

*Criminology for Sale: Institutional Change and Intellectual Field**

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore the institutional setting of and organisational pressures on the intellectual field of criminology. I wish to examine the transformations occurring in the field due to major changes in the wider political economy. As part of this reflection, the politics of teaching and research under conditions of institutional restructuring and neo-liberal ideological dominance will be discussed. Specifically, I want to raise questions regarding the social role of criminology in the context of intellectual labour being construed and in many ways being defined predominantly in terms of 'educational markets' and 'research markets'.

The theme of the paper is how material circumstances are re-shaping the nature and processes of intellectual production as this pertains to criminal justice. The primary issue is not one of the 'relevance' of criminology, to policy makers, to communities or to others. Nor is the concern with the 'fragmentation' of the field. Rather, my interest lies in the process of knowledge production as this is shaped by material and ideological shifts in the working lives of criminological researchers and teachers.

Social Context of Intellectual Labour

The social role of the criminologist can be evaluated in the light of the nature of the criminalisation process (who and what gets criminalised), and the specific interventions of the state in relation to this process (how the state responds to social harm linked to particular class, gender, ethnic and 'race' situations). The work that criminologists perform can be roughly classified according to a conservative, liberal or radical political orientation (see White & Haines 2000). To put it differently, within criminology there are various perspectives on the nature of the state, of society, and of crime and crime control. The kind of work we do reflects particular ideological and political dispositions on the part of the people doing it.

But what criminologists do is not only a matter of personal predilection for this or that 'theory' or analytical framework. It is also very much bound up with the conditions under which intellectual labour, in general, is undertaken. Intellectual histories of criminology, and sociology, point to the ways in which the institutional base of particular disciplines or fields shape the general character of academic work. Thus, for example, writers such as Gouldner

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(1970) and C. Wright Mills (1959) have commented on how social research in the United States was of direct service to the military, the corporate sector, state bureaucrats and social workers, and that, accordingly, sociology's dominant ideological character in the 1950s through to the 1970s tended to be predominantly conservative. Analysis of British (Cohen 1981) and Australian (Carson & O'Malley 1989) criminology likewise views the foundations of the field as being constructed first and foremost as a service discipline for state agencies, especially given the importance of the state's crime control apparatus as a key site or institutional domain for much criminological work.

Conversely, the emergence of critical and reflective criminologies that challenged correctionalism and the generally conservative nature of 'mainstream' criminology was associated with the political struggles in the 1970s. This emergence stemmed from action around such issues as prison abolition, police misconduct, indigenous rights, racism and women's liberation (see for example, Sim et al 1987; Brown & Hogg 1992). At a theoretical level, the impact of social movements on criminology is perhaps most evident in the area of feminist scholarship and research, and while there remains the problem that within mainstream criminology 'feminism is about women, while criminology is about men' (Naffine 1997:2), there is no doubt that the analytical and political challenges of feminism continue to be highly influential throughout the field. At least part of the explanation for a 'radical tinge' within the Australian criminological field over the last 25 years or so has been the establishment of criminology within the tertiary education sector (Pratt & Priestly 1999). The development of academic criminology as a bona fide programme of study and research within universities opened the door to progressive, critical work. But such work also had to contend with the need to break the shackles of a 'markedly empiricist and pragmatic sociology' (Carson & O'Malley 1989:351), as well as the pressures to conform to the 'conservative hegemony' underpinning criminology's institutional development. The establishment of criminology in academia has nevertheless provided some space for development of the critical potential of the field. However, the nature of this 'space' is rapidly being altered. My concern is to trace the implications of these transformations in regards to the limits of, and opportunities for, a critical criminology.

The ways in which criminologists do their work is both bounded by, and always posed in relation to, the major social changes occurring in the society at large. Thus, for instance, there have been declining rates of profit across all advanced capitalist economies since the early 1970s, and hence, search for new avenues to boost the rate of profit at a structural or system-level. This has seen the re-distribution of surplus value among firms via mergers and acquisitions (Pearce & Tombs in press; Snider 2000). It is also manifest in the commercialisation and privatisation processes that we have witnessed across the educational and criminal justice domains.

One consequence of these processes is what has been described as the commercialisation of Australian academic criminology (Israel 2000; see also Kayrooz et al 2001). In terms of research, there have been notable changes in the nature of funding, toward greater reliance on contract research for both private and public sector bodies. In terms of teaching, it has been pointed out that there has been a substantial shift in meeting the needs of the private sector for certain types of workers. To take law as one example: 'An entire generation of new contract lawyers is required to effect the privatisation of public goods and the facilitation of global market activity, as well as to resolve intellectual property dilemmas arising from new technologies' (Thornton 2000:271). In both teaching and research, therefore, there are pressures to make criminology (and law) more 'relevant' to 'market forces'. To facilitate this, the management of Australian universities has generally shifted from collegial to corporate structures (see Israel 2000; Thornton 2000).

The commercialisation of academia has a number of implications for curriculum and teaching. For example, in discussing the problems of treating a law degree as commodity, Thornton observes that:

Law schools are encouraged to mass-produce service-oriented professionals by offering technocratic, skills-based courses which satisfy the admitting authorities but accord scant regard to the university's traditional *raison d'être* of dispassionate inquiry. The result is that there is a danger of returning legal education to the 'trade school' mentality of the past (2000:271).

Similar pressures, and processes, are apparent in relation to criminology as a field, and the social sciences generally (Kayrooz et al 2001). We increasingly 'market' ourselves in ways that are designed to attract state bureaucrats and non-government professionals into our programmes, by offering specialist courses on 'victims', 'crime prevention' or 'corrections'. How, and indeed whether, we end up with a 'trade school' education or mentality as we embark upon such ventures, is a question worth asking. But so too is the question is this *necessarily* such a bad thing? For instance, there are clear demands and needs among criminal justice workers, such as correctional staff, for theoretically informed practice-oriented education that provides critical reflection on prison life and community-based programmes. The issue of identifying new student 'markets' has to be distinguished from the actual subject content that might be offered to this market.

There are a number of dilemmas posed by commercialisation. Among those problem areas identified by Israel (2000) are: legal and ethical problems (such as potential conflict of interests); management of information (including intellectual property rights, and suppressing academic exchange in order to secure market advantage); and changes in research direction due to pressures from funding bodies and government departments (especially priority given to empirical data collection over theoretical critique and reflexive evaluation). Other researchers have pointed to the channelling of academic work into 'safe, well defined' rather than speculative areas of research, and the re-direction of teaching efforts into areas tangential to academics' expertise (Kayrooz et al 2001). Meanwhile, Scraton (2001) goes so far as to argue that the 'choice' faced by critical criminologists is whether to 'opt out' of contemporary research directions, and thereby see one's funding dry up, or to 'opt in', in which case you cannot retain a critical agenda. Life as an academic researcher is rarely this unequivocal. However, the concerns expressed by Scraton do reflect real and substantial restrictions on the doing of critical criminology.

Accompanying the pressures to 'go commercial', there are also changes happening (or about to happen) in workplace relations, whether this is within academic institutions, in government departments or in government-funded institutes. Specifically, most of us now work under some kind of performance management regime, and in some workplaces there is pressure to sign individual (rather than collective) workplace agreements.

The key word used to describe our work today is 'productivity', as defined in terms of grants, industry links and demonstrable publishing record (i.e. refereed publications). This generally translates into greater workload intensity, as expectations and time spent on grant applications and project management rises. Meanwhile, in academic circles, the notion of students as 'clients' is placing greater pressure on people to cater to this 'market' by providing 'what the customer wants' and doing so in ways which provide ever greater resources and time to the 'client'.

Changes in the conditions underpinning research and teaching are being accompanied by emergent shifts in the organisation of the labour force within criminology. This has a number of dimensions. Some of these include: the construction of 'precarious employment' at the bottom, comprised of individuals who are basically dependent upon non-recurrent research grants; the interpenetration of university and government-based criminologies, such as state-originated consultancy work (see O'Malley 1996); and evaluation research which focuses predominantly on cost-benefit analysis. Increasingly, intellectual work is being constructed at a system-level as first and foremost entrepreneurial activity. This involves varying kinds of division of labour within the criminological enterprise, collaboration and partnerships across sectors, and the escalation of money-making and institutional fiscal objectives in determining project 'worth'. Individual professional status is, in effect, being evaluated, from the point of view of occupational advancement and institutional security, by the amount and number of grants one receives (regardless of source or purpose). Power and kudos is driven by the fact that academics are now propelled and required to go for grants and consultancies as a matter of course (O'Malley 1996). In some ways, these pressures within academia are heightened for criminologists, given the broader shifts in criminal justice which have seen extensive marketisation of things such as prisons, policing, security services, and crime prevention.

It seems to me that much more theoretical work needs to be done to better understand and interpret the origins and consequences of the changes occurring within criminology, and the impacts these are having now and into the future. More specifically, the changes in the conditions of intellectual production warrant close scrutiny, as do the particular ways in which the field as a whole, and individuals within the field, are responding to these changes.

One issue to be considered is that of the structural role of academic teachers and researchers in the context of socially divided societies. External pressures by government departments and funding bodies, as well as commercial firms, for particular kinds of research and particular kinds of skilled workers has obvious implications for how academic criminologists construe and carry out their tasks. In recent years there has been a marked expansion in student numbers generally, and in the demand for criminology graduates in particular. This has been driven by both changes in the occupational structures of criminal justice and law enforcement agencies (e.g. the importance of academic credentials vis-à-vis promotion structures within police services), and by greater propensity of government agencies to commission and allocate research and evaluation on the basis of specifically 'criminological' expertise. As Presdee & Walters (1991:163) point out, however, what the state deems 'good research' and a 'good researcher' is bounded by certain ideological parameters: '...there will always be demands by the state for 'operational' research whilst discarding 'critical' research as unscientific'. The precise skills and knowledge required by criminal justice officials and agencies tend to reflect administrative and careerist concerns rather than those associated with critique and acknowledgment of the political processes underpinning the production of new knowledge.

The 'market' has always in some way shaped the substantive nature of research. It has also played a major role in how academic criminology has augmented the labour power of students for their future jobs within the state and corporate sectors. This does not mean that academic criminology is inherently 'conservative' or 'uncritical' or 'vocationally-oriented'. But many students do look to courses to enhance their labour market opportunities (not surprisingly, given the structural problem of unemployment), and research is frequently tied to specific industry-defined 'problems' that require investigation and resolution (a process enhanced by university efforts to increase their funding base). All of this has implications for how crime is defined, who constitute the targets of crime control,

the role of criminal justice workers, and the broad systemic responses to perceived issues of concern. Where do matters pertaining to social injustice and social inequality fit into this scenario, and how do we ensure that they are and continue to be worthy of serious consideration (and for many of us, central to our work)?

Another issue requiring close consideration is the nature of the labour process within academic work. Typically educational workers have been funded by deductions from the overall surplus generated in the private sector (via taxation). They produce the 'commodity' of educated labour power, which the individual student entering the workforce can sell for a wage on the labour market. The value of this labour power is augmented (in relation to unskilled labour power for instance) in the university because of the socially necessary labour time that goes into its production. This production is paid for through tax revenues, although the finished product in the form of skilled labour provides no exchange-value (i.e. it does not bring economic reward) to the institution.

Now, however, the commodification of education is changing this relationship. There is the direct production of the 'commodity' of education in exchange for fees, although whether this is 'for profit' depends upon the nature of the institution or course (i.e. private versus public institutions). In a similar vein, some forms of research are directly linked to commercial purposes and profit-making ventures. Each of these trends raises intriguing questions regarding the transformation of formerly 'unproductive labour' into 'productive labour' in the sense that, under some circumstances, part of intellectual labour is directly inserted in a surplus value producing process (i.e. production of value that is exchanged on the market by a commercial client and thus is directly linked to the profit-making enterprise).

The private appropriation of academic labour, combined with government cutbacks in operating grants to universities, means that there are great pressures to reduce labour costs (whether due to fiscal or commercial reasons). While beyond the scope of the present paper, the concept of proletarianisation might usefully be applied to describe changes in the labour process within academia (see for example, Braverman 1974; Marginson 1993, 1997). For example, the proletarianisation of intellectual labour is manifest in the tendency toward the intensification of labour (increased volume of work), the tendency to increase and rigidify the division of labour (specialisation into teaching, research, and administrative tasks at varying levels of responsibility), and the tendency toward routinisation of high level tasks (expert intervention and codification of existing tasks). In practical terms, this translates for some intellectual workers into the reduction of autonomy (immediate control over the labour process), the de-individualisation of skills and qualifications (fragmentation of tasks) and the downgrading of status (income levels in relation to volume of work performed). How these processes are manifest across the academic labour market needs to be further investigated.

Doing Intellectual Work

Given the broad trends and issues outlined above, the key question is how these changes are impacting upon criminological theory, research and practice. It would be erroneous to posit a one-to-one direct causal relationship between the social context of criminological work (e.g. pressures to do 'administrative' rather than 'critical' criminology) and the actual work undertaken. To do so would imply that the criminologist always does what they are told, or what is immediately relevant and 'practical' as deemed by the relevant funding or institutional body. As with social life generally, there are layers of complexity, ambiguity and flexibility associated with the commercialisation and proletarianisation of intellectual labour that need to be teased out. Not least to consider is the self-conscious reflection by

criminologists about what they are doing, and why. It would be arrogant in the extreme to suggest that academic (and non-academic) criminologists are unaware of how their work situation has changed in recent years, and of the challenges they face in doing their particular type of criminology under what are at times very trying circumstances.

There are certainly difficulties in attempting to engage in theoretical and/or critical criminological work in a context that does not reward such work. If one examines the 'core curriculum' of teaching and research today we find that very often what is valued is what will bring in the money. In practice, this usually means the use of professional expertise in a restricted, technocratic manner and/or ways that will best serve one's client, whether this be corporate or state. Theoretical work or work that is explicitly concerned with issues of 'social justice' tend to be considered 'asset strippers' (see Thornton 2000) in that it costs money (i.e. salaries) but brings little financial resources back into the enterprise or institution.

The material realities of intellectual production are such that 'what counts' is always bounded by considerations of power and purpose – different knowledge claims have differing degrees of legitimacy and institutional support. It may well be argued that what criminologists do is ultimately judged according to 'professional' standards and criteria. For instance, the President of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology recently argued that:

My impression is that meritocracy rules, and that by and large, quality work gets rewarded, while inferior work does not. Some of our most eminent colleagues are highly respected in both academic and government circles. The fact that commercial engagements (as distinct from grants for 'pure' research) may have conditions attached regarding confidentiality or ownership of intellectual property does not constitute interference. Nor is it inappropriate for sources of funding to specify priorities, and to identify the kinds of knowledge that they deem to be useful (Grabosky 2000:i).

There is an appeal here to 'professionalism' and technical expertise as an essential 'safeguard' to knowledge production. The problem with this is that it tends to downplay the social processes of knowledge production and, in particular, the struggles over meaning and the uses to which knowledge is put. Yet, as Israel (2000) indicates, and personal experience confirms, there are a number of examples within Australian criminology where 'integrity' has led to either loss of contract, censorship or exclusion from the 'expert' commercial/state market. The same problems arise with respect to evaluation research; namely issues of co-optation and/or exclusion based upon the 'independence' of the evaluator. In addition, instances of direct industry, government and university interference in academic work may be relatively rare (that is, as far as we know: this is an issue worthy of further research in its own right), but they nevertheless do constitute a major concern (see Kayrooz et al 2001). A classic example of this within criminology is the attempt by the South Australian Attorney-General's Department to suppress two papers presented at the 1996 Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology conference held in New Zealand: '... never before had a government department, let alone a foreign government, threatened legal action against presenters, the Society itself (including its members) and the host university' (Presdee & Walters 1998). As discussed by Presdee and Walters (1998), the response to their evaluation of crime prevention in South Australia took the form of various acts of government intimidation, including use of both formal and informal sanctions. Following Foucault, the authors argue that the conflict was ultimately over what counts as knowledge or truth. At the heart of the issue was how power is exerted, both directly and indirectly, to control or regulate the production of knowledge.

The 'policing of knowledge' (see Presdee & Walters 1998) occurs in various ways, as does the 'silencing' process. For example, in 1998-1999, I was involved in a major government-funded project relating to young people's use of public space. The full report provided an extensive review of literature, findings from primary data collection involving indigenous young people and rural young people (as well as older rural people, and planners, architects and designers), critical analysis of how public space is socially constructed, a summary of different types of positive youth projects, and discussions of developmental youth crime prevention approaches. This report was never published in hard copy. In the light of public criticism of its non-release, and numerous phone calls, it was finally made available on the internet (White 1999). The report had satisfied the requirements of the project steering committee, and had been 'signed off' by all state and territory representatives involved with National Crime Prevention. Anecdotally, I was told that the reason why it was not released (after having been typeset and ready to go to the printers) was that an advisor in the Minister of Justice's office did not like it 'for ideological reasons'. A summary version of the report was released: written by public servants, and published under the name of the funding organisation (National Crime Prevention 1999).

More generally, the status of knowledge claims (and persons making those claims) very much depends on where a person is positioned institutionally within the criminal justice field/university sector, and what kinds of work (specifically) we are talking about. Knowledge production is not a socially neutral process, as Snider (2000:193) observes:

The knowledge claims of sociology and criminology, when they legitimate increased repression and control over traditional (lower class) criminals, are not only heard, they are embraced and celebrated. Only when they legitimate tightened social control over hegemonic groups are they 'obviously' inadequate.

The definitions of what are deemed to be 'important' crimes and the preferred crime responses is part and parcel of a larger political process involving many different players and diverse ideological cross-currents. Scraton (2001) makes the point that critical criminologists are free to research, to write and to teach, but only at the periphery not at the core. Following in the tradition of Gouldner, C. Wright Mills, Cohen and others, he argues that this is due to the 'mainstream' being inherently and integrally linked to the industrial-military complex. It is 'mainstream' precisely because it is embedded in the dominant relations of power and knowledge.

In the contemporary period of neo-liberal reform and restructuring, there has been a dichotomous process of politicisation and de-politicisation of crime issues in the public realm. The politicisation of crime is manifest in law and order campaigns, designed for maximum cross-class electoral appeal, where the central concern is to get tough on crime (meaning 'working class' crime). A modicum of social peace (read, social control) is necessary to the maintenance of political legitimacy in times of intense change and institutional transformation, and to ensure the 'normal' operation of the market. The de-politicisation of crime relates to how crimes of the powerful are ignored or downplayed, social structural and systemic reasons for inequality are rarely explicitly discussed or addressed, and 'solutions' are conceptualised in technical rather than social terms (e.g. more police, more programmes, better targeting of resources).

Criminologists have an important role to play in regards to these debates, and in respect to how and where to turn the criminological gaze. Consider for example, the following accounts of crime:

White collar crime, although technically classified under property crime, needs to be distinguished because of its considerable impact on society. White collar crimes originally covered acts committed by business people and professionals, but today includes theft by employees, corruption, cheating on taxes, social security fraud, medi-fraud (billing by physicians for services not performed), as well as stock market swindles, consumer fraud, and price-fixing. It also includes various crimes committed with the aid of, or against, telecommunications systems and computers (Mukherjee & Graycar 1997:10).

This type of 'administrative' criminology provides a definition that is too restrictive in one sense, and too expansive in another. First, it is premised upon a strictly legal definition of crime and, as such, ignores a key thrust of white-collar crime analysis, that is, its insistence upon going beyond official criminal definitions. Secondly, it disregards the centrality of class and social status in the construction of this crime category. The whole point of its introduction was to focus greater attention on crimes of the powerful as distinct from crimes of the less powerful (see Rosoff et al 1998). This was so even in the light of certain ambiguities concerning whether or not to include some types of blue-collar activity (such as cheating by tradespeople).

Alternatively, we might consider the perspective of Snider (2000), who analyses the process of re-defining activity as non-criminal and as not problematic from a regulatory point of view. Snider likewise considers white-collar and corporate crime - in this case including both financial crimes such as anti-trust and insider trading - and social crimes such as health and safety violations and offences against environment. She argues that:

Because its survival as an object of study is contingent on the passage and enforcement of 'command and control' legislation, corporate crime can 'disappear' through decriminalization (the repeal of criminal law), through deregulation (the repeal of all state law, criminal, civil and administrative) and through downsizing (the destruction of the state's enforcement capability) (Snider 2000:172).

In discussing the 'disappearance' of corporate crime (*vis-à-vis* institutional attention and action), Snider also alludes to the important role of academic discourse in constructions of what is 'feasible' or 'acceptable'. Thus, for example, there are difficulties that have historically attached to labelling the illegal activities of corporations as criminal. Anti-regulation supporters have actively used evidence provided by academic criminologists among others - that criminal law has been ineffective in dealing with business crime - to further legitimate mechanisms that allow the 'market' (and those with the power) to dominate when it comes to 'choosing' the 'right' regulatory strategy. Depending upon government responses, this, too, can reinforce the re-casting of the concept of white-collar crime, away from questions of power (i.e. social status of offender) and toward matters of form (e.g. 'paper' crime that is classless in that it involves welfare fraud as well as corporate fraud). How crime and social harm is socially constructed has major implications for how institutional responses will be framed.

To explain these differing approaches to 'crimes of the powerful', we could examine the institutional sites of different kinds of knowledge production. For example, we might explore the particular pressures on the Australian Institute of Criminology to undertake certain types of research, under certain types of political and economic pressures (see Brown 1994; Israel 2000). Or, we could ask for an elaboration of the precise reasons why the concept of white-collar crime has (apparently) been modified to include crimes by welfare recipients as well as business leaders. Or, we could consider the personal attributes and ideologies of individual researchers and scholars, in relation to the issue at hand. The main thing is that very specific social consequences tend to follow from how a problem is constructed, and this in turn depends upon institutional context and cultural milieu. This is not a neutral social process, but requires close consideration of a range of factors that go into particular forms of intellectual production.

On the other hand, we have to be wary of analysis that over-generalises, and that views issues surrounding intellectual production in highly conspiratorial or deterministic terms. For example, Hil (2000:52) speaks of research 'commissioned by a radical conservative government under the pretext of an anti-crime strategy' as being inherently problematic for criminological researchers. His concerns are summarised as follows:

It seems to me that the criminologist as public intellectual must play an active role in linking crime to the bigger picture in a way that reflects on governmental policies and practices. It would also seem sensible to identify the specific *governmental interests* of those who commission reports and (perhaps) to offer an alternative (more critical and challenging?) view on the 'crime problem'. Otherwise, criminologists are in danger of becoming handmaidens to governments – that is, supportive of governmental agendas and oblivious to the implications of their own work (Hil 2000:52).

This perspective tends to assume a unified, monolithic structure to government, one in which competing and contradictory ideas and practices do not exist. In this particular case – a discussion of government funded research in the area of crime prevention – the writer appears to be oblivious of the progressive politics of many of those working in the office of National Crime Prevention at the time (i.e. an explicit ideological commitment to social justice and empowerment strategies), and, broadly speaking, of the office itself. Furthermore, the way in which 'crime prevention' has been juxtaposed *against* 'law and order' politics and forms of state intervention, a strategic intervention in which criminologists are among the leading exponents, is not accorded the analysis, and credit, that it deserves. For example, Sutton (1994; 2000) has trenchantly argued that crime prevention theory and practice can be used 'as a platform to engage with and contest dominant political and popular discourses about the nature of the crime problems and about the ways society should respond' (2000:320). In his work, he has done precisely this, through critique of exclusionary crime control strategies, and analysis that explicitly recognises the political dimensions of crime prevention.

Critiques such as that offered by Hil also tend to treat 'the criminologist' abstractly. They seldom take into account that the targets of the general polemic are actually 'real' people who more often than not do reflect upon their practice. Some agree with 'government' agendas, some attempt to subvert these agendas, and some attempt to shift government agendas through their professional practice. Whether or not one agrees with the perspective of any particular researcher, it is naïve at best, and insulting at worst, to presume that they do not engage in reflective criminology or that they do not know the historical and theoretical literature pertaining to criminal justice.

Such critiques also generally fail to acknowledge the difference between 'a greater understanding of the nature and origins of the "crime problem"' (an analytic task, with great variation in political orientation and theoretical interpretation) and actual crime problems (an experienced reality that varies according to class, gender and ethnic circumstance). Yes, crime is a social construct, but what about the material realities (violent behaviour, preventable workplace death) that underpin the social construction process? 'Crime' is about political struggles over meaning, definition and response. But there is also an 'empirical' reality lurking out there.

The challenge for progressive criminologists is to develop strategies and modes of intervention that will empower communities and collectivities of people to take action for themselves on behalf of themselves, and that will confront the social injustice and economic inequalities that form the basis of social harm. How criminologists see this task (if indeed it is viewed as the central task in the first place) depends upon one's political perspective, as well as institutional opportunities for intervention.

The application of criminological knowledge and techniques in addressing these issues is not in and of itself the problem. Framing a problem in ways that enable practical forms of intervention does not mean the same thing as adopting a problem-solving 'fix it' mentality (see Hil 2000; 1999). The co-author of a recent report on crime prevention (Developmental Crime Prevention Consortium 1999), for example, clearly has a strong sense of transitional politics underpinning his approach to 'applied' criminology. Homel (2000:48) comments:

...as the Pathways report emphasises, in addition to programs designed to strengthen families and communities through developmental interventions, there are many other kinds of programs that are essential in multiply disadvantaged communities, and they all must be implemented within a framework that genuinely empowers people for personal and community change.

I fail to understand how a solidly researched set of interventions with empowerment as a goal, designed in collaboration with local communities and controlled by those communities, can be dismissed as a 'technical, problem-fixing agenda...'. What is wrong with using the best research available in an attempt to alleviate the suffering of individuals, families and whole communities.

Figures within criminology who are generally perceived to be on the 'radical' end of the spectrum have likewise (a) taken money from 'radically conservative governments'; (b) directed research toward addressing particular social problems; and (c) developed practical measures designed to alleviate these problems. Not only this, they have used the research process to push the boundaries of dialogue and constructive engagement. For instance, Blagg describes a research process that is highly reflective and responsive:

During our consultations, a consistent criticism raised by Aboriginal people was that our work only focused on intervention and did not raise the important issue of prevention and healing. Aboriginal people were concerned with two principle aspects of the preventive and healing work. Firstly, they expressed a desire for programmes aimed at young people, particularly young males, and secondly, they wanted to see healing work focusing on the family as a whole. They were united in their belief that these initiatives required urgent attention and a major injection of resources.

It was recognised, however, that the quality of intervention should be improved as a basis for healing communities – not least because insensitive, ineffective or heavy-handed intervention frequently inflames, rather than ameliorates, already highly strained and volatile situations. Intervention itself, on the other hand, should provide a pathway to healing rather than a funnel into the criminal justice system (Blagg 2000:32).

What is interesting about these research projects – one on developmental approaches to crime prevention, the other on Indigenous family violence – is that in each case the authors have actively attempted to use the lessons learned and substantive research findings as a lever for progressive political intervention and action. Both research projects were also funded by the same source (Commonwealth Government). Criminologists can and do use the resources at hand, whatever their origin, to pursue their versions of the 'social good'. This may sometimes lead to *de facto* censorship of the commissioned research, in the form of non-publication or delayed publication of findings.

Behind the self-conscious and/or post-facto rationalisation of what we do, there lie a series of structural and institutional tensions. For example, we need to distinguish between what a criminologist may say they are doing (e.g. crime prevention as community empowerment) and what they actually, if inadvertently, may be doing (e.g. reinforcing a technical, apolitical approach). Interpretation of what we do is also guided by how a funding agency responds at a program, project or political level. For example, Sutton observes that

the Pathways to Prevention report, of which Homel is a key author, has much to commend it, and that, in particular, it confirms that crime prevention cannot be divorced from broader social policy and social justice issues. He goes on to say that:

On such a reading, the most appropriate outcome from the report would be political action to try to stem further erosion of education, health and welfare infrastructure by state and federal governments. However, given the consultancy's overall emphasis on pinpointing individual 'pathways' to delinquency, and National Crime Prevention's apparent intention of now 'testing' the research in one or more 'demonstration projects', it is unlikely that this will ensue (2000:329).

In addition to difficulties associated with paradoxical and diverse 'readings' of specific research studies, with greatly differing consequences, there are issues surrounding how the criminology 'problematic' is construed in the first place.

We need to be aware, for instance, of how 'essentialism' – that crime per se is a problem, and that it exists as a 'real' object – pervades criminology (see Brown & Hogg 1992). The dominant or hegemonic conception of the criminological project incorporates this essentialist understanding of the problem, and is reflected across the 'mainstream' and 'radical' divide (for example, it is apparent in some left realist work). Acceptance or otherwise of essentialist conceptions of crime and the crime problem will have significant implications with regards to research funding. This is because the logic of conventional criminological research is based fundamentally upon essentialist understandings of the nature of the problem. Given this, even 'leftist' or critical criminological work may manage to secure funding if it begins with an assumption that there is a 'crime' problem to fix.

Conscious reflection on our practice is crucial to becoming more than 'information gatherers for government' (Presdee & Walters 1998:165) or purveyors of the 'powerful commonsense which brackets out any recognition of crime as an ideological artefact of the legal definitions of the state, the criminal law and its knowledge producing processes' (Brown & Hogg 1992:113). What makes intellectual labour in criminology 'intellectual' hinges upon how each criminologist responds to the conditions and authority structures of their work. Writing in a different but relevant context, Connell (1983:250) makes the point that:

Intellectual work is not necessarily radical, but it must always be subversive of authority in its own domain. There is nothing exotic about this, it is implicit in the very notion of intellectual *work*. If the answers to problems are settled by received authority, there is literally no intellectual work to be done.

Elsewhere Connell (1983:239) also observes that 'The more immediately active power is in an intellectual labour process, and the more dominant interests shape the criteria of intellectual work and evaluate the products, then the more likely the product is to be composed of lies'. The institutional context of intellectual labour has no small part in influencing the extent to which 'subversion of authority' and 'not telling lies' features in our everyday work. So too, it shapes the manner in which intellectual work is put to bureaucratic and ideological uses, regardless of the intent or awareness of the social scientist (see Mills 1959). There will always be tensions between what we want to do, and what others will do with the product of our labour. The question of professional and personal integrity is inevitably bound up with how we negotiate the pressures and limits imposed upon us within the labour processes of intellectual work (e.g. specific resources available) and by forces external to our immediate work environment (e.g. media, government bureaucrats, politicians).

In abstract theoretical terms, we could describe the debates over research and intervention strategies as reflecting the perennial sociological dilemma of 'structure' versus 'agency'. Who produces knowledge, who controls it, and the uses to which it is put, are all sites of contestation involving complicated institutional pressures and many different kinds of choices on the part of the intellectual. My argument here is that we cannot assume the politics or ideology of the 'product' from who pays for it: who says what, why, and what they do with it, is, ultimately, what counts. The challenge is to find the 'spaces' within which to pursue progressive criminological work, in a period of sustained work pressures and restricted funding opportunities (in terms of the subject matter that attracts grants).

My own experience is that occasionally external opportunities for research do offer scope for innovative, theoretically informed and practically relevant work. For instance, some forms of research (such as that funded by local councils, or private commercial firms) are 'commissioned' precisely because they offer non-coercive, community-oriented perspectives on issues of crime prevention and social regulation (see for example, White et al 2001; White & Sutton 2001). The input of criminologists is valued in this case because it provides ideas and strategies for inclusive and convivial forms of community participation. It is in one sense 'social control' oriented. And very often it is funded by organisations with commercial or management considerations foremost in mind. But, the result of criminologist involvement is to create opportunities for alternative ways of looking at perceived problems, and for socially progressive means to respond to these.

The Tired Criminologist

This paper has attempted to sketch out some of the ambiguities of criminological practice (research and teaching) associated with significant changes in the material circumstances of criminological work generally. One of the main driving forces behind the paper is that the structural changes described above are, of course, experienced in a very personal way. They affect institutional systems and intellectual fields. They also most certainly affect people as thinking, emotional, political and physical beings. As pointed out by a number of researchers, it is frequently the case that each individual is a site for competing demands on our time, energy and resources, as these relate to the diverse kinds of 'administrative', 'theoretical' and 'political' practices (Hogg 1996; Loader 1998; Cohen 1998).

Hogg (1996) rightly criticises the idea of a 'seamless system of state control' on the one hand, and the idea of there ever being complete 'autonomy' of university intellectuals from the state on the other hand. This is important to bear in mind in any examination of the social role of intellectuals generally, and the specific circumstances bearing down upon criminologists at the present time, for it opens the door to consideration of the idea that there is always space for subversion – of government agenda, of intended research outcomes, of evaluation mandates. For example, knowledge gained of industries and government from an 'insider' perspective may well provide scope for the development of progressive alternative practices or the empirical experience needed for sustained critique.

How we identify and use these 'subversive spaces' is partly a matter of political philosophy, and partly a matter of time. The first speaks to the notion of ideology and strategic alliances within the field, and with fellow travellers outside of criminology as such. The second goes to the heart of the material conditions shaping the working lives of criminologists. Most criminologists today are caught up in varying degrees and types of 'running around'. The work of criminology is overlaid by three types of activities:

- 'busyness' (too much to do, too little time: administration, grant applications, student inquiries, community and government contacts and meetings, discussions with colleagues, review work, writing, research coordination);
- 'business' relating to the intellectual foundations of the profession (critical inquiry, scholarship, research projects), and;
- 'business' relating to research and teaching funding (money chasing for defined purposes).

Pressures associated with these activities are the bane of our existence as workers. They affect the direction and quality of work of academic criminologists across the political and ideological spectrum. The issue of resources (money, time, staff, funds) is especially pertinent to those who wish to undertake controversial and/or radical research, in a period witnessing the 'disappearance' of public debate and official concern in regards to such areas. The conditions of our work are intrinsically linked to issues of power/knowledge – will they lead to the production of overactive, but docile, bodies (Foucault 1977)?

It needs to be acknowledged, as well, that there are 'winners and losers' in this reshaped intellectual climate and this too will have an impact on the nature of the field as a whole. Those who, for whatever reason (e.g. ideological, financial, career), play the funding game the right way will be institutionally privileged over time. There is the danger that the 'winners', by their actions (e.g. gatekeeping roles for funding agencies or journal editorial boards) or non-actions (e.g. ignoring the voices and contributions from 'the fringes'), will succeed in narrowing the scope of what is considered 'legitimate' or 'good' criminology. A conservative hegemony in criminology is contingent upon what research gets commissioned, who gets published, whether 'evidenced-based' research dominates to the exclusion of other types of research, which departments or researchers are invited to tender for consultancies and research, and the extent to which critical criminologists are marginalised institutionally, professionally and politically. How this manifests itself is an open-ended question, if history is any guide and as recent analysis of the plurality of scholarship within the key mainstream criminology journal testifies (Pratt & Priestly 1999).

The development of criminology in Australia in conservative directions may have been generated in response to the critical and theoretical potentials within criminology (Carson & O'Malley 1989), but that development was neither uniform nor totally conservative in nature. As Finnane (1998) points out, a key 'founding father' of the field, Sir John Barry, held a range of views, some conservative and some progressive. Barry's commitment to reform in some areas, it is argued, would have placed him at the radical end of the political spectrum. As writers such as Cohen (1985) have emphasised, there are always ambiguities (and therefore, openings for radical action) in criminological practice and knowledge. Totalising discourses of both conservatives (e.g. the system is fine as is) and radicals (e.g. the system cannot be changed without full-scale transformation) can lead to inaction and/or misplaced optimism or pessimism on both sides (see Cohen 1985). Such discourses also belie the fact that adequate understanding of 'crime', and of responses to 'crime' (including radical innovations and movements), ought to be informed by a sense of the incomplete – of gains as well as losses, of continual struggles over meaning and truth, of 'hegemony' as a process not an outcome, of contradictions that generate new and unusual resistances, of individual initiatives and mass actions.

It is important to be realistic about what we can achieve as intellectuals within the criminological field, and what we need to strive towards. Here I find it useful to distinguish between 'progressive' work and 'transformative' interventions. The first serves to ameliorate the worst, most regressive aspects of contemporary criminal justice practice (e.g. positive youth crime prevention versus coercive enforcement and surveillance of youth). The second attempts to push the boundaries of the current system, to change the system as a whole in substantial ways (e.g. through enhancing public accountability and building social movements). The challenge is to develop 'transitional' political paths that will bridge the gap between holding the line and building a new alternative future. Testing the waters of intervention, and using whatever resources we can get our hands on (including 'commissioned' research), is one way in which a critical praxis can be achieved.

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