

## INTRODUCTION

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After studying race and crime for more than a decade, one thing has become apparent to me: The colonial model is vastly underappreciated as a potential perspective to contextualize the overrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities in justice systems around the globe—particularly in post-colonial societies. This short introduction first provides an overview of the terms *race* and *ethnicity* and then briefly discusses the perils of using crime statistics to examine race and crime cross-nationally. An overview of the colonial perspective is next. As noted in the Preface, though not a direct test of the perspective in the countries profiled in the subsequent chapters, only those readers wearing blinders will miss the connection between colonialism and race, ethnicity, crime, and justice.

### RACE AND ETHNICITY

The terms *race* and *ethnicity* are both used to classify groups. Race is seen as the more distinctive marker, by some. The term has a long history and was created by the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus. Johan Fredrich Blumenbach built on Linnaeus's work by separating the people into five races: Ethiopian (African or Negroid), Mongolian (Asian), American (Native American), Malaysian (Pacific Islander), and Caucasian (White). This division set off an infinite debate as to whether there are truly distinct races. That is, do the differences between the assorted groups make them so distinct that they warrant

a different classification? DNA research suggests that there are some slight biological differences between groups; as examples, mostly Blacks get sickle-cell anemia, and some drugs have been found to be more effective for some groups than others (Soo-Jin Lee, 2005). However, this does not prove that the use of racial distinctions is appropriate, especially considering that the Human Genome Project has found “that humans share 99.9% of their genetic makeup” (Soo-Jin Lee, 2005, p. 2133).

In light of the existing scientific evidence, social scientists have tended to view race as a social construct or a manufactured term simply used to identify people based on their color. In the United Kingdom, for example, scholars use inverted quotes when they use the term race to signify that it has no scientific meaning (e.g., “race”). Other countries, such as Canada, minimize the use of race altogether, especially in government documents. In a similar vein, residents in the United States referred to as “people of color” or racial and ethnic minorities, are considered “visible minorities” in Canada. As you will see in subsequent chapters, countries tend to handle the use of the term differently. In addition, each country has its separate racial classification scheme for who is deemed a racial minority.

Ethnicity also is a term used to classify groups. However, rather than being based on color or rooted in biological notions, although genetic inheritances and certain traits are characteristic of ethnic groups, the term ethnicity relates more to a group’s cultural traditions, geographical ties, common language, and other commonalities. Both terms are imprecise and have their limitations. Nonetheless, over time, they have been used as a means to better understand the experience of assorted groups across the globe. Hence, the terms are reluctantly used herein under a similar guise.

## CRIME STATISTICS

In his recent work, *A Suitable Amount of Crime* (2004), Criminologist Nils Christie discusses the numerous problems with the term “crime.” He writes: “Crime does not exist. Only acts exist, acts often given different meanings within various social frameworks. Acts, and the meaning of them, are our data” (Christie, 2004, p. 3). While Émile Durkheim would certainly take issue with this statement, one can see where Christie’s insight would be particularly useful when examining crime cross-nationally. Thus, the way one society defines or views a certain

offense could influence the extent of the problem, as compared to another society. So, if one country is obsessed with marijuana use and criminalizes it while another country does not, there could be a “wave” of crime noted in one country, whereas in the other country because of its different approach, no crime “wave” would exist. Taking this example one step further, if one country decided to crack down on street crimes in communities heavily populated by racial and ethnic minorities, as opposed to crime in other areas where the majority group tends to predominate in crime commission, then statistics will distort the nature and scope of the crime problem (see Chambliss, 2004). In this case, “the crime problem” will be translated into the “minority crime problem.” Scholars around the globe have noted this racialization of crime (Brewer & Heitzig, 2008; Chan & Mirchandani, 2001; Covington, 1995; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, Roberts, 1978; Knepper, 2008). However, Christie’s important work reminds us of this important consideration, as we try to make sense of race, ethnicity, and crime across the globe. The next section provides an overview of the colonial perspective.

## THE COLONIAL MODEL

So why provide an overview of the colonial perspective? The answer is simple: Because criminologists have excluded the perspective from the criminological canon, and though most students of crime and justice reading this text are likely to have heard of the word colonialism, they likely have never been exposed to a criminological perspective based on it. Colonialism, as defined in a recent dictionary, refers to “control by one power over a dependent area or people” (*Merriam-Webster*, 2004, p. 142). Several decades ago, the work of Frantz Fanon (1963, 1967a, 1967b) popularized the perspective among scholars seeking to contextualize the relations between Blacks and Whites in colonial and post-colonial societies (Agozino, 2005; Blackwell, 1971; Hall et al., 1978; Killingray, 1986; Onyeozili, 2004; Saleh-Hanna, 2008). In the United States, for example, the perspective caught on because of its adoption by those associated with the Black power movement (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967). But it was the early work of Blauner (1969) and Staples (1974, 1975) who applied the theory to Blacks and the work of Moore (1970) and Mirande (1987) who applied it to Latinos in America. More recently, several scholars have revived the colonial perspective (Agozino, 2003; Bosworth, 2004; Bosworth & Flavin, 2007; Saleh-Hanna, 2008).

So how does colonialism help contextualize race and crime? Well, to answer that question, one has to first understand the nature of colonialism. In recent years, the work of Becky Tatum (1994, 2000a) has served as one of the best articulations of the perspective because it addresses more traditional forms of colonialism and also the notion of internal colonialism, which represents another way that colonialism takes hold and transforms a society, and from the native's perspective, usually for the worse.

### **Tatum's Articulation of the Colonial Model**

Drawing on the work of Fanon, Tatum's (1994) conception of the colonial model, classifies it as a socio-psychological perspective. That is, it combines sociological factors with psychological factors to explain the etiology of crime and justice in society. More specifically, the perspective examines the intersection of "structural oppression, alienation and three adaptive forms of behavior—assimilation, crime or deviance, and protest" (p. 34). Early in her articulation of the model, Tatum (1994) points to the connection between colonialism, race, and crime:

Individuals who are the victims of social, economic and political oppression are likely to perceive that oppression and as a result, develop feelings of alienation in which the commission of crime is an adaptive response. In the colonial model, race or color is the ascriptive criterion for differences in subjection to situations of oppression. (p. 34)

Taking a holistic view of colonization, Tatum breaks the process down into four phases. The first phase usually involves the invasion of one racial group into the country of another. More often than not, this involves a minority group (typically Whites) who takes control of the majority population (typically people of color). Here, as aptly noted by Tatum, "The primary objective of the outsiders is to obtain valuable economic resources" (p. 35). Initially, though, the foreign group seeks to trade with the natives, but at some point they dupe the natives into settling for things of minor value in exchange for more valuable resources (e.g., gold). In some instances, when the natives refuse to trade with the foreigners, they decide to pursue brutal measures (e.g., torture, biological warfare) to extract the desired resources (see Crosby, 1972; De Las Casas, 1992 [1552]; Smolenski & Humphrey, 2005).

Following the initial phase of colonization, it becomes apparent that the colonizers have their minds set on controlling the country. But to do so, they

have to think of a strategy that will allow a small minority (of foreigners) to rule over a society mostly composed of native people. The answer, which is the second phase of colonization, is the formation of a colonial society. So what does such a society involve? Tatum (1994) argues that colonial societies “can be characterized by three interrelated processes of cultural imposition, cultural disintegration, and cultural recreation” (p. 35). Once a colonial society is in place, there is the presumption that the culture of the colonizer is superior to that of the colonized. As such, the colonizer spares no expense in minimizing the culture of the colonized. Going even further, the colonizer uses their resources to constrain, transform, and destroy native customs, culture, and values (p. 35). In fact, as part of this phase, the colonizer “paints the native as the quintessence of evil” and uses “Zoological” terms to describe the natives (p. 35). It makes no difference whether the natives are rebelling against the colonizer to secure the most basic rights. The colonized remains “the problem.” Finally, during this phase, the society’s history is rewritten and the language is changed to that of the colonizer. And, in the end, any reference to native culture and history is seen as referring to “primitive societies” and reference to the colonizer is considered a reference to a more “advanced society” (for an excellent discussion of this phenomenon, see Ani, 1994). By this point in the colonization process, White supremacy has firmly taken hold and has become a key aspect of the colonial “machinery.”

Tatum’s (1994) third phase of the colonial process involves the governing of the natives by “representatives of the colonizer’s power” (p. 36). Thus, even though the colonized represents the majority population, the colonizer uses the police and military as the maintainers of the peace or, more accurately, as controlling “agents of the state.” The final phase of the colonization process, as outlined by Tatum (1994), involves “the development of a caste system based on racism” (p. 36). With White supremacy firmly in place, the development of such a caste system is imminent. Such a caste system results in a society where all those in the privileged groups (typically Whites) have access to the best jobs and other opportunities that assist them in flourishing within the colonial society. On the other hand, the worst jobs and least stable opportunities are reserved for those in the non-privileged groups (typically people of color). This, in the end, secures the place of the colonized at the lowest stratum of society. Tatum, though, clearly notes the role of class in the colonial structure. Tatum (1994) writes:

All colonized individuals do not suffer from the oppressive conditions of the social order to the same extent. In fact, the bourgeois faction of the colonized

people represent the part of the colonized nation that is necessary and irreplaceable if the colonial machine is to run smoothly . . . Although their position in society is lower than the colonizers of any status, in regards to the natives, they enjoy more privileges. As a result, there is an antagonism which exists between the native who is excluded from the advantages of colonialism and his counterpart who manages to turn colonial exploitation to his account . . . The colonialists make use of this antagonism by pitting one against the other. (p. 37)

During the implementation of the four phases of the colonial process, there are psychological consequences for the colonized. The late psychologist Bobby Wright addressed the role of psychology in the context of Black people in oppressed situations. In doing so, he coined the term “mentacide” to describe the use of psychology to destroy a group (particularly Black people around the world). In his words, mentacide is the “deliberate and systematic destruction of a group’s minds with the ultimate objective being the extirpation of the group” (Wright, 1994 [1984], p. 20). Fanon, in his classic volume, *Black Skin, White Masks*, provides additional foundation for understanding the consequences of what amounts to psychological warfare. From the need of Blacks to prove that they are not intellectually inferior to Whites, to the desire of Black women for White men and Black men for White women, both solely in an effort to get as “close” as possible to the colonized, Fanon’s (1967a) work gets at the heart of the alienation and “confusion” that results from colonization (see also, Akbar, 1992 [1984]).

Essentially, there are several ways that alienation or estrangement from one’s culture that colonization relates to race, crime, and justice. One way alienation manifests itself is in self-hate. This relates both to the individual and the group. For example, hating oneself can result in one not wanting to identify with who they are or, depending on complexion, “passing” so that others see the individual as being a member of the colonizing group. This results in the shedding of one’s native identity. But the self-hatred extends beyond the self and includes the group. The alienation can result in attacks against the people that the colonized now hate the most: *themselves*. Of this, Tatum (1994) writes: “Here, the individual hates in others those characteristics he hates most in himself” (p. 38).

Another type of alienation results in racial groups being estranged from each other. This produces racial violence which is often based on a mutual lack of trust that results in paranoia. Cultural alienation typically results in the colonized distancing themselves from their native language and history. And the

significance of this is that language and history are at the heart of one's culture (Tatum, 1994; Wilson, 1993; Woodson, 1990 [1933]). So, for example, English and Spanish are not simply languages, they are usually taught in the context of the cultures in which they originated. Thus, in surrendering their language and history, the colonized have all but surrendered to the colonizer. Once this has occurred, what Tatum refers to as alienation against the creative praxis has likely taken hold. Consequently, "The colonized believes that he does not have a measure of choice, influence or control in what happens to him or in what he can make happen. The colonized is full of self-doubt and has a readiness to compromise" (Tatum, 1994, p. 39).

Alienation, though, does not result in solely one response or reaction. In fact, there are three well-known responses that are a product of alienation that results from colonialism. The first reaction is assimilation. Here the colonized simply want to acquiesce and become a fully ascribed citizen of the new colonial society—however delusional that might be considering the premise underpinning colonialism. In short, because White supremacy is often at the heart of colonialism, the colonizer will *never* be considered equal in a colonial society. Thus, for example, if a crime is committed and the two suspects include a colonizer and a "fully assimilated" native person, the suspicion will still fall on the colonized; because, after all, their full assimilation does not remove the badge of being considered the "quintessence of evil."

An additional response to alienation is that some of the colonized will become angry because of their situation, but rather than lash out against the colonizer, the colonized internalizes their feelings. Consequently, the actions result in what has been called "horizontal violence" and related mayhem as opposed to "vertical violence," which would involve attacks against the colonial regime. Pouissant (1972, 1983) and Jeff (1981) also have used such an analysis to explain why there is so much so-called Black-on-Black violence in the African American community. Taking this supposition a bit further, Wilson (1990) has argued that Whites benefit from such violence. In fact, as he sees it, the presence of such self-destructive behavior in Black communities actually serves to further the dominance of Whites. The self-destructive behaviors result in a host of problems that produce elevated levels of "alcoholism, psychiatric disorders, hypertension and crime—particularly homicide—among the oppressed" (Tatum, 1994, p. 40).

Alienation can also result in revolutionary actions against the colonizer. This is when the colonized feels that it is time to "fight back." And, to do so, they

have to gain back their identity by reclaiming their history and culture (Tatum, 1994). Lastly, at times, this results in what Tatum describes as “vertical counter violence” or the repression of attacks by the colonizer. Whereas others might stand back and take the often unprovoked attacks by the colonizer, those “radicals,” as they are referred to, refuse to take the attacks lying down. In essence, given the means by which the colonizer took rule and maintains its rule (through violence), it is clear, at least to those who respond to alienation this way, that violence must be met with violence and, at times, even greater violence. This, in essence, is the only avenue to true liberation from colonial power.

Another form of colonialism is internal colonialism, which occurs after the initial colonial process. This type of colonialism is described in the next section.

### **Internal Colonialism**

The notion of “internal” colonialism is best understood by first examining “external” colonialism. For the most part, this first part of this chapter outlined external colonialism. Feagin and Feagin (2003) provide us with a clear definition, stating that: “External colonialism [is] the worldwide imperialism of certain capitalist nations, including the United States and European nations” (p. 34). Moreover, Feagin and Feagin (2003) note that it has been estimated that:

Europe’s capitalistic expansion has affected non-European peoples across the globe since the fifteenth century . . . [And] until very recently the greater part of the world’s population, not belonging to the white race (if we exclude China and Japan), knew only a status of dependency on one or another of the European colonial powers.” (pp. 34–35)

But even after the decline of external colonialism in these countries, neo-colonialism or the economic dependence on European powers continued (Feagin & Feagin, 2008). Thus, in practice, internal colonialism is the product of external colonialism. But, in general, internal colonialism “refers to when the control and exploitation of non-European groups in the colonized country passes from whites in the home country to white immigrant groups within the newly independent country” (Feagin & Feagin, 2003, p. 35). One thing remains intact throughout this transition: Whites remain in power.



Internal colonialism has been used to explain the plight of racial and ethnic minorities in America. It has also been used to contextualize race and crime in America (see Blauner, 1969, 1972; Bosworth & Flavin, 2007; Staples, 1974, 1975, 1976a, 1976b). More recently, though, scholars have linked “global colonialism of the past . . . [to] social structures of oppression that persist into the present” (Feagin and Feagin, 2003, p. 35). This is referred to by Ramon Grosfoguel and Chloe Georas as “coloniality” or as (presented in Feagin & Feagin, 2003):

a situation of cultural, political, and ethnic oppression for subordinated racial and ethnic groups without the existence of an overt colonial administration and its trappings of legal segregation. Official decolonization does not mean an end to coloniality, the colonial hierarchies of racial and ethnic oppression often remain (p. 35).

In their analysis, they point to the subordinate status of African Americans and Puerto Ricans as prime examples of the continuing effects of colonialism.

Within an internal colonial system, this subordinate status manifests itself in three forms: economic subordination, political subordination, and social subordination (Tatum, 1994). Economic subordination can be seen in the slave system that developed in America. This system created a wealth imbalance that has yet to subside (see Anderson, 1994; Shapiro, 2004; Shapiro & Oliver, 1995). Other forms of economic subordination have been experienced by every racial and ethnic group who has arrived in America. Today, this subordination continues to place racial and ethnic minorities (particularly Blacks and Latinos) in those jobs in the secondary labor market that are fraught with low wages and job instability. As such, as Crutchfield (1989) has argued in the past, and more recently along with colleagues (Crutchfield, Matsueda, & Drakulich, 2006), it produces a situation conducive to high levels of social disorder in communities of color.

During the past few centuries, political subordination has been exercised through a variety of means used to restrict minority voter participation in the political process. This has come in the form of poll taxes, literacy tests, voter intimidation, redistricting, etc. In all instances, the aim has been to impede the progress of minorities. But as a consequence of these discriminatory practices, Blacks and other racial and ethnic minorities have had little influence on matters related to crime and justice, which even in contemporary times produces inequities in regard to which groups become the focus of criminal justice

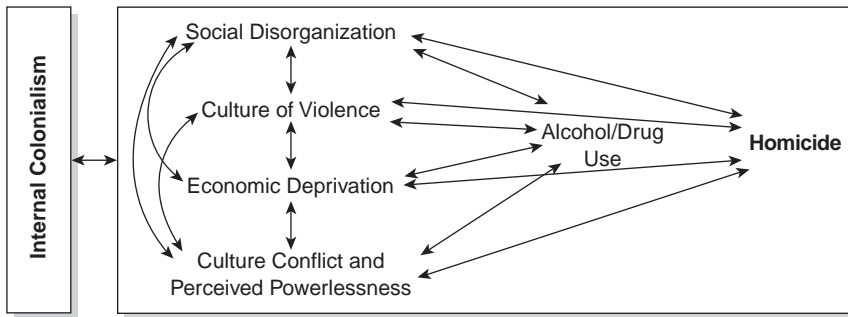
attention and who, in the end, will bear the brunt of punitive “get tough” policies (Beckett & Sasson, 2003; Tonry, 1995).

Social subordination also takes hold during internal colonialism. Here, as before during external colonialism, Whites—in all aspects of humanity—are believed to be the superior group, while racial and ethnic minorities are considered inferior. Thus, racial and ethnic groups (particularly indigenous people, Blacks, and Latinos) have been separated from their culture and “have little knowledge of their cultural heritage, languages, or religions” (Tatum, 1994, p. 47). The one exception here is that “while White ethnic groups often have to give up their traditional ways in order to assimilate into dominant society, there is no intentional action to destroy their cultural heritage, languages, religions or traits” (Tatum, 1994, p. 47).

In the end, because of their status in the social order, Whites are less likely to want to interact with or live near racial or ethnic minorities. This results in segregation (Massey & Denton, 1993) that has been shown to have a negative impact on both the level of crime *and* the perception of crime levels (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Krivo, Peterson, & Karafin, 2006; Quillian & Pager, 2001) in communities of color. Why? The problem is not that crime is high because racial and ethnic minorities are not living next to Whites. It is more a product of them being separated from good basic services and employment opportunities, which, in many cases, have long left inner city communities (to suburban areas) where large numbers of the most disadvantaged people reside (Wilson, 1987, 1996).

### **The Current Status of the Colonial Model**

On the whole, as evidenced by this review of the perspective, the colonial model has much to offer those seeking to contextualize race and crime. Even so, the perspective has not fully lived up to its promise, with most direct tests of its components only showing limited support (Austin, 1983, 1987; Tatum, 2000b). The key problem with these tests, though, is the fact that colonialism should be considered an antecedent variable. That is, colonialism is the instigator of the problems that are now prevalent in communities of color around the globe (Bosworth & Flavin, 2007; Saleh-Hanna, 2008). Bachman’s (1992) conceptual scheme presented in Figure 1.1 best outlines this. In the figure we see that colonialism precedes other conditions that are often contextualized using other criminological perspectives such as

**Figure 1.1** Theoretical Model for American Indian Homicide.

SOURCE: From Bachman, R., *Death and Violence on the Reservation*, Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., Westport, CT., 1992. Reprinted with permission.

social disorganization, culture conflict, economic deprivation, etc. Thus, in some ways, there will always be considerable limitations when scholars attempt to directly test the colonial perspective (Tatum, 1994). Likewise, other criminological perspectives also will have difficulty fully explaining race, ethnicity, and crime because they exclude measures that attempt to measure colonialism (Gabbidon, 2007).

Besides the difficulty testing the perspective, the colonial model also does not account for why some people who experience one form of alienation may or may not respond differently. In addition, unlike race, class issues are not adequately addressed by the perspective (Tatum, 1994). The perspective also doesn't address how Whites deal with alienation and class issues within a colonial society. So, for example, if a White person becomes alienated in a colonial society because they are on the lower stratum of White society, does this result in deviant behavioral responses? This is simply not addressed by the theory. In line with this limitation, the theory also doesn't address to what extent one's phenotype might play in the colonial order (Tatum, 1994, 2000c). Even with the foregoing limitations, the perspective has much to offer those seeking to contextualize race, ethnicity, and crime.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the colonial perspective. Though neglected, the perspective provides essential context for understanding the true origins of elevated

levels of social problems, including crime, in colonial and post-colonial societies. The perspective highlights both the social and psychological aspects of colonialism and how groups react to the conditions and the alienation that result from exposure to a system that inherently preaches the superiority of the colonizer and the inferiority of the colonized. But to further highlight the direct relevance of the theory to those students of race, ethnicity, crime, and justice, the next five chapters are devoted to countries in which the colonial model has something to offer crime and justice scholars. The next chapter examines race, ethnicity, crime, and justice in Great Britain which, of the countries profiled, became the key instigator of global colonialism. As such, it seems only fitting to first examine how race, crime, and ethnicity has played out in the country that shaped the colonial machinery.

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