

**Combating Hate Crime:  
How Can Academics Escape Their  
Ivory Towers and Make a Difference  
in the 'Real World'?**

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# Agenda for Today

- How do hate crime academics view their role?
  - ‘Pure scholars’, activists or ‘public’ academics?
- Existing Endeavours
- Cultural ‘clashes’ with practitioners
- Examples of successful interventions
- Connecting impact, policy and research: some ideas

# Hate Crime Academics: What is Their Role?

- Is it to undertake excellent research that academics then hand over to others to effect change?
- *Or are academics:*
  - Scholars (with an eye on the REF impact agenda)?
  - Activists (with an eye on the scholarly agenda)?
  - Public criminologists?
- How do academics juggle their commitments?

# Differing Perspectives: Academic Activism

*Criminological and sociological research can no longer afford to be merely tokenistic but should work to effect change while also inspiring others to think critically, work through unequal social processes, engage with socio-political issues, and not be deterred from working on challenging subjects or in challenging environments*

Keighley, 2024: 4

*Being an activist makes ... makes generating knowledge more difficult because ... it is difficult to properly weigh evidence and arguments when one is also emotionally committed ... to realizing a substantive political goal, if the evidence and arguments bear on, or are connected to, that goal.*

*And being an activist makes ... teaching more difficult because it may undermine the quality of teaching and the teacher's credibility, at least if what the teacher teaches about is related to their activism.*

Rossi, 2023

# Differing Perspectives: Academic Activism



# Differing Perspectives: Public Criminology

Some academics view public criminologists as:

*'not much more than administrative criminologists, voodoo criminologists, official criminologists, positivists and empiricists ... lickspittles and lackeys'.*

Rock (2014: 424)



# Hate Crime Academics: What is Their Role?

- Existing endeavours:
  - Independent advisory groups
  - Hate crime scrutiny panels
  - Trustee work with charities
  - Advisory group membership
  - Advisors on diversity & inclusion work
  - Media work
- International Network for Hate Studies/British Society of Criminology Hate Crime Network



# Problems, Problems ...

- History of difficult relations between academics and the police
  - Mid-1980s: relationship ‘confrontational’, with police feeling under ‘attack’ from academics they felt were deliberately undermining them (Giannasi, 2014)
  - Stanko (2007: 215)
    - *Academics described the world of practitioners as the ‘dark side’ while within the police: ‘genuine distrust and disbelief that anyone who has not commanded in a uniform capacity has anything truly to offer’*





# Cutting the Waffle

*I got into the lift on the twelfth floor alone, pushed the button for the ground floor, and as the doors began to close there was a shout for me to hold the lift. As the doors reopened DAC Grieve stepped in ...*

*As the doors closed I distinctly remember him informing me that the lift took approximately 30 seconds to get to the ground floor, and it would be helpful if I could use that time to tell him the 'headlines' from my research ... that day highlighted the importance of getting the point across, and was certainly a lesson in cutting out unnecessary waffle.*

Hall, 2014: 17

# Problems, Problems ...

- Issues caused by academic performance indicators
  - Which types of publication are the most useful?
- Working to different timelines/timeframes?
- Conflict within the academy
  - Which side are you on?
- Concerns and fears
  - public engagement
  - media

# Public Criminology: Reaching Beyond the Ivory Towers

REVISITING THE HARMS OF HATE



# Scholars: Forward to the Barricades!

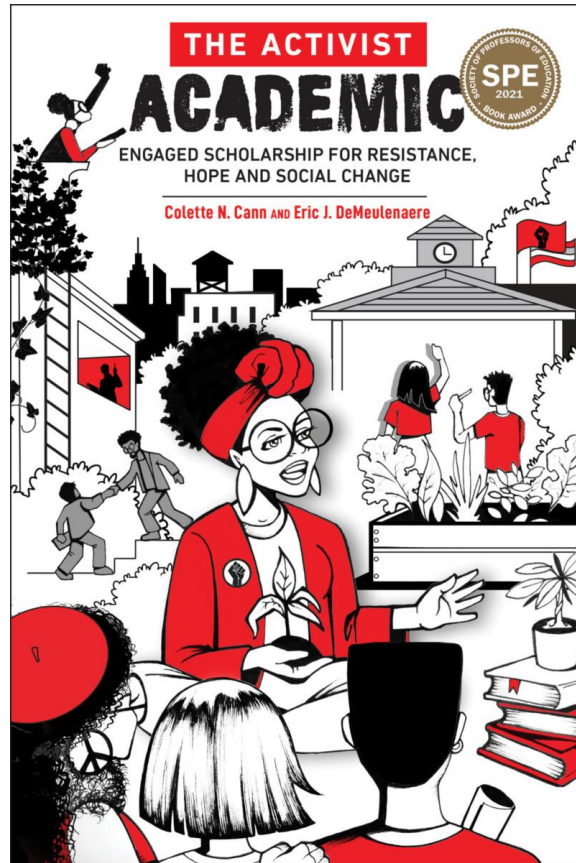
*Some of the most interesting approaches to contemporary social, economic, cultural and political problems are being developed in non-state settings. Such approaches can sometimes be more daring and creative than those pursued by large-scale, centralised, and status quo-oriented political and corporate institutions.*

Chalcraft, 2017





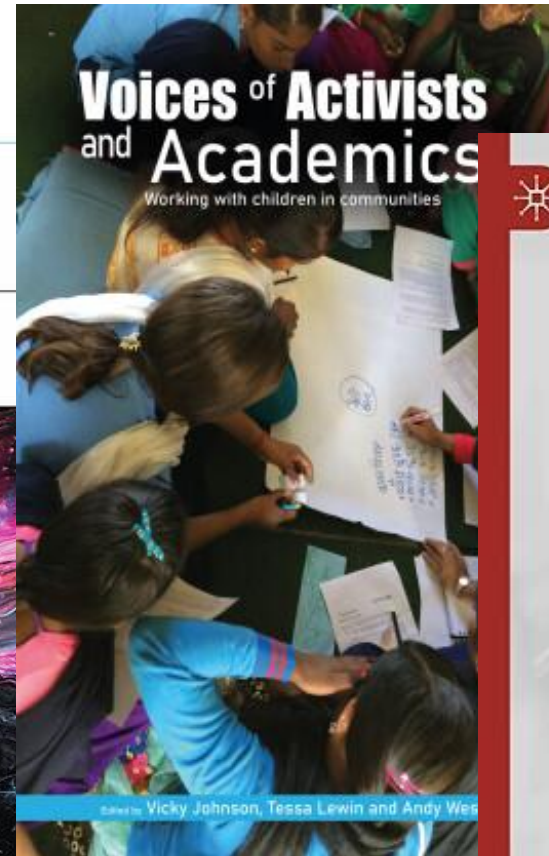
# Scholars: Forward to the Barricades!



**Reimagining Academic Activism**

Learning from Feminist Anti-Violence Activists

BY H WEATHERALL



# Finding a Way Forward

- Academics should effect change in ways they feel comfortable with
- Reaching out is a ‘two-way street’
  - Academia is the ‘real world’ too
- Scholars need to deliver outputs in ways that are relevant to practitioners
- Practitioners must be open-minded enough to take on board research findings
- Informal and formal networks should be established
- Key stakeholders should be involved throughout the research process
  - supported by strong leadership that guarantees organisational buy-in
- Long-term commitment needs to be demonstrated



# Example: Coalition Against Hate Crime, Ireland





## A Final Thought ...

*It's hard work, it's not easy, but it's also good fun, it's exciting at times. And at other times it's really sad, sometimes I don't sleep at nights because I'm panicking about it and that's not healthy.*

*But at the end of the day you either believe in what you're doing and just get on with it, or don't bother.*

**Sylvia Lancaster, 2014**

