

FROM ‘PUBLIC CRIMINOLOGY’ TO THE REFLEXIVE SOCIOLOGY OF CRIMINOLOGICAL PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

*A review of Public Criminology?*² by Ian Loader and Richard Sparks
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Introduction

I want to both congratulate and chastise Ian Loader and Richard Sparks for their oddly titled book, *Public Criminology?* (Loader and Sparks 2010, henceforth PC). I will make my remarks brief and pointed for the sake of provoking and then reorienting the discussion away from textualist disquisitions on the hoary label of ‘public’ (enter discipline) and towards the political economy of the production, circulation and consumption of criminological knowledge in the age of escalating inequality and pornographic penalty.

First, I congratulate the Loader–Sparks team for raising the question of the social and political uses of criminology in this period of frenetic transformation of justice policy discourses and practices and for mapping out influential ways of resolving that question through the exposition of five ‘styles of engagement’, or manners of gearing scholarship on crime and punishment with public debate. This is an urgent topic at a time when variants of penal populism rule the day in nearly all Western countries: crime fighting has everywhere been elevated to the rank of government priority and ‘insecurity’—understood narrowly in strict reference to lower-class street offending, despite the mounting wave of corporate criminality—has been turned into a driver of election campaigns and raw materials for re-asserting state sovereignty. Moreover, politicians of both Left and Right not only vie to prance on the law-and-order stage, but they increasingly claim that their martial solutions are based on solid science, often imported from the United States, promoted global Mecca of the ‘War on Crime’.¹

PC is an oblique yet keen response to this transnational drift towards reactive punitiveness, especially in its proposal to deploy ‘cooling devices’ to inject baseline rationality and civic mindfulness into the penal policy goulash. In addition to being small, compact and friendly to the hand (making it a perfect read for a transatlantic flight), this book is learned, clearly written, scrupulously argued and highly stimulating, thanks to a number of innovative moves. Thus, Loader and Sparks bring the ‘historical hermeneutics’ of John Dunn and Quentin Skinner to bear on criminological texts; they borrow fruitfully from the social studies of science to transfer lessons gleaned from controversies over scientific inquiry and the public good in the natural sciences to discussions of justice; they smartly deploy the metaphor of global warming to characterize the latter’s changed atmospheric; and they employ their considerable

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¹For a recent panorama documenting this worldwide trend and strands of transnational ‘policy transfer’ in criminal justice and the role of criminology and pseudo-criminology in them, see Pratt (2007), Muchielli (2008a), Snacken (2010) and Wacquant (2011).

theoretical acumen to connect myriad topics usually treated in isolation from one another.

PC delivers a strong incitement to reflexivity, which is always a boon to any discipline—no matter how or why you come to that position—insofar as it invites its readers to *think through* criminological issues as they relate to politics and policy, rather than accept them as pre-packaged, that is, ultimately, being *thought by them*. I learned from my mentor and friend Pierre Bourdieu ([2001] 2004) that, in social science, reflexivity is not a decorative device, a luxury or an option (like vitamins in an intellectual smoothie). Rather, it is an indispensable ingredient of rigorous investigation and lucid action. If PC helps reflexivity insinuate itself into criminology, better yet become integral to it, then it will have done that discipline a lot of good.

Now, I want to chastise Loader and Sparks for three linked choices that combine to weaken their case, when they were fully equipped to make a powerful one. Their first mis-step is the decision to drag the reader through the swamp of the recent American controversy over 'public sociology'; the second is the adoption of a textualist brand of reflexivity that gives short shrift to institutions; the third is the deployment of a descriptive typology that traps us in a subjectivist vision of the evolving structural relationship between social science and politics.

The Charade of 'Public Sociology' in America

When I first heard of this book project, I thought to myself, "Not again! Another discipline struck by the disease of '*public-itis*,'" which occurs when you put the nice Habermassian-sounding qualifier 'public' in front of its name, in the quixotic belief that something new is thereby being discovered or argued. This is a needless and heedless distraction, for three reasons. First, the debate PC broaches is a variation on the time-honoured question of the relationship between social knowledge and public action with a view towards justice, a question posed long ago by the Marquis of Condorcet, Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim (with his famous remark that 'our research would not be worth the labor of a single hour if its interest were merely speculative'),² mixed with a twist on the classic Weberian theme of 'axiological neutrality': are criminologists to worry about the politics of their work or must they strive for civic detachment, jump into the policy scrum or stand on the sidelines? So, why the presentist slant, as attested by the pegging of the book on a scholarly debate not even a decade old?

Second, Loader and Sparks misdiagnose the tenor of 'public sociology' in the United States. They present as a novel debate enlarging the civic scope and reach of sociology the latest rerun of a noisy squabble entirely internal to professional sociology, which has more to do with the petty politics of office-seeking and status-bestowing inside the American Sociological Association than with the grand issues of the politics of knowledge. The 'public sociology' advocated by Burawoy (2005a)—after many illustrious

²Condorcet rarely gets his due on this point, as demonstrated by Rothschild's (2001) fine study of his reflections on science, state policy and human emancipation in dialogue with Adam Smith.

predecessors from Robert Lynd to Herbert Gans to William Julius Wilson³—is an *occupational charade*, whose ironies are too many to recount here. It is the toy and the ploy of a repentant Marxist who, having renounced transforming the world and failed to transform the craft (as he and his comrade Erik Olin Wright had boldly set themselves the mission in the mid-1970s), uses his presidential bully-pulpit to try and change the profession by bestowing dignity to the ‘underlabourers’ of minor universities and community colleges. A world-class academic who has tackled frontally salient societal issues—the decolonization of the mining industry in Africa after independence, the exploitation of factory wage earners in America under monopoly capitalism, the formation of socialist consciousness in Eastern Europe after Solidarnosc—but who has not written a single essay for a non-academic journal and never bothered to intervene in public debates in four decades of a distinguished career (Burawoy 2005*b*) advocates for non-academic activities to rally the lower ranks of the discipline (who elected him to his post), while every elite department in the country, starting with his own, routinely devalues such contribution when it comes to hiring and promotion. A leading analyst of class whose rightful claim to academic fame comes from spotlighting the centrality of the labour process conjures up a two-by-two Parsonian typology of intellectual production as an ideational game of species of social inquiry suspended in thin air, with only passing reference to the brutal restructuring of the material conditions of work in the university and the rising misologism of the national culture that make American sociologists *born aliens* in their own society.

One clue as to the true scope and ‘public’ of that debate: the 2004 meetings of the ASA at which Burawoy (2005*a*) sounded his clarion call ‘For Public Sociology’ and excited conventioners by inviting as speakers the *New York Times* columnist–economist Paul Krugman, the international anti-globalization icon Arundhati Roy, and the Brazilian president–sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso, was held in San Francisco, the most left-wing city in America. Yet, it did not rate a single report in the local or national media—one solitary article covered the event some 8,000 kilometres away: it appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* because Burawoy hails from that city. The academic teapot tempest over the meaning and mission of ‘public sociology’ in the United States expresses the peculiar predicament of American scholars, characterized by self-inflicted irrelevance born of hyper-professionalism and social insularity, political powerlessness and civic disgrace (if you want to shoot down a policy proposal in that country, just say that it comes out of a sociology department). To put it tersely, ‘public sociology’ characterized as a discipline dialogically engaged with ‘publics, understood as people who are themselves involved in conversations’ (PC: 42) does not exist outside the discipline: it is an inverted projection of the frustrated political aspirations and forsaken civic yearnings of official sociology, made by, about and for American academics.⁴ Accordingly, since its proclamation, it has been quietly absorbed as yet another specialty registered within the ASA (the section on ‘Sociological practice and public sociology’), routinized

³Herbert Gans’s (1989) presidential address to the American Sociological Association was entitled ‘Sociology in America: The Discipline and the Public’. William Julius Wilson (1991) tackled ‘The Challenge of Public Agenda Research’. Gans and Wilson did not create the same mix of excitement and furore among their colleagues because, based on their extensive hands-on experience in engaging policy makers on issues of poverty, race and urban decline, they likely knew the futility of calling for a populist rehabilitation of applied research and community-oriented activities.

⁴Ironically, Loader and Sparks worry that criminology might fall into that same pitfall: ‘There exists a danger of creating a debate about the public role of criminology that is of interest mainly or only to professional criminologists’ (CP: 18).

as a regular 'column' in that organization's monthly newsletter and reduced to a sub-rubric in CVs (under which one lists journalistic writings and signals one's civic goodwill).

In short, the 'public' tag and debate is an American sideshow and hindrance, not a help in posing the question of the knowledge and politics–policy nexus in British and European criminology.⁵ It falsely universalizes American peculiarities and it confuses the narrow internal politics of the profession with the broader politics of the citizenry. And it obscures the fact that every social science discipline is, by necessity, 'public', only in different ways to different users. I submit that Loader and Sparks would have found a stronger intellectual springboard in Bent Flyvbjerg's (2001) *Making Social Science Matter*, which investigates 'why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again'; in Pierre Bourdieu's ([2001] 2004) *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, which probes the implications of the de-autonomization of the academic field for scientists intent on both defending their avocation and impacting society; or even, should they insist on bringing news from across the Atlantic, in the intellectual insurgency brewing inside American political science under the banner of 'perestroika' (Monroe 2005). They could also have relied on empirical case studies of the current frictions between criminology and policy in Britain, drawing on their own extensive research experience on topics of pressing political import (starting with Girling, Loader and Sparks 2000). Since Loader and Sparks do not set out to defend something called 'public criminology' (thus 'the question mark that clings to the book's title', expressive of a feeling of doubt they cannot quite shake off, CP: 1) and do not end up advocating for or against it, why bring up that notion at all? My hunch is that the reason is commercial: the buzzword 'public' seduces social science editors at publishing houses. Publishers think that its seeming democratic aura will help them sell books, which is one indicator of the growing intrusion of worldly interests into scientific production, to which I return below.

What Kind of Reflexivity?

The reflexivity animal comes in different shapes and shades: the first, egological or narcissistic, centres on the person of the researcher; the second is textual, focusing on the rhetorics she deploys and on the politics embedded in her poetics; the third is epistemic, dissecting the social conditions and techniques of production of the scientific object (see Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 36–46 for an elaboration). PC is heavily slanted towards the textual and omits what, to be deliberately crude in reaction, I will call the *political economy of criminological knowledge*.

Loader and Sparks give us provocative interpretations of wide-ranging authors, from 'zemiology' to experimental criminology to the boldest macro-theories of penal change, but they supply no institutional analysis of the rapidly evolving structural conditions under which those texts are conceived, written, diffused (or not) and deployed, by whom and with what effects. But the science–politics nexus in criminology, as in any domain of

⁵That the *British Journal of Sociology* reprinted Burawoy's presidential address word for word from the *American Sociological Review*—a first in transatlantic intellectual commerce—attests, first, to the abiding thirst for civic relevance felt by English sociologists and, second, to the mental colonization of British sociology and the aspiration of its leaders to match the very professional standards 'made in America' that are one of the main obstacles to such relevance—an instructive instance of the 'cunning of imperialist reason' at the heart of the sociological field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999).

inquiry, is forged, not by free-floating ideas encountering a disembodied ‘public’ (and still less ‘publics’, plural, seemingly endowed with equal influence or purchase on knowledge production), but through the hierarchical articulation of the academic field, of which the criminological domain is a sector, the bureaucratic field, the political field and the journalistic field—in short, by the changing location and uses of justice scholarship in the patterned space of struggles over instruments of rule that Bourdieu calls the *field of power* (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1993). Here, CP is missing a meaty chapter on the neoliberal institutional ecology within which criminological knowledge is now being produced, validated and appropriated (or ignored). This chapter would at minimum include discussion the following items: the managerial makeover of the university and the generalized degradation of the conditions of employment, research and teaching on justice; increased dependency on external funding aimed at short-term technical issues; the growing weight of policy institutes on campus and the rise of ‘think tanks’ off campus; the proliferation of para-governmental outfits that foster and fabricate a bogus science plugged directly into the policy-making machine; the overt and covert intrusion of the concerns of politicians, themselves anxious to demonstrate their manly resolve to tame crime in synch with the demands and cycles of a media microcosm driven by the restless quest for audience ratings.

On the consumption side, Loader and Sparks note plaintively that ‘studies of the recent political uses of knowledge are much needed in the field of crime and punishment’ and stress that acquiring a working understanding of the ‘contexts of reception of criminological knowledge (and how they are structured and operate)’ is essential to effectively gearing criminology and policy (PC: 120). Yet, inexplicably, instead of sketching this ‘context’ and deciphering its rules of functioning, they literally relegate the question of the circulation and consumption of criminology to a footnote.⁶ This neglect of institutions is all the more striking—and cramping both analytically and practically—in light of the swift and sweeping changes that have swept across the organizational landscape of both criminology and public policy over the past two decades.

Consider how ‘think tanks’ have irrevocably altered the institutional matrix through which policy knowledge percolates (Medvetz 2008). Blossoming in the United States in the 1970s and mushrooming across Western Europe in the 1990s, these hybrid outfits strategically located at the crossroads between economic power, the media, the university and party politics purport to ‘bridge the gap between knowledge and policy’ (to use a standard formulation commonly invoked by their promoters).⁷ But this ‘bridging’ is very peculiar: on the one side, think tanks serve as selective magnifiers for marketing measures favoured by their funders and political allies; on the other, they buffer politicians from alternative points of view and inoculate them against the critique of autonomous scholarship. On the crime front specifically, I show in *Prisons of Poverty* how the Manhattan Institute played a pivotal role in (re)packaging and validating the ‘broken-windows theory’ in America (even as it was repeatedly refuted by that country’s criminologists) and in the international dissemination of the strategy of ‘zero tolerance’

⁶In this footnote, they announce as a sequel what should have been a core chapter of this book: ‘We hope to take this “reception” side of these transactions [between criminology and its external users] further in subsequent work’ (CP: 165, note 4).

⁷According to a recent survey, there are 1,777 think tanks in the United States, 263 in Great Britain, 183 in Germany, 165 in France and 122 in Argentina. The creation of such policy institutes reached its zenith around 1996 (McGann 2009). Even by the most restricted definitions, think tanks now outnumber universities in addition to vastly outgunning them in terms of media and political firepower.

policing allegedly derived from it (Wacquant 2009*a*). The New-York-based think tank extended its influence to Great Britain via the agency of the Institute for Economic Affairs and its media collaborators, and to Latin America through the Inter-American Policy Exchange based in Santiago de Chile. It has single-handedly turned the former police chiefs George Kelling and William Bratton into global 'experts in urban security' who, disguised as semi-scholars (with the glorious title of Senior Fellow), wield more influence on policing debates and decisions than thousands of criminologists rolled together, as they travel round the world to meet presidents, governors and big-city mayors in the glaring light of the media to sell them punitive solutions to urban problems.⁸

The impact of think tanks has been both amplified and fortified by a new kind of bureaucratic agency secreted by the state to ape science and better justify the policies suited to neoliberal restructuring. In France, for instance, two official organs of law-and-order propaganda popped up in the 1990s at the interface between the academic and bureaucratic fields (Wacquant 2009*b*: 29–35). The first is the Institute for Advanced Studies in Domestic Security (IHESI), launched by the ministry of the interior (in charge of policing) 'to train security actors', supply technical assistance to 'partners in civil society who wage a tough battle against delinquency day-to-day' and to 'sensitize' the country's elites to the need for proactive penal policies. Bereft of credentialed scholars, it runs seminars, organizes research colloquia and produces a journal called *Les Cahiers de la sécurité intérieure* that presents every appearance of being scientific while being thoroughly submitted to the dictates of state rulers. The second is the Institute of Criminology of Paris, a fake academic centre housed by the University of Paris Panthéon-Assas, run by journalists and retired police officials reconverted into 'security consulting' for business and local governments. It grants a one-semester post-secondary diploma in 'Contemporary Criminal Threats' and indoctrinates police brass and staff on how to tackle issues of 'urban violence', 'trafficking' and 'fanaticism'. Its members are regularly interviewed in the media and trotted out by government officials to extemporize on the latest wave of punitive measures.⁹

The living incarnation of this state-sponsored enterprise in *criminological forgery for political profit* is Alain Bauer, France's first official 'criminologist'. Using his personal connections to corporate heads and top politicians of both the Left and the Right, his ties to the French police and the American secret services, and his deep masonic bonds, the founder and CEO of Alain Bauer Associates (a leading consulting firm in 'security and crisis management') rose from counsellor to socialist Prime Minister Rocard to head of the French National Crime Commission and countless related governmental bodies (the Strategic Security Mission to the President, the National CCTV Commission, the Commission for the Oversight of Police Data, etc.), to special crime advisor to President Sarkozy (Rudolph and Soulez 2007). Sarkozy then rewarded his exceptional diligence in promoting the catastrophist vision of crime that serves his political agenda by personally nominating Bauer to the first Chair in criminology

⁸The national framework adopted by Loader and Sparks appears ill-suited to capturing the transnational travels and travails of penalty in an era when criminal justice theories and measures are increasingly borrowed and sold across borders through 'policy transfer' (Jones and Newburn 2006; Wacquant 2011), as Sparks himself stresses elsewhere (Newburn and Sparks 2004).

⁹The faculty in charge of this program includes a police commissioner, a senior customs official, a retired prefect, the security director of the telecommunications giant Alcatel, novelists, directors of 'security firms', the CEO of Fichet-Bauche (France's leading lock and armoured-door company), a reporter for the newsweekly *Le Point*, an infantry officer from Malta and a Colombian journalist.

in France, over and against the unanimous opposition of justice scholars, who publicly denounced Bauer's glaring lack of qualifications (he holds a M.Phil. in administrative law, is terminally incompetent in statistics and has not a single peer-reviewed publication to his record).¹⁰ This academic consecration gives Bauer not only added credibility to pontificate in the media and to reshape state policy towards crime from above; it also puts him in charge of funding oversight for criminological research for the entire country.¹¹

This new breed of 'security consultants' who cumulate scientific legitimacy, administrative authority, journalistic visibility and personal connections to the gamut of state and capitalist elites has captured a pivotal place at the intersection of crime knowledge, policy and politics (Bonelli 2009). It is no longer possible to reflect on the politics of crime scholarship without dissecting the organizational changes that have spawned them and which they foster in turn. What is more, Bauer and his ilk would argue that they are practising 'public criminology'—and on what grounds would one deny their claim? This claim instantly explodes the naïve presumption that public criminology (sociology, anthropology, geography, etc.) is research conducted 'for the people' rather than for state managers, who, after all, are not the most illegitimate of publics.

Which Typology and for What?

Instead of an objectivist analysis of the tangled circuits of production, distribution and consumption of criminological knowledge, and of the power relations that articulate them, we are offered a subjectivist typology of styles of engagement comprising three 'cool' types (the scientific expert, the policy advisor and the observer-turned-player) and two 'hot' types (the social movement theorist/activist and the prophet). Here, questions abound, for which satisfactory answers are hard to find in the book. What is the basis of this nomenclature and how was it constructed? Is it a robust explanatory tool or a convenient descriptive device? Why this typology, and not some other, such as the triadic splintering of the 'Role of the Intellectual in Public Bureaucracy' proposed 40 years ago by Robert Merton (1968), composed of the public-minded researcher, the indifferent technician and the unattached intellectual, pointing to the difficulties of combining these postures into a coherent role-set? Are these five styles mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive of the universe of possible stances (it appears not, as conceded in the book's closing pages, CP: 143)? What organizational and personal forces determine a researcher to take up this or that strategy, and with what cognitive and practical consequences? And what of formative factors operating on the side of consumption through the anticipation of differential rewards and internalized censorship?

More problems emerge in each category when it comes to slotting particular authors. To pick just one style, I was first amused and then bemused to find myself listed under the rubric of the 'lonely prophet' (along with Pat O'Malley and David Garland, whose

¹⁰See the petition 'Why We Reject the "New Criminology" and the Plan to Control Research on "Domestic Security" of which It Partakes', at www.sauvonslarecherche.fr/spip.php?article2317, and Mucchielli (2008b).

¹¹The character of the 'grant manager' appears nowhere in Loader and Spark's typology of criminological styles of engagement. Yet, there is ample evidence that research administrators have more impact on what kinds of knowledge reach policy makers than the 'formative intentions' of scholars on the side of production (Ross 2000).

stance towards politics and policy are rather different from mine).¹² Remember that the prophet is, along with the priest and the magician, one of the three main protagonists in Max Weber's (1968: 349) sociology of religion, who writes: 'We shall understand "prophet" to mean a purely individual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his mission proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment.' The prophet draws his authority from a call(ing) and not an office; he challenges traditionalism and acts as the human bearer of a new legitimacy. (Weber further distinguishes two subtypes: 'ethical prophecy', when the prophet announces commands by appeal to a transcendent authority such as the will of God, and 'exemplary prophecy', when the visionary embodies the new values in his conduct.) I just do not see how 'lonely prophecy' characterizes a style of engagement in criminological work, which is by constitution a joint activity and appeals to the shared norms of science. Certainly, it is not mine. Not only because I am not lonely: the foray into 'civic sociology' recounted in *Prisons of Poverty* (Wacquant 2009a: 161–74) was expressly conceived as part of a *collective intellectual*, the group *Raisons d'agir*, which aimed to promote a cooperative modality of political intervention in rupture with the classic heroic posture of the singular scholar.¹³ But also, more importantly, because I am no prophet—and neither is any scholar that I have ever come across.

The authors whom Loader and Sparks gather under the prophetic banner share one intellectual trait that has little to do with prophecy: they take a 'big-picture' view of penalty that seeks to relate its permutations to deep changes in the macrostructure, politics and culture of contemporary society. They also diagram changes in punishment to disclose hidden features of the present social condition and state re-engineering. It is the analytic scale and the theoretical purpose of their research agendas that differentiate them from positivistically inclined criminologists, who typically tackle smaller, more technical issues and that makes their work more liable to foster a critical stance toward current policy trends. But this derives from *an epistemological, not a political posture*. Indeed, it says nothing about their strategies to mate (or not) scholarship and political commitment. To specify the missing links: I hold that good social science is necessarily critical inasmuch as it points to the historical arbitrariness of existing social arrangements (things could be otherwise), and thus to forgone opportunities and lateral alternatives; that the most effective critique has a Kantian and a Marxian moment (it dissects categories no less than institutions); that it is a civic obligation of social scientists to reinvest into public debate the results of their research, not only to provide answers to urgent questions, but also, more urgently still, to reframe those very questions (Wacquant 2004). In the Socratic dialogues through which they successively appraise the five styles of criminological engagement at the conclusion of their book, Loader and Sparks indicate that they share the broad outlines of this position (PC: 143–4). Where we part is that I view scientific autonomy ('thou shall ask thy own questions') as the *conditio sine qua non* of intellectual engagement—otherwise the latter is bound to morph into service, if not servility, whether to the state or to this or that

¹²This is progress compared to the slotting of my work by Tom Daems (2009) in his bizarre bestiary composed of the scientist, the educator, the expert and the boxer, which raises the general question of the analytic justification for such typologies.

¹³On rival conceptions of intellectuality in recent French thought and practice, the 'total intellectual' incarnated by Sartre, the 'specific intellectual' embodied by Foucault and the 'collective intellectual' promoted by Bourdieu, see Wacquant (2005).

pressure group or aggrieved party in society. And autonomy is a crucially matter of organizational hardware, not just mental software. In the ever-renewed confrontation between ‘formative intentions’ and ‘institutional contexts’ (PC: 130), the latter has the upper hand and should therefore take analytic priority.¹⁴

In my view, the single major obstacle to reasoned relevance today is the growing heteronomy of criminology and the ‘intellectual dumping’ practised by mercenary or hybrid scholars ensconced in the policy-oriented institutes and the think tanks that have gained the upper hand in shaping government reflection and action on this front. Because they fail to relate the *subjective position-takings* of criminologists (as captured in their fivefold typology) to the *objective positions* they occupy in the hierarchical networks weaved across the academic, bureaucratic and political fields, Loader and Sparks overlook the power of these structural determinants. They cannot but adopt a catholic position of principled ‘criminological pluralism’ and make the ‘democratic under-labourer’ of criminology a sort of disciplinary ombudsman whose ecumenical mission is to ‘foster exchange and debate between different criminological approaches’ (PC: 144). But note how this mediation is then entirely domestic: if the ‘democratic under-labourer’ is a Latourian ‘diplomat’, his diplomacy soothes relations internal to the criminological microcosm; it does nothing to facilitate foreign transactions with operators on the policy scene, and still less to reorganize that scene.

As with any social science, for crime scholarship to gain civic pertinence requires engaging a two-pronged renovation. We must, first, thoroughly reform its internal organization and practices so that the profession does not smother the craft (see Carlen 2011 for a germane argument); and, second, revamp its external linkages and, in particular, elaborate new collective vehicles and regular spaces of dialogue with the mobilized citizenry *outside of academe*. To carry out this double agenda, we need a reflexive sociology of criminological knowledge that goes beyond the textual and matters of ‘sensibility and disposition’ (PC: 116) to encompass a solid topology of the circuits of criminological production and consumption running across the academic, political, bureaucratic and journalistic fields (rather than simply display ‘greater humility in the face of democratic politics’ as proposed in CP: 119).

In conclusion, Loader and Sparks give us an agent-based vision of the politics of criminal knowledge leading to an internalist solution, warped by the misshapen debate on ‘public sociology’ in America, when we need a structural vision of the changing place of penalty in the field of power giving us a roadmap towards institutional remedies that do not depend on the heroic deeds of individual figures. Drawing such a map will reveal that a central obstacle to a civic social science of justice is the intellectual insularity of criminology, which artificially severs the crime-and-punishment duet from the state, social space and culture. Criminology replicates in its disciplinary isolation the ideological autonomization of the crime question from its social, political and cultural determinants and correlates that is the very cause of its ‘overheating’ in contemporary public debate. As committed criminologists, Loader and Sparks are *volens volens* locked in the crime-and-punishment box that anchors that discipline. They necessarily underestimate the extra-penological significance of crime and the extra-criminological functions of

¹⁴Loader and Sparks recognize that ‘the capacity of a pluralistic criminology to contribute to the construction of a better politics of crime and its regulation depends upon social institutions—institutions of both knowledge production and knowledge utilization’ (PC: 145). But they do so on the next-to-last page of the book and leave that crucial question virtually untouched.

punishment, including the fact that criminal justice is a core state capacity designed not to stem offending but to manage urban marginality, stage political sovereignty and achieve legitimacy in the eyes of citizens (Wacquant 2009*b*), so that its analysis and reform far exceed the province of criminology. It follows that, to attain their proposed aim of a 'better politics of crime and its control', we should dissolve criminology into a sociology of penalty cognizant of its location in the field of power that is its very object. With Stan Cohen (1988), then, I submit that we should work *against criminology* to save it from solipsistic scientism, subservient technicism and the faddish illusions of 'public sociology'.

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