

Global Criminology and Asian Criminology: Challenges, Strategies, and Directions

Jianhong Liu

President, Scientific Commission, International Society for
Criminology

Distinguished Professor
University of Macau

Introduction

- Academic Criminology originated in Western countries, primarily Europe and US
- However, influential scholars have pointed out that criminology has been predominantly a “**Northern**” (largely Western) academic enterprise (Carrington, Hogg, and Sozzo 2016)
- Influenced by the development of global interdependence, criminologists are now paying increasing attention to non-Western societies, with more global outlooks beyond the West

Achievement of criminology as a discipline

- Criminology originated in western countries during the 18th century
 - “*On Crimes and Punishments*”, by the Italian lawyer Cesare Beccaria (1764)
- Positivist school was established in the 19th century
 - Cesare Lombroso, raised the idea of “criminal man” in 1880
 - His student, Raffaele Garofalo, coined the word “**criminology**” in 1885
- The early great progress of criminology occurred during the early years of the 20th century in the United States and Europe
 - “*Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*”
 - “*British Journal of Criminology*”
- Turning points for criminology since the last half of the 20th century (Braithwaite, 2000)
 - Criminology grew away from the more established social sciences and became an independent discipline (Miller, 2009)
 - Cross-regional, cross-cultural comparative studies --- criminological studies across countries. Criminology has developed to become international criminology

Current state and challenges for criminology

- Examining the current state of criminology, [the lack of studies on non-western contexts and the dominance of western-based criminology](#) has been a major shortcoming (Carrington et. al. 2019).
 - Most research is based on Western data, addresses Western concerns, and adopts Western literature and perspectives, but tends to generalize the results as universally valid to all the places (Connell, 2006)
 - Thus, the canon of criminology, just like other social science disciplines, is western, white and male (Aas 2012; Bosworth and Hoyle 2012; Lee & Laidler, 2013)

Problems with Western-centrism within criminology

Increasing attention has been paid to the weaknesses of the Western dominance within criminology:

- Firstly, the Western-centrism leads **the non-Western criminology significantly ignored and marginalized** (Moosavi, 2018; Moosavi, 2019)
- Secondly, Western dominance leads criminological theories and policies may **not be applicable in non-Western contexts** (Messner, 2015)
- Thirdly, the Western dominance **hinders the progress of the international criminology** and the dealing with of the transnational crimes

How to develop the non-western criminology

- Recently, debate on Western dominance within criminology have been reignited and many scholars have raised their suggestions to solve this problem. Such suggestions, amounting **to the advance of non-Western criminology**, comprise the rise of
 - *Counter colonial criminology* (Agozino, 2004)
 - *Transnational criminology* (Bowling, 2011; Sheptycki, 2008)
 - *African criminology* (Agozino, 2010)
 - *Asian criminology* (Liu, 2009; Liu, Heberton, & Jou, 2013; Liu, 2016; Liu, 2017; Liu, 2018)
 - *Southern criminology* (Carrington, Hogg, & Sozzo, 2016; Carrington & Hogg, 2017; Carrington, Hogg, Scott, & Sozzo, 2018; Hogg, Scott, & Sozzo, 2017)
- This paper will specifically explain how to develop the non-Western criminology by presenting the example of “**Asian Criminology**”

How to develop the non-western criminology

- **Scientific paradigm**

- Thomas Kuhn: “*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*” (1962), put forward the idea of “paradigm” and emphasized the important role of scientific paradigm
- Hutchin (2012) outlined conditions for a recognized “dominant paradigm”:
 - Professional organizations; Dynamic leaders; Journals and editors writing about the ideology; Support from the government agencies (e.g., funding) and educators (propagating the paradigm’s ideas to students); conferences conducted to discuss ideas of the paradigm; Media coverage and so on
- Jianhong Liu first proposed the “*Asian criminological paradigm*”
 - Stressing the diversity of Asia, particularly encouraging the in-depth study of particular Asian contexts, traditions, and theoretical or practice models, and topics that are particularly Asian (Liu, 2009; Liu, 2018; Liu, 2017)

Asian criminological paradigm as an example of a non-Western paradigm

a. Strategies for building and developing an Asian criminological paradigm

- Asian criminological paradigm provides **three strategies** for developing core concepts and theories for Asian Criminology (Liu, 2017; Liu, 2018)
 - The first strategy is to **transport** Western mainstream criminological theories into Asian contexts and then to test whether these theories can similarly be applied in Asian contexts
 - The second strategy is **elaborating** theories in different contexts (Liu, 2017; Liu, 2018). The elaboration involves not only identifying the scope applied in influential theories, but also reworking or modifying those theories in new contexts
 - The third strategy is to **develop new concepts and theories** in Asian contexts, just as advocated by John Braithwaite (2015)

Asian criminological paradigm as an example of a non-Western paradigm

b. Institutional building and achievements of the Asian criminological paradigm

- First, the [Asian Criminological Society \(ACS\)](#) was established in 2009, when about 50 criminologists from 14 countries and areas in the Asia-Pacific region gathered in Macau and the Society held its first Annual Conference (Liu, 2018)
- Second, the “[Asian Journal of Criminology](#)”, the official journal of the ACS, has played an important role in the development of Asian criminology since its establishment in 2006
- Third, [many books](#) on Asian criminology and criminal justice systems have sprung up
 - E.g., the Springer publisher has published a series of books, edited by Jianhong Liu, include “Handbook of Asian Criminology” (2013) and “Springer Series on Asian Criminology and Justice” (2016-); the series have published five volumes of books.
- Fourth, the rapid development of Asian criminology has attracted [more and more scholars towards pay attention to the development of Non-Western criminology](#) (Belknap, 2016; Braithwaite, 2015; Carrington, Hogg, & Sozzo, 2016; Moosavi, 2018; Walklate, 2016)

Asian criminological paradigm as an example of a non-Western paradigm

c. Further direction for Asian criminology

- First, *exploring research questions* of highly importance and salience in Asia
 - E.g., in China **corruption** may be considered as more serious than violent crimes. **Environment prolusion** has been more concerned in China and India than in Europe and North America. **Industrialization and urbanization** have led to internal migration as a major process in Asian countries rather than to international migration in Western countries
- Second, *developing research strategies and methodology* with the best response to the specific features of Asian contexts and conceptual processes
 - The common methods that applied in Western criminology may not be similarly applicable in Asian criminological research
 - The different **thinking models** of the West and the non-West may also be a factor

Conclusion

- The **Western-centrism within criminology** has led the non-western criminology ignored, marginalized, and underdeveloped
- Moosavi (2019) has said, multiple measures can be used to decolonize criminology, but the **most promising one is to incorporate the non-western scholarship into teaching and research**
- A good example has been supplied showing how non-Western criminology may be developed:
 - Asian criminology (Asian criminological paradigm), to a certain extent, partly changed the Western-centric state of criminology and promoted the advance of international criminology
- It is advocated that more **non-Western criminology be advanced**

References

- Aas, K. F. (2012). 'The Earth is one but the world is not': Criminological theory and its geopolitical divisions. *Theoretical Criminology*, 16(1), 5-20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480611433433>
- Agozino, B. (2004). Counter-colonial criminology: A critique of imperialist reason. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, 21(10), 32.
- Agozino, B. (2010). What is criminology? A control-freak discipline! *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 4(1), 1.
- Beccaria, C. D. (1764). *Dei delitti e delle pene* [On Crimes and Punishments]. Livorno [Leghorn].
- Bosworth, M., & Hoyle, C. (Eds.). (2012). *What is criminology?*. Oxford University Press.
- Bowling, B. (2008). Zero policy. *Criminal Justice Matters*, 71(1), 6-7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09627250801937462>
- Bowling, B. (2011). Transnational criminology and the globalization of harm production. *What is criminology*, 361-379.
- Braithwaite, J. (2000). The New Regulatory State and the Transformation of Criminology. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 40(2), 222-238. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/40.2.222>
- Carrington, K., Dixon, B., Fonseca, D., Goyes, D. R., Liu, J., & Zysman, D. (2019). Criminologies of the Global South: Critical Reflections. *Critical Criminology*, 27(1), 163-189. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-019-09450-y>
- Carrington, K., & Hogg, R. (2017). Deconstructing Criminology's Origin Stories. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 12(3), 181-197. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-017-9248-7>
- Carrington, K., Hogg, R., & Sozzo, M. (2016). Southern criminology. *British Journal of Criminology*, 56(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azv083>
- Carrington, K., Hogg, R., Scott, J., & Sozzo, M. (2018). The Palgrave handbook of criminology and the global south. Springer.
- Connell, R. (2006). Northern Theory: The Political Geography of General Social Theory. *Theory and Society*, 35(2), 237-264. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-006-9004-y>
- Hebenton, B., & Jou, S. (2013). Unmasking crime and criminology in Taiwan. In *The Routledge handbook of Chinese criminology* (pp. 253-267). Routledge.
- Hogg, R., Scott, J., & Sozzo, M. (2017). Special edition: Southern Criminology-Guest Editors' introduction. In (Vol. 6, pp. 1-7): Queensland University of Technology. Crime and Justice Research Centre
- Hutchin, T. (2012). *The right choice: Using theory of constraints for effective leadership*. Productivity Press.
- Lee, M., & Laidler, K. J. (2013). Doing criminology from the periphery: Crime and punishment in Asia. *Theoretical Criminology*, 17(2), 141-157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480613476790>
- Liu, J. (2009). Asian Criminology – Challenges, Opportunities, and Directions. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 4(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-009-9066-7>
- Liu, J. (2016). Asian Paradigm Theory and Access to Justice. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 32(3), 205-224. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986216656681>
- Liu, J. (2017). The New Asian Paradigm: A Relational Approach. In J. Liu, M. Travers, & L. Y. C. Chang (Eds.), *Comparative Criminology in Asia* (pp. 17-32). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54942-2_2
- Liu, J. (2018). The Asian Criminological Paradigm and How It Links Global North and South: Combining an Extended Conceptual Tool box from the North with Innovative Asian Contexts. In K. Carrington, R. Hogg, J. Scott, & M. Sozzo (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Criminology and the Global South* (pp. 61-82). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65021-0_4
- Liu, J., & Cui, S. (2017). Research on fear of crime in China. In *The Routledge International Handbook on Fear of Crime* (pp. 403-413). Routledge.
- Liu, J., Hebenton, B., & Jou, S. (2012). *Handbook of Asian Criminology*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Liu, J., Hebenton, B., & Jou, S. (2013). Progress of Asian Criminology: Editors' Introduction. In J. Liu, B. Hebenton, & S. Jou (Eds.), *Handbook of Asian Criminology* (pp. 1-7). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5218-8_1
- Liu, J., Lambert, E. G., Jiang, S., & Zhang, J. (2017). A research note on the association between work-family conflict and job stress among Chinese prison staff. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 23(7), 633-646. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2017.1296148>
- Liu, J., & Liang, B. (2019). A Case Study of Chinese Netizens' Opinions on Capital Punishment: Diversity, Rationale, and Interaction. *Modern China*, 45(6), 666-692. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0097700418819833>
- Liu, J., & Liu, S. (2016). Are children of rural migrants more delinquent than their peers? A comparative analysis of delinquent behaviors in the City of Guangzhou, China. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 66(5), 465-489. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-016-9638-2>
- Liu, J., & Messner, S. F. (2001). Modernization and crime trends in China's reform era. In J. Liu, L. Zhang, & S. F. Messner (Eds.), *Crime and social control in a changing China* (pp. 3-22). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Liu, J., Messner, S. F., & Liska, A. E. (1997). Chronic Offenders in China. *International Criminal Justice Review*, 7(1), 31-45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105756779700700102>
- Liu, J., & Miyazawa, S. (2018). Asian Criminology and Crime and Justice in Japan: An Introduction. In J. Liu & S. Miyazawa (Eds.), *Crime and Justice in Contemporary Japan* (pp. 1-9). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69359-0_1
- Liu, J., & Palermo, G. B. (2009). Restorative justice and Chinese traditional legal culture in the context of contemporary Chinese criminal justice reform. *Asia Pacific Journal of Police & Criminal Justice*, 7(1), 49-68.
- Liu, J., Travers, M., & Chang, L. (2017). Why compare? Asian countries, the west and comparative criminology. In J. Liu, M. Travers, & L. Chang (Eds.), *Comparative Criminology in Asia* (pp. 11-15). Springer Cham.
- Liu, J., Travers, M., & Chang, L. Y. (2017). *Comparative criminology in Asia*. Springer.
- Liu, J., Travers, M., & Chang, L. Y. C. (2017). Reflecting on Comparison: A View from Asia. In J. Liu, M. Travers, & L. Y. C. Chang (Eds.), *Comparative Criminology in Asia* (pp. 185-201). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54942-2_13
- Liu, J., Zhao, R., Xiong, H., & Gong, J. (2012). Chinese legal traditions: Punitiveness versus mercy. *Asia Pacific Journal of Police & Criminal Justice*, 9(1), 17-33.
- Messner, S. F. (2015). When West Meets East: Generalizing Theory and Expanding the Conceptual Toolkit of Criminology. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 10(2), 117-129. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-014-9197-3>
- Miller, J. M. (2009). *21st century criminology: A reference handbook* (Vol. 1). Sage.
- Moosavi, L. (2018). A Friendly Critique of 'Asian Criminology' and 'Southern Criminology'. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 59(2), 257-275. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azv045>
- Moosavi, L. (2019). Decolonising Criminology: Syed Hussein Alatas on Crimes of the Powerful. *Critical Criminology*, 27(2), 229-242. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-018-9396-9>
- Sampson, R. J. (2015). Crime and the Life Course in a Changing World: Insights from Chicago and Implications for Global Criminology. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 10(4), 277-286. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-015-9220-3>
- Shen, A., Antonopoulos, G. A., & Von Lampe, K. (2009). 'The Dragon Breathes Smoke': Cigarette Counterfeiting in the People's Republic of China. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 50(2), 239-258. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azp069>
- Walklate, S. (2016). Whither Criminology: Its Global Futures? *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 11(1), 47-59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-015-9223-0>