

Defining Whiteness in Criminology

Benjamin Cohn

Master of Science in Justice, Law and Criminology

Abstract

This paper attempts to provide an overview of whiteness in America, why it is important, how it has developed, how it is studied, and the many roles it plays. In a society structured on racial caste, whiteness is used, enjoyed, and valorized as treasured property. White supremacy has shaped society in the United States specifically from slavery, through the Black Codes, Jim Crow Laws, and the rise of the modern prison system that continues to produce new relations of racial domination. This paper provides a meta-analysis of 50 articles published in the last decade that deal with whiteness and policing on topics including immigration detention, the professional culture within criminal justice, police and community relations, hate crimes, and numerous other topics. While all of the articles contain whiteness in their subject, this paper analyzes if whiteness is explicitly discussed, if it is conceptualized or defined in the article itself, and if the definition is critical. Ideally, until there is a standard definition of whiteness that is accepted and agreed upon, every criminological article that addresses whiteness would do so explicitly and include a critical conceptualization so that readers do not need a background in critical race theory. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

Introduction

The concept of race is still relatively new. It began to emerge as population groups from different continents began to make more frequent contact with each other. Now presented as an immutable scientific reality, it has effectively replaced nationality and, in many cases, even religion as a social connector (Calathes, 2017; Scott et al., 2018). As slavery became a larger economic factor in Western societies, race became the rationale for ignoring the values of democracy, civil rights, equality, and justice that these countries supposedly believed in. Although race is an arbitrary way of grouping people, referring to superficial differences that are not biologically meaningful, race has become a socially vague and transhistorical category, indistinguishable from a range of other categories (Scott et al., 2018).

Race has come to permeate almost every aspect of American society; however, there are many Americans who do not have an understanding of these racial realities. Americans of color are essentially forced to become race experts in order to survive in a society that has been so thoroughly racialized. Even seemingly benign interactions can require a deep understanding of the racial subtext that is at play; misunderstanding or misplaying the racial dynamics can be costly for people of color. White people, on the other hand, having created the system, have turned a blind eye to their work. This plausible deniability of intentional racial stratification became a part of the system in order to perpetuate it without conscious effort or acknowledgment from the dominant group. As race was established as the marker of the in and out groups, these racial distinctions transitioned from informal to formal structures and became codified; state actors, including the government, the justice system, police, and even knowledge-producing centers like academia, uphold and enforce these inequalities (Scott et al., 2018).

This paper evaluates some recent adaptations of this historical trend using mostly examples from the United States and Western Europe. After a brief overview of whiteness as a social concept, the development of whiteness studies, the role of whiteness in the criminal justice system, and the field of criminology, this paper provides a meta-analysis of 50 articles published in the last decade that deal with whiteness and policing. While all of the articles contain whiteness in their subject, this paper analyzes whether whiteness is explicitly discussed, if it is conceptualized or defined in the article itself, and if the definition is critical.

DEFINING WHITENESS IN CRIMINOLOGY

The White Race and Whiteness Studies

Race has been used by the powerful to express status and create in-groups. Further, race also became a means to organize and resist power for those who have been racialized as others (Calathes, 2017; Scott et al., 2018). In a racial and capitalist society, power differences are created and sustained through asymmetrical ability to accumulate capital through the exploitation of others. White elites have been able to amass capital in a way that privileges all white people over the exploited, racialized others (Calathes, 2017; Ward, 2014). As W.E.B. Du Bois acknowledged in the early 20th century, white laborers may have received a relatively low wage, but they were compensated with public deference and titles that established their place in society (Kautzer, 2015). The social structure of race allowed whites to effectively determine, and often fall outside of, the law. Economic power is important, but even poor whites carried a greater level of political power than people of color. White supremacy has shaped society in the United States specifically through slavery, the Black Codes, Jim Crow laws, and the rise of the modern prison system that continues to produce new relations of racial domination (Kautzer, 2015; Ward, 2014).

Historically, social sciences have been all white, meaning the disciplines and their analyses end up reflecting those dominant racial views (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). Race structures society in such a way that even the knowledge-producing centers, such as academia, end up functionally reproducing misunderstandings of racial inequality (Henne & Shah, 2015; Smith, 2014). Having been developed alongside the practice of racial stratification, the social sciences became a part of that very system (Scott et al., 2018; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). These thought processes and techniques, defined as white logic, are the anchor of the Western imagination; knowledge, history, science, and culture of elite white men are granted centrality while everyone else has folklore but not knowledge, history, science, or culture (Henne & Shah, 2015; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). In turn, white methods are the actual tools used to manufacture empirical data and analysis in order to support the racial stratification in society (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). The notion of colorblindness has been used in order to downplay racism and racial discrimination while upholding whiteness as effectively non-racial (Smith, 2014). Scholars and researchers rely on objective neutrality to do their work, but this faux-objectivity actually masks how whiteness underpins these normative purviews (Henne & Shah, 2015). Whiteness needs to be removed from its hierarchical position at the top in order to level the playing field. White theories do not have to be automatically dismissed but must stand on their own merit, not as the default standard.

Critical race theory helps shift perspective from white as default to inclusive of Black, Indigenous, and people of color's experience by examining the structural aspects of racism that impact society as a whole and the individual specifically (Scott et al., 2018). The field of whiteness studies emerged from many disciplines and needs to explore the meaning and connectedness of whiteness, identity and privilege, and political economy (Smith, 2014). Whiteness studies focuses on the sense of superiority instilled in white people, irrespective of class, and the debilitating alienation fostered in the racially oppressed who are not allowed to make meaning or produce knowledge in their world (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). Influential whiteness scholars include McIntosh, Roediger, Lopez, Dominguez, Brodtkin, Frankenberg, and Toni Morrison who have examined the making of whiteness, provided a historical overview on the production of whiteness among Irish and Jewish communities, analyzed gendered whiteness in women's lives, and illustrated the nature of normalizing whiteness in American literature (Smith, 2014). Whiteness studies seeks to understand why whiteness, alongside heterosexuality and masculinity, is defined as normal with any other identity seen as a deviation from the norm.

Whiteness and the Criminal Justice System

Crime and punishment are socially constructed by those who own and control the means of production, who, in turn, use the state, the agencies of social control, and the criminal law to serve their own interests (Calathes, 2017; Igbo, 2014). Since its modern founding, America created a carceral state in conjunction with its colonial projects in order to uphold whiteness. Those in power have used the threat of slave uprising, Native American resistance to their own genocide, fear of Mexican citizens absorbed by the conquest of northern Mexico, and immigration from China and Japan to frame the fears of the racial

status quo (McDowell, & Fernandez, 2018; Simon, 2017; Smith, 2014). Though these ideas were initially stated and maintained explicitly, the end of slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and other rights gained by non-white people in America forced whiteness to adapt its own ideologies such as color blindness or believing that society has progressed beyond the need to discuss race in order to negate concessions that have been made and keep things functionally static (Calathes, 2017; Simon, 2017; Smith, 2014). Racism and the protection of whiteness still maintain similar power and impact that have always existed, but the methods have changed, primarily towards affecting societal consciousness more discreetly (Onwuachi-Willig, 2017). Even at moments when criminologists, activists, and legislators have tried to reform the criminal legal system and diminish punishment, the end result has often been an expansion of social control (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018; Simon, 2017). These are not simple reactions to disputes among individuals where the state is drawn in over concerns of the public's well-being. This carceral society is made of interlocking systems created intentionally by the government, deeply marked by racial othering and the privileging of whiteness from its foundation (Simon, 2017).

In a society structured on racial caste, whiteness is used, enjoyed, and valorized as treasured property. It provides reputation and status while granting the right to exclude (Onwuachi-Willig, 2017). White people are the most racially segregated group by design. As a result of the enforcement of this white desire, racial and ethnic minorities end up in segregated communities, despite their willingness to live in neighborhoods where they are a numerical minority (Onwuachi-Willig, 2017). Dominant groups create a shared identity, at the state and individual levels, by shaping both who they are and who they are not (Parmar, 2020). An individual white person chooses which neighborhood they want to live in while redlining and bank loans help dictate what areas are accessible to people of color on a systemic level. Cultural marker and environmental hazard siting, urban information management, land-use zoning, and the legalization of tenure on appropriated land are some of the many practices that affirm whiteness as a privileged category (Sherman, 2020). Planning practices help separate humanity into groups within space, create white subjects who benefit under racial capitalism, and are ultimately upheld by the legal system. Whiteness is a racial identity that shapes and is shaped by law, including the police (Sherman, 2020).

Policing is the methodology selected for social organization under whiteness. One of the functions of policing is reproducing, through violence, the distinction between people of color whose humanity is permanently in question and white people whose humanity goes without saying (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). Policing is violence, a fundamental element of upholding whiteness, and integral to the production of an anti-Black social world (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). This occurs through maintaining white racial separation; facilitating white racial solidarity across the class spectrum; articulating blackness, especially black maleness, as a threat; and regulating the presence of Black people in white spaces (Sherman, 2020; Onwuachi-Willig, 2017). White people are not drawn to a place explicitly because it is filled with other white people, but rather, because the whiteness implies other perceived beneficial qualities (Onwuachi-Willig, 2017). Conversely, a lack of whiteness represents the absence of those positive traits. Higher property values, friendliness, orderliness, hospitality, cleanliness, safety, and comfort are subconsciously inseparable from race and class so policies can escape civil rights protections by using those attributes as placeholders for racial definitions. Police are able to defend race-neutral attributes superficially while guarding whiteness in reality (Sherman, 2020; Onwuachi-Willig, 2017).

The political order establishes benefits that are bestowed upon whiteness as the dominant group and enables punishment practices as social control within racial capitalism (Calathes, 2017). These different lived realities help consolidate whiteness across the class spectrum, pushing poor and working-class white people to identify with those at the top, even though their economic and political interests tend to be more aligned with other working communities (Onwuachi-Willig, 2017). The role of punishment in maintaining racial solidarity can be seen in the courtroom where white people are more aggressive and retributory toward defendants of color. This is especially the case when white people constitute the numerical majority on the jury (Gau, 2016). Diverse juries have shown improved performance; racial, gender, and ethnic variation increases the quality of discussions and decisions while enhancing innovation and problem-solving (Gau, 2016). Even though they do not reap the rewards, poor and working white

DEFINING WHITENESS IN CRIMINOLOGY

people play their part to facilitate capital accumulation for white elites and invariably protect white privilege for white people as a whole (Calathes, 2017). This is not about pursuing justice, but rather propping up racial stratification as the status quo.

Whiteness and Criminology

Criminology has posited race as a major correlate of crime, but criminological theory has generally been limited to discovering and explaining racial patterns in offending and racial disparities in criminal justice administration (Henne & Shah, 2015; Scott et al., 2018; Smith, 2014). Race is often configured as a variable by comparing non-white groups to a white reference category, coding race as an independent variable, or coding race as a moderator or control variable (Henne & Shah, 2015). Initially, there was a heavy emphasis on the etiology of crime being influenced by genetic or physiological deficiencies, but the interest in biology as a factor in crime has persisted (Scott et al., 2018). More recently, a move toward an intersectional lens has allowed scholars to move beyond these deterministic views of the relationship between social structures and offending by acknowledging the structures of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality together create complex opportunities and motivations that shape variation in crime and violence across groups and situations (De Coster & Heimer, 2016). Although criminology is getting better at dealing with racial categories, whiteness poses unique problems.

Even though most criminological research no longer explicitly evokes biological determinism as the main factor for crime and deviance, it still often reproduces and maintains white as the norm amongst racial differences and fixed as static, explanatory attributes (Smith & Linnemann, 2015). This perpetuates an assumed notion of white behavior as the standard to which other races are compared. In turn, this type of knowledge creation results in a preservation or normalization of racial hierarchies (Ward, 2014; Smith, & Linnemann, 2015; Scott et al., 2018). Research then finds non-white groups to be deviant or criminalistic in ways that suggest their race is itself a strong correlative or causal factor, minimizing how broader racial stratification comes to bear on crime and deviance (Henne & Shah, 2015). This problem is exacerbated by the recent development of colorblind or post-racial ideologies which further reduce, rationalize, and even dismiss the impact of racial inequality (Henne & Shah, 2015). Simply coding race as a variable, using white as the default that other races are compared against, or applying a colorblind lens are all manifestations of white supremacy in criminology.

Criminology research has historically been accepted as objective despite it ideologically upholding white supremacy, and that privileging of whiteness still continues today (Blount-Hill & St. John, 2017; Henne & Shah, 2015). Black scholars are drastically underrepresented in criminology and criminal justice doctoral programs and those who are admitted have lower rates of finishing. Additionally, those who finish secure fewer positions in prestigious programs, publish less frequently in highly regarded journals and are paid less than white colleagues (Blount-Hill & St. John, 2017). These problems are not unique to the field of criminology but are indicative of why the field so easily perpetuates white supremacist lines of thinking and analytical tools. Criminology must examine and recognize the role it plays in the adherence to white supremacist logics and the absence of critical examination of whiteness (Smith, & Linnemann, 2015). This problem becomes cyclical as schools produce professional criminologists that are less equipped than they should be to engage in thoughtful research, teaching, and other professional work related to race (Ward, 2014).

Criminology must interrogate how whiteness is embedded in problems of injustice in order to better understand victimization, mass incarceration, police use of force, and the threats these pose to dignity and human rights (Smith & Linnemann, 2015). Criminology and criminal justice have traditionally lacked criticism of conventional power structures and have even been discussed to uphold those same structures (Blount-Hill, & St. John, 2017). Using race as a variable can portray racial categories as fixed and universally defined when they are not. This use can also lead to the depiction of race as a cause for social processes and distinctions that then become correlations and indicators of crime (Henne & Shah, 2015). Using whiteness as normative fails to provide accounts of the various inequalities that mediate the societal relations studied and perpetuates narrow explanations of race, crime, and deviance (Henne & Shah, 2015). These issues exist beyond academia. Criminological research often

serves as the justification for policy change or impacts funding criminal justice and social programs, reinforcing and upholding whiteness (Ward, 2014; Henne & Shah, 2015).

How Whiteness is Defined in the Sample

White people have ensured that the dominant perspective in sociology has been defined in a way that privileges them (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). Although the social sciences profess to be carefully thought-out results of experience and reason, the study of race has often been motivated by the need to support racially stratified industries and colonial efforts (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). However, while these white realities were established, there have always been a minority of scholars, often of color, to counter the narrative and account for power imbalances in their own work. For example, Karl Marx was mainly concerned with working-class struggles but was able to include a racial analysis when he insisted that the global working class would benefit from a close study of the conditions and struggles of people of African descent under enslavement (Igbo, 2014). Marx's conflict theory gave generations of scholars to follow a framework to understand the underlying assumptions of racial-capitalism and a way to analyze the power structures within. A half-century later, W.E.B. Du Bois expanded on Marx's work by pointing out that the Black proletariat and the white proletariat shared the same enemy that used the ideology of race to divide them and thereby weaken the struggle against exploitation and oppression. Du Bois is generally hailed as one of the first criminologists; his work on the Negro Problem and the race problem brought a more well-rounded understanding of these issues to a field that was essentially all-white prior and further laid the groundwork for more modern criminologists to critically bring in new perspectives. Eric Williams argued the Marxist thesis that the wealth of Europe was commandeered as surplus values from the labor of enslaved Africans, not the fruits of European work ethic; Walter Rodney presented this relationship through his work on the dialectics of development and underdevelopment which ran contrary to the narrative of the civilizing process or modernization policies (Igbo, 2014).

Within the United States, after the victories won in the Civil Rights Movement, people from marginalized groups made it further into the academies. Some ended up perpetuating the same definitions, practices, methods, and logic that upheld whiteness as the dominant view; others built new structures and shone a light on the areas that the white gaze had failed to reach (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). In 1973, Joyce Ladner edited an anthology that took aim at the errors of Euro-American sociological analysis and put forth a call for the acceptance of the uniqueness of Black history and society, pronouncing *The Death of White Sociology*. This legacy includes Hylan Lewis, Patricia Hill Collins, Michael Omi, Margaret Anderson, and so many more. This group of scholars has done the work to analyze racial stratification and define society as a product of these sociological differences in access to power. Race is not merely poor science nor is it simply a social construct, its meanings are the product of power relations, which have social and spatial dimensions (Scott et al., 2018). Yet decades later, scholars are still failing to acknowledge this work on a wide scale and continue to fall into the same traps that give whiteness such a stronghold on the social sciences.

Although the articles analyzed in this paper all contained whiteness in their subject matter, there was a lot of discrepancy in how whiteness was defined, if it was defined at all, and whose scholarship those definitions were based in. There were only a handful of sources cited multiple times when defining whiteness. The material that came up more than once includes Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2012), Olson's *The Abolition of White Democracy* (2004), & *Whiteness and the Polarization of American Politics* (2008), Singh's *The Whiteness of Police* (2014), Twine & Gallagher's *The Future of Whiteness: A Map of the 'Third Wave'* (2008) and Webster's *Marginalized White Ethnicity, Race and Crime* (2008). Some of the foundational scholars mentioned above did appear, but over 100 years after Du Bois' first publication, decades after the formal establishment of Black criminology, Critical Race Theory, and other important academic innovations in this field, there is no central definition of whiteness. Even more noteworthy, so far, writing about whiteness has not required its definition nor a critical eye to racial differences or why racial stratification exists.

DEFINING WHITENESS IN CRIMINOLOGY

Those that critically defined whiteness were able to connect it to the power and privilege it extracts from society. There is the power of being relatively exempt from the law and there is also a power over other racial groups, who are also subject to the unpredictable violence of white sovereigns (Calathes, 2017; Kautzer, 2015; Scott et al., 2018). This amenability to civic integration and diminished criminal culpability are bolstered by racist social science and popular discourse, which, combined with white domination of the parental state authority, leads to white opportunity hoarding and non-white underdevelopment (Ward, 2014). White researchers use their race as a framing device in an attempt to eliminate biases from their findings and analysis (Henne & Shah, 2015). The criminal legal system protects whiteness as both literal and figurative property while repressing Blackness in particular (McDowell, 2019; Scott et al., 2018; Simon, 2017). Policing produces and maintains these white supremacist and racial capitalist relations of power (McDowell, 2019; Sherman, 2020).

Sample

For my analysis, I sought criminology articles that addressed whiteness and policing and had been published from 2014 to the present. This is because the events in Ferguson, MO represented a change in national framing and mainstream elevation of discourse around policing in America. The following Spring, the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division released their Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department. A search of articles that were published after 2014 addressing whiteness and policing returned 60 articles. 10 were dropped because of their ostensibly international focus, leaving 50 articles for analysis.

Results

50 articles about whiteness and policing were analyzed for this paper, including topics on immigration detention, the professional culture within criminal justice, police and community relations, hate crimes, and numerous other topics. Many of the articles fall into the pitfalls outlined in this paper; some simply use race as a variable, some use white as the default to which others are compared, and some do not even address racial stratification despite their explicit focus on race. As they are recent articles, some represent a new wave of whiteness studies and try to address what Zuberi and Bonilla-Silver (2008) defined as white methods and white logic within the field of criminology. Other articles are perfect examples of the way that academia has and continues to perpetuate white supremacy if enough attention is not paid.

Although almost all of the papers explicitly discuss race (47 out of 50) only half discuss whiteness outright. 26 of the papers actually name whiteness, which means that 21 papers that discuss race ignore whiteness or fail to fully acknowledge it. Articles on topics such as how the state produces and marshals knowledge of the accused; how non-delinquent boys and girls of color experience police; how multiple, interlocking inequalities come together to shape micro-level interactions; developments in the field of racial hate crime investigation; and much more all failed to discuss whiteness (Campos-Manzo et al., 2020; Brissette, 2020; De Coster & Heimer, 2016; Dixon, & Ray, 2016). This lack of naming whiteness allows white supremacy in academia and the field to continue because the foundations and assumptions are not being challenged. Although they may not admit it, it is highly unlikely that the authors of the articles analyzed in this paper are unaware of whiteness and the way it manifests. If it is not brought to the forefront and discussed, then white supremacy is able to continue unchallenged through the structures that have been created in its image. The default is perpetuating white supremacy, making it so unless scholars confront and dispute the old frameworks, they will operate as-is. As James Baldwin (1962) said, nothing can be changed until it is faced.

Even rarer than discussing whiteness is the act of defining or conceptualizing it. This paper already addressed the founding scholars and sources that were often cited when discussing whiteness but only 18 of the articles analyzed actually conceptualized what whiteness means. More than half of the articles fall under theory building or theory testing categories, but many are still unable to or refuse to define or conceptualize this important topic within their work.

Discussion

As there is currently no standard definition to use, it is important that whiteness gets redefined by scholars that discuss it. Are they building on Du Bois' work, Zuberi, far-right scholars, or something else? If criminology wants to seriously address whiteness, both in the field itself and in relation to crime, scholars should develop the habit of conceptualizing it within their work or creating a standard definition that can be used for a baseline understanding. The fact that whiteness is discussed more often than it was conceptualized implies that whiteness was more likely used as merely a variable rather than a structural truth that impacts access to power and shapes decisions in people's lives. It has already been explained why using race as a simple variable or trying to contribute cultural elements to a non-biological factor are problematic.

All of the articles handled whiteness, but only half of them used a critical definition that addressed the ways race structures social life. Race is not simply skin color, especially when discussing whiteness. Throughout American history, who is allowed access to whiteness has changed depending on the political and social needs of the time. There have been 1-drop rules, paper bag tests, and religious components that dictate who is and who is not white (Lee, 2019). German, Italian, and Irish immigrants were not necessarily considered white when they originally arrived in the United States but grew to be included when it became convenient for maintaining racial hierarchies and political power (Lee, 2019). Matrilineal versus patrilineal white descendants have carried different weight at different times. The papers that do not have a critical definition of whiteness fail to incorporate these challenging realities and limit their ability to maintain their relevance as times will inevitably change. What is considered white today, purely based on skin tone, may change in a way that makes a paper difficult to understand in the future but the papers that critically conceptualize whiteness as a connection to power are more likely to hold up and withstand the test of time. Fortunately, all of the papers that defined whiteness were critical in their definition. An additional six to seven papers used a critical definition that they did not conceptualize themselves, but 25 papers did not. Half of the papers evaluated, written after Ferguson and addressing whiteness, were uncritical in their interpretations. This does not bode well for criminology as a field.

Conclusion

This paper provides an overview of whiteness in America, why it is important, how it has developed, how it is studied, and the many roles it plays. Initially, some of the decisions were conscious efforts to establish racial stratification and a hierarchical society while others were by-products of choices made by those already in power. In the 21st century, race is ingrained in all aspects of society to the point that racial decisions can be made without the subject ever actually being named. This includes academia where white methods and white logic are viewed as objective even though they are upholding whiteness as the default and sidelining those that deviate from the norm.

Greater attention must be paid to whiteness, not only to non-white racial identities, but also to understand race as a dialectically constructed social phenomenon (Smith & Linnemann, 2015). Whiteness and white identity help to perpetuate disparate social relations. Scholars are simply leaning on race to do far too much work in the social sciences instead of developing better tools. Studying particular racial identities is not enough, the system of racial stratification must be understood (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). Race is a signifier for the impact of racial stratification, which actually requires better measures of cultural differences, social and economic processes (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). Most importantly, the ways and reasons people are racialized and the erasure of humanity that race has brought to bear must be understood (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008).

Incorporating whiteness into criminology should focus on the racial formation processes and criminal justice systems' boundary-making properties, how whiteness influences perceptions of criminal justice policy, and attempting to explain the variation in criminal behavior among white communities (Scott et al., 2018; Smith, 2014). Critical whiteness studies can expand and critique race-crime research and can provide a clearer analysis of the administration of law, the impact of public perceptions on policy, and criminal behavior which are foundations of criminological study (Smith, 2014; Henne & Shah, 2015). Critical race theory contributes a nuanced understanding of privilege, power, and social construction of

DEFINING WHITENESS IN CRIMINOLOGY

race and ethnicity (Blount-Hill & St. John, 2017; De Coster & Heimer 2016; Smith, 2014). Criminology should target racism and racial outcomes as a complex intergroup of privilege, power, and oppression and refuse to accept it as a mere deviation of consciousness from an otherwise neutral and rational social order (Scott et al., 2018; Ward, 2014). Although criminologists have not traditionally done so, they can play an important role in identifying and transforming the structural conditions of society that produce subjugation, instead of reinforcing them (McDowell, & Fernandez, 2018).

Prison abolitionists have existed since the creation of the modern prison system and argued for structural change (McDowell, & Fernandez, 2018). Angela Davis has expanded on Du Bois and others' legacies by explaining that abolition is not just getting rid of a particular aspect of a legal system, but rather one of collectively building a racially just world by re-imagining institutions, ideas, and strategies where whiteness is not the default and no longer synonymous with power (McDowell, & Fernandez, 2018). The idea that police are an inevitable fixture in society and are analogous to community safety is now being questioned in the mainstream. Policing in and of itself upholds racial hierarchy (McDowell, & Fernandez, 2018; Sherman, 2020).

Sociology and criminology have not been able to address their own issues with whiteness, which in turn dictates criminal justice policy, lawmaking, and enforcement. A meta-analysis of 50 recent articles that look at whiteness and policing shows just how big of a problem this is. Ideally, until there is a standard definition that is accepted and agreed upon, every criminological article that addresses whiteness would do so explicitly and include a critical conceptualization so that readers do not need a background in critical race theory. However, this is simply not the case. As it is, unless the reader is also a race scholar, most criminology papers will simply uphold white supremacist ideals as the norm and further embed those ideas as realistic. One of the articles documents how blind spots towards race and racial stratification surface in criminological research and argues these blind spots do not simply ignore white privilege but actively uphold it (Henne & Shaw, 2015). This paper agrees that criminology, even recently, aids in whitewashing race, disregarding how race and racism can differentially affect crime and deviance, and narrowly representing race as merely explanatory variables. Criminology falls short of addressing race as a whole with a critical eye, but its understanding and ability to face whiteness is another level of failure. Naming whiteness and failing to incorporate its far-reaching implications poses problems for the future of criminology but would also be a step in the right direction. Right now, too many scholars do not even reach that level; many are content leaving whiteness out of their racialized papers altogether or using it simply as a skin color to be compared with non-white counterparts. The field needs to address this shortcoming within so that move beyond and provide an actual analysis of the deviant behaviors that impact society.

References

- Baldwin, J. (1962, January 14). As much truth as one can bear: To speak out about the world as it is. *New York Times*.
- Blount-Hill, K., & St. John, V. (2017). Manufactured “mismatch”: Cultural incongruence and Black experience in the academy. *Race and Justice*, 7(2), 110–126.
- Brissette, E. (2020). Bad subjects: Epistemic violence at arraignment. *Theoretical Criminology*, 24(2), 353–369.
- Calathes, W. (2017). Racial capitalism and punishment philosophy and practices: What really stands in the way of prison abolition. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 20(4), 442–455.
- Campos-Manzo, A., Flores, M., Pérez, D., Halpert, Z., & Zevallos, K. (2020). Unjustified: Youth of color navigating police presence across sociospatial environments. *Race and Justice*, 10(3), 297–319.
- De Coster, S., & Heimer, K. (2016). Choice within constraint: An explanation of crime at the intersections. *Theoretical Criminology*, 21(1), 11–22.
- Dixon, L., & Ray, L. (2016). Current issues and developments in race hate crime. *Probation Journal*, 54(2), 109–124.

- Gau, J. (2016). A jury of whose peers? The impact of selection procedures on racial composition and the prevalence of majority-white juries. *Journal of Crime and Justice: Contemporary Issues of Race/Ethnicity, Offending Behavior, and Justice Responses*, 39(1), 75–87.
- Henne, K., & Shah, R. (2015). Unveiling White logic in criminological research: An intertextual analysis. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 18(2), 105–120.
- Igbo, B.A. (2014). Indigenous European justice and other Indigenous justices. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 8(1), 1–19.
- Kautzer, C. (2015). Good guys with guns: From popular sovereignty to self-defensive subjectivity. *Law and Critique*, 26(2), 173–187.
- Lee, E. (2019). *America for Americans: A history of xenophobia in the United States*. Basic Books.
- McDowell, M. (2019). Insurgent safety: Theorizing alternatives to state protection. *Theoretical Criminology*, 23(1), 43–59.
- McDowell, M., & Fernandez, L. (2018). “Disband, disempower, and disarm”: Amplifying the theory and practice of police abolition. *Critical Criminology*, 26(3), 373–391.
- Onwuachi-Willig, A. (2017). Policing the boundaries of whiteness: The tragedy of being “out of place” from Emmett Till to Trayvon Martin. *Iowa Law Review*, 102(3), 1113–1185.
- Parmar, A. (2020). Borders as mirrors: Racial hierarchies and policing migration. *Critical Criminology*, 28(2), 175–192.
- Scott, J., Fa’avale, A., & Thompson, B. (2018). What can southern criminology contribute to a post-race agenda?. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 13(2), 155–173.
- Simon, J. (2017). Racing abnormality, normalizing race: The origins of America’s peculiar carceral state and its prospects for democratic transformation today. *Northwestern University Law Review*, 111(6), 1625–1654.
- Sherman, S. (2020). From revanchism to inclusion: Institutional forms of planning and police in Hyde Park, Chicago. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 40(2), 139–150.
- Smith, J. (2014). Interrogating whiteness within criminology. *Sociology Compass*, 8(2), 107–118.
- Smith, J., & Linnemann, T. (2015). Whiteness and critical white studies in crime and justice. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 18(2), 101–104.
- Ward, G. (2014). The slow violence of state organized race crime. *Theoretical Criminology*, 19(3), 299–314.
- Zuberi, T. & Bonilla-Silva, E. (Eds.) (2008) *White logic, white methods: Racism and methodology*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.