

Tamari Kitossa, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology
Brock University

**Centering African Canadian Studies:
The merits and warnings of incorporating of criminology**

Although dominated by the humanities, inquiry into the African Canadian experience is a rich interdisciplinarity that includes: education, epidemiology, public administration, socio-legal studies, and sociology. Toward exploring the content and parameters of a coherent African Canadian studies, the genealogy of this inquiry recommends the need for a sustained, but highly selective, engagement with criminology. The reason is clear; although the issue of blackness and crime is tendentious in works of and about African Canadians, in total, it is a persistent and important theme. While this theme is developing into a small body of literature, those explicitly concerned with this area should move toward conceptual coherency in the centre of African Canadian studies and affirm their fringe status in criminology. This requires that while being mindful of criminology's limitations, they should draw on the insights of critical criminology as they challenge the assumptions, research, and theories of administrative criminologists and left realist. Researchers in this area should take seriously African centered thought, anti-racism, Black feminist thought, class and capitalist analysis, and queer studies. Focusing on the dynamic engagement between African Canadians, the state, and society this heterodox approach aims to: a) produce nuanced descriptive and theoretical accounts of law breaking and making; b) generate insurgent epistemologies and critiques in criminology, most notably that of the internal colonial thesis; and c) assert normative interventions into public policy debates on criminal justice.