Criminological Perspectives on Race and Crime

SECOND EDITION

SHAUN L. GABBIDON
Ideal for use in either criminological theory or race and crime courses, this is the only text to review and assess an array of explanations for crime as they relate to racial and ethnic minorities.

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_African American Classics in Criminology and Criminal Justice_ (2002). (SAGE) (edited with Helen Taylor Greene and Vernetta D. Young)


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Series Foreword

Criminology and Justice Studies offers works that make both intellectual and stylistic innovations in the study of crime and criminal justice. The goal of the series is to publish works that model the best scholarship and thinking in the criminology and criminal justice field today, but in a style that connects that scholarship to a wider audience including advanced undergraduates, graduate students, and the general public. The works in this series help fill the gap between academic monographs and encyclopedic textbooks by making innovative scholarship accessible to a large audience without the superficiality of many texts.

The second edition of Criminological Perspectives on Race and Crime synthesizes a wide range of research on the relationship between race and criminal behavior in a way that will be accessible and of interest to a wide range of readers. Shaun Gabbidon has undertaken a significant expansion and revision of the first edition that reinforces the importance of trying to understand the link between race and crime. The success of the first edition was based on Gabbidon's systematic application of many criminological theories—some familiar, some unfamiliar to readers—to racial disparities in criminal behavior. This approach allowed him to highlight both the strengths and the weaknesses of each criminological perspective as an explanation of racial disparities in crime. The second edition relies on a much larger base of research, but maintains the same balanced approach to applying and to evaluating criminological theories and should be of interest to researchers and students interested in issues of race, ethnicity, and crime.

Chester Britt
Preface

As I noted in the first edition of this work, the idea for this book has its origins in Coramae Richey Mann’s classic text, *Unequal Justice: A Question of Color* (1993). As a graduate student, I can recall reading Chapter 3, in which Mann reviewed theories that sought to explain offending and victimization trends among racial and ethnic minorities. After reading the chapter, I realized the importance of exploring the utility of criminological perspectives for contextualizing race, ethnicity, and crime. Thus, the first edition of this work represented the first attempt to provide book-length coverage of criminological theories that have been proffered to better understand race, ethnicity, and crime (for recent chapter length discussions of theories used to explain race and crime, see Gabbidon and Taylor Greene 2009, Chapter 3; Leiber 2008).

To say the least, the response to the first edition was overwhelming! In addition to strong sales and scholarly reviews, I received emails and had personal conversations with countless colleagues from around the world who were appreciative of the work. Consequently, on the heels of this positive feedback, Routledge decided to publish this revised second edition.

This new edition has been completely updated with more than one hundred new citations. Even so, I cannot claim the work is fully comprehensive. The sheer number of works published each year precludes the inclusion of every study that tests the perspectives profiled in this book. Nonetheless, the work provides, as reviewers of the first edition have noted (see Dawson–Edwards 2008; Henderson 2008;
Knowles 2008), a starting point for those interested in examining how well criminological theory contextualizes racial and ethnic disparities. In addition, I have added new discussions of emerging perspectives such as “Deadly Symbiosis,” critical race theory/criminology, comparative conflict theory, and maximization, the latter being a proposed new addition to Merton’s original strain theory. All in all, I think readers will be pleased with the revised edition.

The aims for the second edition remain the same as the first. First, this work is an attempt to produce a book that answers the question so many students and scholars ask—especially once they see data showing racial and ethnic disparities in crime and victimization (particularly as they relate to violence): “What explains such differences?” To answer this question, I have reexamined some of the “classic” theoretical works to determine whether they addressed the issue of racial and ethnic disparities. In addition, the second edition continues my efforts to explore criminological perspectives advanced by racial and ethnic minorities. Finally, I continue to be concerned with determining which, if any, criminological perspectives have been most successful in contextualizing racial and ethnic disparities.

To accomplish these aims, I have reviewed numerous articles and books that have directly or indirectly focused on this issue. My coverage includes international research, which illuminates the global nature of the problem, as well as the usefulness of exporting some American-based theories and importing theories from overseas. The book is divided into ten chapters. Many focus on traditional criminological theories; first I explain their basic tenets and then follow with a review of the scholarly literature devoted to exploring how well the perspective contextualizes crime among racial and ethnic minorities. Due to the nature of this book, the discussion of three well-known perspectives was excluded. Specifically, there are no chapters on learning theories, psychological perspectives, and rational choice theory. These subjects were excluded because only a limited number of research studies have used these perspectives to contextualize racial disparities, although occasionally some studies integrated aspects of them. In such instances, the assorted theories included in the integrated perspectives are noted. Even with the absence of these staples, the book reviews an abundance of relevant studies on the remaining theoretical perspectives. Finally,
in line with traditional theory books, each chapter notes some general weaknesses of each perspective.

The book begins with an introductory chapter that provides an overview of important concepts such as race, crime, and theory. In addition, the chapter closes by arguing that the earliest connections between race and crime can be found in religious doctrines. Chapter 2 examines biological perspectives on race and crime. Beginning with the well-known works of Lombroso, this chapter reviews the scholarly literature that has pointed to biology to explain racial disparities related to race and crime. Here, there is expanded coverage of the emerging biosocial approach. Chapter 3 is devoted to social disorganization and strain theories. Social disorganization theory has continued to be a staple among criminologists as well as among those who are seeking to better understand the plight of racial and ethnic minorities residing in disorganized communities. The multiple forms of strain theory are also reviewed in Chapter 3. Over time, its original formulation by Robert Merton has popularized the theory for race and crime theorists. In addition, Robert Agnew’s general strain theory has significantly renewed interest in the perspective. This interest has spurred an increasing body of literature on the role of race discrimination as a stressor. This chapter reviews this emerging literature.

Chapter 4 covers subcultural perspectives on race and crime. Following an analysis of the early scholarly literature in this area, the chapter examines the well-known thesis on the subculture of violence and the more recent “code of the streets” perspective. For both perspectives, the chapter assesses the utility of such theories for understanding inner-city crime and violence. Labeling theory is the focus of Chapter 5. While over the last few decades the theory has lost its luster within the discipline of criminology, the chapter argues that the perspective remains important because of the renewed interest in the impact of stereotypes on racial and ethnic minorities.

Among the most widely used perspectives to contextualize race and crime, conflict theory, which is the focus of Chapter 6, has a long history of showing the relevance of one’s class and position in society to understanding crime and justice. The chapter reveals that race also has historically been a central emphasis of scholarly literature examining the plight of racial and ethnic minorities in America and abroad. Chapter 7
focuses on social control perspectives on race and crime. Almost from
the very beginning, theorists attached to this perspective have declared
its “generality”; thus, they argue that the theory is race neutral and
can contextualize crime among all racial and ethnic groups (here and
abroad). By reviewing a sampling of past and current scholarship in
the area, I question this claim. Chapter 8 examines the colonial model,
which is arguably one of the most neglected and under-researched
 criminological perspectives. This chapter introduces the basic tenets
of the perspective and also examines the limited scholarly literature
devoted to the exposition of the theory.

Chapter 9 examines feminist perspectives on race and crime. By
examining the “two waves” of the feminist movement, the chapter explores
development of scholarly literature on gender, race, and crime. Centered
primarily on the black female experience, the chapter examines how the
theory can be useful to race and crime scholars. Chapter 10 concludes the
book by providing an overview of the numerous theoretical perspectives
reviewed. No integrated race and crime perspective is presented because
such an undertaking, as is evidenced by the contents of this book, would
be futile. Racial and ethnic minorities are too diverse to have one theory.
Even so, some theories are obviously more “generalizable” than others.
The conclusion makes note of such perspectives.
A Brief Introduction to Race, Crime, and Theory

Because there is already an abundance of excellent individual books on race, crime, and criminological theory, the primary goal of this chapter is to provide a brief overview of the areas that comprise the core elements of this work. The chapter begins with an overview of race and racism, which is followed by an overview of the concept of crime and a review of the rudimentary aspects of the nature and usefulness of theory. To begin the discourse on race, crime, and theory, the chapter concludes with an illustration of the early intermingling of race and crime in religious doctrines.

Origins of Race and Racism

While today the term “race” is primarily used to refer to the grouping of people (e.g. African Americans, whites, etc.) on the basis of color and cultural characteristics, according to Feagin and Feagin (2008), the term was originally used to describe “descendants of a common ancestor, emphasizing kinship linkages rather than physical characteristics such as skin color, hair type, or facial features” (p. 4). However, by the late eighteenth century, the term began to be used to describe “physical characteristics transmitted by descent” (p. 4). The German anatomist Johann Blumenbach played a significant role in this change by creating a racial classification system in his doctoral thesis, “On the natural variety of mankind” (published in 1775). Blumenbach’s system included a hierarchy of the races, listing them in the following order: Caucasians (Europeans), Mongolians (Asians),
Ethiopians (Africans), Americans (Native Americans), and Malays (Polynesians).

Just as the concept of race is not new, racism, which is the use of race as the basis for discriminating against another group of people, also has a long history. Gossett (1963) documented that, while the term “race” is of recent origin, acts of racism are of ancient origin. Pointing to India and Egypt as some of the first places where the distinction of race was noted, he wrote that “the racism of ancient history, even though it had no science or biology or anthropology behind it, was real, however difficult it may be for us to judge the extent of its power” (p. 3). Gossett described some early illustrations of race prejudice in India and Egypt. Over 5,000 years ago in India, he noted, the sacred text of Hinduism, the Rig-Veda, refers to “an invasion by Aryas, or Aryans, of the valley of the Indus where there lived a dark-hued people” (p. 3). Quoting from the Rig-Veda, Gossett wrote that Indra, the god of the Aryans, “[blows] away with supernatural powers the might from earth and from the heavens the black skin which Indra hates” (pp. 3–4). In the end, Indra conquers the land for the Aryans and decrees that the defeated blacks be whipped (p. 4).

In Egypt, as early as 1350 B.C., pictures in tombs portrayed people using four colors. Red was used to represent the Egyptians, while yellow represented “their enemies to the east.” White was used to represent people from the north and black for Negroes. As noted by Gossett (1963):

Color prejudice … depended on which ethnic group held sway. When the lighter-skinned Egyptians were dominant they referred to the darker group “as the evil race of Ish.” On the other hand, when the darker-skinned Egyptians were in power, they retorted by calling the lighter-skinned people “the pale, degraded race of Arvad.”

(p. 4)

Even with this long global history of racism, Frederickson (2002) has suggested that only within the last century have “overtly racist regimes” emerged. Such societies have five distinguishing features. First, the ideology of the society must be explicitly racist. Expanding on this feature, he wrote:
Those in authority proclaim insistently that the differences between the dominant group and the one that is being subordinated or eliminated are permanent and unbridgeable. Dissent from this ideology is dangerous and is likely to bring legal or extralegal reprisals, for racial egalitarianism is heresy in an overtly racist regime.

(p. 101)

Another distinguishing feature is that the racist regime codifies its beliefs by outlawing interracial marriages to create “racial purity” and a caste system based on racial differences (p. 101). The third feature of a racist regime is that social segregation is mandated by law, the purpose of which “is to bar all forms of contact that might imply equality between the segregators and the segregated” (p. 101). The fourth feature is when “outgroup members are excluded from holding public office or even exercising the franchise” (p. 101). The final feature is when the subordinated group has such limited access to resources and opportunities that most of them “are either kept in poverty or deliberately impoverished” (p. 101).

In Frederickson’s view, while there have been racialized societies where race prejudice has contributed to social stratification, none of those prior to the twentieth century constituted “overtly racial regimes.” During the twentieth century, he classified “Jim Crow” laws in the American South, South Africa under apartheid, and Nazi Germany as “ideal types” of “overtly racist regimes” (p. 101).

Even if Frederickson is correct, the racist regimes that have existed were significant contributors to the globalization of racist doctrines that, as noted throughout this book, serve as a central component of various racist criminological doctrines.

Crime

On crime, the eminent French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1938/1895) stated:

Crime is present not only in the majority of societies of one particular species but in all societies of all types. There is no society that is not confronted with the problem of criminality. Its form changes: the acts this characterized are not the same everywhere; but, everywhere and
always, there have been men who have behaved in such a way as to draw
upon themselves penal repression.”

(pp. 65–6)

Given this suggestion, Durkheim felt crime must be normal. A
glance at world history suggests that his assertion has some merits (for
an alternative view, see Christie 2004). Therefore, while the nature
and extent of crime have varied and continue to vary among societies,
there is no society in which it has not been found. As a consequence,
over time, most societies have generally defined certain behaviors as
wrong or, as we now refer to them, criminal. Given this fact, most
societies have sought to address crime through various programs and
practices. Similarly, over time, even with Durkheim’s pronouncement,
scholars have sought to explain why people violate the norms (or laws)
constructed by individual societies. Such explanations (also referred to
as theories or perspectives) have been diverse in both nature and scope.

In more recent times, scholars have also become interested with
the over-representation of racial and ethnic minorities in arrest and
victimization statistics in white-dominated and previously colonized
countries around the globe (for examples, see Bowling and Phillips
2002; Chan and Mirchandani 2002; Gabbidon 2009; Gabbidon and
Mosher 1998; Saleh-Hanna 2008; Walker, Spohn, and DeLone 2007).
Predictably, irrespective of the country where the interest in racial and
ethnic disparities has originated, formulating and testing the utility
of theories to understand the scope and nature of the criminality and
victimization have been a central focus of scholars. Before reviewing
some of these perspectives, the rudimentary aspects of theory are
reviewed next.

The Foundations of Theory

According to Bohm (2001), “A theory is an explanation” (p. 1). Some
to explaining crime, just about every society has scholars who have
an opinion on the subject. All of these insights, however, might not
qualify as scientific theory. Curran and Renzetti (2001) noted that, to
qualify as scientific, “a theory is a set of interconnected statements or propositions that explain how two or more events or factors are related to one another” (p. 2). Furthermore, they point out that theories are usually logically sound and empirically testable.

Theories can further be categorized by whether they are macrotheories, microtheories, or bridging theories (Williams and McShane 2010). Macrotheories focus on the social structure and are generally not concerned with individual behavior; conversely, microtheories look to explain crime by looking at groups (but in small numbers) or at the individual (p. 8). Bridging theories “tell us both how social structure comes about and how people become criminal” (p. 9). Many of the theories reviewed in the following chapters fit some of these criteria; although others fall short they nonetheless provide useful insights into race and crime. Thus, there is some discussion of nontraditional perspectives that speak to race and crime but have not been folded into the mainstream of scientific criminological theory.

Theories are valuable for a number of reasons. Curran and Renzetti (2001) provided an important summary of the usefulness of theory:

Theories help bring order to our lives because they expand our knowledge of the world around us and suggest systematic solutions to problems we repeatedly confront. Without the generalizable knowledge provided by theories, we would have to solve the same problems over and over again, largely through trial and error. Theory, therefore, rather than being just a set of abstract ideas, is quite practical. It is usable knowledge.

(p. 2)

There are several paradigms within criminological theory that are reviewed here; for example, biological approaches, some of which look to genetic inheritance to explain crime. Other theories have their foundations in the American social structure, culture or one’s gender. Yet other theories, such as the labeling and colonial perspective, have psychological foundations. In recent years, more theorists have also sought to integrate some of these approaches (Agnew 2005; Barak 2009; Godinet and Vakalahi 2009; Messner et al. 1989; Miethe and Meier 1994; Robinson and Beaver 2009). As one might expect, many of these theories have been applied to explain racial and ethnic disparities related to crime. Even before such theories were being formally postulated, race
and crime were connected primarily through religious doctrines. This connection is explored next.

**Early Religious Connections of Race and Crime**

At some point in history, the concepts of race and crime became enmeshed; persons of a darker hue were saddled with the criminal badge. While no exact date of this connection likely exists, the general ideology under which it initially flourished, I believe, was religious in origin. On the connection between crime and spirituality, Bernard et al. (2010) noted that “primitive people regarded natural disasters, such as famine, floods, and plagues as punishments for wrongs they had done to the spiritual powers” (pp. 2–3). As religion became more formalized and documented, holy books such as the Bible took a central place in the search for those who were to be considered “evil” and criminal.

Eventually, the Hamatic myth, which linked this “evil” and criminality to black people, was developed (Sanders 1969). The myth centers on Genesis 9 and 10 in the Bible. The first key passage notes that Noah and his sons were given the responsibility of repopulating the world after the great flood. Genesis 9 identifies Noah’s sons as Shem, Ham, and Japheth. In Genesis 10, Noah plants a vineyard and gets drunk. Naked and drunk in his tent, Noah is seen by his son Ham, who tells his brothers to look at him. However, instead of looking at their father, Ham’s two brothers covered their father with a blanket. When Noah awakened, he realized what had happened and declared,

> Cursed be Canaan [son of Ham]; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren … Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant … God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.  

*(King James Bible 1992, p. 31)*

The central point here is that Ham is believed to have been a black person (Emanuel 1992, p. 25) (see Figure 1.1) and his cursed son Canaan would have been the producer of generations of cursed offspring. Following the path of the myth, the Canaanites were described as wicked people whose temples were said to feature “prostitutes, orgies, and human sacrifice. Relics and plaques of exaggerated sex organs hint
at the morality that characterized Canaan” (King James Bible 1992, p. 228). In addition, it is believed that Canaanite gods, such as Baal and his wife, Anath, delighted in butchery and sadism. Archeologists have found great numbers of jars containing the tiny bones of children sacrificed to Baal. Families seeking good luck in a home practiced “foundation sacrifice.” They would kill one of their children and seal the body in the mortar of the wall.

(pp. 228–9)

Such a virulent myth set in motion the belief that all black people were “evil” and criminal.

Seeking the origin of the use of this myth to denigrate black people, Frederickson (1981) found that “Johan Boemus, a German Hebraic scholar, argued as early as 1521 that all barbarous people descended from Ham, while all civilized men were the issue of Shem and Japheth” (p. 10). From this point forward, the myth was used to justify the enslavement and colonization of blacks around the globe. Given the myth’s connection to the “evil” Canaanites, it was also implicitly used to explain blacks’ involvement in deviant or criminal activities (Sanders 1969).

The next logical step was to move the myth from the religious sphere to a sphere more “scientific” in character. This sphere came in the form of biological theories. The origin and nature of biological perspectives on race and crime are the focus of Chapter 2.
In this chapter, the coverage of biology, race, and crime spans several areas. First, the chapter examines those works that look at primarily physical characteristics to explain crime (e.g. body type, head shape, etc.). Reviewing some of the earliest writings on biological criminology, the chapter aims to illustrate the global reach of Cesare Lombroso’s work connecting biology, race, and crime. Second, the chapter examines literature in the emerging and controversial area of biosocial perspectives. Finally, the chapter also examines those theories that focus on intelligence, which though psychological in origin, are often discussed under the umbrella of biological perspectives. All of these areas provide the bases for the current arguments linking biology, race, and crime.

Early Connections of Biology, Race, and Crime: Lombroso’s Global Influence

In general, the connection between biology and crime has its roots in Europe. Of the origin of this connection, Reid (1957) wrote that “[in] the year 1843 a Spanish physician Soler was [the] first to [mention] the concept of the born criminal” (p. 772). It was also Europe where phrenology, the study of the external shape of the head, was first popularized (Vold et al. 1998, pp. 41–2). The publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) were also quite influential in this era. Once Cesare Lombroso, a doctor in the Italian Army in the nineteenth century and the so-called father of criminology, read Darwin’s texts, he drew on them and began studying army personnel
from the southern portions of Italy where, in addition to being considered inferior beings, the citizens were thought to be “lazy, incapable, criminal, and barbaric” (Vold et al. 1998, pp. 42–3). Lombroso’s assessment was largely based on his belief that it was the presence of Africans and Eastern elements that contributed to this situation in southern Italy (Gibson 1998). His views were also largely the product of biological determinism and his feelings about the inferiority of black people.

In an early work, *White Man and Colored Man: Lectures on the Origin and Variety of the Human Races* (1871), Lombroso presented an evolutionary theory espousing that blacks represented the lowest and most primitive race, from which all others—including intermediary groups like the Semites and the Asians—had sprung under the positive influence of temperate climates. But the African had changed little for millennia, still displaying “that infantile and monkey-like manner of smiling and gesturing.”

(as quoted in Gibson 2002, p. 107)

Seeking an explanation for what he felt was the intellectual inferiority of blacks, Lombroso turned to the following physical explanation: “the brain is undeveloped in the back and weighs less than ours. As for the skull that holds it, the face predominates over the forehead as [their] passions drown [their] intelligence” (as quoted in Gibson, p. 107).

Five years later Lombroso published his first major work, *The Criminal Man* (1876). The crux of Lombroso’s thesis was that criminals were different from noncriminals. In his view, the difference could largely be traced to their biology. He concluded that most criminals fell into one of four categories. First, there were those who were atavistic (born criminals) or were primitive in their genetic makeup. While too numerous to list here, some of these atavistic characteristics included:

the slight development of the pilar system; low cranial capacity; retreating forehead; highly developed frontal sinuses, great frequency of Wormian bones; early closing of the cranial sutures; the simplicity of sutures; the thickness of the bones of the skull; enormous development of the maxillaries and the zygoma; prognathism; obliquity of the orbits; greater pigmentation of the skin; tufted and crispy hair; and large ears.

(Lombroso 1911/1968, p. 365)
Lombroso’s three other categories of criminals included insane criminals, occasional criminals, and criminals by passion. The insane criminals included those he categorized as idiots, imbeciles, alcoholics, and epileptics (see Lombroso 1876/1911, pp. 74–99). The occasional criminals or criminaloids, as he referred to them, were fairly normal (with few physical anomalies), intelligent (in contrast to born criminals), and typically offended later in life (see Lombroso, 1876/1911 pp. 100–21). Lastly, criminals by passion are in complete contrast with the born criminal, both in the harmonious lines of the body, the beauty of the sole [sic], and great nervous and emotional sensitiveness, as well as in the motives of their crimes, always noble and powerful, such as love or politics. Nevertheless, they show some points of resemblance with epileptics, such as their tendency to excess, impulsiveness, suddenness in their outbreaks, and frequent amnesia.

(Lombroso 1911/1968, p. 376)

Throughout Lombroso’s works, he made clear the importance of race in explaining crime. He mentioned that some tribes in parts of India and Italy had high crime rates due to “ethnical causes” (Lombroso 1876/1911, p. 140). He added that “the frequency of homicide in Calabria, Sicily, and Sardinia is fundamentally due to African and Oriental elements” (p. 140). When Lombroso took on the task of explaining criminality among women, he again saw race as being an important contributor to crime. In his view, Negro women and American Indian women were seen as manly looking (a sign of atavism), which contributed to their criminality. More specifically, after presenting pictures of both types of women (see Figure 2.1), he wrote: “It is difficult to believe that these are really women, so huge are their jaws and cheekbones, so hard and thick are their features. The skulls and brains of savage women, too, often resemble those of men” (Lombroso and Ferrero 1893/2004, pp. 149–50).

In another publication, Lombroso had the following to say about American Negroes:

The principal thing is always … the stifling of the primitive, wild instincts. Even if he (the Negro) is dressed in the European way and
has accepted the customs of modern culture, all too often there remains in him a lack of respect for life of his fellow men, the disregard for life which all wild people have in common. To them, a murder appears as an ordinary occurrence, even a glorious occurrence when it is inspired by feelings of vengeance. The mentality is furthered in the Negro by his scorn of his white fellow-citizens, and by bestial sexual impulses.

(as quoted in Bonger 1943, pp. 48–9)

Building on Lombroso’s work, Enrico Ferri (1895), another noted Italian criminologist, felt that race was more relevant for explaining the more serious offenses. As he put it, “The Negro does not have a bad but only an unstable character like a baby, but with the difference that it is linked with mature physical development; thus this instability is the consequence of an incomplete cerebral development” (as quoted in Gibson 1998, p. 106). A student of Ferri’s, Alfredo Niceforo, seeking to explain the difference in offending throughout Italy, conducted an analysis of Nuorese skulls and found that the trends in Nuorese crime could be traced to the fact that their skulls resembled those of Africans (Gibson 1998, p. 108).

Other writers of the period, such as Rowlands (1897), also turned to race and physical characteristics to explain crime:
The criminal is further to be recognized by his tastes and occupation; he is fond of alcohol, cards, and sexual vices; he dislikes regular work, and is sentimental, religious, or superstitious; he is given to write poetry on the walls of his cells or on the kitchen utensils; he is both stupid and cunning; he is frequently tattooed, and generally justifies his misdeeds on high moral principle. And, finally, the typical criminal would have “projecting ears, thick hair, and thin beard, projecting frontal eminences, enormous jaws, a square and projecting chin, large cheek bones, and frequent gesticulation,” and would in type resemble the Mongolian or sometimes the Negroid."

(p. 245)

As is evidenced by these early publications, Lombroso’s works were widely hailed and adopted. Most of his work was also translated into other languages. By the time Lombroso’s works were translated into English, biological determinism had already taken hold internationally. This doctrine, which preached the superiority of whites over other racial groups, had serious ramifications for people of color. Racists used the race and crime connection proposed in Lombroso’s work to show the inferiority and inherent criminality of people of color around the globe.

For example, an early writer who pointed to the international relevance of Lombroso’s work in explaining race and crime was one of Lombroso’s collaborators (and son-in-law) Guglielmo Ferrero. Specifically, Ferrero (1900) pointed to the primitiveness, laziness, and criminality of Tupis (people of Brazilian origin) and Africans. Of the criminality of the Tupis of South America, he wrote that, “if they happened to tread on a stone, [they] became so furious that they would begin to bite the latter like a dog” (p. 96). As for Africans, he commented, “In Africa we find a proverbial giddiness and levity among the Hottentots. They are so little given to labor that they almost all live by begging and are reduced to a state of extreme muscular debility” (p. 96). He also wrote that “[another] important characteristic of the African [N]egro is the ease with which he passes from one extreme to the other, and the sudden violence and brevity of his fits of rage” (p. 96).

In line with Lombroso’s ideas, Ferrero (1900) noted that eighteen centuries earlier the Teutonic (German) race had gone through a similar stage, but was now “universally reputed [as being] calm and tenaciously
laborious” (p. 96). Put succinctly, in Ferrero’s view, the Tupis and Africans were still atavistic while Germans had long evolved from such a state and no longer exhibited the criminal characteristics associated with atavism.

Criminologists have likely underestimated the reach of Lombroso’s work. It is well known that European and American scholars adopted Lombroso’s approach, but scholars in understudied countries such as Latin America also embraced his doctrines. Graham (1990) writes: “It was Fernando Ortiz in Cuba and Nina Rodrigues in Brazil, pioneer students of Afro-Latin American culture, who endorsed the idea of innate black criminality” (p. 5). Rodrigues was a Brazilian who studied Lombroso’s work and applied it to his country. Skidmore (1990), highlighting the various facets of Rodrigues’s work, wrote that

he also studied the social behavior of blacks and mixed bloods in the light of Lombrosian theory. Criminal tendencies among blacks, for example, were explained by analyzing their skulls. His approach to criminal medicine—which clearly followed dominant European theories—greatly influenced the succeeding generation of anthropologists and sociologists … (p. 11)

Moreover, Skidmore wrote that “to appreciate how far he carried Lombosian theory, one need only remember that he recommended different treatment of convicted criminals according to their race” (1990, p. 11).

Because of the “triracial” nature of Cuba, Helg (1990) noted that Fernando Ortiz, who is recognized as Cuba’s first ethnologist, found it an ideal place to study black delinquency (pp. 48, 52). Among those who influenced Ortiz were Lombroso, Ferri, and Garofolo. In fact, four years after writing his doctoral thesis at the Universidad Central in Madrid in December of 1901, he began regular communications with Lombroso, who also directed and published some of Ortiz’s work on crime among blacks in Cuba (Orovio and Mulero 2005). According to Helg, Ortiz felt that “Africans were inferior because of their lack of integral civilization and morals” (Ortiz as cited in Helg 1990, p. 52). Other characteristics Ortiz used to describe African inferiority included that “they were lascivious lovers, given to polygamy, and had no cohesive families; their religion led them to human sacrifice,
anthropophagy (cannibalism) and the most brutal superstitions” (p. 52). Drawing on these observations, Ortiz concluded that African criminality “… differed from the white criminality theorized by Lombroso … [t]he criminality of Africans … was explained by the complete primitives of their collective psyche, incapable of moral discernment” (p. 52). At its core, Ortiz felt that Cuban criminality was the product of “African superstitions, organizations, languages, and dances …” (p. 52).

These ideas are highlighted in his well known work, *Hampa Afro-Cubana, Los Negros Brujos* (1906). In Ortiz’s view, the brujos or sorcerers were main contributors to crime-related concerns (di Leo 2005). Consequently, Ortiz’s proscription for solving the crime problem in Cuba was to eradicate the negative African traits and culture. To do so, he dreamed of a “penitentiary city” where he felt that “if there were a true criminal colony in Cuba, the problem [of the isolation of the brujo] would almost be solved as brujos could take up special tasks, isolated from the other categories of criminals” (p. 42).

These two case studies illustrate that, in the late 1800s, Lombrosian ideals were being espoused not only in Europe and North America, but around the globe where racial and ethnic groups were the focus of ideas that inferior “stocks” were polluting societies. After the publication of Lombroso’s work, linking bad “stock” to crime became the standard progression. Some of the most virulent attacks were reserved for African Americans. Books such as Charles Carroll’s *The Negro a Beast* (1900) and *In the Image of God* (1900) spoke to the fact that African Americans were not human; they were more akin to apes. Relying heavily on biblical interpretations, such as those presented in Chapter 1, Carroll sought to show why the white race was superior to African Americans. Around the same time, it was thought that, because of their genetic inferiority, African Americans would eventually die off (Hoffman 1896).

Even early American sociologists, such as Charles Henderson (1901) of the University of Chicago, picked up on the connection of biology, race, and crime and wrote:

There can be no doubt that one of the most serious factors in crime statistics is found in the conditions of the freedmen of African descent, both North and South. The causes are complex. The primary factor is