win respect and support when it is realized that decolonization is in the interest of all. Decolonization struggles in criminology are non-violent because they are waged with pens and papers and with peaceful community organization. Those who oppose decolonization are mainly those who benefit from the privileges of racism, sexism, and class exploitation who deceive many of the victims of racism-sexism-imperialism to fear the prospects of decolonization which entail tearing down the buildings of oppression and the construction of new foundations for social justice for all who suffer to different extents when injustice is targeted at some.

Che Guevera (1964) started his speech at the UN by welcoming countries that had regained their independence. He condemned countries that claimed to be fighting for freedom around the world but continued to murder Black citizens of their own countries because of the colour of their skins. He condemned the invasion of countries like Vietnam and Cambodia and the murderous overthrow of progressive leaders like Patrice Lumumba in the Congo by imperialist forces seeking to impose White supremacy.

To paraphrase the 1961 second anniversary speech in Havana by Fidel Castro (1961), the epic of decolonization is being written by scholar-activists, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and activists who are progressive and are committed to a better world. The epic is being carried forward by oppressed masses who are demanding for the decolonization of justice and not just for the coining of a new phrase by metaphor-slingers. The ground-breaking book by Cunneen and Tauri (2016)

on *Indigenous Criminology* has served to advance the epic of decolonization to Indigenous Studies by applying the scholar-activist methodology of committed objectivity. Earlier, Harry Blagg (2008) invoked the paradigm of decolonization to address the discourse of crime and Aboriginality in Australia with a conclusion that the justice system still operates as a settler colonial institution that urgently needs to be decolonized to prevent the scandalous over-incarceration of Indigenous peoples. Porter (2016) has called for the decolonization of policing in Australia to avoid making Indigenous Patrols another system of colonization. These interventions are in line with the call of Smith (1999) and by Chilisa (2012) for the decolonization of research methodologies that deal with Indigenous peoples especially. Feagin et al. (2015) welcome the decolonization paradigm as a worthy contribution to liberation sociology and Pfohl (2016) sees this paradigm as a way to advance the sociological imagination.

### **Conclusion**

Decolonization is not a putiputi (ornamental flower) decoration that blossoms today only to wilt tomorrow, leaving a putrid smell. Decolonization is a struggle that is ongoing with victories and setbacks. So long as imperialism remains vibrant, for so long will the forces of decolonization remain resolutely active in criminology and in the justice system. Given that imperialism and White supremacy are threats to all, decolonization will provide benefits to all too. Have no fear about the suffering that may come your way as a result of your dedication to the struggle to decolonize criminology and justice. The submission to imperialism will not safeguard anyone from the dangers of colonization but joining the struggle for decolonization holds the promise of bringing benefits of greater peaceful coexistence and love in the community through social justice, equality, and diversity. Be reassured with the knowledge that no scholar-activists who joined the struggle for decolonization has ever regretted it because the struggle opens the door to the discovery of new knowledge and greater recognition for scholar-activists whereas most of those who submitted to the authoritarianism of imperialism tend to remain relatively unknown.

Be not afraid of decolonization even if you do not have the courage to contribute to this service for the advancement of knowledge and social justice. With the de-centering of Eurocentrism as a universal paradigm, decolonization-centricity will open new territories to scholar-activists to





make more original contributions to knowledge with mutual respect. Thus, decolonization-centricity will produce knowledge that is healing and not produce oppressive technologies for colonial domination. Our journal will invite all those who want to make contributions to avoid the sadomasochistic practice of submission and simply engage in the democratic practice of sharing their knowledge with all. We recommend the methodologies of data reception and committed objectivity as decolonization alternatives to the authoritarian claims of data collection and value-neutral objectivity. We invite decolonization criminologists to be self-critical as they examine what Pfohl (1985) calls the power-reflexive discourses that have sustained imperialist power relations. Accordingly, Kalunta-Crumpton and Agozino (2017), Kitossa (2012), Deckert (2014) and Tauri (2014) have called for an end to the marginalization of Indigenous voices in criminology. This is in line with the call of Alatas (2004) for an end to intellectual colonization of captive minds and the call by Bonaventura de Sousa Santos (2015) for theories to be developed from the South to avoid epistemicide as advocated by Freire (1989). Moosavi (2018) has cautioned that while embracing Southern Criminology, we must be careful not to silence Indigenous perspectives in the name of a geographical southernism still dominated by Europeans who tend to ignore Indigenous contributions to knowledge even while claiming southernism.

For example, not many sociologists are familiar with the legal theory of Irene Watson (2002) about the giant frog from Indigenous Australian folktales that drank all the water in the world to deprive other animals, including little tadpoles, that may have to die for giant frog supremacy. Instead of spearing the big stomach of the frog to release the water for everyone to enjoy, the animals decided to tickle the frog until it laughed and the water came gushing out for everyone to enjoy. That was the cooperative way that Indigenous peoples survived being 'buried alive' and continue to govern the land in coexistence with other creatures instead of seeking speciesist mastery, exclusion, and epistemicide the way the colonizers do. Moana Jackson (2009) developed a similar criticism of scientific racism among colonial criminologists who attributed 'warrior genes' to Māori as the justification for the genocidal attacks against them whereas Māori were peace-loving gardeners. The Deathscapes project (2019) maps the death of Indigenous peoples in custody around the world but not many criminologists know that more White people die in police custody in Australia than

Indigenous peoples according to official police records (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2019).

Finally, the decolonization paradigm does not require DNA tests of authenticity before progressive scholars could make contributions in support of decolonization. Whether the scholar-activists are Indigenous or non-Indigenous in the terrain where they find themselves, the progressive imperative requires that they join the struggle for social justice because injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Many people are surprised to hear that although Indigenous peoples in Australia are over-represented 16 times in prisons, their proportion among prisoners is 23% (Blagg & Anthony, 2014). This means that poor non-Indigenous Australians make up over 70% of the prisoners, requiring that all progressives should join the struggle to abolish the colonial repressive fetish of prisons. Similarly, the Black Lives Matter Movement in the US emphasizes that African Americans are over-represented among those killed by the police but what is not known by all is that the police kill twice more White people than they kill African Americans (Agozino, 2018b). In terms of rates of brutality, African Americans are more likely to be killed by cops but poor White Americans end up being the vast majority of those killed by cops. As a result, the struggle for decolonization is not to be left alone only to those targeted by colonial institutions due to race-class-gender articulation. The struggle will not be won by focusing only on the love of the colonizer's law or nomophilia (more like nomophilitis to me) as the only solution to every colonial problem but also through the restoration of the full sovereignty of Indigenous peoples according to Giannacopoulos (2011).

Moreover, the struggle for decolonization also involves the struggle against neo-colonial oppression such as the killing of tens of thousands of citizens in Mexico and in the Philippines in the name of the War on Drugs or the execution of Africans arrested with drugs in many Asian countries despite the withering away of drug prohibition laws under the pressure of the movement for legalization and penal abolitionism. Oriola (2012) analysed the kidnapping of oil workers by militants in Nigeria to indicate that social movements sometimes turn anti-social. Ezeonu (2018) concluded that long after the restoration of political independence, the recolonization of Africa has continued with the support of state-corporate criminals who control the extractive industries. Decolonization also continues in the struggle against the genocidal crimes in Africa orchestrated by genocidal states imposed by



imperialism that need to be restructured and replaced with the United Republic of African States (Agozino, 2017).

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