

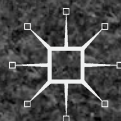
Critical Criminological Perspectives

# Zemiology

Reconnecting Crime and Social Harm



Edited by  
Avi Boukli and Justin Kotzé



# Critical Criminological Perspectives

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Avi Boukli · Justin Kotzé  
Editors

# Zemiology

Reconnecting Crime and Social Harm

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*To those who cross borders*

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# Introduction

Avi Boukli and Justin Kotzé

The emergence of the zemiological movement during the late 1990s (Pemberton 2016) marked a crucial moment for scholars who sought to move beyond the boundaries of the mainstream criminological canon. Complete with a new vocabulary and the discursive space to articulate a multiplicity of harms, which lay outside the conventional discourse of crime, of criminality and criminalisation, areas of harm generation became legitimate focal concerns (Tombs, Chapter ‘[For Pragmatism and Politics: Crime, Social Harm and Zemiology](#)’, this volume; Hillyard and Tombs 2017). Some years later, the landmark edited collection *Beyond Criminology: Taking Harm Seriously* (Hillyard et al. 2004) was published. Ostensibly grounded upon the Greek term *zemia*, *Beyond Criminology* became the basis upon which future zemiological scholarship would build. To further expand the field, this introduction

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briefly attempts a clearer—than has hitherto been offered—delineation of *zemia*, the organising concept around which *zemiology* is built. Subsequently, we make a case for the organising theme of this current volume; namely, a re-examination of the relationship between both crime and harm, and criminology and *zemiology*.

As a word originating from Ancient Greece, *zemia* carries numerous connotations. Rather than simply meaning ‘harm’, as is so often intimated, the word actually denotes, among other things, loss, damage as well as various forms of punishment of deviant and/or legal transgressions (Allen 2000; Boukli 2017). To operationalise this term further, disentangling the concept from its identification and coded equivalence with social harm is necessary. This is achieved by excavating from historical discourses of *zemia* a deeper range of imbedded meanings. An initial analytical reading reveals that *zemia* can be approached in at least four different ways (see also Boukli 2019, forthcoming):

1. It can be taken to denote a communicative idea, thought, feeling or emotion.
2. Its meaning may be understood in relation to performative speech acts conveying wear, decay, attrition, wastage, lack, loss, disadvantage, bodily harm, damage, disaster, spoiling and debt.
3. It may be seen as being directly connected to criminal jurisprudence.
4. It may be seen as being directly connected to the practice or institution of punishment of (a) crimes; and (b) deviant transgressions, as well as to informal ‘punishment’ in a less literal sense.

Immediately it becomes strikingly clear that the English word ‘harm’ is not as conspicuously ambiguous as ‘*zemia*’.

Nevertheless, even with this ambiguity, a few points of clarity can be teased out. For instance, aligned with what is conveyed in approach two above, *zemia*, according to the Greek Neohellenic Lexicon by Aulos, denotes not only damage but also financial loss or deficit due to a ‘wearing down’ or ‘decline’ of some kind. Similarly, Aristotle distinguishes between *kerdos* (gain) and *zemia* (loss), and, in doing so, identifies the mean between these two poles as *dikaion* (the just) (Balot 2001; Hardie 1980). To transgress this mean, thus, constitutes injustice in as much as

by ‘trying to get or take more than one’s share’ one breaches an external standard of distributive fairness (Balot 2001, 27). In this context then, Aristotle asserts that gaining (*kerdainein*) more than one’s own share while causing another to have less (*elatto*) than before, and thereby suffering a loss (*zemiousthai*), is to commit an injustice (Balot 2001). This is both contemporarily important and particularly pertinent considering our current socio-economic and politico-cultural immersion within an inherently exploitative capitalist system (Fisher 2009; Miéville 2015). Within a capitalist system increasingly saturated with immense inequality, requiring only twenty percent of the global population to perform all the necessary functions to ensure its continuation (Žižek 2011), and with just one percent of the global population owning more wealth than the other ninety nine percent (Hardoon 2017), there is certainly a great deal of *kerdainein* at the expense of those suffering *zemia* (*zemiousthai*).

As alluded to in points three and four above, *zemia* is but one of a number of words utilised in the golden age, fifth century BCE, of Athens to denote punishment (Plato 2007; Allen 2000). Collectively, *zemia* along with a wider vocabulary that stood for certain types of punishment encapsulated the diverse conceptualisations, rationale and practice of punishment (Allen 2000; Solon 2002; Plato 2007). *Zemia* is also frequently taken to mean ‘make worse’ as well as to denote ‘hurt’. However, the two are not necessarily contingent upon each other, in that the infliction of the latter does not automatically determine the former as an outcome.

Indeed, we may hurt someone without making them worse. For instance, punishment could take the remedial form of treatment, which may actually do some good (e.g. by preventing drunk driving). That is, if *zemia* is used in this latter sense, it is inflicted upon someone in order to achieve an arguably beneficial outcome (Cross and Woolzley 1994). It is perhaps for this reason that Plato argues for the utilitarian efficacy of *zemia* (in the context of punishment) by highlighting its seemingly reformatory and preventative utility (Saunders 1991). Briefly stated, the fundamental upshot is that the word *zemia* should be understood to contain a broad range of meanings rather than simply pertaining to contemporary notions of social harm. Accordingly, it cannot, nor should it, be trimmed of its numerous connotations.

Reflecting this broader reading of the meaning of *zemia*, the current book explores the relationship between crime and harm, and between criminology and *zemiology*. Through various contributions, the book brings together and analyses various structurally induced harms and the harms endured and perpetrated by those victimised by the capitalist system and its hegemonic vicissitudes. The connecting thread running through the book is thus an effort to help rethink the relationship between systemic or structural and interpersonal forms of crime and harm. The current volume does this by interweaving crucial components of *zemiology* with critical voices in criminology, and with an empirically grounded application of *zemia*, social harm and crime.

*Zemiology* is seen here as both a response to mainstream administrative criminology and an attempt to reiterate key priorities for social justice. Indeed, through its fresh and invaluable perspective, *zemiology* both compliments and strengthens the workings of critical criminology, ‘in the sense of being able to more fully grasp the nature and significance of current world transformations and their effects on various aspects of contemporary social meaning’ (Hil and Robertson 2003, 97). However, so far abstract understandings of *zemia* as social harm have served to limit the range of relevant debates and fall short of providing a clear vision that would facilitate a different vocabulary. A vocabulary that takes us beyond simple discourses of duality, opposition and alternatives, beyond the confines of criminal law and the cultures of crime control, away from targeting certain populations through regulation and discipline. By training its analytical and empirical lens upon social injury, caused by nation states, organisations, corporations and individuals, this volume takes the opportunity to reconsider the challenging relationship between concrete applications of *zemia* and diverse ways of thinking about harm. At its core is the idea that *zemiology* can help reprioritise harms in the social justice system and push for interpersonal, community and structural actions.

Based on the various contributions to this volume, *zemiology* *seems* to be emerging in four discernible ways: (a) in direct opposition to criminology, opposing the straightjacket imposed by ‘crime’ and the criminal justice system, so that the recalibrated focus remains on diverse harms that people experience ‘from the cradle to the grave’ (Hillyard et al. 2004, 1); (b) in



parallel to but separate from criminology, animating a rigorous exploration of the concept of harm, which impels a normative anchorage of harm analogous to the normative anchorage of crime in criminology; (c) working in tandem with criminology, and finding ways to recalibrate the shared foci; (d) dismantling the barriers between crime and harm, and between criminology and zemiology.

## Structure and Content

This book is comprised of two parts. Part 1 explores the relationship between crime and harm and between criminology and zemiology. Here the current tendency to separate the study of crime and harm, alongside the disciplines ostensibly charged with their investigation, is questioned and challenged. Impetus is thus provided for movement beyond the contemporary discourse of duality, opposition and alternatives. Part 2 begins to put this impetus to work. The intersections of crime and harm are explored through various lenses, including those trained on war and gendered violence; sexuality and gender; fashion counterfeiting; and the harms of the service economy.

Starting with the first part of the book Chapter ‘[For Pragmatism and Politics: Crime, Social Harm and Zemiology](#)’, by Steve Tombs, sets off the discussion by teasing out some critical points that emerged from the responses to *Beyond Criminology* and posits a number of theoretical differences between critical criminology, social harm and zemiology. In Chapter ‘[Beyond ‘Criminology vs. Zemiology’: Reconciling Crime with Social Harm](#)’ Lynne Copson seeks to reconcile criminology and zemiology, not by collapsing the one perspective into the other, but by identifying some shared goals towards meaningful change. Chapters ‘[Harm: A Substitute for Crime or Central to It?](#)’ and ‘[Criminology or Zemiology? Yes, Please! On the Refusal of Choice between False Alternatives](#)’ then follow on from these. Firstly, Letizia Paoli and Victoria Greenfield present a solid attempt to operationalize ‘harm’ without abandoning criminology through the creation of a harm assessment framework. Then, in Chapter ‘[Criminology or Zemiology? Yes, Please! On the Refusal of Choice between False Alternatives](#)’, Justin

Kotzé questions the efficacy of the current drive to force an artificial wedge between criminology and zemiology and between the study of crime and harm based upon partial interpretations of zemia. In Chapter ‘[Big Trouble or Little Evils: The Ideological Struggle Over the Concept of Harm](#)’ Steve Hall and Simon Winlow explore, through a transcendental materialist lens, criminogenic and zemiogenic tendencies that are diffused throughout the social order, and unveil how dominant ideology operates at the core of criminalisation processes, compelling us to regard specific harms as the ‘price of freedom’.

The second part of the book begins with Chapter ‘[Whose Harm Counts? Exploring the Intersections of War and Gendered Violence\(s\)](#)’ within which Sandra Walklate explores the intersections of war and gendered violence and poses a set of crucial questions for both criminology and zemiology. Picking up these insights on gender, Avi Boukli and Flora Renz, in Chapter ‘[Gender Murder: Anti-Trans Rhetoric, Zemia, and Telemorphosis](#)’, draw on international audiovisual examples of harm against trans people and utilise the concept of zemia to investigate what a more just future could look like. In Chapter ‘[A Doubling of the Offence? ‘Extreme’ Pornography and Cultural Harm](#)’, Alex Dymock offers a critical reading of current legislative efforts to target so-called ‘extreme’ pornography through the concept of cultural harm. Chapter ‘[Zemiology at the Border](#)’ by Victoria Canning continues the discussion by focusing on the harms of asylum procedures, border controls and ‘crimmigration’, in order to highlight new directions for zemiology. Chapter ‘[Green Criminology, Zemiology, and Comparative and Inter-relational Justice in the Anthropocene Era](#)’ then builds on these contributions, with Avi Brisman and Nigel South exploring green criminology and the potential of mobilising a zemiological approach to reconsider the adverse human impacts on the environment. Focusing on the fashion industry, Jo Large in Chapter ‘[Spot the Fashion Victim\(s\): The Importance of Rethinking Harm within the Context of Fashion Counterfeiting](#)’ challenges the traditional criminological boundaries by exploring diverse notions of harm, and, in doing so, further expands the applicability of a zemiological lens. From the fashion industry, Anthony Lloyd, in Chapter ‘[Serving Up Harm: Systemic Violence, Transitions to Adulthood and the Service Economy](#)’, leads the thread to the service economy and offers a recalibrated focus on the

systemic and subjective harms experienced by those in late capitalist service economy jobs. Finally, Chapter ‘[Harm and Transforming Rehabilitation](#)’ by David Temple concludes this part, and the book as a whole, by noting how the privatisation of probation in England and Wales can be critically considered within a collaborative zemiological framework.

The discussions in these chapters can only scratch the surface of these issues and give a glimpse of the powerful, exploratory and provocative undercurrents that shape this field, while offering a handful of examples of what becomes possible when critical criminology and zemiological scholarship are brought together. It is hoped that collectively this volume has made some strides towards reconsidering the relationship between crime and harm and, thus, arresting the deep running tensions between criminology and zemiology. The work contained herein will no doubt provoke reinvigorated debates within the academic community. However, in doing so, we hope it will encourage a timely reconsideration of prevailing trends in both academic thought and policy.

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# Part I

## Reconsidering Crime and Social Harm



# For Pragmatism and Politics: Crime, Social Harm and Zemiology

Steve Tombs

## Introduction

In the late 1990s, a group of academics began a series of conversations about how a concept of social harm could be more progressively developed as an alternative to crime. It is at once important to emphasise that the motivations, or routes, via which individuals joined these conversations were various. Some were pursuing long-standing struggles to operationalise a concept of crime in their respective areas of work. Others approached this enterprise on the basis of a concern with the marked expansion of criminology as a discipline and the concomitant increase in the number of degree courses in British and Irish universities, while older subjects, such as social policy and sociology, were declining. Others still felt that the notion of social harm could be developed at the margins of criminology, through challenging the discursive power of concepts of crime, 'criminal' and 'criminal justice'. But for some, given the integral nature of these latter

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concepts to the discipline of criminology itself, any sustained focus on social harm could only be achieved within a new and separate discipline, soon-to-be-named ‘zemiology’.

The most tangible outcome of these conversations was an edited collection, *Beyond Criminology: Taking Harm Seriously* (Hillyard et al. 2004). The range of areas covered in, and the diversity of disciplines contributing to, the edited collection was notable. *Beyond Criminology* was an eclectic, somewhat contradictory work reflecting such a wide variety of contributors, theoretical positions, and levels and objects of analysis. It should also be noted that the content—and indeed the title—of the book was deliberately provocative, as well as indicating arguments which were bold (far too bold, as some might say): in other words, many of the book’s contributions were couched within the frame not simply of taking social harm seriously, but in terms of abandoning criminology for a new discipline, zemiology. Yet, we were clear within the book that the shift to social harm from criminology was not one endorsed by all of the authors, nor indeed editors. The book was *designed to generate debate*—and indeed it has done so (Hillyard and Tombs 2017).

This chapter returns to some of the issues raised in and by *Beyond Criminology*, albeit from a personal standpoint. I embraced some notion of social harm, and continue to do so, because it allows me to document empirically, to analyse and to theorise forms of corporate activity for which criminology has historically struggled to account. That said, it remains unclear what is meant by a social harm approach. Moreover, is this synonymous with a zemiological approach? If not, what is the latter? And, however one answers these previous questions, must one be a critical criminologist *or* someone utilising a social harm approach *or* a zemiologist? If so, or indeed if not—to what ends?

## From Crime to Social Harm

I came to the social harm conversation through my long-standing academic and campaigning interest in corporate crime. More specifically, workplace death, injury and illness are phenomena which are

undoubtedly equated with a great deal of harm, harm with economic, physical, financial, emotional, and psychological dimensions.

Notwithstanding that these harms obviously represented a significant social problem, in an attempt to pursue this work within and around the discipline of criminology, I had long struggled to represent these as a *crime* problem, and in so doing had engaged in a number of (entirely unoriginal) strategies, which included, but were not restricted to:

- expanding the use of the term crime to cover violations of non-criminal law (Pearce and Tombs 1998);
- using Sutherland's distinction between what is punished and what is punishable to expand the ambit of 'crime' and thus criminology (Tombs and Whyte 2009);
- reconstructing specific incidents and groups of incidents to indicate how the essential ingredients of 'real' crime were clearly present therein (Pearce and Tombs 2012), and thus making invisible crimes visible (Tombs 1999);
- challenging and reconstructing some of the assumptions within popular, political, academic and legal constructions of 'real' crime either to indicate how these were logically or conceptually unsustainable, or could in fact be applied to corporate activity which produces death, injury and illness or, indeed, both (Tombs 2007).

In these ways, and through what felt like a series of intellectual gymnastics, I was constantly seeking to legitimate the area of harm-producing social life with which I was concerned as the proper stuff for criminology and, indeed, for the Criminal Justice System (CJS). At the same time, at least in the latter context, we sought to be cognizant of the contradictions and dangers of so doing (see Alvesalo and Tombs 2002), and always to challenge the 'illusions of law' (Tombs 2004). In these contexts, the idea of 'social harm' felt liberating, and had progressive potential.

In not dissimilar ways, contributors to *Beyond Criminology*, and those working in a similar vein since its publication, minimally urged that we go at least beyond 'crime' if not beyond criminology. This might be a relatively short or somewhat long journey, and I wish here to indicate



the range of intellectual distance that a commitment to going ‘beyond’ might, and does, take us—some of which guided the ‘intellectual gymnastics’ to which I have summarised in bullet-points above. I wish here to suggest several ways in which criminologists can or do go ‘beyond’ crime and criminology, albeit that these are certainly not mutually exclusive.

One most obvious resort to moving beyond crime is to focus upon violations of law other than the criminal law. Without entering into a definitional debate here regarding the appropriate use of the term ‘crime’ (one which has been tirelessly rehearsed since the exchanges between Sutherland and Tappan over seventy years ago), it has become common-place to use the term ‘crime’ to encompass violations of law other than criminal law, notably civil, administrative and regulatory law (Pearce and Tombs 1998). Indeed, if perhaps more latterly, ‘crime’ has also been used to refer to violations of soft law such as ‘standards’ or ‘codes of conduct’ (typically as these apply to corporate actors, not least in their multinational forms; Bittle and Snider 2013). Such efforts have considerable legitimacy, at least in critical criminological circles.

Moving slightly further are those who wish to embrace within their intellectual ambit those harms which are *punishable* but not *punished*. This commitment can, again, be traced back notably to the work of Edwin Sutherland, who sought to bring to centre-stage those acts and omissions by corporations and their senior executives which could and should in principle be incorporated within criminal justice processes and within the discipline of criminology—but which remain at best relatively marginal, at worst absent. Thus, in terms of the CJS, he argued that most such violations of law remained non-criminalised, whilst his work during the 1940s was a ‘call to arms’ to criminologists to focus not simply on the crimes and incivilities of the relatively powerless, but equally to shift their gaze upwards, to focus on the crimes committed by the powerful, within corporate contexts (Tombs and Whyte 2009).

A somewhat different approach to incorporating harms within the criminological purview is represented by long-standing and heterogeneous attempts to focus upon the harms produced by the activities of the CJS itself or, indeed, in a related variation, upon the harms associated with non-criminalisation, that is, the omissions of the CJS.

The latter is increasingly signalled by the use of the phrase ‘crime *and harm*’ (Corteen et al. 2016; Quality Assurance Agency 2014). Somewhat differently, it involves substituting the term ‘social harm’ for crime completely to encompass the legal and illegal (Ruggiero 2015), or via an implicit or explicit reference to immorality, that is, that which is self-evidently harmful if not proscribed by law (Monaghan and Prideaux 2016). The general aim of such efforts is to render invisible crimes visible (typified in Davies et al. 2014), or to name ‘new’ forms of crime—notable examples here being the emergence of hate- (Jenness and Grattet 2004) and eco- (Ellefsen et al. 2012) crimes. Characterising much of what have become ‘critical criminologies’, the over-arching focus tends to be on the harms associated with a variety of processes of non/criminalisation, usually in ways which emphasise the maintenance or exacerbation of existing structures of power, whether these be viewed through the lens of class, gender and/or sexuality, ethnicity and race, age or, indeed, via some form of intersectionality. Generally, such attempts are couched in a version of equity or social justice or both, albeit the bases for either or both claims vary significantly, and may be well or barely articulated.

A further, distinct approach to embracing the production of ‘harm’ within criminology has been a focus upon the generation of harms through legitimate markets which, through the goods or services produced therein, are associated with consequences resembling those produced through acts or omissions which are in fact criminalised. Here, I have particularly in mind the edited collections of Hills (1987), Freudenberg (2014), and Passas and Goodwin (2004) as exemplars. Each of these collections describes a series of markets—created and maintained by the state, not least through law—for essentially legal products despite the fact that they are either designed to, or necessarily generate in their use, wide scale social harms, including, typically, agro-chemicals, arms, food, gambling, pharmaceuticals and tobacco (see also Tombs and Hillyard 2004, 44–51).

To be clear, to say that the production, distribution and sale of these goods are legal is not to claim that criminal law in particular, and legal regulation in general, does not intervene in such markets. If we take the international arms trade, for example, it is clear that the market in

such goods is regulated by international agreements and national states themselves. Moreover, while these are market regulations, it is also clear that this is a context in which criminal law, both nationally and internationally, can and occasionally does intervene—whether this is in the case of bribery and/or corruption to secure contracts, or as a result of abuse of internationally agreed conventions which results in actual or potential violations of international human rights standards. So this is not a sphere from which law, let alone criminal law, is absent—yet it is a sphere which is relatively far removed from the concerns of much of what passes for criminology.

## From Social Harm to Zemiology?

By the point reached at the end of the previous section, the journey from crime to social harm has become a lengthy and significant one—albeit each of the specific steps ‘beyond’ criminology are, I suspect, quite familiar to readers. And, I would go further: each seems to me to be a perfectly defensible, plausible and indeed productive way in which we can move from ‘crime’ to ‘social harm’. But for some, not least some of the contributors to *Beyond Criminology*, the journey should not and does not stop here.

By way of shorthand, each of the above shifts revolves around the issues of the existence or level of criminalisation or non-criminalisation. But *Beyond Criminology* encompassed a series of harms associated with phenomena far from criminological and criminal justice agendas—including poverty, childhood, inequality, heterosexism, migration, gender, unemployment—and it is here I think that a new discipline of zemiology, the study of social harms *per se*, was being broached, however unconsciously in some specific cases. This is not to deny that many of these phenomena are relevant in understanding the definition and distribution of ‘crime’ and ‘criminalisation’, but it *is* to emphasise that many of the considerations around these in *Beyond Criminology* were not much or even at all about such issues. Criminology had, effectively, been abandoned.

By way of illustration of the distinction being drawn here, a useful reference point is some data which Paddy Hillyard and I recently presented on a range of social harms (Hillyard and Tombs 2017). Alongside data on work-related deaths and food poisoning, we addressed what are rather prosaically labelled 'Excess Winter Deaths'. Each year, the UK's Office for National Statistics calculates the number of such deaths—namely, the additional number of deaths, in England and Wales, occurring from December to March compared with the average number of deaths occurring in the preceding and following four month periods. The most recently (November 2015) published figure estimates 43,900 such deaths occurred in 2014/15, the highest number since 1999/2000. Most of these (36,000) occurred among those 75 and over, with 7700 deaths of people aged under 75 (Office for National Statistics 2015).

Now, both work-related deaths and deaths associated with food poisoning have proximate relationships to 'crime', criminalisation and criminal justice processes, in that they are regulated by criminal law, are subject to enforcement (albeit by regulatory bodies rather than, for the most part, police forces) and in any one year attract a number of criminal prosecutions; moreover, the offences so prosecuted may revolve around intent or negligence or both, thus meeting standards of guilt in criminal law. Finally, it is worth noting that there are existent, if small, literatures around each in criminology.

Excess winter deaths are quite distinct in all of these respects. These are not people killed by the cold *per se*—countries with very low winter temperatures in Scandinavia and Northern Europe have very low rates of such deaths. Instead, most deaths result from lack of access to affordable heating, or suitably insulated, warm and dry accommodation, or most likely both (Office for National Statistics 2015). In other words, their routine occurrence is a product of generations of decisions, actions and omissions regarding housing, energy, welfare and social services, healthcare and probably pensions policy, at the very least. Moreover, while each occurrence—a death—is an event, this event can only be understood in the context of the combination of a series of long-term *processes*. Little or none of these characteristics, and their inter-relationships, of what clearly amounts to a significant form of social

harm, is *or can be* at all explicable via reference to criminal law—albeit some are clearly affected by regulatory law, not least in the creation then maintenance through and by states of complex markets in energy supply as well as in the regulation of some aspects of private provision of housing, some welfare services and pension provision.

Thus, harms such as excess winter deaths are nowhere near the terrain of crime, nor mainstream criminology, nor encountered on the journey from ‘crime’ to ‘social harm’ as sketched out above. They are neither explicable nor preventable through criminal law, which seeks to view or reduce harm to intention, to the inter-personal, to one or a series of discrete events, to victim-offender relationships which have some proximity in time and space (Hillyard and Tombs 2017). A focus on excess winter deaths takes us far beyond crime, criminalisation and criminal justice, far from criminal law and the orbit of mainstream criminology.

It is at this point that it seems to me the epistemological and ontological break with criminology is made—albeit a break that I have only illustrated rather than attempted to theorise. And it is here at which the terrain is crossed into a new discipline. Of course, whether this discipline can be something called ‘zemiology’ is a moot point. I shall return to that question shortly. But, for now, the above is enough to outline a claim, at least, that zemiology is or should be seen as something distinct from a ‘social harm’ perspective or approach—a claim never clearly asserted let alone established in *Beyond Criminology* nor, indeed, in some of the work which has followed and which has explicitly sought to develop the epistemological and ontological terrain very sketchily suggested in parts of that text.

The lacunae, tensions and indeed disagreements across the contributions to *Beyond Criminology* may do much to explain why an increasing number of criminological texts make explicit reference to the term ‘zemiology’ as simply synonymous with ‘social harm’—the latter being a concept which has long been part of criminology, albeit one which has recently received greater attention (Muncie 2013). Hence, the term zemiology has been happily embraced by some in the discipline as ‘The branch of criminology studying the social harm caused by actions’ (Gooch and Williams 2007, 391) rather than the impetus for a separate discipline. The first two editions of *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology* (2001, 2006) each had entries for ‘Social Harm’, albeit neither contained

any reference to the work associated with editors nor contributors to *Beyond Criminology*, a fact which changed in the third edition with an expanded definition of ‘Social Harm’ which appeared therein. That most recent edition also contained an entry for ‘Zemiology’, which reads thus: ‘See: Social harm’ (McLaughlin and Muncie 2013, 496). More generally, the embrace of ‘social harm’ has been identified in the context of ‘critical’ criminology. For example, the second edition of *Introduction to Criminological Theory* by Hopkins Burke contains the section ‘Critical Criminology and the Challenge of Zemiology’, which makes no references to the origins of or debates around the term, but simply begins, ‘A significant and fast expanding contemporary variant of critical criminology has been Zemiology or the study of social harm’ (Hopkins Burke 2005, 179; see also Hil and Robertson 2003). Tim Newburn’s *Criminology* includes ‘Zemiology’ as a short sub-section within a chapter constituting a whistle-stop tour of ‘Radical and critical criminology’ (Newburn 2007, 258).

Such claims merely reproduce, perhaps exacerbate, the contradictions, confusions and disagreements that were present in *Beyond Criminology*. It is absolutely clear that in that collection, there was neither agreement on abandoning criminology for zemiology, nor what this might entail or might look like, nor on the relationship between criminology, zemiology and a focus on ‘social harm’. For example Paddy Hillyard and myself proposed at least the consideration of abandoning the discipline in favour of zemiology—even though we took different positions on this consideration. For Paddy, I am fairly clear that he viewed the study of social harms as an independent set of phenomena, whatever their relationships to crime, criminal justice or criminology—that is, as a new, if not ‘replacement’, discourse, to be conducted within the rubric of zemiology. My own position, as reflected in my work if not the statements of social harm and zemiology, has been much more ambivalent—a point discussed earlier and to which I shall return briefly, below.

If at best we set out some of the possible epistemological, theoretical and substantive commitments of zemiology as an alternative discipline, we did not attempt to set out in detail what that discipline might look like—a point which has been rehearsed in critical commentaries of *Beyond Criminology*. Thus, for example, Loader and Sparks (2011) argue that we spend too long critiquing criminology and not enough