

**CRIMINOLOGY AS CULTURAL PRACTICE: A
COMPARATIVE DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL
JUSTICE SYSTEMS**

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ABSTRACT: The study utilised a comparative documentary analysis to examine criminology as a distinct professional and cultural practice across seven diverse countries: Nigeria, Uganda, India, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Argentina, and Australia. Utilising a purposive sampling method, these countries were selected to represent a broad global spectrum of socio-legal environments. Unlike ethnographic research, which requires primary fieldwork, the study systematically synthesised secondary literature, official reports, and legal documentation to investigate how the discipline of criminology is applied in varied field settings. The study adopted structural functionalism as its primary theoretical framework to evaluate how crime is perceived, prevented, and controlled; however, it acknowledged that this framework's focus on system equilibrium poses inherent limitations for a fully transformative decolonial critique. Findings demonstrated that criminological practice is fundamentally shaped by local cultural negotiations, revealing a significant disparity between standardised theoretical protocols and the realities of diverse justice systems. In nations such as Nigeria and Uganda, the study highlighted how informal power structures and communal justice models operate independently of formal state definitions, challenging the universality of Western-centric models. The study affirmed that a robust understanding of social order requires a decolonised methodology that views criminological practice as a socially situated act rather than a mere data-collection exercise. It advocated for a pluralistic research approach that integrates indigenous knowledge systems into formal criminological inquiry to ensure that policy and academic study remain culturally grounded and contextually valid.

Keywords: Criminology, Cultural Practice, Comparative Analysis, Legal Pluralism, Structural Functionalism

INTRODUCTION

Crime and the measures established to control it are fundamentally cultural products. Both criminal behaviour and the agents of control are conceptualised as inventive creations, manifesting as culturally mediated, symbolic social practices. The behaviour of various societal groups, including participants in subcultures, law enforcement personnel, political actors, security

providers, and media organisations, is guided by the meanings they ascribe to these cultural activities. Culture permeates every aspect of the criminal justice system, from the conditions that facilitate crime and the methods used for its prevention to the legal proceedings conducted in courts.

The foundations of criminology reflect a theoretical divergence concerning the nature of crime. The 'classical' school, championed by Enlightenment thinkers like Beccaria and Bentham, introduced the rational subject and the 'social contract,' asserting the law's inherent moral authority. This was later challenged by 'positivist' criminologists, including Lombroso, who advocated for scientific objectivity. These foundational debates remain central to contemporary discourse. Today, the study situates itself within the vibrant tradition of Southern criminology and decolonial methodologies (Carrington et al., 2019; Connell, 2007; Agozino, 2019), which critique the historical dominance of Northern, state-centric frameworks in favour of perspectives that better account for power asymmetries and the lived realities of the Global South. By utilising a comparative documentary analysis, the study builds upon the vital tradition of qualitative criminological inquiry established by scholars such as Ferrell et al. (2015) and Hall and Winlow (2015), moving beyond quantitative positivism to explore the diverse ways criminology is performed as a cultural practice.

Statement of the Problem

Criminological inquiry has traditionally been dominated by rigid, state-centric, and quantitative frameworks that obscure the nuanced, local realities of justice systems. Conventional methods of secondary data collection often fail to capture the subtle negotiations occurring between state actors and local gatekeepers, leaving critical micro-level cultural interactions invisible. Without a rigorous, comparative examination of how criminological practice functions globally, the discipline remains vulnerable to the uncritical application of Western theoretical models in diverse socio-legal environments. This reliance creates a significant global legitimacy gap, as formal administrative accounts often fail to reflect how local subcultures, communities, and authorities perceive, define, and respond to crime.

The study is essential because mainstream criminology lacks a unified, decolonised perspective that systematically captures global disparities. Prevailing frameworks frequently fail to address how local histories and informal social structures alter the implementation of justice, making a systematic empirical critique of global cross-cultural qualitative research vital to establishing valid, locally grounded knowledge.

This problem manifests as intense cultural and structural friction across various global landscapes. In Uganda, institutional fragility leads to the linguistic normalisation of corruption, driving citizens to bypass formal court systems in favour of communal justice mechanisms. In India, a formal colonial common law framework intersects with caste hierarchies and extended family structures, causing marginalised groups to face disproportionate custodial interference and slower legal redress while relying on traditional *Panchayats* for cultural legitimacy. In Argentina, a history of state terror fosters profound public cynicism, where "legalised illegalities" by elites and the rise of powerful family clans fill the governance vacuum left by a complicit state.

Concurrently, systems in the Global North undergo intense institutional crises that formal metrics fail to register. In the United Kingdom, the discipline faces scrutiny regarding structural inequalities, racial disparities in "stop and search" protocols, and an aggressive shift towards managerial efficiency over the deeper social causes of deviance. In the United States, the professionalisation of justice has undergone a "punitive turn," weaponising algorithmic risk assessments and "broken windows" policies to manage surplus populations through mass incarceration. In Australia, the carceral settler-state model remains in opposition to Indigenous customary laws, creating an ongoing crisis regarding the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Consequently, the core research problem is that mainstream criminology lacks a decolonised, comparative framework to map these complexities. This deficiency masks the critical discordance between formal legal protocols and local cultural practices, preventing the discipline from functioning as a socially situated act of scientific study (Ferrell, Hayward, and Young, 2015).

Research Objectives

The study seeks to critically analyse and document how criminological practice functions as a distinct cultural act across diverse global justice systems. Specifically, the research aims to:

- i. Examine how local cultural meanings and historical contexts mediate the definition and management of deviance in seven selected national jurisdictions.
- ii. Critically assess the limitations of exporting standardised, Western-centric criminological frameworks to highly diverse socio-legal environments.
- iii. Propose a more inclusive, pluralistic methodological framework that integrates indigenous and local knowledge systems into formal criminological study.

Significance of the Study

The study holds profound significance for academic scholars, criminal justice practitioners, and policy formulators because it offers a cross-cultural empirical critique of how criminological knowledge is gathered and applied. For the academic community, the research expands the boundaries of global criminology because it systematically exposes the limitations of exporting Western-centric, quantitative frameworks to diverse socio-legal environments. The study provides a foundational text for researchers seeking to build a more inclusive, decolonised approach to field inquiry because it documents the subtle negotiations, informal power dynamics, and local realities that are often left invisible in administrative reports. It served as a critical bridge between high-level theoretical models and the actual emic realities of communities grappling with crime, which ensures that academic discourse is grounded in contextual accuracy rather than uncritical assumptions.

For justice practitioners and institutional gatekeepers, the findings offer valuable operational insights into the friction between formal statutory laws and localised cultural practices. Understanding how concepts like communal restorative justice in India, informal para police structures in Nigeria, or customary legal systems in Australia operate allows practitioners to better

navigate the social environments they serve. Furthermore, the study provides a clear rationale for shifting away from rigid, one-size-fits-all administrative protocols for policy formulators and state actors. The research highlights the urgent need to design legal policies that integrate indigenous knowledge systems and respect local social realities, which will ultimately enhance the global legitimacy and efficacy of crime control measures because it demonstrates how the structural fragility of states leads to the normalisation of corruption or the rise of extrajudicial measures like mob justice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Criminological discourse is increasingly shaped by the recognition that theoretical frameworks originating in the Global North often fail to capture the specific socio-legal complexities of the Global South (Carrington et al., 2019). This reliance on foreign-centric models creates an analytical gap where researchers interpret local data through lenses that do not adequately account for indigenous social structures or the systemic legacies of colonial power. When researchers ignore these regional nuances, they struggle to explain the relationship between crime and governance in areas where state authority is frequently contested. A comparative documentary analysis provides a vital alternative, allowing for a broader understanding of how criminological practices adapt to local power dynamics while moving beyond the limitations of Northern-centric methodologies.

Southern Criminology attempts to resolve these persistent imbalances by developing inclusive frameworks that recognise the validity of local, non-Western knowledge (Agozino, 2003). This scholarly movement encourages researchers to ground their work in the unique histories and social realities of the periphery, rejecting the tradition of vertical knowledge transfers. The Global South must be viewed as an epistemic location where Western rationalism is re-contextualised, as regional universities serve as critical sites for generating alternative theories (Connell, 2007). Such efforts transform the study of crime from a process of outsider observation into a collaborative engagement with community realities, moving the discipline towards a truly global perspective that respects the intellectual history of diverse cultures.

Legal pluralism characterises many postcolonial societies where state-centric legal structures coexist with indigenous or restorative justice models (Swenson, 2018). Citizens frequently bypass formal, often inaccessible, state institutions in favour of informal or communal mechanisms that offer greater immediate legitimacy. In the study, Structural Functionalism is employed as a heuristic device to evaluate how these diverse institutions, both formal and informal seek to maintain social order. However, the analysis critically deconstructs this framework, acknowledging that functionalist assumptions of system equilibrium often obscure the profound power asymmetries and colonial legacies that characterise postcolonial societies. By tempering functionalist observations with the decolonial critiques of Agozino (2003) and the Southern theory of Connell (2007), the study shifts from a search for equilibrium to an investigation of how justice is negotiated in practice, ensuring that the research remains grounded in the lived realities of the Global South.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Structural Functionalism as its primary analytical framework to evaluate how crime is perceived, prevented, and controlled across diverse global contexts. Structural Functionalism posits that society functions as a complex system where institutions and cultural norms work in concert to promote stability (Durkheim, 1938). It remains essential to acknowledge the limitations of this framework, as the traditional emphasis on system equilibrium and internal stability creates a productive tension with this study's goal of producing a decolonised, critical analysis of power imbalances.

The framework provides a useful lens for examining three key dimensions of criminological practice:

- i. The principle of "collective conscience" represents the shared beliefs that maintain social order. The study applied this to analyse how local populations evaluate behaviour, which reveals the divergence between official state legal frameworks and local understandings of deviance, particularly where formal systems fail to resonate with community values.
- ii. The principle of interconnected social control views society as a network of parts, including family units, religious structures, and traditional governance. The study utilised this to examine how informal social controls often act as primary agents of order. Traditional assemblies, such as Panchayats in India or indigenous customary systems in Australia, were analysed as functional adaptations that maintain order where imposed colonial legal structures lack cultural legitimacy.
- iii. The principle of systemic self-regulation explains how societies respond to governance gaps. The emergence of informal para-police groups, such as the Bakassi Boys and Amotekun in Nigeria, and the rise of communal justice in Uganda, were analysed as functional responses to institutional failure. Such mechanisms represent adaptive processes through which communities attempt to restore security when formal courts are inaccessible.

Evaluation of these justice systems, through the lens of equilibrium and institutional fragility, allows for a critical, pluralistic discussion of global criminological practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative comparative documentary analysis and comparative secondary case study to examine global criminological practices. The methodological framework investigated the nuanced realities of crime and justice that quantitative, state-centric approaches frequently overlook. The research utilised an inductive process, synthesising documented observations across seven distinct national jurisdictions to develop broader conceptual insights regarding global socio-legal systems. The study avoided imposing predefined quantitative parameters by prioritising an emic perspective, focusing on the documented interpretations of social actors, communities, and institutional entities. The research relied entirely on secondary

data. The secondary data consisted of published academic literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, ethnographic monographs, and historical textbooks spanning criminology, sociology, and socio-legal studies. The approach created a verifiable repository of evidence concerning the structural frictions, traditional justice practices, and administrative control architectures within the selected nations. Qualitative data are uniquely suited for the study because it accommodates the descriptive depth required to study how crime is perceived, prevented, and controlled across diverse cultural environments.

Sampling Technique

The research used a purposive sampling method to select specific countries for investigation. Purposive sampling allowed for the intentional choice of jurisdictions that offered the most significant insights into the research objectives. This technique ensured that selected cases provided well documented manifestations of institutional friction, colonial legal legacies, and structural strain, which were essential for achieving the analytical goals of the study.

Population

The population of the study comprised the entire continents of the world. Seven countries were selected from these continents through the purposive sampling method to ensure a comprehensive representation of global socio legal landscapes.

Selected Countries and Rationale for Countries Selected

The targeted approach allowed for a rigorous contrast between the formal administrative control mechanisms of the Global North and the adaptive, informal justice architectures of the Global South. Nigeria and Uganda represented Africa in the research. These nations were selected due to the significant legal pluralism and variance in security challenges present in the region. Nigeria's federal structure and legal fragmentation provided an intense case study of state security failure and plural governance. Uganda was selected for the visible contrast between formal state punitive measures and the reliance on communal justice mechanisms, which served as a critical site for studying legitimacy crises.

India represented Asia. India was chosen as a unique model where British Common Law intersected with deeply institutionalised social hierarchies, creating a specific form of legal complexity unmatched elsewhere in the region. The United Kingdom represented Europe. The United Kingdom was selected to establish a theoretical baseline for the official justice model, acting as the primary site for the development of modern Common Law and academic criminology.

Argentina and the United States of America represented the Americas. Argentina provided a documented history of economic collapse and political corruption, facilitating an analysis of legalised illegalities. The United States of America was selected as an analytically significant case for studying the punitive state model, given its world leading rates of mass incarceration. Australia represented Oceania. Australia was included because its history as a penal colony

offered a transparent institutional link between past colonial practices and the contemporary crisis of Indigenous overrepresentation in the carceral system.

The comparative framework allowed the study to challenge Eurocentric assumptions regarding crime control. The research synthesised context rich qualitative data that reflected the actual, rather than the intended, operations of diverse justice systems.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Africa: Nigeria

The comparative analysis of Nigeria revealed a complex landscape of legal pluralism where inherited British common law structures frequently clashed with deeply rooted traditional and restorative justice mechanisms. Evidence indicated that the formal criminal justice system suffered from a chronic awaiting trial crisis and severe underfunding, which generated a profound crisis of institutional legitimacy and a backlog of cases that left individuals detained for years without formal hearing (Ukwayi & Okpa, 2017). This vacuum in state provided security prompted the emergence of para police agencies and vigilante groups, which local communities viewed as more culturally resonant than the official police force. The analysis showed that traditional courts and local mediators continued to play a central role in dispute resolution, reflecting a heritage that prioritised communal reconciliation over the punitive individualistic models of the colonial era (Tade, 2019). The study further indicated a social perception of the police as an instrument of state oppression, which deepened the reliance on informal security architectures. Ultimately, the definition and punishment of crime in Nigeria are inextricably linked to the struggle for state legitimacy and the persistent influence of non-state actors in the governance of social order.

Africa: Uganda

The research regarding Uganda demonstrated that criminological practices were heavily influenced by traditional cultural beliefs and a widespread distrust of formal legal proceedings. The analysis highlighted the linguistic normalisation of corruption which facilitated social interactions within a fragile institutional framework. Evidence suggested that traditional belief systems often led to cultural syncretism, where ancestral rituals and customary justice coexisted with formal state law. A primary finding involved the prevalent use of mob justice as a cultural alternative to the official court system, primarily due to the perception that the police bail system allowed offenders to escape punishment without providing restitution to victims (Baker, 2005). The research observed that many citizens viewed the formal legal system as an external imposition that failed to address the foundational social and emotional causes of deviance. Consequently, the Ugandan experience underscored how the prosecution of crime was shaped by a historical context that favoured immediate communal retribution over the inaccessible processes of the formal judiciary.

Asia: India

The analysis of India illustrated how a colonial common law framework intersected with deeply institutionalised social hierarchies and religious traditions. Evidence established that social control was maintained through extended family structures and the caste system, which contributed to systemic violence, including caste based atrocities that occurred despite constitutional protections (Bhat & Chakraborti, 2024). The study indicated that the definition and punishment of crime were often influenced by religious concepts and the regulation of social boundaries, which prioritised communal status over individual legal rights. The research also identified localised manifestations of social regulation that operated outside the formal legal code, reflecting a tension between the modern state and traditional mechanisms of dispute resolution. In addition, the Indian experience revealed a significant disparity in how different social groups accessed the judiciary, with marginalised castes often facing higher rates of custodial interference. Ultimately, the Indian criminological landscape is shaped by a blend of ancient social stratifications and the legacy of an adversarial legal system that struggled to provide equitable justice.

Europe: The United Kingdom

The study categorised the United Kingdom as a foundational system rooted in a long history of common law, where the discipline of criminology emerged from early twentieth-century medical and psychological inquiries. Evidence noted that while the field remained interdisciplinary, the primary focus centred on the professionalisation of the penal system and the management of a centralised judicial tradition emphasising procedural fairness. The United Kingdom demonstrated a high degree of state-led disciplinary recognition, although it faced internal inconsistencies regarding racial disparities in stop and search practices and sentencing outcomes (Parmar, 2017). The analysis suggested that the British system functioned as a product of institutional reform, prioritising legal procedures that balanced individual liberty with the maintenance of social order. The research also highlighted a shift towards technocratic governance in the justice process, where efficiency and risk assessment took precedence over the broader social causes of deviance.

South America: Argentina

The investigation into Argentina revealed a criminological landscape shaped by a history of military dictatorship, economic instability, and public distrust of state institutions. The research identified that the memory of human rights abuses during the era of state terror directed the discipline towards transitional justice and an examination of the unlawful acts committed by political and business elites. A critical finding involved the social perception of wealth as a product of corruption, which facilitated the rise of powerful criminal family clans in urban centres. The study revealed how these criminal organisations often replaced an absent or complicit state, providing local leadership and social services to communities living in severe poverty. The analysis showed how the Argentine legal system struggled to reconcile its civil law foundations with the reality of drug related capitalism. Also, the research highlighted a focus on the criminality of the powerful, where academic discussions prioritised the study of high level professional crime and state corruption over common street crime.

North America: The United States of America

The study of the United States documented a shift from the mid-twentieth-century ideals of the Chicago School towards a modern era defined by the punitive turn and mass incarceration (Shaw & McKay, 1942). The research analysed how the implementation of broken windows theory and stop and frisk policies transformed urban landscapes into zones of intensive surveillance and social control. The study revealed that American criminological identity is heavily influenced by a vast prison-industrial complex that disproportionately targets marginalised ethnic and racial groups, creating a cycle of systemic disenfranchisement. The analysis highlighted the tension between foundational values of individual liberty and the reality of a state-led deterrence model that prioritised incapacitation over rehabilitation. Additionally, the research examined the role of political narratives in weaponising crime data to justify aggressive sentencing laws. Ultimately, the United States represents a global extreme in the professionalisation of punitive justice, where the management of surplus populations has become a primary function of domestic policy.

Australia

The analysis established that Australia's criminological identity is linked to its historical origin as a British penal colony, a legacy that continued to influence its modern judicial architecture. The research examined how the early focus on the convict stain transitioned into a contemporary crisis regarding the systemic overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the criminal justice system. A significant finding involved the persistent tension between the Western adversarial legal model and Indigenous customary laws, which prioritised collective healing over generalised punishment. The data revealed that despite numerous commissions and policy interventions, the carceral settler state continued to disproportionately target First Nations communities through aggressive policing and mandatory sentencing laws. The analysis also highlighted the role of frontier criminology, which examines how geographical isolation and the colonial past influence contemporary approaches to border control. Ultimately, the Australian experience represents a site of cultural conflict where the state's foundational structures of control remain in opposition to the demands for Indigenous self-determination and legal pluralism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study demonstrate that the perception, prevention, and control of crime are not universal constants but are deeply embedded in the unique cultural, historical, and linguistic frameworks of each nation. When applying a structural-functionalist lens, these diverse national contexts reveal significant systemic friction. The formal state apparatus frequently fails to maintain social equilibrium, leading to the emergence of adaptive, informal mechanisms that restore order where the state has lost legitimacy.

In the African context, the research illustrates a failure of formal institutions to integrate with local social structures. In Nigeria, the lack of cultural resonance within the state legal system necessitates a reliance on traditional adjudicators who provide a form of "moral justice" that colonial-era common law failed to offer. The "awaiting trial" crisis acts as a manifestation of systemic imbalance, necessitating the cultural legitimisation of vigilante groups like the Bakassi

Boys and Amotekun. Similarly, in Uganda, the prevention of crime is managed through communal justice mechanisms, which function as sanctioned alternatives to a police bail system perceived as ineffective. The linguistic normalisation of bribery through terms like "Kitu Kidogo" reshapes the definition of a criminal act, shifting it from a legal transgression to a social negotiation.

Within India, the research reveals that crime control is inextricably linked to the institutionalised social hierarchy of the caste system, where the preservation of social order often supersedes the protection of individual legal rights. Traditional village councils (*Panchayats*) manage disputes through religious frameworks, viewing the state's adversarial system as an intrusive mechanism that disrupts local stability. Conversely, findings from Argentina highlight a culture of systemic distrust, where the state is perceived as a primary perpetrator. This perception fosters the rise of clan-based networks, such as Los Monos, that provide alternative forms of social regulation, illustrating a breakdown in the state's monopoly on power.

In the Global North, the findings from the United Kingdom and the United States indicate a shift towards actuarial justice and technocratic control. This transition reflects an attempt to manage social volatility through surveillance and mass incarceration rather than integrative social policies. While this model seeks to maintain institutional order, it often exacerbates marginalisation. Australia presents a distinct case of institutional friction, as the legacy of the penal colony remains in opposition to Indigenous customary laws and demands for restorative justice.

Ultimately, the findings of the study suggest that the functional stability of any criminological system is defined by its cultural legitimacy. The tension between formal, state-centric mandates and local normative expectations determines the effectiveness of crime control architectures. Where the formal legal system fails to align with indigenous or communal values, the resultant legitimacy crisis creates a vacuum that is filled by informal, and often extra-legal, modes of order maintenance.

Conclusion

The study concluded that a global criminology must move beyond Eurocentric definitions to acknowledge that crime is a culturally mediated phenomenon. The research established that in jurisdictions where the formal state lacks legitimacy, communities invariably develop their own normative frameworks of justice and order. The evidence suggests that the effectiveness of crime prevention is determined not by the severity of legislation, but by the degree of alignment between statutory law and local cultural values (Uganda Law Reform Commission [ULRC], 2004). The study affirmed that the future of the discipline lies in its ability to embrace legal pluralism and integrate these diverse global perspectives into a more inclusive and representative framework of social control (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2012). This evolutionary path requires a deliberate shift away from viewing criminology as a mere appendage of law or sociology, establishing it instead as an independent scientific discipline capable of critically scrutinising state policies.

Limitations of the study include the reliance on secondary data, which necessitates that findings be interpreted within the constraints of existing documentation, and the inherent tension in structural-functionalist theory, which often prioritises system equilibrium over the analysis of transformative social change. Future research should prioritise primary ethnographic engagement to further validate these conceptual insights. Recognising how diverse socio-political and historical realities shape localised responses to deviance remains the most viable strategy for advancing a decolonised criminological theory.

Contributions to Knowledge

The study contributes to the body of knowledge by identifying the operational "legitimacy gap" between formal state laws and local communal practices. This disconnect acts as the primary driver for why communities create and rely on alternative justice systems when the formal state lacks local authority. Documenting the specific ways in which post-colonial, transitional, and Western societies define and manage deviance through their own cultural lenses expands the traditional boundaries of global criminological data.

The research provides a new conceptual toolkit for decolonising criminology by recording how local cultural meanings, such as "Kitu Kidogo" in Uganda or "moral justice" in Nigeria, actively dictate the trajectory of crime control. Exposing the limitations of exporting data-driven, Western-centric frameworks to diverse socio-legal environments proves that crime is a culturally mediated phenomenon that cannot be understood through a one-size-fits-all lens. This framework bridges the divide between high-level academic theory and grassroots realities, offering policymakers and scholars an empirical foundation to analyse state corruption and street-level deviance concurrently without replicating institutional biases. Validating the operational role of indigenous knowledge systems and customary laws within formal criminal justice frameworks further advances the discipline. The research also offers an empirical explanation regarding how state fragility and weak institutional presence lead to the normalisation of systemic corruption and extrajudicial measures like communal vigilante action.

Recommendations

The study recommends a comprehensive reorientation of global criminological policy, advocating a transition away from state-centric models towards a framework that respects local cultural definitions of justice. To address the crises identified in the Global South, the research recommends formally integrating traditional restorative mechanisms into the statutory legal system. This change aims to directly alleviate the "awaiting trial" crisis in Nigeria and Uganda by diverting minor offences from overburdened courts to culturally legitimate local mediators. For India, the study urges the creation of a social justice oversight model to ensure traditional village councils respect human rights and protect marginalised groups from discrimination within the social hierarchy. In Argentina, the research advocates for trusted, community-based government programmes in vulnerable neighbourhoods to replace the social regulation currently dominated by illicit clan-based networks.

Regarding Western nations, the findings suggest a move away from the punitive models of incarceration and rigid administrative surveillance seen in the United States and the United Kingdom. The study recommends replacing technocratic monitoring with a pedagogical approach where practitioners gain expertise in the socio-historical context of the communities they serve. This shift aims to dismantle systemic inequities, moving instead towards a restorative philosophy that prioritises community reintegration over carceral isolation. In Australia, the research calls for a constitutionally recognised First Nations justice framework that empowers Indigenous communities to utilise customary law, directly addressing the colonial legacy of overrepresentation in the penal system. Finally, the study recommends a global overhaul of the criminological curriculum to make immersive ethnographic data collection a mandatory component of professional training. This academic reform seeks to prevent the uncritical application of Western theoretical models in non-Western environments, ensuring future practitioners are equipped to work through a lens of cultural empathy.

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