Criminology and Criminal Justice
http://crj.sagepub.com

Third Wave criminology: Guns, crime and social order

Adam Edwards and James Sheptycki
Criminology and Criminal Justice 2009; 9; 379
DOI: 10.1177/1748895809336698

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://crj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/9/3/379

Published by:

http://www.sagepublications.com

On behalf of:

British Society of Criminology

Additional services and information for *Criminology and Criminal Justice* can be found at:

Email Alerts: http://crj.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts

Subscriptions: http://crj.sagepub.com/subscriptions

Reprints: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav

Permissions: http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

Citations http://crj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/9/3/379

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

Criminology & Criminal Justice
© The Author(s), 2009. Reprints and Permissions:
http://www.sagepub.co.uk/JournalsPermissions.nav
www.sagepublications.com
ISSN 1748–8958; Vol: 9(3): 379–397
DOI: 10.1177/1748895809336698

Third Wave criminology

Guns, crime and social order

ADAM EDWARDS AND JAMES SHEPTYCKI
Cardiff University, UK, and York University, Canada

Abstract

Evidence-based policy-making implies greater clarity in the relationship between science, politics and crime control. This is especially the case with a highly polarizing topic like gun-crime. Specifically, the enrolment of social science by pressure groups, political parties and other political actors raises questions about the possibility and desirability of a scientifically detached appraisal of the problem. One resolution is to reject the feasibility of objective detachment, treat science and politics as synonymous and locate criminology firmly in the domain of politics and morality—to 'take sides' as it were. This renders the purpose of academic criminology problematic, for if its practitioners are to be regarded as inevitably partisan, what do they contribute as social scientists to public issues defined as political and moral in content? Why should criminological knowledge claims be especially valued over that of other political and moral actors? More recently, attempts to define concepts about the formative intentions, intrinsic and extrinsic to the politics of scientists' work, suggest ways of demarcating science from politics in this and other criminological disputes. They provide a rationale for the distinctive contribution of social science to public controversies over crime and control.

Key Words

gun-crime • pistolization • Third Wave criminology • weaponization

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

Introduction

Howard Becker (1967: 247) famously invited sociologists of deviance to take sides with the underdogs, 'as our personal and political commitments dictate', to grant those labelled as deviant a voice hitherto silenced by the hubris of policy-makers and the certainties of their criminological and other social-scientific interlocutors. In his riposte, Alvin Gouldner (1968) rejected the necessity and desirability of such partisan social science. He acknowledged the need for great detachment in appreciating social problems from multiple viewpoints and he advocated that all standpoints, including those of 'the labelled', should be open to criticism not just representation. These opposing views continue to structure arguments over the relationship of social scientists to public controversies, and this is especially true for criminological topics which are laden with political and moral ambiguity. This is no less true for specific arguments about social control and violence. This controversy has perennial significance in criminological policy-making in the UK and elsewhere in the English-speaking world (Stenson and Cowell, 1991) and, globally, academic criminology continues to witness both the scientification and politicization of crime control (Nelken, 1994; Stenson and Sullivan, 2001; Sheptycki, 2004). In the contemporary period, appeals to 'evidence-based' policy making premised on objective scientific investigation into 'what works' (Sherman, 2009) co-exist with ideologically driven electoral competition over 'law and order' (Downes and Morgan, 2007), popular-democratic experiments in 'community engagement' (Casey, 2008) and (often as a consequence of these) the political manipulation of scientific research findings in line with established policies (Hope, 2004; Maguire, 2004).

In controversies about gun-crime in a number of jurisdictions around the world we find examples of these tensions and subsequent polarization of arguments over causes, control options and their consequences. Competing expert claims on behalf of formally or informally constituted advocacy coalitions appeal to social science knowledge in the competition for legitimacy claims that are purely political. One answer to this conundrum is to embrace Becker's advocacy of the underdog and 'take sides'. However, it is not clear that underdogism can decide the matter when it comes to gun-crime. Does one side with the individual underdogs who feel under threat and demand the right to self-protection? What about the underdogs of a more generalized public who have the right to live and go about their lives in freedom from fear that general de-weaponization offers? In addition to the challenges of deciding the rightfulness of claims to underdog status, when it comes to issues as hotly contested as gun-control, taking sides is problematic for criminology (or any other social science) in that it brings scientific investigation into close proximity to political action and, in so doing, undermines its own conditions of academic existence. What do partisan appeals to *social scientific method* do for decision making? Why should the contributions of criminological partisans to discussions about guns, crime and social order be valued over those of any other political and moral actor?

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

The attempt to demarcate science and politics does not imply a yearning for the positivist past. For good reasons criminology broke with 'scientism' in the latter half of the 20th century, first under the auspices of the York Deviancy Symposium in the latter 1960s, continuing with the subsequent rise of the 'new' criminologies of the 1970s and 1980s and later fragmenting into a plethora of postmodern criminologies (Nelken, 1994). There are those who still confidently claim that politics and political analysis can and should be absented from criminological research and that this is the best way to make well-informed decisions (e.g. the Campbell Collaboration).[1] The position we stake out here envisages a criminology that is understanding of the politics of criminological research (Hughes, 2000), detached from the viewpoint of any particular advocacy coalition, able to comprehend fully both the science and politics involved and is also ultimately able to make credible and persuasive remarks influencing the direction of social and policy responses (Edwards and Hughes, 2009). It is the potential for a fully rounded understanding of its subject that distinguishes what we are calling here 'Third Wave criminology' from other kinds of moral and political discourse about guns, crime and social order.

Social studies of science

To help clarify our point it is useful to look briefly at broader debates in the social studies of science which share similar concerns about the demarcation of science from politics. Collins and Evans (2002, 2007) define a 'Third Wave' of science studies as a means of both depicting the recent intellectual history of the sociology of science and advocating how this discipline should develop in future to study 'expertise and experience'.[2] Riding high on the First Wave was the communicative rationale of an obviously successful 'positive' science. From sometime around Louis Pastuer's empirical demonstrations of the germ theory of disease in the 19th century, if not before, the First Wave gathered strength. That wave in the philosophy of science lasted well into the next century. A variety of thinkers contributed to its ebb and T.S. Kuhn's (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* is often thought of as the break point for the next wave. In that book Kuhn introduced the notion of the fundamental incommensurability of different scientific 'paradigms' which self-include their own evaluative criteria. Notwithstanding Kuhn's own subsequent attempts to distance himself from the relativism that this view implies, the paradigm shift he helped introduce set off the Second Wave. The crest of the wave was probably Feyerabend's (1975) *Against Method*, a position as radical as any in the philosophy of science. Feyerabend's view is complex and subtle, but it is generally agreed that it implies that philosophy can neither succeed in providing a general description of science nor in devising a method for differentiating products of science from non-scientific ones such as myths. In the Second Wave it came to be thought by many that methodological guidelines ought best to be ignored by scientists

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

in the aim for imaginative and non-cumulative progress. The hubris of First Wave thinking was much criticized and, even in mainstream philosophy of science, 'scientific paradigms' were depicted as 'social constructions' whose epistemological superiority over other kinds of knowledge was difficult to sustain.

There is a clear parallel with the already noted turn in criminological thought during this same period when, drawing on radical ideas from the history and philosophy of science as well as other critical paradigms (notably anti-psychiatry), criminological positivism came under sustained attack from the new deviancy theorists. The backwash from Second Wave philosophy and sociology of science was prolonged by the meditations of Jean-François Lyotard and others. During this period criticism prevailed and any positive claims staked out in the name of science were incredulously condemned as metanarratives. Lyotard's (1979) *The Postmodern Condition*, itself a grand narrative about the decline of the metanarrative, eventually collapsed under the weight of its own contradictory story. But the Second Wave took a long time to ebb. Shifts in radical criminological thinking also took place at about this time, but from somewhat more practical influences. The 'Zoo Keepers of Deviance' (Young, 1970) looked up from their stories of 'Nuts, Sluts and Perverts' (Liazoz, 1972) and realized that *Controlology* (Ditton, 1979) had taken over. Neo-Conservatives and been *Thinking about Crime* (Wilson, 1975) and were advancing towards *Crime Control as Industry* (Christie, 1993). The social constructivist critique in criminology was evidently none too good at *Fixing Broken Windows* (Wilson and Kelling, 1996) and the *Fragmentation of Criminology* (Ericson and Carriere, 1994) made it difficult to establish counter-knowledge refuting the compelling logic of *Zero Tolerance Policing* (Dennis, 1997).

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. At the turn of the millennium the beginnings of a Third Wave began to gather strength in the sociology and philosophy of science taking theory beyond mere social constructionism. Harry Collins and Robert Evans (2007: 144) distinguish key differences between social constructionism and the Third Wave in the following terms:

1. *Upstream not downstream*: The aim of Wave Three is to change the world not just observe it.
2. *Insecurity*: As a consequence of being upstream, the claims made under Wave Three will be less secure than the claims made under Wave Two, just as science is less secure than sceptical philosophy.
3. *Categorization*: Both 1 and 2 imply that the analyst's reflex under Wave Three will be to construct categories rather than dissolve the boundaries between them.
4. *What is celebrated*: Under Wave Two what was celebrated and exploited was scientific uncertainty: scientific problems were turned into sociological resources. Under Wave Three scientific uncertainty is not a resource but gives rise to the question about how to act in the face of its inevitability.

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

Of course these claimed differences are contested within social studies of science (Wynne, 2003), especially the distinction between the upstream and downstream aims of knowledge production. In the context of debates about crime control, such claims might be seen as particularly provocative by some labelling theorists whose accounts of the self-fulfilling consequences of criminalization, particularly the 'stigmatic shaming' of the criminal justice process, have led to important changes, most recently in the global popularity of 'restorative justice' (Braithwaite, 1989). Even so, Collins and Evans' distinctions provide powerful analytical resources in helping us question the pure rationale of social constructionism and what it has done both for and to the criminological critique of positivism. A particularly persuasive insight, surely incontrovertible, is Collins and Evans' notion of 'insecurity' which refers to the kinds of knowledge claims that any (social) science can make. Whereas social constructionism offers the infallible certainty of infinite regress in competing knowledge claims (it is endlessly possible to deconstruct the deconstruction of a deconstruction) the Third Wave promotes a self-consciously fallible realism in its efforts to bolster explanatory accounts that are, despite epistemological and ontological difficulties, nonetheless 'satisficing'.[3]

The Third Wave of the sociology of science does not mark a return to 'scientism'. Collins and Evans (2007: 45) explicitly acknowledge that 'all scientific decisions are intrinsically political'. Moreover, since political decision making and scientific consensus formation have different tempos, and since the domain of policy making has been extended beyond the domain of technically qualified elites so as to enhance political legitimacy, there is considerable scope for paralysis by analysis, which is a far cry from the command potential of modern scientific positivism. Third Wave science studies first seeks to disentangle expertise from political rights in technical decision making and then to find ways of effectively mobilizing both in the furtherance of the scientific enterprise. The simultaneous utility and weakness of expertise are at issue. Experts may be best placed to decide matters of fact, but on their own they may not be the best placed to make value judgements about the use of that knowledge. Because the lay public are not limited by the paradigmatic strictures of expert communities, they may paradoxically be better placed to make crucial judgements about what is to be done with the products of expert knowledge, but are less able to interpret those knowledge claims. The democratization of knowledge production and consumption risks the idea of expertise itself—a particularly vexing issue for generalist social theorists since it restricts inquiry to examining expert knowledge claims and leaves the theorist with no grounds on which to make authoritative pronouncements about them. The upshot of Third Wave thinking is that a new approach to expertise is needed, one which respects the role of culture in generating knowledge but, through a stress on socialization and experience, recognizes that a nuanced conception of expertise, as both real and unequally distributed, is possible.

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

The significance for academic criminology of the self-consciously fallible realism that Third Wave science studies advocates cannot be understated. It offers a centre point between the specious ontological certainties of First Wave positivism and impotent epistemological relativism of the debunking sociology characteristic of the Second Wave. In these terms, Third Wave criminology embraces fallibility in order to question how to act on 'crime' in the face of inevitable uncertainty about its causes. In so doing it replaces the creeping nihilism of post-modernist thinking about crime and control with a renewed commitment to humanist explanation-building in order to influence thoughtful policy action. Methodologically it advocates drawing on a wide range of empirical evidence in order to enhance both understanding and appreciation of 'the facts'. By artfully combining data from quantitative social sciences such as demography, survey research and official statistics with qualitative insights from ethnography, history, media studies and literature (to name some of the most obvious) in a 'second best' method, academic criminology can own and use its beliefs of the moment, even in the midst of philosophizing about them until, by what is vaguely called scientific method, things are changed here and there for the better (Sheptycki, 2004).

A glimpse at global politics and gun control

In 2003 Brazil was the centre of world attention when it came to questions about guns, crime and social order. In that year more than 39,000 civilians had been killed through firearms violence, a staggering number for a country not at war. Over the previous quarter-century approximately half a million Brazilians died in this way. The extremes of wealth and poverty and the tremendous weaponization of Brazilian civil society put the country's urban landscape among the most dangerous places in the world. Along with tackling the manifest problems of wealth differential, de-weaponization was thought to offer an obvious policy solution. Hence it was proposed that a law might decree a ban on the sale of firearms and ammunition to the public and a public referendum was announced to that effect. It was in the run-up to a public referendum concerning firearms regulation in the country that the global politicization of the issue was clearly exposed. An article in *The Nation* explained:

> No matter what the outcome of the referendum, the situation in Brazil underscores the increasing globalization of the gun lobby. Chris W. Cox, the NRA's chief lobbyist in Washington, claims Brazil is 'a steppingstone for the global gun-ban lobby to inflict its will on law-abiding gun owners in the United States,' adding that … 'the global gun-ban movement' will get 'the fight of their lives' if they come stateside.
>
> (Hearn, 2005)

The article revealed that, in order to engage more effectively, the NRA (National Rifle Association) had secured permanent accreditation as a

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

non-governmental organization (NGO) from the UN's Economic and Social Council. According to the article, thus armed with lobbying rights, NRA spokespersons were known to utter threats that Washington would further cut UN funding if international gun control efforts were to threaten the USA's gun owners. With regard to the referendum in Brazil, *The Nation* revealed a catalogue of public relations tactics and the use of dodgy data by local Brazilian 'gun rights' activists in concert with the NRA's international representatives. The referendum was defeated, not before opinion polls were observed to swing widely from estimates of between 60 and 80 per cent in favour of stronger gun control laws at the beginning of the campaign. The *Washington Post* reported that 'with more than 92 percent of the ballots counted, 64 percent of Brazilian voters opposed the ban' on the sale of firearms and ammunition to private citizens. This shift followed 'an aggressive campaign by opponents who argued it would leave citizens defenseless (*sic*) against armed criminals' (Reel, 2005: A13).

Arguably the Brazilian state lacks the capacity to assert effectively a monopoly of force necessary to disarm the people who live there anyway. Brazil already has comparatively strict gun-control laws on its books and despite them gun-crime corrodes the social order. Recognizing this, even if the vote had gone the other way, any new laws passed would have been ineffective. The referendum was largely gestural and there is no scientific reason to suppose that its success would have resulted in a better situation. Nevertheless, the tug-of-war of symbolic politics between the NRA and the so-called 'gun ban movement' in Brazil offers a revealing example of the manipulation of public opinion concerning this issue and it does so on a transnational basis.

The transnational-state-system is a volatile order and efforts to assert the values of cosmopolitan democracy and human rights often fall victim to geo-strategic and financial interests. At the UN 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, an early version of the draft programme of action explicitly called on states to regulate effectively civilian possession and use of firearms as an important means to curb national and international gun trafficking (UN, 2001).[4] This reference was dropped at the insistence of US representative John Bolton (see Bolton, 2001). The community deliberating about the issue on the international stage is well positioned to access documentation revealing the role of civilian used weapons in the perpetuation of widespread human insecurity. The Small Arms Survey (2002) estimated that 60 per cent of the global stockpile of 640 million small arms and light weapons were in civilian hands. The Small Arms Survey (2004) also showed that civilians are also the principal victims of gun violence, with an estimated 200,000–270,000 people losing their lives to gun homicide or suicide in countries 'at peace' each year. The Small Arms Survey (2001) has also shown that the US public holds one-third of the global gun arsenal, an estimated 234 million guns and it is also well known that the US firearms homicide rate is the highest of any developed country (Krug et al., 1998). However, Latin America and

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

the Caribbean are the regions worst affected by pistolization, with 60 per cent of all murders occurring with a gun (Small Arms Survey, 2004). The process of pistolization, like weaponization more generally, is an escalating one where arming can lead to violence which fuels fear, which can produce more arming and yet more fear in a difficult-to-break amplification cycle.

Scientification, criminology and gun-crime

The question arises: what is the state-of-the-art in criminological knowledge about successful ways to control gun-crime? Perhaps unsurprisingly, the problem is nowhere more studied than it is in the United States. There much of the research emphasis has been on criminal law enforcement interventions to reduce the availability of firearms to restricted users. Two populations—adult career criminals and juveniles—are legally prohibited from purchasing handguns nearly everywhere in the United States. Pierce et al. (2003) showed that, under conditions of mass handgun ownership, there are a variety of ways in which these prohibitions may be breached. They emphasized the fact that for every six firearms used in crime only one was legally obtained. With so many guns available to the general population, the sheer volume of gun acquisitions from illegal sources, both regulated and unregulated is difficult to intervene against. In the USA illegal markets in firearms are large and very complex and present a substantial challenge to law enforcement officials interested in disrupting the illegal supply of guns to prohibited persons.

In highlighting the role of illicit gun markets in sustaining gun-crime, Pierce et al. (2003) helped to focus US law enforcement capacity onto controlling illegal firearms markets. They aimed to develop problem-solving interventions designed to help enforce laws against illegal selling, possession and use of guns. They estimated between 1.2 and 3.6 million illegal firearm acquisitions in the USA per annum, noting that states with more restrictive laws have higher rates of crime-guns that can be traced back to retail purchases out-of-state. The patch-work quilt of gun-regulation in the United States helps to explain partly the map of the illicit gun market there. In the United States research demonstrating that tight enforcement of gun laws and vigorous prosecution of gun criminals can produce reductions in gun-crime at the local level have tended to hold the limelight (Sherman, 2001). Pierce et al.'s review of the research revealed the market to be diffuse with many small operators limiting oligopolistic development in the illicit market. Analysis of the geographic distribution of retrieved crime-guns suggested that a majority (51.9%) are recovered fairly close to the location of first retail (50 miles) and a significant number (31.5%) are recovered within 10 miles. Further, 65 per cent are recovered within the same state they are originally legally purchased. Pierce et al.'s data also revealed that a relatively small fraction of retail firearms dealers account for the majority of crime-gun traces and that the large majority of traced crime-guns change hands

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

at least once between purchase and use in crime. Nevertheless, they also found a short 'time-to-crime' window, and suggested that guns were being quickly diverted from the legal market through straw purchasing or resale. They propound a 'supply-side approach', using crime-gun trace data and a gun trafficking risk profile to target law enforcement interventions onto the illicit gun market. The available evaluation research suggested that focused supply-side enforcement programmes can be used to good effect, but that the effects do not last longer than the special programmes (Sherman, 2001).

Much of the research reviewed in this literature is the result of meticulous methodological thinking and execution. The net result of this research, and the law enforcement operations it underwrites, is to displace and occasionally disrupt the flow of guns in the illicit market, but it does not alter its more general characteristics. In terms of gun-homicide, with a national rate of more than 10 per 100,000, the United States remains at the top of the international tables for advanced industrial democracies (see Figure 1). In contrast, in the United Kingdom where the general public is substantially de-weaponized, criminological research reveals a rather different picture. Squires et al. (2008) observe the relative rarity of gun-crime in the UK, in spite of high profile and alarming media coverage of specific shooting incidents. Because ownership of firearms is extremely restricted in the UK, the illicit market in guns is also small and statistical occurrence of gun-crime is rare (Hales and Silverstone, 2005; Hales et al., 2006). Expressed in percentages, the majority of the gun-homicides in the UK are in fact domestic in nature. Squires et al. (2008) observed that, in the UK, firearms account for only 11 per cent of murders in the poorest areas and 29 per cent of murders in the least poor areas. In an interesting contrast with the US case, in the United Kingdom the more affluent the area the more likely it is that guns will be used to commit murder. As can be seen in Figure 1, England and Wales, together with Scotland and the Netherlands, have among the lowest occurrence of gun-homicide in the advanced industrial democracies. As is evident from the position along the horizontal axis of the graph, they are also the least pistolized.

Contrasting cutting-edge UK studies that attend to the social characteristics associated with illicit gun markets with the state-of-the-art US research reveals paradigmatic limitations in the scientification of criminological knowledge. What goes largely un-remarked in these studies are the strategic characteristics of the illicit firearms markets and their association with the State's capacity (or effort) to regulate and influence the pistolization of everyday life.

The facts are known. From a public health perspective it makes sense to speak in terms of the *Global Gun Epidemic* (Cukier and Seidel, 2005). The professional criminological gaze remains largely fixed on the micro-level interactions of criminal networks operating in illicit markets and misses this broader point. Police resources are concentrated on tactical interventions that complicate the broad strategic picture but do not make significant differences to it. Meanwhile, single issue lobbying to promote or limit mass

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

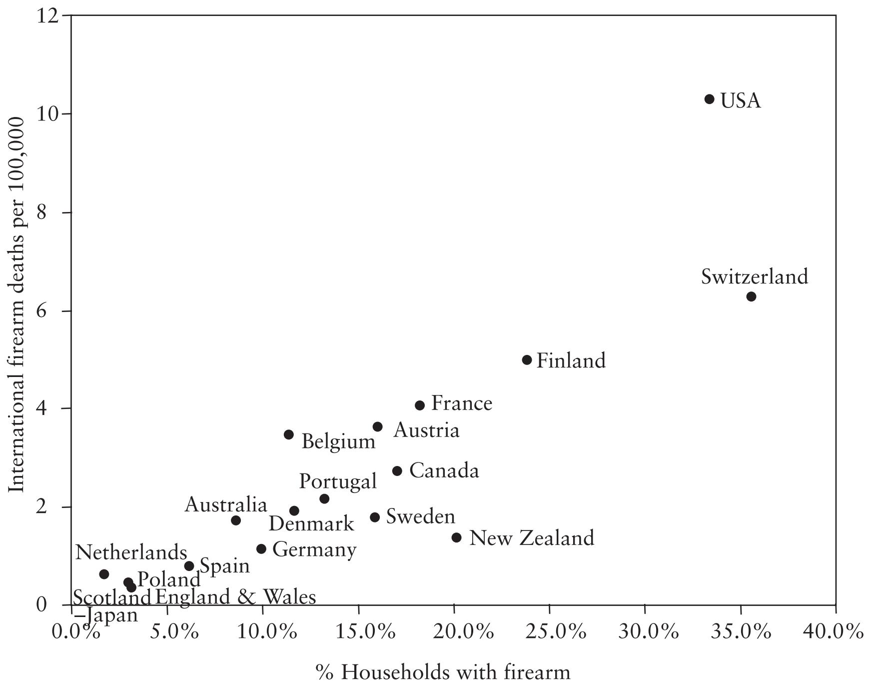

Figure 1. Global firearms deaths

Source: *Global firearms deaths* (Toronto: Small Arms/Firearms Education and Research Network, 2005), www.ryerson.ca/SAFER-Net/issues/globalfirearmdeaths.html; also United Nations (UN), *The Eighth International Crime Victims Survey, 2000*. Prepared by the Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, 2003, http://www.unicri.it/wwd/analysis/icvs/data.php.

gun ownership on a global scale utilizes all of the public relations techniques associated with democracy in the age of mass media and achieves effective stalemate. A rhetorical question seems apt for, if the response to gun-crime globally were *socially* constructed, should not things be rather opposite? Observing the public health implications of the global gun epidemic, the available resources would be harnessed to strategic solutions communicated clearly via the available information channels. Never ascribe to conspiracy that which can adequately be explained by incompetence. The conflicts that gun-crime represents are mirrored in conflicts over the authority of criminological knowledge (and, by extension, social scientific knowledge more generally). And so it is to this philosophical issue that we return.

Involvement, detachment and interdisciplinarity

Academic criminology is an interdisciplinary field. Interdisciplinarity implies looking at a subject in a holistic way from various angles using different

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

methods thus forming a transcendent understanding. This idea has long historical antecedents, most notably in ancient Greek philosophy which aimed for the general synthesis and the integration of knowledge (Klein, 1990; Ausburg, 2006). Interdisciplinarity is often advocated as a remedy for the harmful effects of excessively specialized knowledge production. On some views interdisciplinarity is almost entirely indebted to specialists who provide the expert knowledge interdisciplinarians require as the basis of their analysis. Other perspectives emphasize the need to somehow transcend specific disciplinary viewpoints seen as epistemologically and politically problematic. Interdisciplinarity is complicated by the relative incommensurability of thought-styles bequeathed to it by the multiplicity of disciplinary perspectives it embraces.

In Third Wave studies of science there is a call for the protagonists involved to face up to the problem of 'translation' (Collins and Evans, 2002: 257–8). For sociologists who study the practice of science, it is now obvious that, in order for groups of interdisciplinary experts to talk to each other, translation is necessary. Translation requires at least 'interactional expertise'—that is enough knowledge to be able to interact interestingly and interestedly with possessors of 'contributory expertise' (i.e. those who have superior expert knowledge that can contribute to the specific topic at hand). This is akin to the 'appreciative stance' advocated by Becker (1963) and others associated with the sociology of deviance and the new criminology, and it depends on the persistently human capacity to assume the role of the Other and to see one's self through the eyes of others. Thus, one of the conditions for successful Third Wave science, and interdisciplinary work generally, is interaction and involvement. This interaction and involvement may also draw in members of the lay public because, in a society with broadly democratic norms, science that really matters is often too important for it to be otherwise. The problem of translation may be difficult in such circumstances, not least because the popular beliefs that pepper the language games of lay public discourse are not subject to the same methodologically rigorous thinking that is normally expected of academic criminologists (and, by extension, any other social scientist). As Richard Dawkins (1997: 3), formerly Simonyi Professor for the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University, has written 'there's all the difference in the world between a belief that one is prepared to defend by quoting evidence and logic, and a belief that is supported by nothing more than tradition, authority or revelation'.

Collins and Evans make a distinction between the intrinsic and extrinsic politics of science that is useful here. They draw attention to the 'formative intentions' of scientists which they contrast with other kinds of moral and political actor. By formative intentions, they mean, 'the intentions that are available to actors within a form of life, and partly constitute that form of life, rather than being the intention of any particular individual at any particular time and place' (Collins and Evans, 2007: 116). The form of life academic investigators in the field of criminology inhabit places a higher value on empirical evidence and logic than it does on tradition and authority. The kind

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

of politics intrinsic to participation in that form of life requires the facility of judgement within these complex elements in order to make appropriate choices in the performance of disputation and argumentation. Once this intrinsic political aspect of science is foregrounded and understood the task of demarcating science and politics can turn to extrinsic politics:

> We can, then, demarcate science from politics, not by looking at the content of scientific knowledge but by looking at the contrasting formative intentions of scientists and politicians ... social studies of science may have shown that politics and other mundane influences are *intrinsic* to scientific knowledge, but ... they should never be *extrinsic*. Such influences must be resisted within any activity that we are to call a science.
>
> (Collins and Evans, 2007: 126, emphases in original)

These concepts help to explain how involvement and detachment in the politics of science can occur simultaneously. Involvement in the intrinsic politics of an academic field such as criminology precisely requires 'taking sides' in the way that Becker recommended because there are political concerns about the framing of research questions that are intrinsic to the field. This involves interrogating the available evidence and the logic that holds it together as evidence, because that is how the form of life that is academic inquiry intrinsically works. The defence of criminology as an interdisciplinary field is the form of life that it allows, where translation between the different language games that cultivate it is routine and allowances are made for uncertainty. The politics intrinsic to academic criminology allow that scientific community *as a whole* to make claims regarding the superior epistemological warrant for that community's insights because, when those politics are played according to the rules of the game—that is with proper reference to genuine evidence presented in a logically coherent form—it produces superior understanding. What makes interdisciplinary social science a distinctive kind of practice that makes a particular contribution to public controversies is in the formative intention of detachment; the 'form of life' is that of the social scientist *qua* social scientist, not *qua* political activist or 'moral entrepreneur'. When the extrinsic intrudes on the intrinsic, when the academic criminologists 'take sides' by adopting a priori commitments to particular causes they are not, strictly speaking, acting as criminologists.

By virtue of the subject matter of criminology, the intrinsic politics of its interdisciplinary language game brings it into close proximity to the extrinsic politics of the social field generally. The problem of objectivity for the individual is that it requires a multitude of simultaneous perspectives. This is obviously difficult and is ultimately limited by human beings embodiment as subjects limited by physicality, location and experience. But social scientists of the Third Wave do not aspire to omniscience, First Wave science has already been criticized for that degree of hubris. Within the interdisciplinary field the politics intrinsic to it require that individuals subordinate the ego to the intellect and participate in the relevant language games openly and in good

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

faith. When the politics become extrinsic it is with reference to academic criminology as a social institution; it is not methodologically individual. In the interdisciplinary field of criminology the Third Wave criminologist imaginatively combines data from a variety of sources in a 'second best' method which recognizes fallibility in order to guess best how to act on 'crime' in the face of inevitable uncertainty about its causes. Self-consciousness of fallibility does not mean disengagement. An individual's good faith engagement with the extrinsic politics of criminology means actively representing the best exemplars of the collective knowledge of the community of experts who share the intrinsic understanding of a common language game. This is, admittedly, difficult to live up to in practice, not least because of the additional complexity arising from interdisciplinarity. Nevertheless, and despite the limitations in understanding of any particular criminologists (ourselves included), it is defensible to say that, while the sum total of academic criminological knowledge is provisional and difficult to present in the round, ultimately it is expert knowledge that is 'good enough', and capable of corroboration.

Conclusion

What we have tried to do here is engage in some 'third order'[5] reflection about the role of academic criminologists in public discourse about guns, crime and social order. Drawing on some recent trends in thinking about the sociology and philosophy of science more broadly we distinguished three waves in the development of scientific language games. Logico-postivist thought exemplified the crest of the first wave, just as deconstruction did for the crest of the second. Third Wave criminology is interdisciplinary and has a commitment to 'upstream' explanation-building in order to influence thoughtful policy action. The distinction between internal and external language games, and the intrinsic and extrinsic political aspects this implies, gives coherence to the notion of Third Wave science generally.

This article has been especially concerned to ground reflection on the nature of contemporary criminology by reference to the problematic of guns, crime and social order. Here the global politics of gun-crime were exemplified with an account of the circumstances surrounding a public referendum in Brazil concerning laws about the sale of firearms to the public. The account showed that gun-crime is sustained in that country by a cycle of fear, which is perhaps not surprising given the staggering effects that the pistolization of everyday life has had for social order there. We then briefly examined a series of state-of the-art criminological studies concerning gun-crime and criminal markets. Although methodologically sophisticated and meticulously carried out, the science suffers from paradigmatic thinking, often in support of law enforcement operations that serve merely to displace the phenomenon it purports to control.

Conversely, the scholarship presented elsewhere in this Special Issue of *Criminology and Criminal Justice* broadens discussion of gun-crime and

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

control by re-framing the issue in terms of the social relations of 'weaponization' and their consequences for research and policy. In addition, and although other contributors may not recognize or accept characterization of their contributions in terms of 'Third Wave criminology', we think they all share a commitment to 'upstream' explanation-building, an aetiological approach that is self-consciously fallible but nonetheless concerned to construct clear analytical categories that address the problem of how to act on crime in the face of scientific uncertainty. As such, they retain an intellectually consistent approach to the particular contribution that social scientists, as contrasted with party politicians, pressure group activists and other political and moral actors (including, we would insist, those labelled as gun criminals), can make to the problem of gun-crime and control and this has broader relevance for thinking about the implication of criminology and criminologists in public controversies. In the terms advocated here, the 'formative intentions' of contributors to this Special Issue are an acknowledgement of their involvement in the intrinsic politics of social science but a detachment from the competing causes that constitute the politics of gun-crime and control that are, and should be, extrinsic to their science.

The critical distinction between the intrinsic and extrinsic politics of criminology adds a further dimension to our understanding of how crime and control are mediated by specific social contexts or 'geo-histories' (Edwards and Hughes, 2005). 'First Wavers' are able to generalize theory failures about the causal relations between licit firearms availability and patterns of gun-related criminal offending—from 'stateside' to the favelas of Brazil and back—because they abstract these relations from the particular social contexts in which they are accomplished. The historical, political, cultural and economic conditions of firearms acquisition are indispensible in developing understanding in the round. Put simply, context is important in understanding the consequences of pistolization in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Binghamton, New York.[6] Of course intrinsically controversy rages about these issues.[7] Meanwhile 'Second Wavers' observe the constructions of 'gun crime' by perpetrators, agents of social control and academic observers, whose language games can be generalized as: 'perp talk', 'control talk' and 'don talk'. The deconstruction is useful in cracking open the paradigmatic limitations of scientistic criminology, but since Second Wavers only use scientific shortcomings as a sociological resource for their own practice of de-construction—they operate downstream—the discourse, critical though it is, does not really change the circumstances that gave rise to the problematic in the first place.

Criminologists of the Third Wave are interested in the findings of positive science and they are interested in particular constructions of the world, whether 'perp talk', 'control talk' or (other) 'don talk'. They are interested to understand the historical, geographical and cultural background to the contingent relations of gun-violence. We expect differences between Brazil (see previous section), North America (Cook et al.; Sheptycki, this issue), the West Indies (Agozino et al., this issue) and the UK (Hallsworth and

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

Silverstone; Roberts and Innes, this issue). Third Wave criminology strives for a deeper understanding of these differences in an interdisciplinary way so as to contextualize properly and think about the criminological problematic. The criminological problematic in this instance involves the interactions between armed and motivated offenders, suitable (and possibly armed) targets and—sometimes momentarily absent—(but probably armed) guardians. It is facility with particular aspects of 'contributory expertise', together with the 'interactional expertise' that makes interdisciplinary work in the field of criminology possible, and it is that possibility which distinguishes Third Wave criminology from other discourses about crime and control. The products of Third Wave criminology are fallible. It is to be hoped that future researchers will produce a better understanding than the one we have at present. Of course, any current claims to social scientific 'truth', including criminological ones, should at least be capable of corroboration by other independent observers. But in the meantime, they are the product of the intrinsic deliberation of a community of researchers and thinkers: they are a 'good enough' basis to make suggestions for piecemeal social engineering. In the realm of politics extrinsic to academic criminology—where special interest groups, moral entrepreneurs and a variety of other political actors are equal players—individual criminologists would do well to be mindful that their intellectual strength and persuasive power is intrinsic to membership in a community of experts. All the other players in public language games about crime and crime control expect to make history—to change things—and they expect academic criminologists to behave similarly. After all, it would be odd if the criminological experts had nothing to say in answer to the question: *What is to be done about law and order*? (Lea and Young, 1984).

Notes

1 http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/

2 We admit that the story told here could be more complex. The sociology of science is, perhaps, the most controversial subject in sociology. That is because it reflexively applies its own critical gaze to the discipline's own basis of authority. Were space to allow it, we would want to weave into this account some of the other major contributions to the sociology of science knowledge, beginning with the ideas of Karl Mannheim and R.K. Merton and including David Bloor's and the Edinburgh School's so-called 'strong programme' in the sociology of scientific knowledge.

3 More prosaically, they are 'good enough' given the current state of knowledge about the social phenomenon in question.

4 This version called on states:

> To put in place adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the legal manufacture, stockpiling, transfer and possession of small arms and light weapons within their areas of jurisdiction. To ensure that those engaged in illegal manufacture,

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

> stockpiling, transfer and possession, can and will be prosecuted under appropriate penal codes. ... To seriously consider the prohibition of unrestricted trade and private ownership of small arms and light weapons specifically designed for military purposes.

5 Following Stan Cohen's (1988: ix) distinction between the:

> three orders of reality in the subject [of criminology]—first the 'thing' itself (crime and the apparatus of its control); second, research and speculation about this thing (description, classification, causal theory, normative and technical solutions to crime as a 'problem'); and third, reflection about the nature of the enterprise itself.

6 Where, on 3 April 2009 (just as we were finalizing this article) 13 people were killed in a shooting incident at an immigration centre.

7 See, for example, the exchange put before Lord Cullen's inquiry into the Dunblane massacre—a mass shooting perpetrated by a legal gun owner and gun sports enthusiast, Thomas Hamilton, who shot and killed 16 children and one teacher at the Dunblane primary school in Scotland, 13 March 1996—which heard evidence from Home Office representatives arguing for severe restrictions on private gun ownership and opponents of these representing shooting sports groups and other gun enthusiasts (Munday and Stevenson, 1996; Squires, 2000). See also Lott's (2000) case for liberalizing gun ownership laws in the United States on the basis of comparisons of gun-related homicide rates in states adopting 'concealed carry' laws and those prohibiting the right to carry handguns in public places.

References

Ausburg, T. (2006) *Becoming Interdisciplinary: An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2nd edn. New York: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

Becker, H. (1963) *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: The Free Press.

Becker, H. (1967) 'Whose Side Are We On?', *Social Problems* 14: 239–47.

Bolton, J. (2001) 'United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects', Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, Washington, DC, 9 July.

Braithwaite, J. (1989) *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Casey, L. (2008) *Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime: A Review by Louise Casey*. London, Cabinet Office. Available at http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/corp/assets/publications/crime/cc_full_report.pdf

Christie, N. (1993) *Crime Control as Industry: Toward Gulags Western Style*. London: Routledge.

Cohen, S. (1988) *Against Criminology*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Collins, H.M. and R. Evans (2002) 'The Third Wave of Science Studies: Studies of Expertise and Experience', *Social Studies of Science* 32(2): 235–96.

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

Collins, H.M. and R. Evans (2007) *Rethinking Expertise*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Cukier, W. and V. Seidel (2005) *The Global Gun Epidemic*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Dawkins, R. (1997) 'Is Science a Religion?', *The Humanist: The Magazine of Critical Inquiry and Social Concern* January/February. Available at http://www.thehumanist.org/humanist/articles/dawkins.html

Dennis, N. (ed.) (1997) *Zero Tolerance: Policing a Free Society*. London: IEA Health and Welfare Unit.

Ditton, J. (1979) *Controlology: Beyond the New Criminology*. London: Macmillan.

Downes, D. and R. Morgan (2007) 'No Turning Back: The Politics of Law and Order into the Millennium', in M. Maguire, R. Morgan and R. Reiner (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, 4th edn, pp. 201–40. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Edwards, A. and G. Hughes (2005) 'Comparing the Governance of Safety in Europe: A Geo-Historical Approach', *Theoretical Criminology* 9(3): 345–63.

Edwards, A. and G. Hughes (2009, forthcoming) 'Crime, Science and Politics', Cardiff University School of Social Sciences Working Paper.

Ericson, R.V. and K. Carriere (1994) 'The Fragmentation of Criminology', in D. Nelken (ed.) *The Futures of Criminology*, pp. 89–101. London: SAGE.

Feyerabend, P. (1975) *Against Method*. London: Verso.

Gouldner, A. (1968) 'The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State', *American Sociologist* 3: 103–16.

Hales, G. and D. Silverstone (2005) *Gun Crime in Brent*. Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth.

Hales, G., C. Lewis and D. Silverstone (2006) *Gun Crime: The Market in and Use of Illegal Firearms*. Home Office Research Study 298. London: Home Office.

Hearn, K. (2005) 'As Brazil Votes to Ban Guns, NRA Joins the Fight', *The Nation* 25 October. Available at http://www.thenation.com/doc/20051107/hearn

Hope, T. (2004) 'Pretend It Works: Evidence and Governance in the Evaluation of the Reducing Burglary Initiative', *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 4(3): 287–308.

Hughes, G. (2000) 'Understanding the Politics of Criminological Research', in V. Jupp, P. Davies and P. Francis (eds) *Doing Criminological Research*, pp. 234–48. London: SAGE.

Klein, J.T. (1990) *Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University.

Krug, E.G., K.E. Powell and L.L. Dahlberg (1998) 'Firearm-Related Deaths in the United States and 35 Other High- and Upper-Middle-Income Countries', *International Journal of Epidemiology* 27: 214–21.

Kuhn, T.S. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lea, J. and J. Young (1984) *What Is to Be Done about Law and Order?* London: Harmondsworth.

Liazos, A. (1972) 'The Poverty of the Sociology of Deviance: Nuts, Sluts and Perverts', *Social Problems* 20(Summer): 103–20.

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

Lott, J.R. (2000) *More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lyotard, J.-F. (1984 [1979]) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Maguire, M. (2004) 'The Crime Reduction Programme in England and Wales: Reflections on the Vision and the Reality', *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 4(3): 213–37.

Munday, R.A.I. and J.A. Stevenson (1996) *Guns and Violence: The Debate before Lord Cullen*. Essex: Piedmont Publishing.

Nelken, D. (1994) *The Futures of Criminology*. London: SAGE.

Pierce, G.L., A.A. Braga, C. Koper, J. McDevitt, D. Carlson, J. Roth et al. (2003) *The Characteristics and Dynamics of Crime Gun Markets: Implications for Supply-Side Focused Enforcement Strategies*. Final Report to the National Institute of Justice, 11 September. Grant No. 97-IJ-CX-0053. Rockville, MD: National Criminal Justice Reference Service.

Reel, M. (2005) 'Brazilians Reject Measure to Ban Sale of Firearms', *Washington Post Foreign Service* 24 October: A13. Available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/23/AR2005102300394_pf.html

Sheptycki, J. (2004) 'Relativism, Transnationalisation and Comparative Criminology', in J. Sheptycki, A. Wardak and J. Hardie-Bick (eds) *Transnational and Comparative Criminology*, pp. 69–90. London: Routledge.

Sherman, L. (2001) 'Reducing Gun Violence: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising', *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 1(1): 11–25.

Sherman, L. (2009) 'Evidence and Liberty: The Promise of Experimental Criminology', *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 9(1): 5–28.

Small Arms Survey (2001) *Profiling the Problem*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Small Arms Survey (2002) *Counting the Human Cost*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Small Arms Survey (2004) *Rights at Risk*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Squires, P. (2000) *Gun Culture or Gun Control? Firearms, Violence and Society*. London: Routledge.

Squires, P., R. Grimshaw and E. Solomon (2008) *Gun Crime: A Review of Evidence and Policy*. King's College London: Centre for Crime and Justice Studies.

Stenson, K.M. and D. Cowell (1991) *The Politics of Crime Control*. London: SAGE.

Stenson, K.M. and R.R. Sullivan (2001) *Crime, Risk and Justice: The Politics of Crime Control in Liberal Democracies*. Cullhompton: Willan Press.

United Nations (2001) 'Draft Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects', version L4 Rev. 1.

Wilson, J.Q. (1975) *Thinking about Crime*. New York: Basic Books.

Wilson, J.Q. and G. Kelling (1996) *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Neighbourhoods*. New York: The Free Press.

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009

Wynne, B. (2003) 'Seasick on the Third Wave? Subverting the Hegemony of Propositionalism', *Social Studies of Science* 33: 401–17.
Young, J. (1970) 'The Zoo Keepers of Deviance', *Catalyst* 5: 38–46.

ADAM EDWARDS is Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Cardiff University School of Social Sciences. He is director of the European Society of Criminology's working group on the Governance of Public Safety and has research interests in the relationships between science, politics and criminology.

JAMES SHEPTYCKI is a Professor of Criminology at York University, Toronto, Canada. He has published widely on criminological topics including domestic violence, drugs and crime, organized crime, money laundering, serial killers, transnational policing and comparative criminology. His recent work, with Andrew Goldsmith, concerns transnational policing and the notion of a 'constabulary ethic' (*Crafting Transnational Policing*, 2007, Oxford: Hart Publishing).

Downloaded from http://crj.sagepub.com at Cardiff University on December 11, 2009