

Editorial

By Dr. Biko Agozino
Editor-In-Chief

This journal is the official organ of the African Criminology and Justice Association but the opinions expressed in the journal are those of the authors and not necessarily representative of the views of the association. The journal is here to fill a void in existing knowledge by exposing the discipline to knowledge about and from Africa and Africans worldwide that could enrich the discipline in a progressive direction. For too long has criminology continued as a discipline designed almost exclusively by others with little or no acknowledgement of the contributions, actual and potential, from African sources.

Nevertheless, given the fact that criminological technologies have been used to control people of African descent disproportionately for centuries, it is not surprising that Africans and Africanist scholars have a lot to say that is relevant to both the discipline of criminology and to criminologists. From the Trans Saharan slavery by Arabs to the Trans Atlantic slavery by Europeans, Africans have borne the brunt of the most unimaginable crimes ever known to humanity – the African holocaust. Add to those, the crimes of colonialism and apartheid, a total of wrongs which have been recognized as crimes against humanity by the United Nations, and you will wonder how criminology could have gone on for so long without a significant African perspective. This journal is here to address the need to know more about why and how the dominant criminological technologies continue to affect people of African descent disproportionately in the internal colonies of the world today.

I wish to thank the members of the editorial board and the members of the association as well as non-members who have generously given their time to review manuscripts or contribute articles to this maiden issue. Your continued support will be essential for the sustainability of the journal so that we may look back in the future and wonder how so much could be achieved with the resources available to us.

I particularly wish to thank the President of University of Maryland Eastern Shore and the Chair of the Criminal Justice Program there for allocating an office to the journal and making available the services of the Web Manager to support the journal. Also worthy of special mention are Dr. Obi Ebe and Dr. James Opolot, the founding and the incumbent presidents (respectively) of the African Criminology and Justice Association for encouraging this project every step of the way. Also thanks to the American Society of Criminology and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences for consistently allocating meeting rooms to us for our deliberations during their annual meetings.

The electronic format of the journal offers the best options to the editors, writers and readers alike. Writers are no longer constrained by the political economy of page space and editors incur fewer costs in correspondence and typesetting. Readers are no longer constrained to read in tiny fonts squeezed together by publishers. Readers can easily increase the font size by 150% or even 200%, depending on the sizes of their monitors, to

read at their own convenience. Readers in Africa and parts of the Third World or those at poorer institutions around the world who lack access to printed current periodicals can more easily access this journal online and print out or download articles of interest at the fraction of what it would cost to subscribe to printed journals.

Each issue of the journal would carry seminal essays and whenever possible, the essays will be followed by a panel discussion of one or more books. There are four original essays and five book review articles in this issue. Each of the original essays is thought provoking and every criminologist that reads any or all of them will come out with something new and rewarding. The essay on criminology as lovemaking by myself, Dr. Biko Agozino, adopts the style of a dramatic dialogue (the African methodology of call and response) to bring out neglected knowledge of the relationship between law and society from an African perspective. The essay on disproportionate minority incarceration by Dr. Saliba Mukoro is a very important one from the point of view of people of African descent and all lovers of human dignity around the world. The essay on obstacles to effective policing in Nigeria by Dr. Emmanuel Onyeozili is an article that has relevance to the global African presence. Finally, the essay by Dr. David Dagleish is an excavation of the time-tested traditions of social control in pre-colonial Africa for the benefit of those who are ignorant or those who simply refuse to accept that Africans lived in societies that were relatively more moral just before the advent of colonialism.

I am particularly honored to have my book, *Counter-Colonial Criminology*, as the focus of the review panel in this maiden issue. This was the result of an on-going discussion among colleagues that Dr. Ihekwoaba Onwudiwe initiated by organizing a roundtable discussion of the book at the American Society of Criminology meeting in Denver, Colorado, 2003. Following the discussion, many of the participants suggested that the reviewers should write up their comments for possible publication in a journal. When the planning of this journal took shape, it became the natural forum for the debate. To any reader out there who has read the book and who agrees or disagrees with any of the reviews published here, feel free to write to the editor and share your perspective so that we may continue to benefit from the African tradition of call and response. The same goes for readers of the substantive articles in the journal.

Those authors and publishers who have books of relevance to people of African descent, please send five review copies to the Managing Editor, Dr Emmanuel Onyeozili, if you would like your book to be the subject of a future review panel such as the one featured below. We will be particularly pleased to hear from colleagues (including graduate students and retired professors) who wish to contribute to the journal through original essays and or book reviews and through acting as manuscript reviewers.

To our colleagues in criminology and justice studies, we extend an open invitation to engage in serious debates on any issue of interest to people of African descent. Feel free to download and print or forward the articles in the journal so long as you acknowledge that you got it from this source. To contribute an article, just click on the link to take you to the submission dialogue. To respond to an article, just click on letters to the editor and

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