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Rethinking Criminology(ies) through the Inclusion of Political Violence and Armed Conflict as Legitimate Objects of Inquiry

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La reconnaissance de la criminologie en tant que discipline indépendante reste un projet inachevé. Ce processus semble être entravé par d'éternels débats d'objet, de théories et de méthodes entre une criminologie « traditionnelle » et une criminologie « alternative ». Cet article soutient qu'en portant attention à de nouveaux objets et les défis qu'ils représentent, il est possible d'établir un dialogue entre ces deux versants de la criminologie. En rendant perméables les frontières de l'objet criminologique, s'ouvre alors la possibilité d'une discipline malléable et dynamique qui étudie les processus de normalisation/différenciation/altérité et qui s'attarde à l'ordre, la discipline et le contrôle à travers des perspectives normatives, politiques, théoriques et méthodologiques diversifiées.

Mots clés : criminologie traditionnelle, criminologie alternative, violence politique, conflits armés, recherche

Criminology has yet to achieve full recognition as an independent discipline. Its development has been hampered by a multiplicity of often stale debates between a "traditional" and an "alternative" criminology over the legitimate object, theories, and methods of the discipline. Rather than pursuing the debate in its current form, this article explores how focusing on new objects of inquiry and the challenges they represent may help to bridge the criminological divide. By rendering the borders of criminology's object permeable, we may produce a malleable and dynamic discipline that deals with processes of normalization/differentiation/othering as well as ordering, governance, and control from different normative and political perspectives, theories, and methods.

Keywords: mainstream criminology, alternative criminology, political violence, armed conflict, research

Introduction

In order for the academic community to recognize a discipline as such, it needs to develop an explicit object together with theories and

methodologies (Lanier and Henry 2004). If these elements are central to the construction and recognition of a discipline, it follows that debates over such issues become deliberations that might redefine and reconfigure the discipline. Seeing science as a reflexive process implies facilitating and embracing such debates. However, in the context of an emerging discipline such as criminology,¹ the persistence of unresolved debates can actually lead to an existential crisis that puts its survival in peril.² Since its being recognized as a discipline in some universities,³ criminology has been under constant attack by sources from within and without. In a sense, criminology is like an adolescent craving to be acknowledged as independent from its parent disciplines (law, sociology, psychology, and psychiatry); it wants to be recognized as an autonomous scientific knowledge-producing entity while, at the same time, it remains attached to its parents in terms of methodology and theory as well as academic credibility or reputation (Cohen 1992; Morrison 2006). The process of becoming an independent and autonomous discipline has also been hindered by parent disciplines that do not appear ready to let go of the territory claimed by criminology (Cohen 1992). Furthermore, like many adolescents, criminology appears confused and dissatisfied with its own identity, trying on different objects of inquiry, theories, and methodologies. The turmoil within criminology translates into disputes over choices made or to be made and challenges of the knowledge resulting from those choices as well as criticism of the outcomes in terms of the concrete application of that knowledge. Criminology appears, then, as a battlefield, with groups and alliances formed across normative, political, theoretical, epistemological, and methodological divides.

Criminology or criminologies: The clash of mainstream and alternative over their institutionalization as the official criminology

Criminology as a field within its parent disciplines does not appear to have generated much commentary or controversy. Nevertheless, when criminology began to make claims as an independent discipline, it came under heavy attack and the knowledge it produces was criticized as a producer of and product of *power-knowledge*.⁴ The historical analysis that began in the 1970s challenges the criminological project on two parallel and related issues. Criminology can be described as an “applied, practical and technocratic endeavour” (Frauley 2008: 2), but it can also be considered an appendage of the state, a tool of the state’s normalizing project in society (Foucault 1975). Criminology

and criminologists are thus criticized for serving the interests of the state by producing new mechanisms of social control and by legitimating the state's actions against those identified as dangerous either because they have been labelled delinquents or because they have been assigned to a social category constructed as deviant (Lynch 2000).⁵ Criminology would appear to be in a "dangerous relationship to power," as the knowledge it produces legitimates crime control and has life-changing implications for the rights, liberties, and freedom to move within the social space (Hudson 2000: 177) of those who feel the impact of that "knowledge." In viewing criminology as a technical tool of the state, critics question the discipline's legitimacy as a science: what it does and for whom it does it.

Garland (1992) challenges this narrow conceptualization of criminology by suggesting that there is more than one criminology: many criminologies have developed through time. The tenants of this position argue the existence of a mainstream criminology and an alternative criminology. The former is supportive of the status quo and the moral order of society and, therefore, directly or indirectly, is part of the normalizing project of the state (Garland 1992; Morrison 2006). This criminology is, itself, not monolithic and actually evolves from two different schools: classical or administrative criminology, which is primarily concerned with crime control (Cohen 1992; Morrison 2003); and positivist criminology, which adopts an aetiological perspective concerned with the causes of crime (Cohen 1992).⁶ Despite an apparently unitary discourse, alternative criminology is composed, just as mainstream criminology is, of a multiplicity of more or less compatible traditions (feminist, anarchist, radical, etc.). What draws these diverse traditions together is that they position themselves under the common banner of countering mainstream criminology. Their commonality arises from their producing counter-discourses and positioning themselves as critics of power by questioning the basic notions used by mainstream criminologists; working against practices of individualization, differentiation, and normalization; and integrating new topics of study into the discipline (Garland 1992; Frauley 2008). According to Jamieson (1998), this alternative criminology should be concerned with identifying and reflecting upon the moral project of criminology by problematizing "the relationship between moral and immoral acts and social order in conditions of peace and war" (Jamieson 1998: 488).

Alternative criminology has attempted to break away from the discipline itself because of its "narrow technicist limitations or its infusion with prevailing political, legal or social assumptions" (Morgan

and Hough 2000: 46). They have proposed abandoning criminology to mainstream criminologists and returning to one of the parent disciplines to develop their alternative object. Others have proposed creating a new discipline, for example, the study of harm or *zemiology*. Those taking this position claim that a critical discourse that challenges the boundaries of the discipline does not suffice to transform it (Hillyard, Pantazis, Tombs, and Gordon 2004). Given that disciplines produce and reproduce their object of study, by engaging in criminology, critical academics are, in spite of their discourse, legitimating the object called *crime* and therefore inadvertently reproducing power relations and relations of domination. These authors contend that it is necessary to escape criminology in order to create a discipline based on the notion of harm and not crime. This means not only breaking away from the negative heritage of criminology but also divorcing it from mainstream criminologists.

Tensions within criminology are, in fact, political battles among various conservative, liberal, and radical political orientations, where criminologists are simultaneously knowledge producers and moral entrepreneurs (Cohen 1992; White and Haines 2000). The political nature of criminology is apparent in the process of defining what is considered criminal or non-criminal, in the power relations involved in the production of knowledge (funding, access to the field, publication, etc.), in the value judgements implicit in the conceptualization of the criminological object, and in the production of criminological knowledge (including the theories, concepts, and methodologies that are mobilized) as well as the use or consequences of the knowledge produced (Becker 1967; Bottoms 2000; Hammersley 1995; Hudson 2000; Morgan and Hough 2000; Noaks and Wincup 2004; Piron 2005; Presdee and Walters 1998; White 2002). Whether mainstream or alternative, doing criminology always entails reflecting on questions of order, justice, authority, and legitimacy as well as on the institutional arrangements surrounding them (Stubbs 2008). This reflection is influenced by and dependent on the ideological and political preferences of criminologists. In fact, the ideological and political dispositions of criminologists become apparent through their diverse ways of conceptualizing the nature of the state, society, crime, and crime control (White 2002). Thus criminology is "politicised explorations of the role of crime and crime control in society" (Anthony and Cunneen 2008: 2). Criminology is inescapably normative in orientation, in that it is manifestly about crime, which is constructed as a social problem and given a negative label (Morgan and Hough 2000). Hence, what is at stake in the debates within criminology is the political and normative

character of the discipline, whether in its mainstream or its alternative form. Mainstream criminology is considered to be embedded in the dominant relations of power and knowledge (White 2002), while alternative criminology “seeks to advance a progressive agenda favouring disprivileged peoples” (Schwartz and Friedrichs 1994: 221).

The acknowledgement of these two criminologies, with their respective normative and political undercurrents, allows for a better understanding of the continual debates within the discipline and shines a light on internal battles over the desire of each to be institutionalized as the official criminology. The intellectual history of criminology shows that academic work in the field is shaped by an institutional power base: Those who are institutionally privileged come, over time, to influence by their actions (gate-keeping roles in funding and publishing) and inactions (ignoring voices or contributions from the fringes) what is considered to be legitimate or good criminology (White 2002). It follows that the official criminology is in a better position to promote what it considers to be the legitimate object, theories, and methods of the discipline. Moreover, the two criminologies do not have an equal likelihood of becoming institutionalized. The administrative focus of mainstream criminology, together with its emphasis on the causes of and possible responses to street crime, appeals more to the interests of those concerned by the rise in crime rates (Morrison 2006). Mainstream criminologies, working under essentialist premises, get more attention and are better funded than are alternative criminologies, further facilitating their institutionalization and marginalizing alternative criminology (Carson and O'Malley 1989; Cohen 1992; White 2002). A “conservative hegemony in criminology is contingent” on mainstream criminologists being solicited by governmental agencies and having their research funded and published to the detriment of that of alternative criminologists who, as a consequence, are institutionally, politically, and professionally marginalized (White 2002: 139). The institutionalization of mainstream criminology as official criminology demonstrates Foucault's (1977) power-knowledge dyad as it produces a scientific discourse supporting a particular normativity that reinforces current relations of power and, in return, gains legitimacy through its being recognized as a discipline and its discourse as scientific.

Alternative criminology, due to its explicit positioning of itself as a critique of power or power relations, is rarely located inside officially recognized *criminological institutions*⁷ and this fact facilitates its partial rejection. Moreover, by refusing to use the basic notions mobilized

by mainstream criminology, alternative criminology has become self-sufficient and impermeable to external influences; it has developed a counter-discourse that uses its own language and has locked itself into an internal logic that renders difficult any dialogue with the discourse it opposes (Angenot 1988). Consequently, the discourse of alternative criminology appears to mainstream criminology and to non-academics as lacking, inadequate, problematic, and even a little ridiculous. Given that different knowledge claims have varying degrees of legitimacy and institutional support (White 2002), the use and production of such a counter-discourse leads not only mainstream criminologists but also the state⁸ and other non-academic social actors (e.g., politicians and journalists) to dismiss the discourse of alternative criminology as non-scientific. The undermining of alternative criminology is reinforced by the fact that it deals with subjects not officially recognized by the discipline, from perspectives that go against traditional analysis, and uses methodological approaches not considered as scientific by some. Finally, its own claims to being *anti-criminology*, *against criminology*, *new criminology*, or any other epithet that defines it as being something other than criminology represents an additional hurdle to its official recognition and acceptance as criminology. Nonetheless, the rejection of alternative criminology, its objects of inquiry, methodologies, and theories, is never absolute; there is always room for manoeuvring, negotiation, and resistance, as is demonstrated by the existence of an alternative discourse within academia and within governmental, para-governmental, and non-governmental institutions. Thus, alternative criminology continues to participate in the debate over the object, theories, and methodologies of the discipline.

The criminological object: Essentialist versus definitional notion of crime

Since its inception as a discipline, the definition of criminology's object has been a source of multiple and ongoing internal debates (Pires 1992). The most prevalent and accepted criminological objects of inquiry are crime and criminal policies. In mainstream criminology, crime is seen as a natural and social reality that criminologists must study in order to develop socio-political responses, lest it lose explanatory relevance. The discourse of alternative criminology is not univocal as to what is the legitimate object of criminology. Some propose leaving behind the concept of crime as defined by mainstream criminology to focus instead on the "rationalities, institutions, practices and experiences of collective life that impede, threaten and promote

social justice" (University of Ottawa 2008). This alternative approach presents practical problems similar to those of mainstream criminology; in both cases, there is an underlying moral or normative code of *acceptable/unacceptable*, *desirable/undesirable* as well as an implicit or explicit ideological process (socialism or conservatism, for instance) for achieving social justice.

Other alternative criminologists have come to accept, more or less willingly, that crime is or should be the object of the discipline (Morgan and Hough 2000). Criminology is seen as a realm of discourse focused on understanding crime and guiding the state's reaction to crime (Morrison 2006). For Cohen (1992), crime is the object imposed on criminology; however, criminologists can attempt to construct what this object is or should be. This means that criminologists should try to move beyond a legalistic definition of crime and construe a scientific one, independent from politicians and legislators. There are periods of time when criminologists pay increased attention to the connections among politics, harm creation, and the construction of *crime* (Lanier and Henry 2004). During these times there is a discursive push to focus not only on street crime or other forms of injurious conduct but also on the harmful actions of the state or the powerful as legitimate criminological objects of inquiry. Consequently, new fields within criminology continue to emerge: state crimes, crimes of the powerful, supranational criminology, international criminology, among others. In some instances, this discourse is accompanied by pragmatic efforts to criminalize different actions, and as a consequence, criminologists are further stuck in the system's logic (Cohen 1992). At this point, it is not the process of criminalization that is problematic but what actions/behaviours are or are not criminalized. The criminalization process may be viewed as a battle where the victorious have the power to label the actions of others as criminal, while ignoring their own injurious conduct (Morrison 2003).

The lack of agreement on the object of criminology can be interpreted as permitting a certain flexibility and the latitude to incorporate new issues as legitimate criminological objects of inquiry. By embracing this flexibility, we can envision criminology as a dynamic discipline, open to being redefined and reconfigured through an internal exploration of its boundaries. Instead of trying to settle the question of what the precise object of criminology is, we can view research itself as a productive means of engaging in an otherwise stale debate. Through researching and bringing to the fore particular objects of inquiry, researchers from both sides of the divide can engage in discussions

of specific topics and of the knowledge produced. In this way, researchers can participate in the development of criminology as a malleable discipline that is not trapped and fixed by a particular object.

As a case in point, political violence and armed conflict have traditionally been neglected by criminologists, as some consider them to lie outside the realm of the discipline (Jamieson 1998; Ruggiero 2006; Rothe, Ross, Mullins, Friedrichs, Michalowski, Barak, Kauzlarich, and Kramer 2009). Criminology has shied away from the study of atrocities, genocide, human rights violations, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, particularly from a perspective that centres on imbalances of social power within societies (Mullins and Rothe 2008). However, since the late 1990s and particularly since the beginning of the new millennium, criminologists⁹ have been looking beyond terrorism and have started to investigate a multiplicity of topics, such as genocide, torture, child soldiers, war, crimes against humanity, and so on. These are seen as issues impeding or threatening peace and social justice and therefore as legitimate objects of inquiry under a particular conceptualization of alternative criminology. Thus, researchers have opted to study such issues as they inform us about the processes involved in the social construction of crime and the criminal; the local, national, and international responses to those crimes; the construction of an international criminal order; or the production and reproduction of the dangerous classes at the international level. Some mainstream criminologists¹⁰ who embrace a more conservative definition of criminology (simply as *the study of crime*) have also taken up political violence and armed conflict as legitimate criminological objects of inquiry, given that many of the practices and activities that constitute political violence and armed conflict (robberies, kidnappings, and murders) are actions that either the state (through national law) or the international community (through international law, treaties, and conventions) defines as criminal.

Accepting political violence and armed conflict as legitimate objects of criminological inquiry, whether from the point of view of a mainstream or of an alternative criminology, opens up new terrain to be explored concurrently with the hope that inter- and cross-criminological dialogues may be possible. Moreover, the inclusion of political violence and armed conflict forces the discipline to look beyond the crimes of the powerless and the harms caused by the state and the powerful. Instead, criminology would be able to focus on activities above the state, alongside the state, and below the state as well as

across differing state agencies in order to offer a more subtle and pluralistic analysis of the state and its intersection with other actors both in the commission of, and in the response to deviant actions (Jamieson and McEvoy 2005: 504). It would also allow criminologists to see how concepts such as *justness*, natural and functional, are ascribed to arrangements that are, in fact, phenomena of power that victimize, neglect, marginalize, and discipline others (Morrison 2003: 464). Finally, the fields of political violence and armed conflict can also illuminate the political basis of criminology, without reference to the politics of defining or researching crime. The political significance, motivation, and characterization of the social actors and their practices in cases of political violence and armed conflict forces criminologists to confront the concept of the political as a central and unavoidable issue needing to be further conceptualized and theorized. The underlying commonality in the different characterizations of an event, practice, or issue as political violence or armed conflict is the label *political* or the recognition that such and such an event is a *political act*, whether politics is conceived as being about the distribution or maintenance of power (Weber 1958), or power relations (Foucault 1977), or the binary code of friend-foe (Schmitt 2007).

Theories and concepts: The criminological project and its pitfalls

Criminological knowledge was originally generated by the parent disciplines of criminology. This means that criminology as a discipline faces a particular challenge: the production of an integrated knowledge that incorporates knowledges produced by medicine, sociology, law, and psychology (Poupart 2009). As multidisciplinary, criminology is expected to look for concepts and theories from all disciplines and adapt them so that they can be helpful in the observation of a criminological object (Lanier and Henry 2004). As interdisciplinary, criminology is presumed to be able to bring together, combine, and amalgamate concepts and theories from different disciplines to produce a complex analysis of a given criminological question or problem (Lanier and Henry 2004). Producing integrated knowledges drawn from different disciplines is an ambitious project that, if realized, can solidify criminology as a legitimate discipline. However, if criminology is not successful, it could create further rifts among criminologists, not only along mainstream/alternative lines, but also between theoretical camps.

Knowledge is produced, accepted, and published along paradigmatic and theoretical lines that entrench already existing divides. The fact

that theories tend to be presented as competing entities, combined with the fact that scholars' identities are often constructed along theoretical lines, limits communication across the divide (Williams 1998). Criminologists who attempt to bridge a divide by adopting an integrated approach have limited success as "specialists"¹¹ in a particular object or theory and often feel uncomfortable evaluating research that incorporates approaches with which they are less familiar.¹² Furthermore, there is an implicit and sometimes explicit sense of superiority that impedes or at least limits possible communication or intellectual exchanges. Mainstream criminology sees itself as having a monopoly on truth (or close to it) and opposes those who are "misguided" in their support for alternative positions (Williams 1998: 58). The strength and originality of the criminological project, then, becomes a restriction on the production of knowledge and a potential pitfall for criminology's consolidation as a discipline.

In addition to its advantages, the incorporation of the fields of political violence and armed conflict into the criminological domain poses significant challenges for the discipline, as expanding the discipline also implies expanding its theoretical gaze. As Jamieson (1998) argues, this is not simply a matter of reanimating previous literature on war, since war as practice evolves through time, the nation state has undergone transformations, and there have been theoretical developments on issues such as gender violence and social exclusion that need to be taken into consideration. Criminologists, therefore, are faced with the challenge of incorporating knowledge, theories, and concepts from the study of international relations, international law, international institutions, history, political science, and economics (Rothe et al. 2009). A case in point is the need to conceptualize politics and power within criminology in a conscientious way; this requires criminologists to delve into political science and philosophy, a task for which, despite the possible benefits, they are not necessarily equipped. This means that criminologists, whether mainstream or alternative, are confronted with the paradox of having to specialize in a domain of criminology while at the same time maintaining an overview of the knowledge produced by a multiplicity of other disciplines.

Methodological issues within criminology: The politics of researching political violence and armed conflict

Research is a political enterprise (Morgan and Hough 2000), either because it serves political goals or because the research process is

informed by politics (Becker 1967; Noaks and Wincup 2004). This appears to be particularly true for criminology, as the research object (crime and its control) is a political and moral construct (Bottoms 2000). Furthermore, because the research object is connected with what are considered to be social problems, which politicians seek to explain and control, the political context affects, to varying extents, the research process itself (Ross, Barak, Ferrell, Kauzlarich, Hamm, Friedrichs, Matthews, Pickering, Presdee, Kraska, and Kappeler 1999; Noaks and Wincup 2004). For example, since universities encourage researchers to do funded research and governments, institutions, and corporations are, as a rule, the only sources of funding, criminologists find their projects dependent on the agendas of private organizations or the state (Stubbs 2008; White 2002). Notwithstanding this, research is never completely under the control of a monolithic state whose interests are coherent and without contradiction, nor are researchers ever fully autonomous and independent from any influence (Hogg 1996; White 2002).

The extent to which funding bodies influence the actual conduct of research varies considerably, but a certain dependency is created because scholars need funded research to advance their careers (Noaks and Wincup 2004; White 2002). A similar situation emerges when criminologists attempt to publish or disseminate their results: sponsors exert influence through restrictions, editing, or outright censorship; through the internal politics of publication; or through there being the political consequences of certain results (Israel 2000; Noaks and Wincup 2004; Piron 2005; Ross et al. 1999; White 2002). Mainstream and alternative criminologists tackle these issues differently; while the former is suspicious and reluctant in the face of political or moral engagement, the latter accept the politics and political effects of research (Bottoms 2000). This means that, whereas mainstream criminologists assume the research process and knowledge production in general to be neutral, objective, and impartial, alternative criminologists recognize the existence of inherent, multilevel political dynamics that some attempt to diffuse while others embrace, use them to mobilize, or are mobilized by them.

Research therefore advances the interests of the state, the powerful, the dominant directly through the political sympathies of the researcher and indirectly through the control such interests can exert over knowledge production. However, research also gives voice to the oppressed/marginalized and can be a tool of resistance. In fact, researchers inevitably take part in micropolitical processes as they attempt to under-

stand and represent a particular standpoint or conflicting standpoints from opposing groups (Noaks and Wincup 2004). There is a hierarchy of credibility in research, where the right to be heard is distributed unevenly or differently (Becker 1967). By giving voice to those at the bottom of the hierarchy, those discourses that are ignored or marginalized emerge as a kind of subjugated knowledge.¹³

The politics of research having been discussed, the task now is to untangle how the research process itself (outside of external influences and pressures) cannot be divorced from a series of decisions involving the political and normative positions of the researcher. Drawing from my own experiences researching women's involvement in the Irish and Peruvian armed struggles, I can identify the implications of the decision taken at distinct stages of the research process. The first step of any research project is to construct and name the research object. This first conceptual choice has normative and political implications and consequences for the researcher. For my own research, I had to decide how to label the women and the organizations they belonged to; the choices *terrorist*, *freedom fighter*, or *insurgent* have well known moral and political implications; therefore I chose to use the term *combatants* to describe the women and *anti-establishment armed groups* to name the organizations. These terms were descriptive and non-judgemental yet represented political, normative,¹⁴ and conceptual implications:

- The use of violence by the women was not considered as something intrinsically abnormal, wrong, or bad.
- Their involvement and actions might be considered as political, therefore their violent actions might be political.
- Politics was not conceived as intrinsically disconnected from violence or the use of arms.

The implicit and explicit choices involved in the manner in which the research object was named and conceptualized influenced the theories and conceptual framework that could be mobilized. Envisioning politics as tolerating or accepting at least a certain degree of violence draws on a Weberian conceptualization of politics and leads to the construction the state as an "organisation of men dominating men through the monopoly of legitimate force" (Weber 1958: 78). Given that anti-establishment armed groups battle the state in order to govern and maintain the exclusive right to use force, it follows that these organizations can be conceptualized as embryonic states battling an

already established state. If this is the case, then the military wing of anti-establishment groups can be seen as the corresponding embryonic army. Thus, women's involvement in the military wing can be seen as involving the practices of citizenship (volunteering or being conscripted to protect the community as a citizen's right/responsibility). Furthermore, Goffman's (1961) concept of total institution as well as the concept of career can be mobilized to analyse the experience of the women within the organizations (professional or deviant) and to understand their trajectories within the armed struggle. These theoretical choices would be very different if we started with a vision of politics that excluded violence and an understanding of violence as intrinsically bad. If that were the case, a different set of theories would be mobilized.

As the goal was to understand the processes and experiences of women's involvement in the armed struggle, the research problem led me to opt for life history interviews in the context of a qualitative approach. The completion of the interviews was, in part, facilitated¹⁵ by the overall approach and, in particular, by the conceptualization of their practices, not in terms of good/bad, legitimate/illegitimate, justified/unjustified, but as strategies put in place for the sake of a political objective. Choosing to speak to the women themselves, not the organization or those opposing them, also implied giving voice to a marginalized and criminalized population. Generating space for their voices meant acknowledging these women and their experiences as well as allowing for an alternative discourse to exist in opposition to that of the state and its representatives.¹⁶

The type of criminology and the theories and methods mobilized are the result of the normative position of the researcher. The choices she or he makes will generate more or less collaboration from either side of the conflict as well as more or less acceptance from the scientific community and the population in general. The readers' reactions, whether of interest or unease, to the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological choices described in the previous paragraphs also reflect the underlying political and normative issues of researching political violence and armed conflict. Researchers struggle to come to grips with their own evolving and developing opinions on particular conflicts throughout a project. They are confronted with their own uncertainties as to how they are conducting the project and doing the fieldwork (both at the intellectual and the pragmatic level), and also as to how the research will be used or mobilized by others (including different parties in the conflict). Finally, the researcher is faced with having to juggle

the realities of suffering and the emotional proximity to suffering with the intellectual abstraction of studying people's experiences and material realities. These issues are not limited to this particular field or object. Researching political violence and armed conflict only renders more visible the realities of all research projects and processes, whether from mainstream or alternative criminology.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this article, it was taken for granted that, if a discipline is to be recognized as such, there needs to be a specific object, specific methods, and specific theories. Criminology has been trapped in a multiplicity of pointless debates by trying to meet those three requirements, and its lack of success has called into question its legitimacy as a discipline. Criminology is not a traditional discipline; its original project was to produce integrated knowledge on normative and political issues. Morality and politics are, therefore, an integral and essential component of the discipline. Until this is acknowledged and accepted, the worn-out debate over the moral or political project of outlining one criminology or the other will uselessly continue to hinder the development of the discipline. The acceptance of criminology as a discipline is not dependent on our achieving common ground on any of the issues or questions regarding object, theories, or methodologies. (Does such an agreement even exist in any of the officially sanctioned disciplines?) It is based on moving beyond an attempt to exclude and expel the other (that is not what reflexivity is about) and accepting an agonistic coexistence. This would enhance the existing debates on issues to do with problematic, harmful, or disruptive social phenomena (including the functioning of society) among those between whom a common ground can be found—whatever their methodological and epistemological position or moral and political sensitivities. In fact, criminology's failure to produce an undisputed answer to questions regarding its object, theories, and methods is actually its strength, and that strength should be further explored and exploited.

Notes

- 1 In most parts of the world, criminology is yet to be considered a discipline as such. Indeed, most universities do not have a criminology department. Instead, programs are created within other departments such as law, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and even medicine.

- 2 Chambliss (1995) called for resolving the key question for the discipline, the question of crime, in order for it to remain viable and vital.
- 3 Criminology departments only began to appear in the 1960s (Akers 1992).
- 4 Central to Foucault's work is the conception of the mutual, inextricable interdependence of power and knowledge. Power produces knowledge and knowledge produces a relationship of force; a site where power is exercised is also a place where knowledge is produced. Power-knowledge is covert power working through people as discourse renders certain views, practices, thoughts, and actions unthinkable. By becoming undeniable truths that define a particular way of seeing the world and acting in it, a particular way of life is normalized.
- 5 Steinert (1998: 414) describes criminology as a "technocratic field of knowledge" and a science of social exclusion.
- 6 Garland (1995) refers to those traditions as representing two distinct projects: one aetiological and the other governmental.
- 7 This term refers to academia (universities, research agencies, conferences, houses, and funding agencies) as well as governmental and para-governmental institutions.
- 8 What the state sees as good research is determined by ideological parameters that tend to discard alternative research as unscientific (Presdee and Watters 1998).
- 9 See the work of Stanley Cohen, Myriam Denov, Ruth Jamieson, Sandra Lehalle, Dawn Rothe, among others.
- 10 See the work of Gus Brannigan, John Hagan, William Laufer, and George Yacoubian.
- 11 Piron (2005) argues that scientists become the gatekeepers of acceptable knowledge but the over-specialization of researchers and the institutionalization of certain types of knowledge as scientific knowledge acts as means of social control where only particular knowledges are recognized, financed, and publicized.
- 12 This is particularly problematic in the case of the knowledge produced by alternative criminology, as alternative criminology is less institutionalized than is traditional criminology, and so, for the purposes of research grants and acceptance for publication, the work of alternative criminologists is evaluated by traditional criminologists.

- 13 According to Foucault (1977), subjugated knowledges are those that have been ignored and masked because they represented an alternative to the "truth" of other knowledges or rejected because they gave voice to those excluded from the arena of legitimate discourse.
- 14 It is worth noting that, during the peer review process, certain evaluators commented on the significance of not using the term *terrorism* and claimed that that choice was problematic.
- 15 This was explicitly stated by some interviewees.
- 16 This was explicitly stated as the reason for acceptance by some interviewees. Once again, this exemplifies the politics of research and the political use by others of someone's research.

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