



Rosa del Olmo Prize

2025 Recipient Announcement

David Goyes

University of Oslo, Norway

Marya Al-Hindi

University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Avi Brisman

Eastern Kentucky University, United States

Laura Gutiérrez

University of Liverpool, United Kingdom

Annette Hübschle

University of Cape Town, South Africa

Omar Phoenix Khan

University of Bath, United Kingdom

Nigel South

University of Essex, United Kingdom

John Scott

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Tracy Creagh

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Abstract

Western academic dominance, including in criminological theorisation, has occurred through a long and ongoing process of erasing and marginalising the knowledge produced in other regions of the world and by other intellectual traditions. Such epistemological injustice—which on occasion amounts to an *epistemicide*—not only affects the voices rendered invisible, but the entire planet, as knowledge that could be useful in generating an accurate reading of reality and productively responding to its challenges and injustices is discarded. Redressing epistemological justice entails, among other things, challenging colonial logics to rebalance the distribution of epistemological capital among peoples and among traditions of knowledge production. Knowledge that has been marginalised, neglected, or discarded must be recentred; knowledge creators who have traditionally been positioned as “informants,” “sources,” and “mines,” or treated as “exotic,” must be acknowledged in their creative activity. By centring contributions that develop criminological theorisation beyond Western scripts, the Rosa del Olmo Prize seeks to redress epistemological injustice.

Keywords: Rosa del Olmo; decolonial criminology; Southern criminology; epistemological justice

The Ascendancy of Western Epistemological Dominance

The ascendancy of criminological theories from the “West,” or what we now call the “Global North,” has not only marginalised non-Western and Southern perspectives but has blatantly ignored the unique experiences, insights, and expertise of thinkers from “the periphery” (Encinoza & del Olmo, 1981). The marginalisation and destruction of non-Western knowledge, known as “epistemicide” (Santos, 2014), is not unique to criminology but has been part of the colonial project for five centuries and

has affected knowledge production in its entirety. As Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel (2016) explains, the erasure of non-Western knowledge began before the colonisation of the Americas with the expulsion and forced conversion of Jews and Muslims in 1492 in the Kingdom of Granada. The process by which the Spanish Kingdom took over Granada was an act of proto-racism. The Spanish monarchy used “purity of blood” as determined along lines of religion to justify the erasure of Muslims and Jews, and while racism was not firmly established as we know it today, it was the first time that purity of blood according to religious creed was used to differentiate between “races.” The Spanish monarchy, seeking to impose its “royal” knowledge as superior, destroyed almost a million books that belonged to Jews and Muslims. The colonisers repeated such an epistemicidal process in each of the continents to which they expanded: they ruined the codices of Indigenous Americans; they labelled African systems of knowledge as “sorcery”; they denominated Asian cosmologies as “mysticism”; and they referred to Oceanic wisdom as “tribal ritualism.” Notwithstanding this apparent rejection, the colonisers also appropriated ideas and technologies and promulgated them as their “discoveries.” Examples include the slogan of the French Revolution, which was taken from the Wendat Peoples (Graeber & Wengrow, 2022), the technologies for vaccination, stolen from Afro-descendants (Benjamin, 2022), and a wide range of uses of plants and seeds seized from Indigenous peoples across the world (Goyes, 2018a).

The colonisers forbade non-Western people from participating in educational institutions and from creating knowledge. The prohibition was explicit by denying entrance to institutions and by destroying their knowledge, and implicit by making life so cumbersome that little time was left for creative activity. As myriad knowledge traditions were erased and their contents appropriated by the colonisers, Western sciences (natural and social) self-arrogated the role of ultimate knowledge producers. This way, Western knowledge production co-evolved with colonialism and maintained its racist underpinnings with variations of either Darwinian biological superiority or the anthropological social Darwinian view of inferior people in need of civilisation. Furthermore, colonial campaigns accelerated the development of Western science. The conquerors, needing systems to manage large populations on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, employed hundreds of nascent scholars to design technologies of social control (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mejias & Couldry, 2024).

By claiming superior cognitive capacities, colonisers constructed an artificial moral duty to lead the rest of humanity from backwardness to progress (Goyes, 2025)—an idea popularly known as the “White man’s burden” (White, 2023). The creation of a hierarchy of human cognitive capacities thus accompanied the discourse of progress, development, modernity, and social evolution. Enlightenment intellectuals proposed that social evolution positioned them as advanced, while Indigenous peoples were still primitive (Graeber & Wengrow, 2022). Africans and Afro-descendants were categorised as non-human. French reactionary Turgot, cited by Graeber and Wengrow (2022, p. 60), argued that social evolution:

always begins with hunters, then moves on to a stage of pastoralism, then farming, and only then finally passes to the contemporary stage of urban commercial civilization. Those who still remain hunters, shepherds or simple farmers are best understood as vestiges of our own previous stages of social development.

For another example, see the work of Boas (2012).

Colonialism thus instigated modernity and its view of progress as a unitary path that leads to human fulfilment, and Western knowledge as the ultimate knowledge. This is what Aníbal Quijano (2000 [with Ennis], 2007) referred to as “coloniality”—the practice of considering as valid only that which follows and flows from modern European ways of knowledge creation. Colonisers argued that because they had the best technology, produced by superior science with its precision, efficiency, and instrumental logics, they were the apex of development. In reality, many other civilisations had developed empirical and rational bodies of knowledge prior to this development in Western thought (Goyes, 2018b).

Criminology, like all other Western disciplines, adhered to these colonial logics. Criminology emerged as a tool of social control to be applied to the colonised. As Wayne Morrison (2006, pp. 54-55) explains, “as an activity of ‘scientifically’ studying crime/criminality, criminology was born in the intestines of (nation-state) criminal justice processes ... this linked criminology to penalty, to censure, to the application of the State Power to punish.” Through these processes, as Blagg and Anthony (2019, p. 1) underscore, criminology has helped to subordinate the Global South to the “imperial truths” produced in the Global North regarding the nature of society’s problems. Criminology also willingly forgot (and keeps overlooking) and erased (and continues to neglect) knowledge created in the Global South (Goyes & South, 2017). As noted above, examples also involve prohibition against the creation and dissemination of knowledge in and by the Global South (Encinoza & del Olmo, 1981).

Reclaiming the Epistemological Capital in the Periphery

In the last decade, an emerging Southern criminology has confronted this “inappropriate dominance” of criminological scholarship from (predominantly White men in) the Global North. In August 2015, *The British Journal of Criminology* published an article entitled “Southern Criminology.” The principal aim of this article, which subsequently appeared as the lead article in Volume 56, Issue 1, was to set forth an approach that could help to “decolonize and democratize the toolbox of available criminological concepts, theories, and methods” (Carrington et al., 2016, p. 1). The authors defined “southern criminology” as a “theoretical, empirical and political project aimed at bridging global divides and democratizing epistemology by levelling the power imbalances that privilege knowledges produced in the metropolitan centres of the global North” (Carrington et al., 2016, p. 15). They further described “southern criminology” as a tool to “elucidate the power relations embedded in the hierarchical production of criminological knowledge” (Carrington et al., 2016, pp. 2-3). The urgency of the project, Carrington and her co-authors (2016, p.1) maintained, emerged from “the [detrimental] impact of global divisions in political, economic, cultural and military power on the production of knowledge,” as well as the dominant but problematic view within criminology of Northern theories as universally valid and of Southern contributions as second-class or exotic. The common denominator of both dynamics, as Carrington and her collaborators maintained, was the (neocolonial) portrayal of Northern societies as leaders in the “development” of the world.

Describing this phenomenon as a form of “myopia,” Carrington and colleagues (2016, p. 6) argued that the uneven distribution of epistemological power between the Global North and the Global South had engendered biased theories that had failed to acknowledge: the role of (neo)colonialism in the analysis of the incidence of, and issues relating to, crime and violence; the inadequacy of importing Northern theory into Southern societies which ignored the geo-political specificity of all social theories; the ethically problematic exploitation of the Global South as a data mine and Southern scholars as data miners; and the invisibility and subordination of Southern theorisation. Accordingly, the authors championed the idea of advancing a transnational criminology inclusive of the knowledge of the Global South—Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania. Southern criminology was thus tasked with the further goal of “adopt[ing] methods and concepts that bridge global divides and [embrace] the democratization of knowledge production as political aspiration” (Carrington et al., 2016, p. 1).

For Carrington and colleagues (2016), their use of the concept of the “South” was both metaphorical—to refer to peripheral voices everywhere—and geographical—to refer to Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. For them, the demarcation of the Global North and Global South was useful for two principle reasons. First, it sheds light on the criminogenic consequences of their interactions. As the authors pointed out, the demarcation is useful because, at a macro-level, there are “vast disparities remain[ing] between the North and South in wealth, income and access to education, health care, adequate food and shelter, effective political institutions and safe and secure environments” (Carrington et al., 2016, p. 6). Furthermore, the authors asserted, the current “world order” reflects a Global North-Global South divide that is the product of the century-long trajectory of imperial colonisation. Second, the Global North-Global South delineation helps identify metropolitan (mistaken) assumptions within criminology. For these authors, Northern criminology—i.e., that produced in North America and Western Europe—has largely failed to study many phenomena that, while taking place in the Global South, are relevant for Global North and Global South relations and for criminological theorisation. Such phenomena, traditionally under-acknowledged by criminology, might range from the resource exploitation of the Global South by the Global North to social conflicts present in rural communities to the particularities of gendered crime in the Global South.

Rather than discarding northern criminological theories, Carrington and her colleagues called for the decolonisation and democratisation of criminological theorisation in order to modify and augment the discipline of criminology and “re-orientate its compass.” This could involve, for example, re-evaluation of the dominant concepts of war and peace, as these fail to capture the complexities of southern violence; development of a more nuanced understanding of the insidious influence of organised criminality and corruption in southern governments; and challenging the acceptance of northern explanations and assumptions such as those underpinning the “neoliberal penalty thesis” (Carrabine et al., 2020, p. 14). In subsequent publications, Carrington and colleagues—Carrington, Dixon, Fonesco, Goyes, Liu and Zysman, 2019; Carrington, Hogg, Scott, and Sozzo, 2018; Carrington, Hogg, Scott, Sozzo, and Walters, 2019—have very successfully created not simply an *idea* or *concept* but an academic *brand* or *label* that, in a relatively short space of time, has made an international impact via articles, books and conferences (for a more elaborate account of the emergence of Southern criminology, on which this summary is based, see Goyes et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, to present a more complete picture of a Southern-oriented or decolonial criminology—or the criminological project of reclaiming epistemological capital in the periphery—two clarifications are in order: first, these authors are not the only representatives of Southern criminology, nor is this “movement” a novelty within criminology. Southern criminology is an accommodating and varied project with multiple contributors and perspectives; it could therefore be appropriately described

as *Southern criminologies*. Likewise, as Goyes (2019) has described, the call for a criminology attuned and attentive to the realities of the Global South originated long before the 2015 baptism of “Southern criminology.” Scholars from non-core Western countries—such as those in Africa (Agozino, 2003), Asia (Liu et al., 2013), and Latin America (Aniyar de Castro, 1987; del Olmo, 1981; Zaffaroni, 1998)—as well as researchers with an interest in applying post-colonial and globalisation perspectives to criminology have all, for at least five decades, highlighted the need to address the criminological knowledge gap by increasing the volume of criminological activity attuned to the realities of the Global South.

Southern criminologies and their precedents all share the goal of *decolonising science*, which, in the words of Quijano (2007, p. 177), means to “liberate the production of knowledge, reflection, and communication from the pitfalls of European rationality/modernity.” The decolonial project in criminology has a long history, which can be observed in *Criminology of Liberation in Latin America* (Aniyar de Castro, 1987), Samir Amin’s theory of “Eurocentrism,” formulated in the 1980s (Amin, 2009 [1988]), and the work of many other scholars who for decades have been championing the decolonisation of mind, body, science, and society (Mbembe, 2001; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010; Thiong’o, 2021)—all with the goal of exposing the cultural (religious) hegemony of the Global North and critiquing colonialism and capitalism. By reminding readers of the decolonial and southern initiatives that existed within criminology before the labelling of a “Southern criminology,” we do not intend to diminish or delegitimise the success of the current Southern criminology movement, but to avoid repeating the colonial logic of erasing knowledge that existed in other continents and other knowledge traditions. In addition, by reminding readers that previous (plural) Southern criminologies have existed and continue to exist, we wish to emphasise that these Southern criminologies have been unable to find a position on an “equal footing with Western criminology, despite repeated affirmations of their legitimacy” (Goyes, 2019, pp. 46–47), and that many researchers and scholars have worked for decades on the decolonisation of criminology without success.

The Rosa del Olmo Prize seeks to keep recognising the fight for the decolonisation of knowledge in criminology and related disciplines.

Rosa del Olmo as a Symbol and a Guide of Decolonising Criminology

Venezuelan Professor Rosa del Olmo (1937–2000) became “one of the most important exponents of Critical Criminology in Latin America” (Padilla, 2006). She was a “leading figure in the world of left-wing criminology [and] ... critical criminology in Latin America, [a] feminist and inexhaustible social fighter and one of the most well-versed criminologists in the socio-political and economic analysis of drug trafficking” (Padilla, 2006). del Olmo contributed to the formation of a Latin American criminology from the 1970s onward. At the time, Latin American criminology was still dominated by European positivist thought, but ideas from Liberation Theology and Liberation Pedagogy had started to influence the minds of a nascent Latin American Liberation Criminology group (Goyes, 2023). del Olmo could see the potential for a radicalisation of the kind of criminology that had been dominant in Latin America and, as far as she was aware, in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) as well. In the early 1970s, she joined the wave of “new” criminological thinking and critique that was underway, connecting with key figures in the US and Europe, such as Richard Quinney and members of the Berkeley School, making connections with the National Deviancy Conference in the UK, and attending the inaugural meeting of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control in Florence in 1973, where she met Nils Christie. del Olmo sought to publicise these new developments within Latin American criminology but, importantly, “only to inform, and never to copy, European criminological thinking” (del Olmo, 1981, p. 98). del Olmo was already warning about the dangers of “ideological dependency: stressing ... the need to begin the historical reconstruction of criminology in Latin America” (1981, p. 98). As a reflection on her work at the time, del Olmo (1981, p. 101) suggested that criminology in Latin America, from its origins, was a “highly political discipline with social control” as its ultimate goal. Often it developed into a discourse to legitimise differences between Whites, Blacks and Indians and thus it was very convenient to classify people and to justify racial discrimination. Importantly for her longer legacy and relevant to the prize in her name, she also observed evidence of the coloniality of knowledge whereby “works written by Latin American specialists ... were ignored because they inquired about their own reality with a non-European perspective” (del Olmo, 1981, p. 101).

Notable from this period was her 1975 paper, “Limitations for the Prevention of Violence: The Latin American Reality and its Criminological Theory,” which Shank and Dod (1987, p. iii) described as a significant paper in the development of “Latin American Critical Criminology.” Around a decade later, in a special issue of *Crime and Social Justice* dedicated to coverage of “Latin American Perspectives on Crime and Social Justice,” del Olmo published her pathbreaking (1987) article, “Aerobiology and the War on Drugs.” At the level of politics and policy, del Olmo argued that the “Latin American ruling classes mixed European ‘juridical science’ with North American ‘techniques of treatment’.” The end product is that, even today, crime and punishment are defined in the tradition of European Penal Law” (1987, p. 101). While larger networks of critical criminologists have developed in Latin America, the criminology developed by some penal lawyers and psychologists still

largely supports foreign and elite social control (Goyes & Sozzo, 2023). To address this colonial importation and imposition, del Olmo argued, what was needed was the development of a Latin American Indigenous methodology and also the incorporation of an analysis of violations of human rights.

In all of this, del Olmo was laying the foundations for what has become a “Southern criminology,” and her work sought to reclaim the epistemological capital for the periphery that was robbed upon the colonisation first of the Americas and later of other continents. Her advocacy for a Latin American criminology led her to confront the epistemological inequalities that have become familiar in debates today but that she recognised in the 1980s, noting how the required language of conference proceedings was English with no translation, and how scholars from Latin America might be denied the opportunity to present papers and be excluded from published proceedings. Evidence of this is chronicled in a devastating but overlooked account of the experiences of del Olmo and Argenis Riera Encinoza (also a Venezuelan criminologist) when they tried to present a paper at the Sixth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders. The paper, itself, was eventually published in 1981 in a special issue of *Crime and Social Justice* on “Law and Order in the 1980s: The Rise of the Right,” but only after this dismaying series of events, which the Editors (Encinoza & del Olmo, 1981) recount in a cover letter that accompanied the article.

Encinoza explains that when an advance copy of their paper was sent to the United Nations in New York, they received a telephone call to delete their criticisms of Gerhard Mueller’s views on crime and its control. When Encinoza and del Olmo refused to change the contents of their paper, Pedro David went to Caracas to persuade them to reconsider. Again, Encinoza and del Olmo refused. Encinoza writes that they were punished for their noncompliance. Their session was not printed in the schedule of meetings; the paper was not translated or reproduced for the Congress; and according to Encinoza, Sergio Garcia Ramirez (of Mexico), a representative of Pedro David, was assigned as chair with instructions to forestall any open discussion on the prospects for an alternative criminology in Latin American countries.

A more detailed biography of del Olmo and an analysis of her wide-ranging contributions to criminology are offered in South (2023) and in Goyes, South, Scott, and Creagh (2023). Some of del Olmo’s other wide-ranging contributions are noted in Goyes and South (2017). The relevance of del Olmo for this 2025 recipient announcement, however, lies in the decolonial and southern work she advanced as early as the 1970s—and how she embodies the spirit of challenging northern dominance in the study of crime, conflict, and social control. Like many disciplines, criminology suffers frequently from a form of intellectual amnesia, forgetting or overlooking past contributors and insights (Goyes & South, 2017; Young, 1979). Revisiting del Olmo’s work (South, 2023) reminds us that we should always try to ensure that we acknowledge earlier pioneers—particularly if they have not been a part of the usual transatlantic literature reviews. Hence, as mentioned earlier, for all the “newness” of a “Southern criminology” (Carrington et al., 2016), we really should remember how much significant work had already been accomplished setting out a southern critical perspective. Honouring Rosa del Olmo is a way of recalling and illuminating the southern criminologies that existed before the contemporary project and in non-Anglophone countries.

The Rosa del Olmo Prize

In early 2023, the *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* editorial team established the Rosa del Olmo Prize to be awarded biennially for the article that, in the editors’ opinion and based on the recommendations of a panel of experts, most contributes to innovative thinking in the development of criminology beyond Western scripts (Goyes et al., 2023). The prize seeks to invert and challenge harmful ideologies within academia, and confronts at least three tenets: that knowledge creation is a feat of isolated individuals, that the so-called marketplace of ideas is an even and fair field, and that Western scholars are the ultimate knowledge creators. The Rosa del Olmo Prize celebrates contributions that develop criminology beyond Western scripts, focuses on analyses that capture the structural roots of social injustices, and highlights how paths towards justice must be marked by collective action. To underscore the collaborative nature of knowledge production, recipients are invited to write reflective acknowledgement stories about those who made the research possible (see Kramer, 2020, for the original proposition). The Rosa del Olmo Prize also challenges an uneven playing field by establishing a committee composed of scholars from diverse genders and regions of the world who are aware of discrimination and bias in academia. They evaluate academic texts not based on “conformity” to Western standards but on contributions to diversity of thought and understanding, accompanied by high-quality reasoning and presentation.

The *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* chose Rosa del Olmo as a symbol to defy “global” stereotypes about who the ultimate knowledge creators are or have been. Many criminological awards use Western men (and occasionally a few Western women) as emblems for academic excellence. As described above, Rosa del Olmo symbolises the epistemological potency of intellectuals beyond the West and their ability to contribute to criminological theory. Remembering the knowledge that exists but has been forgotten or erased is a way to decolonise academia, democratise knowledge, and

advance epistemological justice. Rosa del Olmo challenged cognitive dependency in her work—and this award continues her endeavour. On various occasions, del Olmo denounced how the knowledge produced by some groups is ignored just for its non-European perspective (e.g., Encinoza & del Olmo, 1981). She also condemned the outright exclusion of critical insights made by the Southern thinkers. With the Rosa del Olmo Prize, we resist the notion that Western scholars are the ultimate knowledge creators, expand the visibility of non-European perspectives, and reposition Southern scholars at the table of global criminological dialogues.

The *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* has been a venue to grapple with and oppose individualist, neoliberal, and discriminatory ideologies since 2012 and, therefore, is a suitable home for the Rosa del Olmo Prize. Knowledge is a commodity, and knowledge production does not occur in a geopolitical vacuum. Indeed, the influence of North Atlantic nations over knowledge production is even greater in higher education than that exerted in trading and financial economies (Marginson, 2014). The *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* is committed to cognitive justice (Santos, 2014) and, as such, aspires to democratise knowledge, bridge global divides, and encourage the voices of those on the periphery to publish with the journal. It recognises that intellectual projects are intimately related to political and cultural struggles for recognition and social and economic justice. This includes scholars from diverse Indigenous and First Nations peoples communities, as well as scholars from the Global North and Global South committed to cognitive justice. As part of the journal's commitment to the democratisation of knowledge, authors retain copyright and articles are licenced via Creative Commons to make published articles more readily available and usable. There are no Article Processing Charges. Authors can submit and publish at no cost. It is not enough to recognise that the social sciences are northerncentric; it is imperative that we act to democratise knowledge production.

A short list of eligible articles was compiled to include full articles published between July 2023 and July 2025 that best exemplified a review of criminology outside of traditional Global North perspectives. Editors and editorial board members, past and present, were excluded from consideration for the prize. Judges were selected from the current editorial board and editorial team by Co-Chief Editor Dr David Goyes: **Marya Al-Hindi** (inaugural recipient of the Rosa del Olmo Prize), **Avi Brisman** (book editor), **Laura Gutiérrez**, **Annette Hübschle**, and **Omar Khan** (members of the editorial board).

The 2025 Rosa del Olmo Prize Recipients

The *International Journal for Crime, Justice, and Social Democracy* congratulates **KuoRay Mao** and **Zhong Zhao**, who receive the 2025 Rosa del Olmo Prize for their article:

Authoritarian Environmentalism and Epistemological Violence: A Southern Green Criminology Analysis of the 2014 Lanzhou Water Crisis and the Belt and Road Initiative Expansion into the Global Water Sector, 12(4), 27-38. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.2948>

In this article, KuoRay Mao and Zhong Zhao embrace the challenge of attuning criminology to authoritarianism by exploring authoritarian states' roles in commodifying natural resources (freshwater) in the illiberal society of China. The authors, by studying the 2014 Lanzhou water contamination and the Belt and Road Initiative's (BRI) global water push, reveal a complex landscape of political, regulatory, economic, and legal dynamics—power relations that are, at once, strikingly familiar in other contexts of the Global South, but also distinct in the ways they manifest under China's model of authoritarian environmentalism. While the “neoliberalisation of nature,” which Mao and Zhao define as “the assertion of private ownership over global commons,” is not peculiar to China, the country's size, its rapid urbanisation, and economic growth make its study all the more important.

Mao and Zhao's article illuminates how the neoliberal framing of water as a commodified economic resource has facilitated its predatory privatisation (and the ensuing cascade of associated crimes and harms) not only in “liberalised” and “democratised” states of the Global South, but also in contexts with profoundly different political systems, such as in China. The article describes the case as an instance of transnational state–corporate environmental harm. It explores the local, national, and global layers that overlap within “the water business,” and it illustrates how the state fosters, supports, and protects private actors and public–private partnerships, enabling these entities to take full control over local populations' access to water, while simultaneously expanding their influence on a global scale. Mao and Zhao's case study demonstrates the intricate web connecting local realities to national and global dynamics, and it serves as a clear example of how state–corporate harm flourishes within the complex networks of globalised enterprise operating under the logic of neoliberal capitalism, often to the severe detriment of affected communities. This case study also illustrates both the distinctive nature of water politics and economics in China and the powerful homogenising effect of the neoliberal commodification of nature. Overall, Mao and

Zhao's article enlightens the reader with new insights specific to the Chinese context, while simultaneously offering a direct and valuable contribution to existing understandings of state–corporate harm and its connection to the exploitation of natural resources.

The analysis of “epistemological violence” is conceptually sharp, successfully arguing that the Global South is marginalised in criminological scholarship and providing empirical explanations of how this operates in practice. Challenging such epistemological violence, the article critiques global capitalist priorities through a Southern green criminological lens. The article also presents a direct critique of existing mainstream criminological literature that does not fully account for the realities as discussed in this article, nor provide context-relevant solutions. In sum, this article makes a valuable contribution to green criminology by filling an essential gap in the literature on the intersection of authoritarian states and environmental harms.

Recipients Statement: KuoRay Mao and Zhong Zhao

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the selection committee of the *International Journal for Crime, Justice, and Social Democracy* for awarding us the Rosa del Olmo Prize. This is a profound honour—one that will continue to inspire our scholarship and community engagement as we strive to understand how power shapes justice outcomes. In the ancient Chinese poem Li Sao, written in the 3rd century BCE, the poet *Qu Yuan* portrayed the search for knowledge and justice as a long and arduous journey requiring tireless effort in the pursuit of truth “from above and below” (路漫漫其修遠兮，吾將上下而求). In our own attempts to generate knowledge, we feel fortunate to walk this path with the support and camaraderie of many inspiring individuals and to be situated within a vibrant community of knowledge-makers.

The generation and use of knowledge are always collective enterprises. In China and across the Global South, rapid neoliberalization and escalating socio-ecological crises have reshaped local conditions so swiftly that conventional academic research often becomes outdated by the time it is published. Today, meaningful insights frequently emerge from dialogue and sustained engagement with grassroots organizations, community groups, and activists who dare to challenge established understandings.

Our research draws deeply from a long tradition of civil society organizations, environmental NGOs, and human rights lawyers—both in China and internationally—who have persistently contested the definitions and evolving practices of authoritarian environmentalism, as well as the neoliberal and state-capitalist frameworks that shape criminalization and selective enforcement worldwide. Without their pathbreaking efforts—thinking differently, filing legal motions, and resisting entrenched narratives—our attempt to apply southern (green) criminological theory would risk becoming a rarefied abstraction that fails to capture lived forms of resistance or the courage of those who refuse imposed boundaries of thought. This article owes far more to their bravery and insight than to anything we could claim alone.

We are also indebted to the traditions and remarkable synergies generated by scholars in critical, green, feminist, cultural, and southern criminologies. Many of these scholars have expanded the field, laying essential foundations for alternative and transformative understandings of criminology. They are too numerous to name, yet their work has profoundly shaped our thinking—as has the work of all who have contributed to this journal. As Rosa del Olmo's exemplary scholarship reminds us, it is vital to recognize how much significant groundwork has already been laid in articulating southern, critical, and decolonial perspectives.

Ultimately, this article represents our modest attempt—following Rosa del Olmo's example—to resist the coloniality of knowledge at a moment when global environmental politics and systems of social control increasingly converge into an authoritarian capitalist configuration. Although the article centers on a 2014 drinking water pollution incident, it is neither a mere historical account nor a critique of Soviet- or Western-influenced legal traditions in the Global South. At its core, it seeks to challenge top-down and arbitrary definitions of harm, crime, and social control at the intersection of expanding global illiberalism and the growing oligarchic power over technology and capital. Our work is also rooted in our shared love for Lanzhou and its people—a city where both of us lived for many years, and whose multi-ethnic histories have created a rich and fascinating tapestry of cultural encounters.

Rosa del Olmo's lifelong work stands as a testament to her courage in challenging “metropolitan thinking,” her compassion for marginalized communities, and her expansive transdisciplinary criminological imagination—nourished by learning from those too often overlooked. Following the example she set, we humbly accept this award, fully aware that this paper is but one small cobblestone on the long and unending road in pursuit of knowledge and justice, the very journey *Qu Yuan* described more than 2,300 years ago.

References

- Agozino, B. (2003). *Counter-colonial criminology. A critique of imperialist reason*. Pluto Press.
- Amin, S. (2009 [1988]). *Eurocentrism*. Monthly Review Press.
- Aniyar de Castro, L. (1987). *Criminología de la liberación [Liberation criminology]*. Maracaibo: Editorial de la Universidad de Zulia.
- Benjamin, R. (2022). *Viral justice: How we grow the world we want*. Princeton University Press.
- Blagg, H., & Anthony, T. (2019). *Decolonising criminology. Imagining Justice in a Postcolonial world*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Boas, F. (2012). *The mind of primitive man*. Forgotten Books.
- Carrabine, E., Cox, P., Crowhurst, I., Di Ronco, A., Fussey, P., Sergi, A., South, N., Thiel, D., & Turton, J. (2020). *Criminology: A sociological introduction*. Routledge.
- 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., Scott, J., & Sozzo, M. (Eds.). (2018). *The Palgrave handbook of criminology and the global south*. Palgrave.
- Carrington, K., Hogg, R., Scott, J., Sozzo, M., & Walters, R. (2019). *Southern criminology*. Routledge.
- Carrington, K., Hogg, R., & Sozzo, M. (2016). Southern criminology. *British Journal of Criminology*, 56(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azv083>
- del Olmo, R. (1981). *América Latina y su Criminología [Latin America and its Criminology]*. Ciudad de México: Siglo veintiuno editores.
- del Olmo, R. (1987). Aerobiology and the war on drugs: A transnational crime. *Crime and Social Justice*, 30, 28-44.
- Encinoza, A. R., & del Olmo, R. (1981). The view from Latin America against transnational criminology: A call for democratic international cooperation. *Crime and Social Justice*, 15, 61-67.
- Goyes, D. R. (2018a). *Biopiracy from a green criminological perspective* [doctoral dissertation] University of Oslo.
- Goyes, D. R. (2018b). Green criminology as decolonial tool: A stereoscope of environmental harm. In K. Carrington, R. Hogg, J. Scott, & M. Sozzo (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of criminology and the global south* (pp. 323-346). Palgrave.
- Goyes, D. R. (2019). *Southern green criminology. A science to end ecological discrimination*. Emerald.
- Goyes, D. R. (2023). Latin American green criminology. *Justice, Power and Resistance*, 6(1), 90-107. <https://doi.org/10.1332/CDQK2391>
- Goyes, D. R. (2025). Colonialism and environmental violence. In R. White (Ed.), *Elgar encyclopedia of environmental crime* (pp. 14-21). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803923833>
- Goyes, D. R., & South, N. (2017). Green Criminology Before ‘Green Criminology’: Amnesia and Absences. *Critical Criminology*, 25(2), 165-181. <https://doi.org/10.1332/CDQK2391>
- Goyes, D. R., South, N., Scott, J., & Creagh, T. (2023). Rosa del Olmo Prize: Introductory Essay. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 12(4), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.3223>
- Goyes, D. R., South, N., Sollund, R., & de Carvalho, S. (2021). Editors’ introduction to the special issue, “Southern criminologies: Methods, theories and indigenous issues”. *Critical Criminology*, 29, 423-429. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-021-09586-w>
- Goyes, D. R., & Sozzo, M. (2023). Latin American criminologies: Origins, trajectories and pathways. *Justice, Power and Resistance*, 6(1), 2-18. <https://doi.org/10.1332/VJBP5734>
- Graeber, D., & Wengrow, D. (2022). *The dawn of everything. A new history of humanity*. Penguin Random House.
- Grosfoguel, R. (2013). The structure of knowledge in westernized universities: Epistemic racism/sexism and the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 11(1), 73-90.
- Grosfoguel, R. (2016). A estrutura do conhecimento nas universidades ocidentalizadas: racismo/sexismo epistêmico e os quatro genocídios/epistemicídios do longo século XVI. *Sociedade e Estado*, 31, 25-49. <https://periodicos.unb.br/index.php/sociedade/article/view/6078>
- Kramer, M. J. (2020, January 1). Let’s abolish academic prizes. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/01/02/how-prizes-do-more-harm-good-academe-opinion>
- Liu, J., Heberton, B., & Jou, S. (2013). Progress of Asian criminology: Editors’ Introduction. In J. Liu, B. Heberton, & S. Jou (Eds.), *Handbook of Asian criminology* (pp. 1-7). Springer.
- Marginson, S. (2014, March 28). The west’s global HE hegemony: Nothing lasts forever. *University World News*. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20140326123556985>
- Mbembe, A. (2001). *On the postcolony*. University of California.
- Mejias, U. A., & Couldry, N. (2024). *Data grab. The New colonialism of big tech (and how to fight back)*. WH Allen.
- Morrison, W. (2006). *Criminology, civilisation and the new world order*. Routledge.

- Padilla, M. O. V. (2006). Rosa del Olmo Pérez-Enciso (1937-2000). Pionera de la Criminología Crítica Latinoamericana [Rosa del Olmo Pérez-Enciso (1937-2000). Pioneer of Latin American Critical Criminology]. <https://m.facebook.com/crimiparateorimaroctvazpa/posts/465368000237381>
- Quijano, A., Ennis, M. (2000). Coloniality of power, eurocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1(3), 533-580. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/23906>
- Quijano, A. (2007). Coloniality and modernity/rationality. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3), 168-178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601164353>
- Rivera Cusicanqui, S. (2010). *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa : una reflexión sobre prácticas y discursos descolonizadores [Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A reflection about the decolonial praxis and discourse]*. Tinta Limón.
- Santos, B. d. S. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Shank, G., & Dod, S. (1987). Editorials: Overview of the issue. *Social Justice*, 30, i-xxi.
- South, N. (2023). Revisiting Rosa: Eco-Bio-Genocide, drug wars, and southern green criminology. In D. R. Goyes (Ed.), *Green Crime in the Global South: Essays on Southern Green Criminology* (pp. 263-284). Springer International Publishing.
- Thiong'o, N. W. (2021). *Decolonizar la mente [Decolonising the mind]*. Penguin.
- White, R. (2023). Colonialism, knowledge, and the white man's burden. In D. R. Goyes (Ed.), *Green crime in the global south: Essays on southern green criminology* (pp. 285-310). Palgrave.
- Young, J. (1979). Left idealism, reformism and beyond. In B. Fine (Ed.), *Capitalism and the rule of law. From deviancy theory to Marxism* (pp. 1-28). Hutchinson.
- Zaffaroni, E. R. (1998). *Criminología. Aproximación desde un margen [Criminology. Approximations from the margins]*. Temis.