

## APPLIED CRIMINOLOGY

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*The development of social scientific theory and knowledge takes place not simply within the heads of individuals, but within particular institutional domains. These domains, in turn, are shaped by their surroundings: how academic institutions are organised, how disciplines are divided and subdivided, how disputes emerge, how research is funded and how the findings are published and used. In Criminology, an understanding of these institutional domains is especially important for knowledge is situated not just, or not even primarily, in the 'pure' academic world, but in the applied domain of the state's crime control apparatus.*

(Cohen, 1981: 220)

*Criminology is a contested, contradictory and interdisciplinary discourse marked by constant incursion, interactions, translations, deviations and transgressions. Competing theoretical perspectives meet and sometimes they are able to speak to, listen to and understand each other, at others they appear not to share any common discourse. There is, therefore, no one definition of 'Criminology' . . . but a multitude of noisy, argumentative criminological perspectives.*

(McLaughlin and Muncie, 2006: xiii)

### Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter explores what is meant by Applied Criminology: that is, Criminology in its applied form.

It is argued that Criminology should be applied to three principal questions:

- what is to be done about offenders?
- what is to be done about crime?
- what is to be done on behalf of the victims of crime?

It considers the historical development of Criminology as a discipline.

Some of the major movements and theories within Criminology are set out and the implications of applying these theories are explored.

Factors which shape the construction of criminological knowledge are critically considered. It is argued that all these factors have an important bearing on how Criminology is (or might be) applied and therefore how Applied Criminology should be understood.

The chapter concludes by considering the practice and policy implications of an Applied Criminology and outlining the contributions the various chapters of the book make to these debates.

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## Introduction

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Over the last ten years there has been an increase in Criminology courses in universities and in the number of students on these courses, many of whom anticipate employment in the community and criminal justice sector. This growth in the number of students is integrally linked to the perception that studying Criminology will not only improve the 'employability' of students but also, in doing so, will improve the functioning of the criminal justice system and increase its effectiveness. There is a sense, then, that the Criminology studied in the academy will (or should) be applicable in the field—to what are presented as the 'real world problems' of crime and criminal justice—a form of Applied Criminology.

The growth of Criminology taught in the institutional domain of the academy has also coincided with an increase in governmentally sponsored Criminology research. Whilst this reflects the prominence of crime and effective crime control in political debate, it also reflects a broader ambition to use 'evidence' from criminological research—especially in relation to what does or does not 'work'—to guide policy and practice.

This governmental commitment to researching criminal justice and evaluating its effectiveness has also been a significant factor in the growth of the monies made available to fund criminological research. Between 1998 and 2001, Tombs and Whyte (2004) observed that there was a 500 per cent increase in funding for research by the Home Office, much of which was aimed at commissioning criminological research. This is a significant investment and represents the government's interest in the generation of criminological knowledge. However, as we will stress, criminological knowledge and its production are not value free; nor is the extent to which criminological knowledge is meaningfully engaged and subsequently applied. Different criminological theories emerge from different contexts, are shaped by different forces and therefore have very different implications if applied. As this chapter, and indeed this volume, will illustrate, this is not as straightforward a process as it seems. There have been a number of developments, for example in policing and youth justice, which make bold claims regarding the extent to which criminological research and 'evidence' has been employed in informing the direction of policy and practice. Yet the extent to which criminological research has been employed to inform rather than merely legitimate policy is hotly contested, calling for a reappraisal of how Criminology has been engaged or 'applied' (see Hine, this volume).

This introductory chapter aims to set the scene for the rest of the book by exploring these issues. In doing this it critically appraises the forces which shape criminological understandings and considers the extent to which these understandings are—or could be—meaningfully deployed in guiding the policies and practices of criminal justice.

We identify three principal questions which Applied Criminology should address

- what is to be done about offenders?
- what is to be done about crime?
- what is to be done on behalf of the victims of crime?

and outline how the chapters which make up this collection contribute to these challenges.

It will be shown in this introductory chapter that these apparently simple questions are conceptually much more complex than first appears and that any answers to them involve political judgements as well as debates about effectiveness—or indeed what is judged as evidence of effectiveness. At this point, it is enough to note that unless Criminology illuminates these questions it is not easy to see **how** it is to be applied or **to what**.

The other chapters in this collection also address these questions. They apply Criminology to understanding crime and criminalisation, to responses to crime and offenders, to penal policy, to the needs and rights of victims and to understanding why certain conceptions of criminal justice have been prioritized over others. These chapters accordingly offer not only an overview of Criminology and the extent to which it has been meaningfully applied in respective parts of the ‘field’, but also contribute to debates around criminal justice—critically exploring the relationship between Criminology and policy and practice developments. The chapters in this collection do not all adopt a similar approach. Indeed in many respects they reflect the theoretical diversity of Criminology and the contested nature of criminological discourse. What the chapters have in common is that they critically engage with the manner and the extent to which Criminology has been meaningfully applied to the particular element of the field they address.

Garland defined Criminology as ‘a specific genre of discourse and enquiry about crime—a genre which has developed in the modern period and which can be distinguished from other ways of talking and thinking about criminal conduct’ (Garland, 2002: 7). He argued that this distinctiveness rests on Criminology’s claims to be empirically grounded and scientific, its focus on the subject matter of crime giving its distinctive disciplinary identity. Others dispute that Criminology constitutes a discipline in its own right (Walklate, 2005). According to Lea, Criminology is not a discipline but is defined by its subject matter—crime, criminal law and the relation between the two—and it is to this subject matter that we now turn.

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### The subject matter of Criminology

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Criminology is the body of knowledge regarding crime as a social phenomenon. It includes within its scope the processes of making laws, of breaking laws, and of reacting towards the breaking of laws . . . The objective of Criminology is the development of a body of general and verified principles and of other types of knowledge regarding this process of law, crime and treatment.

(Sutherland and Cressey, 1955: 3)

Whilst its disciplinary standing may be contested, then, Criminology involves a critical and systematic study of crime and criminals, of their victims, of the institutions and practices of criminal justice and punishment, of crime management, treatment and ultimately of reduction. This definition of the subject of criminological enquiry

is ambitious, committing Criminology to inquiry and interpretation in areas conventionally explored by psychology, sociology and philosophy, by law, politics and economics. Indeed this theoretical abundance, whilst reflecting the 'rendezvous' nature of Criminology, is both part of its intellectual appeal and the source its most intractable disputes and the subsequent 'fractures' between differing criminological perspectives (Ericson and Carriere, 1994).

Common sense suggests that crime must be the stuff of Criminology. Yet the definition of crime and correspondingly the boundaries of Criminology are notoriously problematic. An accepted, but minimal, definition of crime stipulates that crime is conduct proscribed by the law and liable to attract punishment. However, this definition has its limitations: how, for example, does an 'act' become transformed into a 'crime' and why are some acts defined as crimes while others are not? As Christie observes 'Acts are not, they *become*. So it is with crime. Crime does not exist. Crime is created. First there are acts. Then follows a long process of giving meaning to these acts' (1998a: 121).

Is there something that all crimes have in common? A Durkheimian (1964) approach would suggest that the criminal law expresses a consensus about what is right and wrong, what types of behaviour should be legislated against and punished. Stealing, for example, is a crime because it is agreed to be morally wrong. A more critical perspective, however, sees crime as narrowly defined by governments who represent the interests of powerful groups in society rather than as a reflection of consensus. For example a Marxist perspective identifies how the process of criminalization can be used as an instrument of economic power to serve the interests of the powerful (Sheptycki, 2006). An anonymous protest about land enclosure makes the point eloquently:

The law locks up the man or woman  
Who steals the goose from off the common;  
But lets the greater felon loose  
Who steals the common from the goose.

The perception of the criminal law as a formal codification of the consensus of values that binds a society therefore arguably neglects these important dimensions of power. Without an appreciation of these dimensions of power it is impossible to understand how certain acts become criminalized whilst others do not. This plainly raises questions for Criminology: if Criminology is restricted to the study of acts that the state defines as criminal, it is clearly at risk of having the terrain of its enquiry limited and confined to agendas defined and shaped by the state. Many criminologists insist, therefore, that they have the right and the responsibility to investigate other types of harmful conduct—for example, the wrongs done by states to their citizens, or the harms caused by powerful corporations, whose actions may not fall within governmentally defined criminality, but are never the less socially harmful (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1975)

The legal parameters of crime should not just be accepted as given: it is an impoverished and uncritical Criminology that forbids itself by definition from inquiring

into the origins of laws, who decides what kind of conduct is so proscribed and with what consequences.

Some have accordingly been tempted to call for a shift away from crime as the subject of inquiry and to instead focus on *harm* (Hillyard and Tombs, 2005). This perspective argues that crimes should be considered in the much broader context of the many harms that threaten and damage people's lives, including the pollution of air, water or food, poverty, exploitation and abuse by powerful industrial and commercial interests, health and safety at work, stress and social exclusion. Some of these harms are, to be sure, technically criminal, at least in some circumstances, but it is not usually these that governments have in mind when they debate 'crime concerns' and many of these harms are not 'criminal' at all. It is also not these type of crimes or social harms to which criminological enquiry is routinely *applied*.

Crime impacts disproportionately on vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, who are also most at risk of other social harms and from the crimes of the powerful. Much crime too is intraclass—that is, committed by members of these marginalised communities against one another (Young, 1986). To insist that the crimes of the powerful and the processes of criminalization impact unfairly on disadvantaged communities is not to deny the harms of crime as conventionally understood. Criminologists have an ethical duty to consider these issues, especially if we are concerned with the application of this knowledge and how the insights of Criminology can support and serve these communities.

### ***Law as oppression, law as liberation***

The criminal law calls upon the state to protect people who are powerless against the predations of those who would exploit and abuse them, and to bring the perpetrators to justice when crimes are committed. It is therefore an instrument of liberation.

The criminal law represents the interests of those who have the power to impose their preferences on the rest of society and, in some jurisdictions and in almost all societies at some times, sustains injustice. It is therefore an instrument of oppression.

## **Applied Criminology**

This chapter—and indeed this whole volume—affirm the possibility and value of Applied Criminology—that Criminology which self-consciously and deliberately explores the insights of Criminology for their relevance and application to policy and practice.

Some theorists have associated Applied Criminology with a dilution of criminological theory and the process whereby Criminology has become depoliticized. That is, they have seen Applied Criminology as focusing primarily on improving the service delivery of the criminal justice system, dislocated from consideration of broader structural issues and the theories which examine these. This perspective sees Applied Criminology as purely 'technicist' (Cohen, 1985), focusing primarily on the effective workings of the criminal justice system, a system which targets the transgressions

of the poor and the powerless, and in particular socially deprived working class adolescents (Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973).

However, we would argue that an Applied Criminology should go much further than this. Applied Criminology should have a critical edge, casting a discriminating, analytical gaze over the processes of criminalisation, crime enforcement, and the criminal justice system. Since crime is such a highly politicised issue, Applied Criminology should seek to expose the relationship between governmental agendas and knowledge production. That is how government defines crime, shapes the criminological agenda and influences the way in which Criminology is applied. An Applied Criminology has an ethical duty to do this; otherwise it risks being fully incorporated by the state and its intellectual integrity and analytical efficacy severely restricted. In this respect, to echo Christie's assertion regarding the role of Criminology, Applied Criminology should not be aimed at *problem solving* for the state but rather should also focus on *raising problems* (Christie, 1971 cited in Bottomley, 1979). Applied Criminology should contribute not merely to the smooth functioning of criminal justice but must raise questions regarding the direction of policy in the context of a broader socio-structural critique. Thus the 'emphases and methodologies of applied work' should be considered in relation to the 'economic, political and social conflicts of the time' (Sim et al., 1987: 5). In this context any attempt to understand what is meant by Applied Criminology requires an appreciation of the context from which criminological theories emerge, and of state power and its relationship with criminological knowledge production.

As Hudson has argued Criminology not only seeks to understand social control but 'is itself part of the apparatus of social control in modern societies' (Hudson, 1997: 452). Applied Criminology accordingly calls for an element of self reflection—for example why does Criminology focus mainly on the poor and the powerless rather than the actions of the powerful—or in the words of Hagan (1994) the crimes of the 'street' rather than the crimes of the 'suite'? Why is it these groups who become the paradigmatic target to which Criminology is applied—whereas other groups do not? This focus clearly ensures that Criminology focuses on certain types of problems rather than others, generating knowledge of certain types of activities to the neglect of others. Tombs and Williams explore this issue in detail in their chapter in this volume, demonstrating that while crimes committed by powerful business interests cost far more than street crimes, they are much less likely to be the subject of research.

Whilst Criminology is plainly vulnerable to misuse to 'legitimate' policy and practice, especially when crime is such a volatile political area, we would argue that Applied Criminology is worthy of study for a variety of reasons. Indeed, so long as it retains its critical and analytical perspective, Applied Criminology can make important contributions to informing policy and enhancing practice, illuminating the three identified principal areas of concern—what is to be done with offenders?; what is to be done about crime?; what is to be done for (on behalf of) victims of crime?

Applied Criminology shows us that each of these questions is much less straightforward than it looks, concealing a number of deeper questions and themes. How are we to understand the processes by which some wrongdoers (but not others) come to be

identified as offenders? What types of intervention are just and effective? What of 'potential' offenders? How good are we at identifying them? And what are the consequences of identifying them and the ethics of intervening (perhaps compulsorily)—not on the basis of what they have done but in anticipation of what we think they may do? Indeed what type of issues would be raised if we considered this type of pre-emptive intervention with corporate offenders rather than juvenile delinquents? Since so few crimes lead to conviction, can the criminal justice system influence levels of crime? If not, what can? Who is to count as a victim? Many of these issues are questions with which the chapters in this volume concern themselves.

Another important insight of Applied Criminology is to recognise that these three broad questions cannot be collapsed into one. This fairly obvious point needs to be pressed because penal policy has often seemed to treat them as a single question—a question to which the answer is *punishment*. Penal policy, at least in the past twenty years, has insisted that condign punishment—whether justified in the language of desert, deterrence or incapacitation—is the appropriate way of dealing with offenders, displacing the rehabilitative aspirations that characterized the earlier years of the twentieth century (Garland, 2001). Again, conflating the first two questions, policy has typically responded to anxieties about the prevalence or seriousness of certain kinds of conduct by penalizing these through the criminal law. Yet at least arguably this rests on an exaggerated faith in the efficacy of deterrence and the educative force of criminal justice.

Punishment is also felt to be a unique vindication of the experience of victims. The possibility that victims may need other sources of restitution, support or closure has often been politically marginalised on precisely this pretext. The persuasive trope of the *scales of justice*—in which the claims and needs of victims are weighed against those of offenders—encourages the belief that a balance can only be struck when punishment is heavy. Yet investigation shows the position is more complex than this. Victims respond to the distress of crimes against them in different ways. Plainly it will depend on the victim and the crime. It is no doubt safe to assume that victims want the offences against them to be taken seriously, but this is not at all to say that this can only (or even best) be demonstrated through punishment—and certainly not through punishment alone. Annexing the matter of the needs of victims to the punishment of offenders, moreover, leaves stranded the many (majority) of victims whose offenders are not caught or punished.

The first point, then, is that failure to separate out these three questions leads to poor crime control and an approach to victimisation that will leave most victims unsupported and unsatisfied. It is next to be noted that these are all *normative* questions, which are not 'value free' but call for political and ethical judgements. We saw earlier that the choice of definition of *crime* and the determination of the scope of Criminology irreducibly involves political and ethical choices—for example whether to study crime (or even what type of crime) or social harm. Similarly, the three questions raise not only empirical and conceptual challenges, but also ethical problems.

Yet, as Matza argued, the 'correctional perspective' in Criminology—the priority to denounce and repudiate—increases the possibility of 'losing the phenomenon—reducing it to that which it is not.' (Matza, 1969: 17) In other words, the urge to suppress crime interferes with a proper understanding. This perspective too at least partly

explains why so much of the criminological tradition treats offenders as objects rather than subjects, inquiring into causes rather than the reasons that are usually sought when trying to understand behaviour. There are ethnographic traditions in Criminology too (Hobbs, 2007) which attempt to discover what offending means to its perpetrators, the sense they make of their conduct, listening to their 'voices'. Whilst these perspectives have been marginal in Criminology they have made a considerable contribution to the understanding of crime and criminality (Yates, 2004). However, these perspectives bring with them the risk of romanticizing crime—another shortcoming against which Matza warned (1969). Matza's proposal was for an appreciative inquiry which takes seriously offenders' accounts of their own behaviour without collusion or romanticization.

If we want to know why someone has behaved as they have, we ask them and they will give **reasons** and **meanings** in their account—not causes. Criminology has not usually approached offenders in this way, losing a potentially rich source of understanding. This may be because we are reluctant to 'understand' conduct which it is psychologically and politically more comfortable to deplore.

Matza's insight plainly has very significant implications for Applied Criminology. If, in an enthusiasm to denounce crime, criminologists abandon a critical perspective, as they apply their understandings to the real problems of crime, criminal justice and victimization, they are at risk of misunderstanding, of irrelevance and even of aggravating the problems they are attempting to address.

### Some criminological approaches and their applications

There are a wide range of criminological theories, which offer competing perspectives on crime and therefore have very different implications if applied to the field of community and criminal justice practice. To illustrate this, we now review some theories and explore the issues raised in their application.

The 'Lombrosian project' (Garland, 2002) attempted to determine what it was about criminals that made them different from others through the application of positivist methodology and the utilization of the tools of the natural sciences to identify '*L'Uomo Delinquente*'—the 'Criminal Man'. Yet the aspiration to reduce crime significantly through gaining knowledge of its causes as discerned from a study of offenders gradually came to seem less plausible. The biological or psychological factors that differentiated offenders from others were elusive and in any case probably beyond influence. Meanwhile, the worth of the project was challenged by other modes of understanding crime. The 'Chicago school' investigated the ecology of crime and suggested that crime might be a function of social organization (or disorganization). 'Strain theory' found the origins of offending in the 'strain' between aspirations of affluence and the realities that prosperity was attainable by relatively few: crime was one possible response to this predicament. 'Conflict theories' regarded crime as a manifestation of tensions—typically class tensions—grounded in the social order.



For all the many differences in the theoretical preferences and political affiliations associated with these accounts, they have it in common that constitutional differences between individuals are taken, at best, to be just part of the story. Sociological approaches recognize that any account of offending needs an appreciation of the social origin and context of crime and therefore insist that crime is a product of the political and economic arrangements of society rather than the aberrant behaviour of a few individuals. Unsurprisingly, governments favour individualized explanations and normally reject accounts that involve critiques of social structure.

Again, if all that crimes have in common is that they are proscribed by the criminal law, it may seem implausible that there could be such a thing as ‘the cause (or even causes) of crime’. To suppose that there could be would not only neglect the political contingencies of criminalization but the sheer diversity of conduct encompassed by the term *crime* (even in its most conservative definition).

The list of ‘notifiable offences’ (see Nicholas, Povey, Walker and Kershaw, 2005: Appendix Two) includes a very wide range of crimes—from fraud by a company director to abandoning a child under the age of two; from abstracting electricity to religiously aggravated criminal damage; from adulteration of food to treason. How likely is it that genetics, biology or psychology could uncover the ‘cause’ of such diverse conduct?

For other reasons besides, it was also seeming increasingly unlikely that any such causes could be discovered by a study, no matter how meticulous, of the characteristics of known offenders. Self-report studies and victimization surveys were demonstrating (as criminologists had long suspected) that the convicted and imprisoned criminals about whom so much knowledge had been accumulated were no more than a very small proportion of all those who broke the law—and could not be assumed to be (more probably were not) representative of the larger group.

Cohort studies—tracking the criminal records of everyone born in a particular week—further demonstrated that a much greater number of people acquired a criminal conviction than had been realized. Attrition studies, demonstrating the various points between crime and conviction where offenders disappeared from the process, tried to gauge the size of the iceberg of which convictions are the tip and suggested that, certainly for some offences, there were no more than two or three convictions for a hundred crimes. Self-report studies suggested that even this number massively underestimated the incidence of offending and it became plausible to assert that many—probably most—people commit a criminal offence at some point in their lives (for discussion and references, see Maguire 2007).

Cohort studies show that a significant number of people acquire a conviction for a serious criminal offence. Attrition studies show that only a small fraction of offences lead to a conviction. Victim surveys and self-report studies confirm that the number of people who commit an offence is very large. If most people offend, where does this leave the search for a difference between those who offend and those who do not? And if the criminal justice system deals with no more than a small proportion of offenders, can it contribute much to a reduction in crime? If not, what strategies should be employed against crime?

As well as challenging the project of discovering the causes of crime, these insights call into question the relationship between offending and the criminal justice system. How can the criminal justice system make more than a very modest contribution to levels of crime if only a small proportion of offenders are apprehended and convicted? A conventional reply is to appeal to *deterrence*: the prospect of apprehension and penalty deters people from offending—a phenomenon that is less apparent to those in criminal justice practice who only encounter those who have *not* been deterred. Yet Criminology has advised us to be cautious here: it is not that fear of the consequences never deters, but that deterrence makes unwarranted assumptions about behaviour that exaggerate its potential. In particular, there is little or no evidence that increasing penalties for offences will reduce incidence. If there is an optimal level of punishment that would deter, no one knows what it is.

Another possibility is that the criminal justice system has an *educative* influence, affirming the values that bind a community in the repudiation and denunciation of crime that is represented by arrest, trial and punishment (Durkheim, 1964). The criminal justice system no doubt does have some such effect: one of the ways in which we learn the wrongness of conduct is by witnessing the community response to such behaviour. Yet while it may be important and morally educative for a criminal justice system to remain thus connected to the values of the society it is intended to serve, the implications for criminal justice and sentencing practice are far from clear. In particular, there is no evidence to suggest that there is any straightforward relationship between *levels* of punishment and public perceptions of wrongness (Walker, 1991).

In sum, then, it is increasingly being appreciated, that, as Garland puts it:

It is only the mainstream processes of socialisation (internalised morality and the sense of duty, the informal inducements and rewards of conformity, the practical and cultural networks of mutual expectation and independence etc.) which are able to promote proper conduct on a consistent and regular basis.

(Garland, 1990: 289)

all matters plainly beyond the remit or capacity of state agencies of criminal justice.

One way of describing this trajectory in Criminology is to say that it became increasingly clear that the question 'What is to be done about crime?' is not the same as the question 'What is to be done with convicted offenders?'

An appreciation of the social context of offending is a warning about the limitations of the criminal justice system. There may be a place for intervention with troubled individuals, but the socio-economic order, the distribution of opportunities, the way in which we arrange our affairs and order our lives constitute the context in which people will have their opportunities to offend or to desist and in which they will make their choices.

Rational choice and routine activity theories protested that offenders had been 'over-pathologized': offenders were rational calculators like everyone else (or at least no less rational than everyone else) who took opportunities on the basis of judgments about their own interests. These approaches argued that the 'causes of offending' were largely unknown, probably unknowable, and in any case beyond influence.

(How might the ‘mainstream processes of socialisation’ to which Garland refers be amenable to change?) It was therefore a mistake, theoretically and politically, to approach crime reduction through what Criminology thought it knew about the untypical minority of convicted offenders it studied.

For that matter, the criminal justice system could not do much with the few offenders with whom it did manage to engage. There was very little evidence to show that any particular mode of intervention was more successful than any other in reducing the chances of reconviction (Brody, 1976). Worse, Criminology, arguing that ‘crime’ could not be studied in isolation from the processes of criminalization and the practices of enforcement, adduced some arguments to suggest that criminal justice practice is as much part of the problem as it is a solution. Most obviously, the more conduct is criminalized, the greater will be the incidence of crime. Nils Christie (2004) has recently argued cogently that there is a significant sense in which societies can have as much crime as they choose: there are several possible responses to misbehaviour and incivility and, if the political choice is made to designate many of them crimes, then there will be more crimes and more criminals. There may be other ways—including more effective ways—of reducing the incidence of the unwanted behaviour.

Interactionist perspectives suggested that formal state interventions typically made matters worse by characterizing offenders in ways which change their own perception of self (leading often to ‘secondary deviance’ (Lemert, 1951)) and make other people react to them differently and negatively. At the extreme, Schur (1973) counselled *radical non-intervention*, ‘leaving the kids alone’. It is well established that crimes are disproportionately committed by younger people and that the normal development is to ‘grow out of crime’ (Matza, 1969; Rutherford, 1986). It is doubtful that criminal justice interventions can accelerate that process, but they can slow it down—by removing people from the environment in which they must learn to live lawfully and the opportunities that they need to create and sustain law-abiding lifestyles. This is an issue which the chapter by Goldson and Yates in this volume considers in detail.

Labelling theory, moreover, challenged the very coherence of the traditional criminological project of understanding offenders in order to reduce offending. There was *nothing* about offenders that made them different from other people—the difference being, as Becker famously said, neither a property of the offence nor the offender, but a function of the response to their conduct.

Labelling theory affords an unusual example of the way in which criminological theory can be applied to practice. The policy of diversion from prosecution, especially for young people, and of decarceration drew on interactionist understandings of offending. Even now that these approaches have been qualified and compromised, labelling theory remains as a chastening reminder that intervention can make things worse, as often as it makes things better. The idea of early intervention is beguiling—and is regularly reaffirmed by politicians. The early identification of young people who are likely to offend and a timely intervention to prevent this seems a plausible and attractive policy. Yet labelling reminds us that this is an aspiration with a very poor track record.

One of the objections to radical non-intervention concerned the ‘message’ that it gave—to offenders, to the community and, especially, to victims. To do nothing in

response to offensive behaviour was indistinguishable from indifference. Braithwaite (1989), while recognizing the potentially stigmatizing and exclusionary consequences of traditional punishments, felt that criminologists had drawn the wrong conclusion: punishment was often a proper reaction to wrongdoing but must be administered in a manner that would facilitate the reintegration of the offender into the community.

Rational choice perspectives and the recognition that criminal justice is just one (limited) aspect of the response to crime had helped to separate out the question of what to do about **crime** from the question what to do about **criminals**. The increased recognition of the importance of the victim is characteristic of contemporary criminological discourse (Bottoms, 1995; Garland, 2001). Awareness of the victim prompts a third question: what is to be done on behalf of **victims of crime**?

### Applied Criminology—frameworks for practice

Applied Criminology should be able to contribute to answers to the three main questions we identified earlier in this chapter. It therefore has relevance for policy makers and for practitioners working in the field of criminal justice.

Students who plan to enter into the field of criminal justice need to be equipped not only with a firm grounding in theoretical Criminology, what Cohen in the opening quotation refers to as the ‘pure academic world’, but also an understanding of how these theories relate to policy and practice in criminal justice—that is, how these criminological theories are applied. This is key to Applied Criminology and indeed what it has to offer.

Students must be able to engage critically with developments in the field in which they work. The field of criminal justice is a dynamic and ever changing and increasingly expanding landscape (Muncie, 1999). It is therefore extremely important for students who are to become practitioners to engage with these changes reflectively and critically. In order to do this it is not enough for a student simply to be equipped with a range of technical skills—they also need theoretical knowledge and the tools of critical analysis. For example it is not enough for students to merely learn about the relationship between a theory and policy and practice, they must be able to offer an informed critique of it. It is through these processes that practitioners can develop practice models and improve the services they provide.

The flow of ideas, moreover, goes both ways—not only should the academy influence practice, but practice experience and innovative policy debate must have their influence on the character and direction of Applied Criminology.

All of the authors in this volume apply criminological theory to their topic and consider the relationship between criminological theory and policy and practice developments. This includes a critical review of how criminological theory has been applied in this area of the sector; the extent to which Criminology has been meaningfully engaged, paying particular attention to the contemporary context and to Criminology’s relationship with power; and the implications of their analysis for

diverse communities, with particular regard to discrimination, oppression and injustice. The authors also discuss how Criminology might be applied and comment on some of its unrealized potential and how it might be deployed to enrich the quality of political debate and contemporary practice.

The relationship between criminological research and policy and practice is key to any discussion around *applied* Criminology. Indeed, it is this relationship which is presented as key in the 'what works' and effective practice agendas and it is at the heart of the relationships between the academy, the state and the apparatus of social control. This is central to all of the chapters in this volume. Hine in her chapter explores some of the contours of the relationship between criminological research, policy and practice in more detail. In particular Hine explores the development of Criminology and its relationship with governance illustrating how the current relationship between Criminology, research, policy and practice can be traced back to these historical roots. Hine also examines the notion of evidence-based policy and practice and the current dominant conception of these relationships, as well as the individual concepts of policy, practice and research. Thus, Hine critically explores the relationship between research, policy and practice which lies at the heart of any discussion of Applied Criminology.

This dialogue between Applied Criminology and practice should be especially productive in the area of diversity and anti-discrimination. Crime policy has sometimes spoken about *offenders*, *victims* and *communities* in ways that neglect their differences—as 'standard cases'. But, as Hudson insists, 'Once the subject of justice is given back his/her social context and flesh and blood reality, it is clear that difference is the standard case, and that differences are routinely irreducible.' (Hudson, 2001: 166). Since a reflective Criminology should explore and expose these differences, Knight, Dominey and Hudson look at Criminology's erratic engagement with (and regular neglect of) these issues and discuss the emergence of critiques to mainstream Criminology. They examine the implications of practising in a criminal justice system which reflects and reproduces inequalities of power.

Opposition to inequality and unfairness calls for self-awareness—an appreciation of how practitioners' attitudes and behaviour must themselves be a subject of reflection if personal and institutionalized discrimination is to be challenged. It requires knowledge—of structural and cultural patterns, institutions and practices that sustain these inequities. It also calls for understanding and professional competence, as well as for an ethical commitment to justice. All this is a central part of applied criminological studies intended to produce practitioners who will recognize and oppose injustice and who must be supported by their organisations in this endeavour.

Crisp and Ward look at the role Criminology has played in informing developments in police and policing and in doing so outline the challenges for policing in the 21st century, exploring the insights criminological theory can offer in informing policing practices. They also critically appraise historical developments in policing and look at the relationship between the police and local community. In doing this they pay particular attention to issues regarding race. The chapter concludes by arguing that the recent developments in the training of police officers provide an opportunity to reflect

on the application of research and theory on policing operations and the relationship between the police and the community.

Prisons are a key part of the criminal justice system and in the UK are the ultimate sanction for criminal wrongdoing. Wahidin and Ardley in their chapter on prisons look critically at imprisonment, and illustrate disturbing trends in the use of imprisonment and also its social effects. They take a critical look at the functions of prisons paying particular attention to women prisoners and older prisoners. They critically explore issues relating to ethnicity and self harm utilizing case studies to illustrate these problems. They then move on to consider abolitionism, arguing that the abolitionist approach offers an alternative vision of how we as a society deal with wrongdoing—a vision which contrasts starkly with traditional models of penalty.

Canton and Eadie apply consideration to the area of discretion and accountability. Practitioners are called upon to make decisions all the time and are often guided by regulations that are intended to constrain or even to determine their course of action. But how can rules accommodate diversity—not only the very many ways in which circumstances differ from one another, but differences among the people affected by the decisions? A regulation designed for a ‘standard case’ could lead to injustice in the real world of diversity. Yet if professionals make their judgements case-by-case, this could in itself lead to unacceptable inconsistencies, to favouritism, bias and arbitrariness.

Canton and Eadie propose accountability as the protection against such unfairness. They further argue that attention to individuality and respect for difference are important parts of the legitimacy of criminal justice practice. Confidence in the criminal justice system and compliance with its demands are enhanced when people are treated as individuals and with respect. Accountability should not be confined to the line management relationship, but should be extended to a much wider constituency—and not least to those affected by the decisions.

Evidence-based policy and effectiveness, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, have become key terms in the lexicon of criminal justice. The chapter by Goldson and Yates critically assesses recent constructions of ‘evidenced-based’ policy formation and their application within the context of youth justice in England and Wales since 1997. They argue that there is a lack of congruence between research evidence and current youth justice practice and therefore call into question the extent to which Criminology has been meaningfully applied in youth justice. They argue that a genuinely evidenced-based approach to youth crime and justice must transgress crude politicization of youth justice. Ultimately, this requires the depoliticization of youth crime and justice and the development of more progressively tolerant, human rights compliant, non-criminalizing, inclusionary and participative strategies. It is to this, they argue, that ‘applied Criminology’ must strive. In doing this they argue that Applied Criminology should be constructed as a form of critical intervention.

Community interventions are a key part of modern day criminal justice systems. The chapter by Smith offers an overview and historical development of community interventions—a key area to which government claims criminological research has been applied. Drawing on examples from the youth justice system, Smith critically engages with the ideological justifications which community interventions draw on,

asking questions both about their rationale and the practical consequences and exploring their links with Criminology and research evidence. Thus Smith wrestles with the extent to which Criminology, in this respect, has been applied. In a similar vein to Goldson and Yates and Tombs and Williams, Smith argues that Criminology has a responsibility to offer a critical perspective, both in terms of honest and accurate evaluations of effectiveness, but also in terms of making normative judgements about the desirability and value of interventions.

Wood and Kemshall discuss accountability in the practice of working with high risk offenders in the community. Accountability is due to many groups—victims, communities, the several agencies involved in a multi-agency endeavour—and to the offenders themselves. This is not only a moral requirement, but conduces to compliance. They point to ‘a clear relationship between an offender’s acceptance of and compliance with restrictions, and the extent to which the decisions made are clearly communicated and justified.’ No risk management strategy can ignore the response of the offender to that strategy.

One of the most significant developments in community and criminal justice, in recent years, has been the increasing influence of restorative justice. Stout and Goodman Chong in their chapter look critically at the influence restorative justice has had on criminal justice policy and practice. They explore the influence it has had on both adult and youth justice systems. In doing this they explore key issues relating to the role of the state and the role of community that are not only inherent to restorative justice approaches, but are also key issues in broader debates around criminal justice. In this way the chapter looks at how the themes and principles of restorative justice have been meaningfully applied via criminal justice policy.

In a similar manner to the earlier chapter by Goldson and Yates, the chapter by Tombs and Williams can also be seen as a critical intervention, this time into debates around victimology and corporate crime. Thus whilst the victimology movement within Criminology has focused on the needs and rights of the victims of street crime, Tombs and Williams turn the analytical gaze up to corporate criminals. In doing this they critically appraise the extent to which the needs of the victims of corporate crime are meaningfully engaged with by Criminology or met by a criminal justice system so heavily weighted towards dealing with the crimes perpetrated by marginalised groups. They outline how Criminology can be applied in a manner which mounts a critique of ideologically driven definitions of ‘victims’. Again this chapter raises a number of pertinent policy and practice questions regarding how corporate criminals are responded to and how the needs of their victims are met.

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## Conclusion

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This chapter has set out to explore what is meant by Applied Criminology and to assess the potential contribution of Criminology to practice. We have argued that an Applied Criminology should engage critically with the field and extend itself further than the narrow confines of the needs of government for research to inform the

apparatus of social control. It should not merely be reduced to providing technicist alibis (Cohen, 1985), constructed around narrow and conservatively constructed definitions of crime, proffered by the state. Rather it should move beyond this—to engage critically with issues of broader social harm, of why certain questions are asked rather than others, why certain evidence is profiled whilst other evidence is not and how governmental agendas impact on criminological knowledge production. As Christie argues, Criminology should be a problem raiser rather than a problem solver for the state. This requires an appreciation of how criminological discourse is constructed and how government agendas have shaped the institutional domain of academic Criminology. As Cohen argues in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter—this is especially important for Criminology precisely because criminological knowledge is applied. The rest of the chapters in this volume in their own ways explore different aspects of this application

We have identified three central practice questions—what is to be done with offenders?; what is to be done about crime?; what is to be done on behalf of victims? We have suggested that these questions are distinct, even though sometimes insufficiently differentiated in political debate. All criminal justice practitioners are required to address one or more of these questions and the associated challenges for practice. Practitioners equipped with the insights and the critical and analytical skills achieved through the study of Criminology will be not only be more reflective: they will be more effective in their work, because of their understanding of the potential and the limitations of their practice. The critical knowledge and accumulated experience of thoughtful and reflective practitioners is a rich (and under used) resource that has great potential to enhance policy and practice progressively.

### **Key Arguments**

It has been argued that the forces which shape criminological knowledge production have an important bearing on how Criminology is (or might be) applied and therefore how *Applied Criminology* should be understood.

This chapter has argued that Criminology should be applied to three principal questions: what is to be done about offenders?; what is to be done about crime?; and what is to be done on behalf of the victims of crime?

It is argued that these apparently simple questions are conceptually much more complex than first appears and that any answers to them involve political judgements. It is also argued that Applied Criminologists should be *problem raisers* as well as *problem solvers* (Christie, 1971) At the same time, the chapter argues that Criminology does afford insights and understandings that will enhance the quality of criminal justice practice.

The chapter concludes by considering the practice and policy implications of an Applied Criminology and outlining the contributions the various chapters of the book make to these debates.

### **Selected further reading**

Garland, D. (2002) 'Of Crimes and Criminals: the development of criminology in Britain' in Mike Maguire, Rod Morgan and Robert Reiner (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of*



*Criminology*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press. This chapter (not reproduced in the fourth edition, but available on the companion website) offers an excellent overview of the development of Criminology and provides useful insights into the relationship between criminological knowledge production and policy and practice in community and criminal justice. McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J. (2006) *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology*. 2nd edn. London: Sage is a comprehensive resource for students of Criminology. Rock, P. (2007) 'Sociological Theories of Crime' in Mike Maguire, Rod Morgan and Robert Reiner (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press. This chapter offers a full analysis of the role of sociological theories of crime. Muncie, J. McLaughlin, E. and Langan, M. (1996) *Criminological Perspectives: a reader*. London: Sage. This includes readings from a range of key thinkers. Newburn, T. (2007) *Criminology*. Cullompton: Willan is authoritative, comprehensive and accessible.