

# **Theory And Research On Gender, Crime, And Justice: Some Of The Key Priorities For The Next Decade And Beyond.**

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## **Abstract:**

*Considering that Criminology has been around for more than two hundred years, feminist criminology, which emerged in the 1960s, is relatively recent. This work intends to highlight gaps that still exist on theory and research on gender, crime, and justice, pointing out four key priorities for criminological theory and research on gender. The methodology used for this investigation is a wide range of articles on the subject, that are focused on the criminological research in the English-speaking world, predominantly in the United Kingdom. The results show a need for criminological research with more emphasis on intersectionality, violence against women in politics, crimes against women in rural settings and the need for an awakening to gender criminological studies that address the queer community*

**Keywords:** *Criminology; Feminist Criminology; Crime; Justice; Gender.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Approximately fifty years ago, Criminology focused only on male deviant behavior and the little that was discussed about women ended up expressing stereotyped ideas that lacked depth. From the end of the 1960s, influenced by feminist movements, Criminology began to devote attention to women's studies and to give importance to their experiences (Gartner and McCarthy, 2014, p. 1).

Currently, almost all Criminology textbooks dedicate part of their content to gender studies (Burman and Gelsthorpe, 2017, p. 214), but there are still some spaces to be filled. Based on these gaps, this article intends to point out some priorities for criminological theory and research on gender: more emphasis on intersectionality, the hostile environment faced by women in politics, more attention to crimes against women in rural settings and the need for an awakening to gender criminological studies that address the Queer community.

In the first section of this work, a brief historical analysis of the construction of criminological thought with an emphasis on women will be made. In the second part, the concept and importance of intersectionality for Criminology will be seen. In the third topic, we intend to analyse how the greater participation of women in political life has led to a specific form of gender-based violence, still little studied by Criminology, and which should receive greater attention from scholars. In the fourth section, the need to develop a theoretical basis and further research on violence against women in rural areas will be demonstrated, as many criminological studies and research focus on urban contexts. Finally, the relevance of existence will be discussed, but also the need to deepen the area of Criminology dedicated to the Queer community. A considerable portion of people who have either been victimised because of being Queer, or commit crimes due to others being so, still receive little focus in criminological studies.

## **II. Notes on methodology**

Regarding the methodology used, the collection of information for this work involved research in DiscoverEd (The University of Edinburgh platform), Web of Knowledge, Google Scholar, and Microsoft Academic resources. For the searches, the terms used were 'criminal justice', 'criminology' 'gender and related terms such as 'crime' 'feminism' and 'feminist criminology'. The purpose of the search for related terms was to obtain better results catalogued using similar expressions. After procuring the results, the articles and books were briefly examined by reading their titles and abstracts in order to filter the articles obtained with the theme of this article.

As this is an article prepared from secondary data, resulting from other research carried out on the subject, the path taken here was to construct our own arguments, highlighting the most important points from the research carried out, seeking argumentative consolidation, coherence, seriousness, and originality in propositions. The use of existing data (secondary data analysis) as the research method was chosen because there is already a great number of empirical evidence on the subject and data analysis takes less time and resources, notably for the purpose of this article that is to highlight gaps that still exist on theory and research on gender, crime, and justice, pointing out four key priorities for criminological theory and research on gender.

### **III. Historical analysis of women from positivism to feminist criminology**

Considering that Criminology has been around for more than two hundred years, feminist criminology, which emerged in the 1960s, is relatively recent. Therefore, in order to understand the horizons of feminist criminology, it is important to know its origins (Heidensohn, 2012, p. 122).

Modern criminology emerged in the 1870s, when scholars such as Cesare Lombroso, Raffaele Garofalo and Enrico Ferri sought to apply scientific methods to understand criminological phenomena, specifically through biological and biopsychological observation of the criminal. The focus was on the man (Walter, 2003, cited in Woods, 2015, p. 131).

Women hardly appeared in Criminology studies and, when present, their image was stereotyped. If a criminal, for example, she would have masculine physical characteristics similar to those described by Lombroso as belonging to the atavistic male. Otherwise, it would have feminine characteristics. The woman is described in Lombrosian studies as a mediocre figure, mentally limited, passive, and sedentary with a precarious moral sense (Klein, 1973, pp. 328-330). Women are portrayed as inferior beings and, because of their stage of evolution, committed fewer crimes than men (Heidensohn, 1985, p. 114).

Women's thinking is also stereotyped and this can be evidenced in the works of Thomas, Davis, and Pollak (Klein, 1973, p. 328). In Thomas, for example, the woman is defined according to her sexual and domestic functions, dominated by a determinant biology and emotionally unstable. Indeed, female delinquency was very close to sexual delinquency, since 'many of his case histories of unadjusted girls describe lives of promiscuity or adultery rather than crime' (Heidensohn, 1985, p. 117).

As can be seen, the first criminological theories gave a positivist (biological) approach to the causes of the phenomena, but only targeted the male figure. Criminality and female victimisation were themes that were omitted or, when noticed, were minimised or belittled (Chesney-Lind and Morash, 2013, p. 287).

This image of women fed and solidified the sexism and repression of the time, scientifically supporting male domination and the social mechanisms of control over women (Klein, 1973, p. 334; Smith and Natalier, 2005, p. 39) and it permeated, to a greater or lesser extent, the criminological studies that followed for a long time (Heidensohn, 1987, p. 17). Sutherland and Cressey, in 1974, believed that fewer crimes were committed by women because girls received greater supervision from their parents than boys (Cook, 2016, p. 336).

Gender issues remained virtually untouched by Criminology until the twentieth century and the androcentric view prevailed even in works in critical criminology, which focused mostly on the relationship between social inequality and crime (Cook, 2016, pp. 340-341).

### **IV. Theory and Feminist “Waves”**

Studies related to gender and crime arise in a context of great social, political and cultural transformation. These transformations took place in several areas and had young people as protagonists, above all questioning the old ways of life (Heidensohn, 2012, pp. 123-124). Feminist criminology and the feminist movement are closely related, so it's important to understand. The history of the feminist movement can be divided into three phases or, as they are known, three “feminist waves” (Burgess-Proctor, 2006, pp. 30-31).

The first wave of feminism occurs between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century and is related to struggles for women's civil rights (Burman and Gelsthorpe, 2017, p. 213; Burgess-Proctor, 2006, pp. 30-31). In the United States, for example, the first wave feminism has as its main achievement the right to suffrage by women (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988, p. 497).

The 'second feminist wave takes place in the mid-1960s and also appears in the context of struggles for civil rights (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988, p. 497), but with a focus on reproductive rights and debates about sexuality. It is in this period that feminism in Criminology emerged – a movement with diverse nuances, but which sought to challenge mainstream criminology by developing a gender perspective in criminological studies (Burgess-Proctor, 2006, pp. 30-31; Chesney-Lind and Morash, 2013, pp. 289-290). As highlighted by Burman and Gelsthorpe (2017, p. 213), 'it set out to challenge some of the gender-blind assumptions inherent within criminology at that time and to create a space for women's experiences and voices'.

In the 1970s and 1980s, it is noticeable how the development and dissemination of feminist thought brought about a new way of thinking, one where women's experiences and ways of thinking should no longer be

peripheral to discussion. The centrality of the male figure and its monopoly on scientific investigation and knowledge production was impacted by the feminist movement (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988, p. 497).

It is in this scenario, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, that the third wave of feminism takes place as a movement openly critical of the omission of feminist scholars about the existence of multiple genders, races and sexualities. Intersectionality emerges in this context (Burgess-Proctor, 2006, pp. 30-31) and will be discussed later.

## **V. Feminist Criminology**

In 1985, Frances Heidensohn (1985, p. 111) observed that 'Criminology, mainstream and tributary, has almost nothing to say of interest or importance about women'. Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988, p. 498) made a similar observation, noting that criminology still remained silent on the issues brought to light by the feminist movement.

Most criminologists did not consider gender-based impacts, issues, and differences in theories and research, which are often tested using the male audience as the object of observation. In the end, there was no reflection on the results of the studies as being from that restricted universe (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988, p. 505). Therefore, women's invisibility was criticised in criminological studies (Heidensohn, 2012, p. 125; Burman and Gelsthorpe, 2017, pp. 214, 220).

When looking at the period of women's omission in criminological studies, Cook (2016) treats the issue from an interesting perspective, considering that this extended period was a loss of opportunity. In fact, understanding the issue in this way reflects the temporal dimension in which women were forgotten in the understanding of issues inherent to Criminology and which ended up being partial.

It was proposed, therefore, that feminist perspectives should be part of the construction of theoretical knowledge and research in Criminology. There should be a focus on gender issues to understand how this element organises the objects of study of Criminology, social institutions, and human behavior itself (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988, pp. 526-527).

Gradually, criminology has embraced the gender perspective, significantly broadening its studies in this area and going beyond. At this point, one must agree with Burman and Gelsthorpe (2017, p. 231) that feminism's contributions to criminology are significant and have a wide influence on both criminal policy and practice. It is, however, necessary to go even further, but feminist movements themselves are relatively recent and it is important to realise that criminology has increasingly prioritised gender perspectives.

Finally, recognition of the various female experiences from the perspectives of race, gender, and other factors constitute a pillar of feminist criminology, and new thoughts relevant to criminology continue to emerge from the perspective of feminist theory. Each new school of thought challenges mainstream criminology to go further – the complexity of the relationship that encompasses gender, crime and justice (Chesney-Lind and Morash, 2013, pp. 289-290). There has been a great advance in feminist criminological studies and research based on intersectional analysis - between gender, race, sex, social class and the impact of these aspects on the understanding of the criminal phenomenon (Cook, 2016, p. 334).

## **VI. Key Priorities For The Next Decade And Beyond**

### **Intersectionality**

The concept of intersectionality was used for the first time in the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw in the analysis of the synergy between race and gender as elements that, concomitantly, influenced discrimination – in this case, of black American women (Sokoloff and Burgess-Proctor, 2011, p. 238). Intersectionality, as a paradigm, orientation or theory, has its origins related to critical criminology and, especially, to black feminist criminology, as studies were initially centered on the white male figure and, later, on the female figure, but also white. Black women remained outside criminological studies (Creek and Dunn, 2014, p. 1; Burgess-Proctor, 2006, p. 34). Mainstream criminology was not only sexist but also racist, and feminist criminology had failed to identify this limitation (Rice, 1990, p. 57).

In the 1980s, there were already some studies that took black people into account, but in this case, only the black man: 'none of these studies included black women or considered issues of particular relevance for them' (Rice, 1990, p. 58). Black feminism began to emphasise the experiences and discriminations suffered by black women, that is, oppression based on gender and race as factors that communicate (Burgess-Proctor, 2006, p. 29-30). Thus, intersectionality stems from the recognition that multiple systems of domination such as race, social class, gender do not act alone, but together. Understanding them, therefore, requires a multidimensional analysis in which the scholar's gaze is able to see the many variables that act on phenomena of criminological interest, as 'systems of power such as race, class, and gender do not act alone to shape our experiences but rather, are multiplicative, inextricably linked, and simultaneously experienced' (Burgess-Proctor, 2006, p. 31).

Race, gender, social class, sexuality and other relevant social aspects intersect and are closely related in understanding crime and criminal justice (Creek and Dunn, 2014, pp. 3-4)

The intersectional approach has a lot to contribute to feminist criminology and criminology in general. In relation to theoretical importance, an intersectional approach allows the integration of the most diverse criminological perspectives, for example, the mutual influence of gender-race-social class factors in the phenomenon of crime, as these elements act as factors of great influence on the behavior of people and also in the responses given by the criminal justice systems to these behaviors (Burgess-Proctor, 2006, p. 39). In addition to its theoretical importance, the intersectional approach is also important in the area of methodology (Burgess-Proctor, 2006, pp. 41-42), as it allows for an understanding of social positions and their relationships with victimisation and the commission of crimes and has been used by criminologists who wish to undertake a deeper analysis of gender and crime (Creek and Dunn, 2014, p. 15). The intersectional approach also provides an opportunity for criminological studies to identify inequalities and allows for improvements in the search for justice. These inequalities, previously viewed in isolation, are now seen as structures that act together and are mutually influenced, bringing previously marginalised groups to the center of the analysis (Sokoloff and Burgess-Proctor, 2011, pp. 236-238).

In times of extreme inequality, it is even more important to scientifically investigate the powerful and oppressors, as well as understand that globalisation has made previously narrow concerns widespread and that gender-based violations should be seen as human rights violations (Chesney-Lind and Morash, 2013, p. 295).

Rafter and Heidensohn (2002, p. 74) question how feminism will deal with the Anglo and ethnocentric view in crime and justice studies. Feminism and criminology are strong in the Western world, particularly in English-speaking countries and, as a consequence, the problems end up being observed through Anglocentric and ethnocentric lenses, leaving forgotten gender problems involving women in other regions, such as those residing in the global south.

### **Violence against women in politics (VAWP)**

The growth of women's participation in politics around the world has drawn attention to the gender issue involved in these women's working conditions. The increasing number of cases in which harassment, intimidation and even physical violence against women in politics are reported has been the subject of gender-based studies (Holm, 2020, p. 295). Women's participation in the political arena does not pass without being subjected to sexist and misogynist commentary on the part of society. The daily life of a woman involved in politics is permeated with insults, threats and, in some cases, death, such as that of British politician Jo Cox (Krook, 2020, p. 257) and Marielle Franco, the Brazilian politician who was 'summarily executed for her political activity in the defense of the causes she defended' (Langlois, 2019, cited in Krook, 2020, p. 128), such crimes are characterized not only by political motivation but also by gender (Krook, 2020, p. 3).

Bardall (2020, p. 299) defines violence against women in politics (VAWP) as 'an umbrella term' to designate 'a spectrum of possible harms, ranging from everyday sexism, to rape, assassination and online abuse'. It is thus gender-based violence that targets women in politics. VAWP also involves 'broad range of harms to attack and undermine women as political actors' (Krook, 2020, p. 4).

Three aspects are important in distinguishing between gender-based VAWP and political violence in the broad sense: 'it targets women because of their gender; it is gendered in form, as exemplified by sexist threats and sexual violence; and it discourages women in particular from being or becoming active in politics' (Holm, 2020, p. 295).

There are some known reasons that explain why this topic is rarely discussed. First, many women who experience violence believe that it is part of political activity and not really an issue. Others, despite understanding that this is a problem, prefer to remain silent to protect their career in politics or their political parties. Some avoid bringing the matter to light so as not to be blamed. Finally, some do not know how and with whom to deal with their experiences (Krook, 2020, p. 4).

Reporting on research carried out in the European Parliament, Holm (2020, p. 296) points out that the vast majority of women parliamentarians claim to have already suffered psychological violence during their term in office and half claim to have already suffered death threats, or rape, in addition to reports of sexist attacks on social media. Women who occupy prominent and leadership positions, as well as those most active in the media, are even more exposed. In other words, the greater the prominence in a political career and public exposure, the greater the risk of victimisation.

VAWP as a form of crime is a global problem (Krook, 2020, p. 9). Another element that demonstrates the contemporaneity and relevance of the theme is the space in which most of these crimes are committed: the virtual world. Most attacks happen in the cyber world, including on social networks, and involve a large number of perpetrators, which makes it difficult to repress these behaviors. Many attacks involve psychological violence, often with a sexual overtone, and tend to increase during election periods (Bardall, 2020, pp. 299-300; Holm, 2020, p. 297). The environment in which violence is practiced, almost always virtual, raises the question of whether the criminal justice system is prepared to investigate, identify the perpetrators and, eventually, punish them.

Furthermore, it is not clear in criminological research whether 'violence against women politicians is increasingly recognised as an issue that undermines women's presence in politics' (Restrepo Sanín, 2020, p. 1) or 'may potentially depress the political ambition of other women by highlighting the inherent dangers in engaging in public life, speaking out about these experiences can also be empowering' (Krook, 2020, p. 256). For example, research of the 2019 elections in Ukraine suggests 'gendered forms of online abuse and harassment have become an increasingly important obstacle to women's participation in politics in this context' (Holm, 2020, p. 297).

Attention is also drawn to the need for state actions to address the VAWP issue. Is the enactment of a law that specifically criminalizes these acts of violence, like what Bolivia did in 2004 (Restrepo Sanín, 2020, p. 2) appropriate? It is a question that prompts further research on this topic.

### **Violence against women in rural areas**

'The study of criminology is the study of urban crime and criminality historically. This is unfortunate as much of the world's land and population is not concentrated in urban areas' (Hollis and Hankhouse, 2019, p. 177). Although approximately 50% of the world population lives in rural areas, few scholars are dedicated to criminological phenomena in these spaces (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014, pp. 1-2), compromising, to some extent, the validity of the conclusions of studies restricted to urban environments (Meško, 2020, p. 3). Rural criminology, therefore, 'focuses on the study of crime in rural environments and the testing, verification, and revision of classical criminological theories in these environments' (Meško, 2020, p. 3).

There is a possible explanation for Criminology's disinterest in rural areas. Most predominantly rural countries are located in what is conventionally called the southern world – a part significantly forgotten by mainstream criminology. This is why it is claimed that 'criminology is predominately the study of westernized and urbanized societies' (Hollis and Hankhouse, 2019, p. 178).

In the late twentieth century, rural criminology constituted a sub-field of Criminology, but most studies were descriptive rather than theoretical. Since then, many advances have been made in this area, but studies still focus on a shallow comparison between urban and rural crime rates (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014, pp. 50-51). Critical criminology has offered space for conducting criminological studies on rural communities - especially due to the emphasis given to different forms of inequality and the perception of the different contexts in which the phenomenon of crime manifests itself, in addition to offering them a specific focus and dedication (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014, pp. 26-27)

The analysis of crime in rural areas often finds it difficult to define and delimit these regions geographically (Ceccato, 2016, p. 237). Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy (2014, pp. 5-6) offer a definition of rural communities as being places that have four aspects in common: a small population with low density; people who have some close relationship with one other and more direct contact; they show less departure nowadays from the way of life in the past in relation to urban regions (homogenisation process) and more obvious cultural, social and economic differences. However, this definition does not seem to be universally applicable and depends on the historical and cultural context, especially nowadays when city and countryside are interconnected, deserving further reflection.

On the other hand, the assumption that 'rural areas are characterised by a higher degree of social cohesion and informal control, and there is also less physical disorder' (Meško, 2020, p. 4) does not seem to reflect the process of change in which urban and rural spaces are increasingly influenced by each other, as communication, transport, social interactions, migration, etc. are evident.

Crime levels are generally higher in urban areas, but fear of crime and some types of crime, such as domestic violence against women, have increased in rural areas. Conversely, levels of violent crime have decreased in urban areas to a greater extent than in rural areas (Meško, 2020, p. 4).

Unfortunately, knowledge about differences in crime rates, victimisation, and other issues relevant to criminology in rural areas is still quite limited (Hollis and Hankhouse, 2019, p. 177). It is possible to notice the scarcity of official statistics and criminological studies dedicated to these spaces and, even rarer, studies that specifically address gender-based violence in rural areas. In the case of women, most crimes happen in private spaces and at home, a place ordinarily associated with security, 'tends to be more dangerous than any other place' (Ceccato, 2016, p. 226). For the country woman, 'the home, the ostensibly peaceful and violence-free place, is a house of horrors' (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014, p. 13). Women residing in rural areas in the United States, for example, are at greater risk of being victims of domestic and sexual violence than those living in urban agglomerations (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014, p. 13) and despite violence against women being more pronounced in urban North American areas, the number of homicides committed by partners has been higher in rural areas since the 1980s (Ceccato, 2016, p. 230).

Ceccato (2016, p. 234) points out that 'rural areas are becoming more criminogenic, particularly accessible rural areas', but it is quite difficult to estimate about crimes against women in rural areas because many cases go unreported. Unreported cases of crimes against women in rural areas are higher due to several

factors, such as the greater distance between homes and police stations; the distance between neighboring houses, making it difficult for neighbours to find out about the facts and report them to the authorities; shelters for women in situations of violence are often far away; lack of good transport infrastructure; lack of access to cell phones and internet (Ceccato, 2016, pp. 226-227).

### **Violence and Queer people**

Initially, it is necessary to identify what the word Queer refers to. As Carrie Buist and Emily Lenning (2015, p. 3) emphasise, Queer is an 'umbrella term' that encompasses gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and all those outside the heteronormative binary pattern.

A significant percentage of society around the world identifies as belonging to the Queer community. In the United Kingdom, for example, according to the latest data collected (Office for National Statistics, 2021) it is estimated that there are 1.4 million people in the country identifying as lesbians, gays or bisexuals. Data on the Queer community, however, is insufficient - there is no data on the transgender population, for example.

Criminology has ignored the Queer population. As a consequence 'there is little understanding of how sexual orientation and gender identity differences might relate to criminal offending, desistence, policing, and victimisation' (Woods, 2014, p. 7). The first articles addressing Queer criminology were published in the late 1990s, but attention was turned to this field only in 2014, with the publication of a special issue of the *Critical Criminology Journal* (Buist and Lenning, 2015, p. 9).

Defining 'Queer Criminology' is not an easy task, as highlighted by Buist and Lenning (2015, p. 3), it is something under construction, dynamic and reflects the fluidity of Queer identity itself. The authors present the possible definitions for Queer criminology: 'a theoretical and practical approach that seeks to highlight and draw attention to the stigmatisation, the criminalisation, and in many ways the rejection of the Queer community' (Buist and Lenning, 2015, p. 1) or 'a criminology that investigates, criticises and challenges heteronormative systems of oppression in the context of the criminal legal system' (Buist and Lenning, 2015, p. 120).

The birth and development of Queer Criminology reflects the feeling and need for the LGBTQ+ community to occupy a central space in academic discussion in Criminology, as well as challenge the structures of the criminal justice system for the perception and understanding of the various forms of oppression experienced by the Queer community (Buist and Lenning, 2015, p. 1).

According to a report by the United Nations (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2019, p. 42), in sixty-nine countries around the world, consensual sexual intercourse between people of the same sex is still considered a crime and in six of these countries, this practice is punishable by the death penalty. Members of this population are exposed to various forms of violence, such as the risk of being arrested, of suffering police violence, threats, extortion, hate crimes, in addition to the stigma and prejudice that, in this case, is subsidised by the State (Moran, 2018, p. 159) through explicitly homophobic and transphobic laws. Thus, outside the law, the queer community is policed, criminally prosecuted and punished – sometimes with death (Buist and Lenning, 2015, pp. 25-26).

Between 2015 and 2016, 12% of hate crimes in England and Wales were related to sexual orientation. A total of 7,194 sexual orientation hate crimes were recorded (Office for National Statistics, 2017). The data found, therefore, refers only to hate crimes and not to all other types of crime that members of the Queer community may be victims of. Likewise, there is no consolidation of official statistics that correlate offending, victimisation and Queer people. It is worth noting that this portion of the population 'rate their quality of life as lower than the UK average' and 'Discrimination may explain some of these differences' (Office for National Statistics, 2017).

In addition, members of this community face various adversities in the criminal justice system, whether as offenders, victims or even actors in the system itself. The Stonewall events showed a troubled relationship with the Police, mainly due to the ostensible and violent control exercised by them over sexual relations between people of the same sex or 'use of power as a means to oppress and repress the freedoms of others' (Buist and Lenning, 2015, p. 48). The roots of these problems reflect a society in which heteronormativity prevails. Systems based on sex and gender are present in all spaces and affect people's identity, imposing behaviors and expectations rooted in sex/gender - such as the judgement commonly made about appropriate or inappropriate behavior for a given gender (Chesney-Lind and Morash, 2013, p. 290).

Most critical criminologists, at the time of the emergence of critical criminology and its early years of development, did not consider sexual orientation or gender identity as relevant factors in criminological studies and research because they considered homosexuality to be deviant behavior – a crime. And so, 'early critical criminological discussions of LGBTQ populations - and homosexuals in particular - took place through the lens of sexual deviance' (Woods, 2014, p. 10).

It is important that there is an area of criminology dedicated to studies and research related to the Queer community. There is validity to the question, asked by Carrie Buist and Emily Lenning (2015, p. 9), about why research and theory into this didn't start a long time ago, especially after the emergence of critical criminology

'that was developed in reaction to the lack of attention paid towards the influence of class and power would be slow to support such an endeavor like queer criminology'.

As seen, one of the initial criticisms of feminist criminology was the fact that polls were conducted with male research audiences and ignored female research audiences, but the resulting theories were pervasive. Therefore, the same assumption of research carried out and theories elaborated on the basis of the heterosexual universe and experiences cannot be generalised and applied to the Queer community.

Queer criminology is essential to better understand the use of the justice system as a tool for controlling those within the population that challenge heteronormativity and binarism. There are several examples around the world that demonstrate the ways in which the power of the State has been used as a mechanism for controlling the behavior of sexuality and gender (Buist and Lenning, 2015, p. 112). It is necessary to deepen the debate on how gender identity and sexual orientation interact with the victimisation of Queers beyond hate crimes, as well as further studies on the reason for this group's involvement with crime and the reasons for desistence (Woods, 2014, p. 13).

## VII. Conclusions

Feminist criminology, heavily influenced by feminist movements in general, represented a great advance in criminological studies with a gender perspective, but it is necessary to take greater steps. As Heidensohn (2012, p. 127) emphasised about the history of gender and crime studies, 'progress was at first slow and has remained patchy. There remain gaps in both issues addressed and approaches developed'. In this article, we have seen how there are still empty or little-filled spaces in theory and research on gender, crime and justice.

Going deeper into intersectionality studies is a challenge still present in criminological studies to understand how gender and other forms of inequality are related to crime. It was also evident that it is necessary to analyse in greater depth the violence against women in politics and, specifically, what impact this form of violence has on the participation of women in politics. Furthermore, it can be seen that crime in rural areas is still a little studied topic, official comparative data is lacking and data on the gender dimension of crimes in rural areas is even scarcer.

Finally, the necessity for gender identity issues to constitute an additional element for consideration in criminological theorising and research - besides those elements already being considered, such as race, age, social class etc. - is plain to see. Within this element, understanding the differences and experiences of the queer community is important.

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