

# On an entrepreneurial criminology of mass political violence

Nicolas Carrier • Augustine S. J. Park

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**Abstract** This article examines an entrepreneurial criminology of mass political violence within the broader set of criminological communications on this theme, and identifies some troubling dimensions of the criminological closures on which the enterprise rests. The criminological enterprise over mass political violence testifies to ambitions of external expansion at the expense of other social scientific analyses, that are represented as ill-qualified for the study of this particular object, while evacuating from its conception of criminology intellectual traditions averse to the promotion of criminalization as a means to constitute and respond to troubling events. The normative values advanced in enterprising calls seem to have led to a failure to submit certain assumptions to rigorous intellectual (and political) critique. The result is an analytic conservatism that, perhaps unwittingly, reinforces dominant assumptions about crime, as well as an uncritical adoption of liberal internationalism and western cultural dominance.

## Introduction

At the dusk of the 19th century, debates about how to designate and further foster burgeoning truth claims about ‘crime’, ‘criminality’ and ‘criminals’ settled on the term ‘criminology’. This term was seen as providing the advantage of not limiting the scope of an emergent *logos* on crime to the zoological approach championed by the Italian school of criminal anthropology, thus promoting a conception of the emergent science of crime that was not confined to individualized and biologized aetiological speculations [9, 107, 129]. The 20th century has witnessed the highly successful

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N. Carrier (✉)  
Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive,  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
e-mail: nicolas\_carrier@carleton.ca

A. S. J. Park  
Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada  
e-mail: augustine\_sj\_park@carleton.ca