Teaching Activist Criminology in the Neoliberal University

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ABSTRACT:

This chapter analyses the degree to which the UK Higher Education (HE) Sector can offer spaces for students to critically reflect on topics relevant for activist criminology such as zemiology, post-colonialism, abolitionism or green criminology as opposed to constructing the criminal justice system (CJS) as a natural solution for crimes and social harms. The chapter argues the importance of this topic due to deepening institutional links between universities and criminal justice agencies in the name of professionalisation for the latter (Hallenberg and Cockroft 2017). The chapter proposes that to avoid criminology curricula merely reproducing the priorities and solutions of the CJS it should turn to the liberatory pedagogy of Paolo Freire (Freire, 1996) and include teaching practices to encourage recognition of social movements and resistance against harms of States, corporations or the CJS as legitimate foci in the criminology curriculum.

KEYWORDS:

1. Activist Criminology
2. Critical Criminology
3. Higher Education
4. Pedagogy
5. Neoliberalism
6. Social Movements

Introduction

This chapter reflects on the space the UK HE Sector can allow for criminology students to pursue an activist application of criminology. It makes similar arguments as those in favour of critical criminological paradigms such as zemiology, post-colonialism, prison abolitionism or green criminology (Barton, Corteen, Davies & Hobson, 2010), but adds further considerations on how practitioners can and should attempt to encourage students to engage with activist groups and social movements. It states that this can provide a critical counterweight to the influence of institutional links between universities and criminal justice agencies in the name of professionalisation (Hallenberg and Cockroft, 2017). Critical criminology must make sure there is an alternative to such initiatives to avoid the discipline merely engaging in the social reproduction of the priorities and solutions of the Criminal Justice System (CJS). The chapter uses the liberatory pedagogy of Paolo Freire (Freire, 1996) to outline how it can include teaching practices to encourage recognition of social movements as examples of citizens resisting harms of States, corporations or the CJS. It does however counsel academics to consider the legal risks for students who do engage in this activism using examples of police use of force and surveillance from the 2010s to more recent moves in UK legislation that arguably criminalise protest.

Criminology and the Neoliberal University in the late 20th/21st Century

This section will outline the broad developments of criminology throughout the 20th/21st century and the rise of the neoliberal university that reshaped demands and conceptions of criminology and cognate disciplines.

Criminology is a discipline that analyses trends in crimes, profiles and motivations of offenders, victims and the functioning of the CJS, from its police, prisons, probations, courts and other relevant agencies. There is a conflicted and contradictory history of criminology itself from its earlier beginnings that are relatively unquestioning of the category of crime and deviance to the 1960s, the influence of labelling theory (Becker, 1991) and the rise of subsequent critical criminological streams that began to question how the criminal justice system criminalises some human actions yet chooses not to criminalise more powerful actors (Box, 1983). This genealogy does not discount the rise of conservative orientations in criminology and sociology, including right-realism (Murray, 1990) and Broken Windows theory (Kelling and Wilson, 1989), alongside other critical approaches such as Left Realism that accused social constructionist paradigms of downplaying the real harm of conventionally understood crime (Lea and Young, 1993). There are newer critical criminological threads such as Green Criminology (White, 2003) and Zemiology (Hillyard et al., 2004), or the study of social harm, that re-centred discussions on social construction in relation to harms including those that are marginalised from legal codes.

As with left realism decades before, there is a debate to the degree that critical forms of criminology side-line the harms that citizens can suffer from conventionally defined crime, particularly out how working class members of society are often the most likely to be victims. Ultra-realism highlights how rising legally defined criminality can ape the harms of consumer capitalism within neoliberalism (Hall and Winlow, 2018).

As regards the institutional settings criminology was taught, the "Neoliberal University" has been a term, used in tandem with the 'corporate', 'enterprise' and 'entrepenurial' university (Bottrell and Manathunga, 2019: 2) with varying levels of disparagement to describe the emergence of radical changes observed in the ethos, administration, role and idea of the universities since World War Two. HE policy observed similar changes in tandem

with the neoliberal restructuring of the Post-War Welfare State and New Public Management (Heller, 2016) instigated throughout the public sectors of Western capitalist democracies. It signals a greater penetration of market demands and logics into the university and reshaping of its priorities towards employability.

Some of the features of the NeoLiberal University are:

1) An audit culture that emphasises demonstrable metrics around teaching, research and knowledge exchange and workload allocation models. This works hand in hand with an obsession with getting universities higher in different national and global ranking tables.
2) New forms of knowledge shaped between university, private business and state demands being prioritised that moves away from serving the public good to serving the needs of business (Heller, 2016)
3) This form of knowledge receiving greater access to research funding
4) This form of knowledge demanding the same metrics from other disciplines across the social sciences, arts and humanities (Heller, 2016)
5) A hierarchy of staff with a casualised temporary precariat at the bottom that accompanies an internalisation of these new norms and competition with colleagues as opposed to resistance
6) An increased workload to meet these metrics with often much overtime going unacknowledged (Bottrell and Manathunga, 2019).
7) An increase in student tuition fees and student debt and increasing the need to demonstrate employability outcomes for graduates (Heller, 2016)

The HE sector in the UK is just as subject to these changes as the USA or Australia with Higher Education subsumed under the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (Stockdale and Sweeney, 2022).

A key feature of the "Neoliberal University" is its reliance on performance metrics. The latter reflects an increasing demand that universities prove their performance in student uptake, graduation, research impact, teaching excellence, knowledge exchange and graduate employment success (Morrish, 2019). This often pushes a conformity of knowledge and performance to satisfy the conditions of these particular ranking tables (Heller, 2016). UK Universities have previously adhered to the Quality Assurances Agency (QAA) but are now also expected to adhere to the Research Excellent Framework (REF), the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the National Student Survey (NSS). This all changes how academic knowledge and what is legitimated as such is perceived and what students are taught to expect from a degree (Stockdale and Sweeney, 2022).

This increase in metrics is particularly pertinent in the context of rising fees since the late 1990s when the Labour Government introduced a fee of £1,000 per year. In 2006 these were raised to £6,000 per year and kept pace with inflation. The election of the Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition in 2010 resulted in an implementation of austerity across government spending. As part of this, university tuition fees went up to £9,250 per year. This period of austerity also resulted in the abolition of maintenance grants with student debt rising to £47,000 after a three year undergraduate degree (House of Commons Library, 2018). Ever since their introduction these fees became an accepted part of the university's financing base. The increase in fees resulted in a switch to treating the student

as a consumer and thus the metrics around teaching excellence, research excellence and graduate employability ensure more "value for money".

In 2019 the Auger Review (House of Commons Library, 2019) recommended that the fees be cut to £7,500 a year and that the Government supplement the lost income with a teaching grant to HEIs. The student loan repayment scheme was extended from 30 to 40 years and the maintenance grant was reintroduced. The teaching grant will however be increased for those universities that are offering "high value" and "high cost" courses and could see increased funding while those who do not receive it could see such income fall (House of Commons Library, 2019, 4). This latter point was meant to introduce accountability into the public subsidy but what counts as "high value" can have a direct bearing on the teaching of activist and critical criminology. Criminology courses that favour an application of technical solutions that unproblematically treat crime as something that can be policed and contained in prisons without consideration of wider social justice issues may be able to demonstrate more employability. They can do this more easily than critical stances that state that the CJS is overused for such harms in society and should be downsized in favour of social justice solutions. Employability has been a long-standing concern of HE policy along with the commodification and marketization of academic knowledge (Barton et al., 2010). The Review has stated that the provision of post-18 education cannot be left entirely to the market but this seems to be included more as an afterthought as it also states the need for further scrutiny of "low-value" courses and to encourage degrees that align to the economy's needs (House of Commons Library, 2019, 9).

At the same time as these institutional changes in HE there were also demands that criminal justice agencies must become increasingly professionalised. A recent example would be the UK police force with the requirement that officers have a degree or equivalent qualification (Hallenberg & Cockroft, 2017). This has led universities to collaborate with the College of Policing and shape policing degrees. This is one way that the CJS can have a direct influence on the shaping of curricula to do with criminology and criminal justice.

Criminology can respond well to these pressures as its applicability to criminal justice professions such as police officers, prison officers and other roles in the criminal justice system and further afield with security agencies such as MI5. This creates pressures on what modules are favoured on the curriculum and are more amenable to this hegemonic ideology of crime requiring an exclusively criminal justice intervention. For the UK context there does not seem to be disaggregate data on whether criminology graduates will go on to work in criminal justice agencies. However governmental and private agencies seem to heavily construct a criminology degree in this manner. The National Careers Service states that with a career in criminology, '…you might move into social or probation work, a career in law or join the security services' (National Careers Service, 2022). Graduate careers advisory service, Prospects, states that, 'As a criminology graduate with critical thinking, analytical and communications skills, you're attractive to employers both inside and outside the criminal justice sector' and lists police officer, prison officer and probation officer as possible careers (Prospects, 2022). The *Complete University Guide* tells applicants**, '**Many Criminology graduates go into roles directly related to crime and punishment, using their insights and research skills to manage, control and prevent crime. Job options include within

crime reduction, probation or rehabilitation, or for certain offences like online crime or domestic abuse' (Butler, 2021). The latter does also emphasise careers outside the criminal justice system but it is clear that the uppermost consideration that is presented is either in, or in conjunction, with the CJS. With the Auger Review splitting up courses into "low" and "high" value the CJS can present a tempting career path for graduates. This is particularly important considering how much political and actual capital is invested in the CJS (Garside, 2017).

The Review (House Of Commons Library, 2019) states that graduates often do not pay the loans due to not earning enough which asks to what degree the Review is concerned with graduates obtaining good employment as opposed to repaying their loans. While critical criminologists have to be realistic and realise that their students will want to earn after they leave their degree, it is not unreasonable to expect that universities can also be institutions for critical thinking and should be able to intervene in public debate even if the environment for such debate seems to be narrowing further and further.

The next section will analyse how critical pedagogy can provide the best paradigm to introduce critical criminological perspectives to students in HE and how this must be negotiated within the neoliberal context.

Critical Pedagogy

Paolo Freire urged educators to engage in a dialogue with students as opposed to seeing them as mere repositories of knowledge and instruction (Freire, 1996). Freire states that this can lend itself to ideologically inculcating an identification with the interests of the oppressors on the part of students. Freire wrote these words after experiencing exile in the wake of the pro-US Brazilian coup d'etat of 1964 (Foley, 2021). This may seem removed from the context of criminology courses in the Global North but it should be remembered that such coups in the peripheral countries of the Global South such as Brazil, Chile and Indonesia were as much a part of neoliberal restructuring (Klein, 2008) as the move toward an internally punitive criminal justice approach within the countries of the Global North twinned with a free state market rollback of state interventionist policies in the economy. In this sense an uncritical criminology that sees the legal definitions of crime as inherently apolitical and criminal justice as the only solution points to education as an Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser, 2014). Criminal justice presents itself as the only solution to issues around crime and hence a predestined source of employment for the increasingly utilitarian subject of the student in the Neoliberal University.

Due to critical criminology's focus on the unequal criminalisation of less-powerful groups who experience deprivation along the lines of gender, race and class as well as crime's unequal victimisation of them, the dialogic element in Freire's pedagogy is ideal. It outlines how students are expected to be co-creators of discussion in lectures and seminars. Educators must test their presuppositions as well as what they teach against what their students have experienced and how this has shaped their views of crime and the CJS. This is particularly important due to the expansion of the student body that now holds more learners from ethnic minority and working class backgrounds who are often the first in their family to go to university (Henderson, Shure and Adamecz-Volgyi, 2020). Their experiences

and those of their family and peers with the CJS can exceedingly differ from that of more middle class and/or white students and educators. With this in mind education must seek to reconcile these poles of contradiction so both teachers and students are educators (Freire, 1996). This is important in the context of discussions on decolonisation and how the experiences of students of colour need to be addressed in shaping the learning curricula (Charles, 2019).

It is also important not to expect students to hold automatically progressive and critical views on the police and criminal justice and can include opposition to perspectives such as prison and police abolition. There is a tendency in Freire's work to assume that students may automatically welcome this dialogue as opposed to the "banking" approach to education where trained instructors deposit information to the students and "withdraws" them via assessment (Freire, 1996). Freire would state the proper aim of education is not to integrate students into this structure but to change this structure to encourage their criticality and creative approaches to their education. Critical pedagogy is meant to examine the relationships between approved orthodox "knowledge" and authority and power relations for its students (Bottrell and Manathunga, 2019). Hamilton (2013) attaches this to ideas of student empowerment as Burawoy (2008) describes through public sociology and states that students are active critical subjects with their own accumulated experience. Hamilton also states that this is part of a wider process of social transformation through transforming the teacher-student relationship. For criminology this means to problematise the automatic assumption that criminal justice is the only answer to questions of crime and harm and reveal how approved solutions are shaped within the context of political priorities and who has the power to frame the causes of crime and how society should respond. This kind of critical pedagogy is meant to also be public and engage in scholar activism (Hamilton, 2013). Despite this seemingly gloomy prognosis critical scholarship is still pushed by academics and be enthusiastically received by students (Barton et al. 2010). The only issue is the possibility of neoliberalism in the academy appropriating this as marketing material for driving student enrolment as opposed to fostering real critical and community engagement.

From critical to activist criminology

This chapter is concerned with an explicitly "activist" criminology. This means a form of praxis where students and academics can take the teachings of critical criminological currents to inform their engagement with relevant social movements seeking social or criminal justice solutions. The rationale of the criminal justice system and its various agencies are an important focus of critical enquiry for these social movements. Belknap describes the need for "legal justice" but also specifies the importance of "social justice" (Belknap, 2015, 5). This is a recognition that most of the crimes and harms that the criminal justice system criminalises and focuses on are often those of working class offenders and how a large proportion of these are the result of massive inequalities in wealth.

Belknap (2015), in the American context, stated how activist criminologists must increase the scope of voices and perspectives in the discipline and the topics under

consideration. She spoke in particular on the long-marginalised contribution of African-American voices in criminology. There are also already emerging paradigms such as Criminology of the South that seek to highlight the important work that has occurred in criminology outside of the US and European context (Carrington et al., 2019) as well as integrating indigenous perspectives within criminology (Cuneen and Tauri, 2017). This is not to state that student perspectives means an easy dismissal of theories or negation of the expertise on the part of the educator (Barton et al., 2010) but shows how students can relate it to their own experiences and challenge received theories to heighten critical thinking.

Different strands of activist criminology and social movements can hold differing interpretations of the role for CJS, from a reorientation in its priorities or the removal of certain crimes from legislation and inmates from the prison estates such as non-violent drug offenders. Murji's (2020) description of sociologist, Stuart Hall, as a quintessential 'theorist-activist' who strategically drew off theories for applied interventions such as the death of young black men in police custody or the institutional racism of the police investigation of the Stephen Lawrence murder is one such example.

Some movements can call for outright abolition of prisons and the police while others can demand new extensions of criminalisation to powerful corporate and State actors or feminist movements can demand criminalisation of unrecognised forms of gender-based violence and abuse. Another such example would be environmental campaign groups that contribute to investigations of environmental crimes that receive very little attention from police (Nurse, 2017). Research can of course be activism and one of the most high-profile example would be the contribution by Phil Scraton into investigations on public order policing failings during the Hillsborough Football stadium disaster in 1989 that resulted in the deaths of 97 spectators (Scraton, 2016).

For this chapter, activist criminology means the use of critical criminological knowledge to engage with social movements, charities or NGOs outside of the CJS around an issue related to crime and criminal justice. Activist criminology can also counter an emphasis on criminal justice employment that encourages a student body to question this sector as an automatic destination after graduation. Activist criminology can reveal the regular praxis of subaltern groups that seek to intervene in the CJS and change laws. Critical criminologists should try and show students how they can engage in such forms of activism and to denaturalise the CJS as the sole career path for their students. It can involve merely demystifying the process of becoming a university researcher or lecturer. It can also include collaborating with NGOs such as Corporate Watch that sometimes offer internships and volunteering opportunities. It is worth asking activists and campaigners to discuss with students how they made that their career path or balance it separately from their employment. In the UK this can include groups such as Liberty, JENGbA or more direct action groups such as the Network for Police Monitoring, League against Cruel Sports and Extinction Rebellion or a number of other campaign groups of differing liberal to radical formations. Even if students do not get immediate instrumental benefit out of it, running legal aid sessions or legal observer training for protests can strengthen students' knowledge of the law and its application.

This of course is a process that will have to be undertaken in deep consultation with activist groups and NGOs. There must be a recognition that these groups can be under-resourced and that engagement with them can still be construed as lecturers working for their own benefit and advancing their careers or the Neoliberal University using this to co-opt such movements in giving a socially progressive gloss to the employability agenda. Outside of setting up a heterodoxical university system academics who may pursue this route should consider that NGOs will have just as much right to ask how they may benefit from such a relationship. This can include the chance to use University facilities to host events or to engage with researchers to contribute reports specifically for these organisations. Of course, this can also be further constricted by policies such as PREVENT which a later section will describe as proscribing a vast array of organisations as of interest to the counter-terrorist state apparatus (Gilmore, 2017). For now it may be worth demystifying how to become a campaigner or indeed helping students from disadvantaged and criminalised backgrounds engaging in their own grassroots activism.

However, despite the dialogic approach and critical pedagogy stemming from the work of Giroux and Freire (Barton et al., 2010), critical criminologists should not assume that all the students will become political radicals overnight or decide not to go into criminal justice. Students may take the critical lessons of activist criminology and carry these forward within their new professions in the CJS. Whether this is an ideal outcome for critical criminologists depends on which strain they write and teach in. For prison and police abolitionists it may not be seen as a victory but for critical criminologists who agitate for a radical reorientation in law it can be.

Trying to show students non-conventional career paths into activism may also help avoid the cynicism that can result from a long reflection on social harms and a CJS that is functionally not able to redress them or, in fact, exacerbates them. However, educators must in turn, be honest with their students about the harms that can result from engaging in activism, particularly for working class and/or BAME participants. This is another reason that legal aid training sessions should take place and is important for criminology departments that may draw their cohort from a more deprived and/or ethnically diverse mixture. The following section will present lessons from the 2010 UK anti-austerity protests and more recent legislative measures to criminalise certain modes of protest.

Activist criminology and activist criminalisation

The increase in tuition fees after the 2010 election of the Coalition and Liberal Democratic Government as part of its state austerity policies mobilised college (16-18 years old) and University students to engage in activism against this development. College and University students contributed some of the most high profile displays of protest during the anti-austerity movements from 2010-2015. There were visible confrontations between the police and these student groups including on-campus protests and arrests. Examples abounded during the anti-austerity protests throughout the early 2010s. These included the collective use of force such as during protests against tuition fees and the cancelling the of

Education Maintenance Allowance in 2010 resulted in   hundreds of college and university students placed into a police containment for several hours on Westminster Bridge in the middle of a freezing December night in 2010 (Addley, Gabbat and Dodd, 2010). The following year after the 2011 riots student protests organisers received letters from the police warning of their authorisation to use rubber bullets (Hughes, 2011). They have also been subject to targeted covert surveillance with the police attempting to recruit them as informers on the wider student movement (Evans and Khalili, 2013). There are indications that the latter is still a possibility for youth protest movements when in 2021, similar attempts were made to recruit a student "whistle-blower" connected to Black lives Matters protests (BBC News, 2021).

This kind of surveillance meant that protestors from anti-austerity to environmental and Palestinian and anti-racist protests faced the possibility of having their details recorded in databases dealing with the nebulous, and non-legally defined label of 'domestic extremism'. Sabir (2017) terms it as a broad definition that emphasises violence by non-state actors in pursuit of an ideological goal. Sabir cites instances of police training seminars marking peaceful direct action groups as domestic extremists in training materials with groups such as al-Qaeda. This all arose at the same time as revelations of undercover officers affiliated with anti-domestic extremism units were infiltrating of activist groups since the 1980s and fathering children with female activists under aliases and subsequently disappearing (Travis, Lewis and Wainwright, 2011). Since 2019 the Home Office declared it would stop using the term 'domestic extremism' after a QC-led review found significant deficiencies in its definition and application. Despite this police forces were still found to be concurrently using it while there were concerns on what new terminology could replace it such as counter-extremism experts speaking of the supposed threat of the "sectarian far left" (Netpol, 2019).

As well as the space for activist criminology to contribute knowledge focused on the public good being narrowed due to intensification of the neoliberal restructuring of the university, forms of student activism against the related raising of fees in the 2010s were met with extensive use of force and surveillance on the part of the police. On average the age of the student a critical criminologist would teach are from ages 18-21 not discounting mature students. There is a duty of care. This means that attempts to engender not only a critical consciousness but also the possibility of an activist one may result in students producing themselves as suspects for the State (Brodeur, 1983).

Activist criminologists should not shirk from telling their students the risk these types of activism present for them, not just to prepare them but to also further underline some of the main themes that critical criminology teaches about the State, social order and the CJS. This is not to discourage students from engaging in street based politics in the slightest but rather to keep in mind how activists face the possibility of criminalisation. It is for this reason that criminologists should encourage students to engage with professional legal aid training and other forms of support and solidarity for experienced activist groups or to offer this in their classes themselves. Several academics are already activists and have this experience. While not as oppositional as other forms of protest such as Extinction Rebellion,

many UK academics are members of the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) and have taken industrial action over restructuring of pensions since 2018 (Adams, 2022). As well as this has been campaigning on rates of pay, the increasing casualisation of precarious labour in the Neoliberal University, the increasing workload and unequal pay gaps amongst staff of colour, staff with disabilities and a gender pay gap has formed the basis of the UCU's 'Four Fights' campaign (UCU, 2022). As previously stated this should be in collaboration with organisations that put their stakeholders' needs above that of any university priorities.

However, it is possible that the HE sector in the UK may provide obstacles to secure collaboration between activist groups and training students. One example can be PREVENT. This is a counterterrorism strategy introduced under the Labour Government in 2003 that Conservative-led administrations continued. The stated aim was challenging "extremist ideology" (HM Government, 2011, 1: Gilmore 2017) and preventing those deemed vulnerable as becoming radicalised. It was particularly focused on al-Qaeda inspired terrorism. Throughout the civil service, education sector, social work, charity and criminal justice, practitioners were expected to be observant of signs of vulnerable stakeholders possibly falling prey to such extremist ideologies. Also, it made sure to identify and prevent funding for organisations and individuals who bear responsibility for spreading such ideologies. Among the ideologies that PREVENT was to challenge were 'extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are also part of terrorist ideology' (HM Government, 2011, 6). Universities through their conferences and speakers as well as student societies were expected to maintain a duty of care to students and avoid inviting such figures on to campus. Of particular concern were certain universities and colleges that held a high number of Muslim students. Universities UK (UUK), the main umbrella organisation of the UK HE Sector, have enthusiastically taken this up reiterating the need to balance student care with maintaining academic freedom of speech. UUK states that different universities had different levels of "protocol" for "managing potentially controversial speakers" (HM Government, 2011, 73). The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills gave "intelligence briefings" to over 40 English universities it deemed at risk of radicalisation (HM Government, 2011, 74). The report goes on to state that some of these universities now have a dedicated police officer to advise them on these matters. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act of 2015 established the "Prevent Duty" (Massoumi, 2021) which included law enforcement advisement, risk assessments of speakers and monitoring. Massoumi (2021) has described PREVENT as an exercise in "channelling" where certain Muslim religious charities are positioned as mainstream largely due to their lack of opposition to Western military intervention in predominantly Muslim countries.

This raises issues about the potential monitoring of Muslim students but the police also ascribed domestic extremism to a wide range of activist groups as well as terrorist organisations that actively sought multiple civilian casualties. An attempt to divert students from the CJS can instead result in more surveillance and social control in an example of 'net-widening' (Cohen, 1985). The Home Office already had to step in and clarify that the PREVENT duty did not apply to anti-fracking campaigners after a secondary school and councillors in North Yorkshire suggested as much (Townsend and Cobain, 2016).

Recent legislation has also threatened to further criminalise protest through force as opposed to surveillance. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill includes provisions for enhanced police and sentencing powers. The Bill's progress is occurring in the course of high profile debates about the civil disobedient actions of environmental groups Extinction Rebellion and Insulate Britain as well as the tearing down of a statue of merchant and 'philanthropist' Edward Colston in Bristol by Black Lives Matters protesters due to the fact that much of his wealth was gained through the slave trade. The Bill explained that the enhancement of powers are necessary due to changing tactics on the part of protesters such as gluing themselves to vehicles and buildings, blocking bridges and entrances to Parliament and newspaper printers. For this stated reason the Bill allows police to place 'necessary conditions' on stationary assemblies whereas before these only existed for public processions and this increases the maximum sentences for breaching these conditions. It also increases the circumstances in which police can take action to limit the noise a protest makes if it has a 'detrimental impact' on people in the vicinity or disrupts an organisations day to day affairs (Zander, 2021, 9). It has also suggested turning the charge of Public Nuisance into a statutory offence as opposed to common law with a maximum penalty of ten years. 'Public Nuisance' can range from a gamut of harms from death all the way to 'serious annoyance, serious inconvenience' (Zander, 2021, 9). There are provisions for giving the criminal courts sufficient sentencing powers for criminal damage to a memorial so that they can consider all the impacts and removes the money limit for summary trial. This can include flowers and wreaths laid at memorials such as the Cenotaph (Zander, 2021). The main participants identified as pulling down the Colston statue were recently acquitted of all charges in a jury trial which puts the sustainability of this new provision into doubt (BBC News, 2022). This is occurring in the context of a culture war where movements such as Black Lives Matters and their demands that British public history and memorials recognise the damaging legacy of Empire and slavery as well as continuing structural racism face regular accusations of trying to "rewrite" British history (Grylls, 2021).

Conclusion

Activist criminology is an important paradigm that works hand in hand with critical criminology. Focusing on the UK HE sector, this chapter has outlined how the challenges of embedding activist criminology may experience obstacles in the Neoliberal University. It has highlighted how activist criminologists must counteract dominant narratives on the essential career paths for criminology students. It also counsels the need for ethical considerations, highlighting to students the criminalisation of protests and activism against neoliberalism and other manifestations of State-centred harm. The chapter argues that forming links with activist organisations can be good to prepare students for activism while keeping in mind the demands and workload these organisations may already experience. Despite this, as Jackson (2020) recommends for ethnography, this chapter argues that even just allowing students to hear the perspectives of the policed can help them gain an understanding of the law from below.

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