One Step Forwards, Two Steps Backwards? Difficulties and Dilemmas with Connecting Hate Crime Policy and Research¹

Jon Garland²

Abstract
This article will assess the difficulties and misunderstandings that prevent hate crime academics and practitioners from working together more productively. It will be argued that many of these problems stem from the different occupational cultures across the two spheres, which can generate varying expectations, values and practices that exacerbate problems in working relationships. Some of these difficulties relate to differing understandings of what hate crime actually is and how to counter it. The article suggests that by gaining in-depth knowledge of each other’s working methods and outputs, perhaps by being involved in formal and informal joint projects that necessitate flexibility and the development of shared approaches, academics and practitioners can devise more nuanced interventions that deal with the harms of hate crime more effectively.

Keywords
Hate crime, practitioner-academic divide, occupational cultures, policy and practice, public criminology

Introduction
From its beginnings in North America in the 1960s the concept of hate crime has grown into an issue widely recognised for its societal significance, attracting attention from policymakers, lawmakers and criminal justice practitioners in the United States, Canada, Europe and Australasia. From its early focus around issues of racist harassment and violence the concept has gradually expanded, so that currently in the United Kingdom, for example, it also includes hostility towards gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, disabled and faith communities. Other jurisdictions recognise further forms of targeted harassment, including age (Canada), political affiliation (Poland) and health (Belgium - see ODIHR, 2013). This growth has prompted initiatives and interventions from across the public, private, voluntary, educational and charitable sectors.

Accompanying this growth in the recognition of the harms of multiple forms of hate crime has been the rise in the number of research projects, journal articles, books and conferences undertaken, written or hosted within the more ‘rarefied’ arena of academia. Initially led by scholars in North America, the study of hate crime has become significant within the disciplines of criminology,
sociology, law, psychology, history and politics. Indeed, recent years have brought forth new edited collections, second and third editions of books, international networks for studying the issue or funded research projects, with each claiming to bring something fresh to the debate. In many cases, of course, they have done so, and it is not my intention to criticise the body of work that has appeared in the last few years. However, it is a surprise – and something of a concern – that there have not been more meaningful policy developments as a result of this academic endeavour. It’s as if – at least for significant proportions of the time – academia exists separately from the policy and practitioner realms, narrowly concerned with its own inward-looking ideas, methods of working and performance measurement that have little relevance outside of its own ‘ivory towers’.

Many policymakers and practitioners, meanwhile, view much of this work as just so much academic ‘hot air’, written in a style that bemuses and alienates them. This scepticism, although well-founded in some instances, has also had the unfortunate consequence of preventing them from seeing how this work could be of use to them too. Instead, often in the last twenty years or so a number of academic projects have produced findings that have stimulated debate among lecturers and researchers but have then had little or no impact outside of this sphere. Once released into the public domain their work has been met with indifference, if it has been acknowledged at all, and thus the opportunity to benefit from it has been missed.

This article will assess many of these complexities that have undermined the academic-practitioner relationship within the field of hate crime, including the misunderstandings that have appeared on both ‘sides’. Drawing on hate crime and broader criminological literature, it will assess how and why this relationship has on many occasions faltered. Crucially, though, it will also examine, through the use of two hate crime case studies, instances where the relationship has blossomed and meaningful progress has been made, with input from both realms and other sectors too. It will suggest that if we can learn the lessons from these case studies then practitioners and academics will make more progress in what both are trying to achieve: a reduction in the levels and impacts of hate crime.

**Cutting Out the Waffle: Issues in Academic-Practitioner Relations**

The history of academic-practitioner relations has often been characterised by mutual feelings of miscomprehension and sometimes even annoyance. Occasionally, these emotions have spilled over into something more acrimonious, with, for example, the mid-1980s relationship between the police and academics in the UK being described as ‘confrontational’, with the former feeling under ‘attack’ from certain academics whose criticism they felt was deliberately undermining them (Giannasi, 2014). Although relations between the two have mostly ‘thawed’ since then, as Stanko (2007) suggests, some in academia still refer to the broader practitioner world as the ‘dark side’, as though...
it represents something ‘sinister’ and alien to the values of the academy. Worryingly though, when working with the police she has also encountered ‘genuine distrust and disbelief that anyone who has not commanded in a uniform capacity has anything truly to offer’ (Stanko, 2007: 215). As Bartunek and Rynes (2014) note, while there have been many and varied attempts to reduce the gap between scholars and practitioners over several decades, there is a concern that this gap is increasing rather than decreasing: a rather sobering thought.

It is therefore imperative that we understand why these problems occur if meaningful ‘cross-realm’ progress in the arena of hate crime is to be made. Some of these causes relate to the unique operational cultures that set academia apart from the practitioner arena. Talking of the differences between the police and academia, for example, Hall (2014: 22) highlights the meaning behind the word ‘urgent’ when applied to job tasks. In the police, he posits, a task labelled ‘urgent’ is one which needs to be done immediately or there could be dire consequences, while in academia the same label can indicate that the job needs to be completed sometime ‘in the next six weeks’ or so. This relates to what is generally understood to be a much faster-paced, dynamic working climate in the police in which information needs to be processed speedily, while decisions, that have real-world outcomes, need to be taken rapidly. Hall neatly sums this up in an encounter he once had with a senior police officer who, while showing some interest in his hate crime research, could afford only a short time to listen to Hall describe it:

As the doors [to the lift] closed I distinctly remember [the senior officer] 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).

As a budding academic, Hall quickly noticed this striking difference between the ‘quick-fire’ world of policing, with its emphasis on the need to know now, and that of academia, which prioritises the necessity of working through the nuances of research findings in more elongated time frames. This applies to the publishing of research findings too, with Hall stressing the usefulness to practitioners of receiving them as soon after the completion of the fieldwork and analysis as is practicable, while for academics this process can be – in fact, some would argue that it needs to be – drawn out over many weeks or even months. Publications from original fieldwork should, in their view, be reflective, thoughtful, theoretically informed and carefully constructed, but for practitioners these sorts of delays are unhelpful and indeed often incomprehensible.
One of the key issues with this type of delay, which applies just as much to hate crime publications as those emanating from other criminological research, is that it reflects the pressure that academics are under to produce articles deemed ‘world leading’ or ‘internationally excellent’ in terms of ‘originality, significance and rigour’ (Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), 2014) for submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the periodic review of research that UK academics and their departments are subject to. This is the most important key performance indicator by which departments (and by extension their staff) are judged as it has immense prestige attached to it, notwithstanding fundamental financial implications too. Publishing high quality articles in prestigious journals is therefore one of the most important activities that research-active academics can undertake, necessitating that such pieces are thoughtfully crafted and highly-developed theoretically. This process can in itself take weeks and sometimes months, a timeframe incompatible with that of many practitioners dealing with problems that need solving urgently. Moreover, practitioner frustrations will often be further compounded as they attempt to decipher the rather archaic and over-complicated style that many of these articles are written in. If these issues were not divisive enough, a further problem is that they are published in the type of elite journals that historically have been mostly inaccessible to those outside of the academy and/or far too expensive for many hate crime practitioners, working in the cash-strapped public sector, to obtain.

End of project reports, which academics are obliged to produce for bodies that fund their research, are far more suitable to a practitioner audience as they are generally focused, shorter works written in a more straightforward style. However, while practitioners may prize them, academics attach little value to them, or to producing executive summaries or briefing papers, as they are not regarded as being of sufficient academic quality under the REF’s assessment framework for them to be considered for submission to it. For the same reasons, practitioner-friendly newsletters and magazines are not highly rated in the scholarly world either, meaning that many academics view writing articles for them – even if this would help get their message across to key audiences – as a waste of their time. Furthermore, even practitioner-oriented books edited by academics (such as the one assembled by the author of this article and Neil Chakraborti, Hate Crime: The Case for Connecting Policy and Research, which is aimed squarely at hate crime audiences on either side of the ‘gap’ – see Chakraborti and Garland, 2014), which have the potential to play an important role in bridging the academic-practitioner divide by involving authors and perspectives from both ‘sides’, are not valued by the REF either. Such works may be good for academics as they help to raise their profile, but in terms of the targets set in annual appraisals, which are often oriented towards the next REF, they have negligible worth.
However, it is important to acknowledge that many national academic environments do not have such prescriptive research assessments as the UK’s REF and therefore academics in those environments have more licence to produce practitioner-friendly publications. Even within the UK context, it could be argued that the impact statements and case studies, that are a significant part of departmental REF submissions, actually provide impetus for academics to engage with practitioners in order to generate the ‘real world’ impacts that the REF is looking for. Although this is something of a moot point, as Currie (2007: 187) suggests, a way to address any mismatches between academic targets and practitioner needs would be for universities and educational funding councils, such as HEFCE, to re-orientate the type of academic activities that they value by rewarding ‘dissemination, synthesis, public presentation of findings and issues, engagement with agencies and institutions and audiences beyond the professions and writing for a wider public’. For hate crime scholars this would form part of a broader ‘public criminology’ that purposefully sets out to engage and have dialogue with not just practitioners and policymakers, but also politicians, interest groups and indeed the public more generally. Such an approach would seek to effect genuine societal change through involving those outside of academia in the design and implementation of research projects, in the development of research tools, in granting access to target populations and indeed in providing ‘real world’ advice and guidance throughout. This would help keep the academic work grounded, focused, timely and accessible.

However, when analysing the success of this approach within criminology more broadly, Rock (2014: 424) notes the cynicism with which it has been met by some academics, who labelled these public criminologists as ‘administrative criminologists, voodoo criminologists, official criminologists, positivists and empiricists … lickspittles and lackeys’. These types of complaints – that public criminologists were somehow too ‘scientific’, bound up in managerialist ideology, too close to government or the source of their funding, and, remarkably, ‘lapdogs’ to these (and other) bodies – unsurprisingly caused some to fear that their work was not academically valued by their peers. Indeed, the hostility with which public criminology is viewed by a minority within the discipline is quite extraordinary, although some of these critics’ concerns – that this type of research may not be as independent as it would like to think it is, or that it is too narrow in scope and focused on undertaking short-term, more ‘profitable’ projects at the expense of ones whose gains are not immediately obvious – are definitely food for thought. However, it is equally important that academics do not lose sight of the potential ‘real world’ impact of their work, something of especial relevance to those operating in the hate crime field. This is not to underestimate the value of theoretical hate crime work, but to suggest that this work should not be self-indulgent and should instead have its sights fixed on its relevance to achieving practical gains.
This should not mean that the onus is solely on scholars, as practitioners should also be open-minded enough to consider the usefulness of academic theories to their work. An example of a practitioner who has fully comprehended this, and has adapted a theoretical model to their work, is Chih Hoong Sin, director of the UK Office for Public Management – see Case Study One.

Case Study One: The ‘Layers of Influence’ Model

One of the more interesting recent suggestions for creating better synergy between the worlds of academia and policy/practice has been devised by a UK hate crime practitioner, Chih Hoong Sin, who adapted the theories of Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991, originally applied in the arena of health care studies) in order to develop a victim-oriented model that explains the complex interactions between hate crime victims, agencies and other actors from different social spheres. The ultimate aim of this model is to enhance the support provided to victims of (in Sin’s example) disablist hate crime, but its basic principles have wider applicability to victims of other forms of hate crime too.

This ‘layers of influence’ model (Sin, 2014) can best be understood as a series of concentric circles (representing social ‘layers’), with the disabled person in the centre of them. The layer immediately outside the centre is occupied by carers and families, and the one after that organisations and institutions, while the outer layer hosts society and attitudes. These layers are interdependent, interacting with each other in complex ways contingent on time and place. Sin argues that too often in the past academics and practitioners have concentrated on the centre of these circles – and in particular the supposedly ‘vulnerable’ characteristics of the disabled person being targeted – without examining how the structures and contexts surrounding them – the outer layers – have impacted upon their situation. This error can, suggests Sin, ‘serve to reinforce an entrenched “charity model” of disability where disabled people are depicted as victims of circumstance and deserving of pity’ (Sin, 2014: 103), with the consequence that their case is dealt with via the care route rather than through the criminal justice process.

Instead, Sin proposes that the role and influence of the social layers surrounding the victim must be fully comprehended if appropriate, holistic interventions are to be developed that effectively help the victim. For example, the significance of the relationship between the victim of disablist hate crime and those in his/her immediate social networks (and especially the imbalance of power that may exist between them) needs to be acknowledged, as do their interactions with the next layer (represented by agencies and institutions such as the police, health and social care, and housing associations), which can be beset with problems that further disadvantage victims. More broadly, Sin suggests, the influence of the outer layer (wider society) in perpetuating disablist stereotypes and
attitudes can have negative consequences for the lives of disabled people, and thus plays a key role in the overall situation that disabled victims find themselves in.

Sin has successfully implemented his model within local health care/hate crime partnerships, where he has designed hate crime care pathways for victims in conjunction with health service trusts and associated organisations. For example, he has worked with Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust and collaborating agencies in order to develop new understandings among stakeholders of the roles that the layers around the victim can play in not only perpetrating hate crime, but also preventing it. This has helped to take the focus away from the victim and their own personal circumstances and towards a more multi-agency, cross-sector way of dealing with hate victimisation. By doing this, joint interventions have been effectively implemented that have used the model to identify their best entry points across the various layers, including via victims, their carers and family, and agencies that have come into contact with them, both within the criminal justice system and across the health and social care arenas (Sin, 2015).

By underlining the significance of society’s multiple layers in the process of disablist victimisation, Sin’s model offers useful insights into how the practitioner and scholarly realms can counter the processes and impacts of hate victimisation. It suggests that multi-layered problems require multi-agency solutions, and that these should come from joint practitioner-academic endeavours. Also, just in itself, Sin’s model shows what can be achieved when a practitioner applies academic theories to their own policy and practice-based arena. Stanko’s (2007) work has a similar theme, although from the angle of an academic working with, and adapting to, practitioner working cultures. She relates the methods by which she successfully introduced theoretical ideas into discussions in ways that ultimately benefitted both ‘sides’:

I weave these [theoretical] musings into policy discussions that have implications for how we do business now and how we might do it better in the future. Such an impure theoretical tactic enables me to help frame a strategic approach to delivering better services (with people in mind) that is flexible, recognizing diversity in need and in population (Stanko, 2007: 216).

This more subtle (if ‘impure’) way of interweaving theory with policy demonstrates the innovative means that can be found to bridge the academic-practitioner gap. Of course, such methods will need to be adapted to the vagaries of different occupational cultures, with those of the police, for example, differing markedly from others, such as those in probation (see Reiner (2010) and Mawby and Worrall (2012) for extended discussions of these). For academics, this can be something of a
challenge, as they will need to become familiar with varying working practices, standards, expectations and the common use of multiple context-specific acronyms, which can lead to the development of occupational ‘micro-languages’ which many scholars find baffling.

One organisation that has adapted its own cultures and ways of working to those of a number of other sectors is the Sophie Lancaster Foundation, which has developed links with academics, practitioners, and those involved in the charitable, private and even music and acting arenas, and it is to a study of their methods that this article now turns via Case Study Two.

Case Study Two: The Sophie Lancaster Foundation – Pointing the Way Forward?

The Sophie Lancaster Foundation evolved out of the tragic events that occurred in a small town, Bacup (in the north of England), on the evening of 10 August 2007. That night, 20 year-old Sophie Lancaster and her boyfriend Robert Maltby (21), both of alternative/gothic appearance and lifestyle, were, without any warning or provocation, viciously attacked in a park by a group of males with whom they had initially fallen into friendly conversation. They were both rushed to hospital, and while Robert eventually recovered from the assault, Sophie never regained consciousness and died from her injuries two weeks later (Smyth, 2010).

At the subsequent trial of their attackers it became apparent that the motive behind the assault was the violent exception that the teenagers had taken to Sophie and Robert’s strikingly different appearance, which had induced a fear and an anger in them that had manifested itself in such a brutal way. The presiding judge at their trial, Judge Russell QC, recognised that the attack was a hate crime, perceptively understanding the underlying fear of, and prejudice towards, those that lead an alternative lifestyle that can fuel assaults such as this. By looking visibly different from the accepted norms of male and female appearance in a small, isolated place like Bacup, Sophie and Robert had inadvertently challenged the narrow worldview of their assailants, with horrific consequences (Garland and Hodkinson, 2014).

Sophie’s mother, Sylvia Lancaster, also felt that the assault on her daughter and Robert was a hate crime, prompting her to form a charitable organisation, the Sophie Lancaster Foundation. The Foundation adopted the dual aims of challenging all forms of prejudice while campaigning to get the targeted harassment of those from alternative subcultures (‘alternatives’) officially recognised as hate crimes. In the years since its inception it has enjoyed a level of success and influence that offers useful pointers for the development of similar initiatives, as it has campaigned effectively on multiple platforms through involving people from the private, public and academic sectors in its work. It initially gained support from private industry via the cosmetics company Illamasqua, as well
as from the worlds of pop music, arts and literature. Illamasqua commissioned *Dark Angel*, a short animated film that movingly portrays the circumstances surrounding the fatal assault upon Sophie, and in 2011 a play about the Lancaster case, *Black Roses*, was broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and later on BBC television. One of its most notable successes, though, was to persuade Greater Manchester Police (one of the UK’s largest police forces) to recognise and record the targeted victimisation of alternative subcultures as hate crimes. This was the first police force to do so (in April 2013) and was subsequently followed by others, including Warwickshire and Durham.

**How the Foundation Bridged the Practitioner-Academic Divide**

Since its inception the Foundation has delivered talks at academic symposia and conferences, addressed undergraduate and postgraduate students and, crucially, shown a willingness to take on board the findings from scholarly research. Indeed, the Foundation can take some credit for affecting academic thinking around hate crime. Due in no small part to the Foundation’s efforts to get the targeted harassment of those from alternative subcultures recognised as hate crimes, scholars have begun to address this issue and consider its implications for the notion of hate crime more broadly. Examinations of the targeted victimisation of alternatives have uncovered parallels, in terms of nature, frequency and impact, between it and the officially recognised forms of hate crime (Garland, Chakraborti and Hardy, 2015; Morris, 2014). This has, in turn, kick-started a debate regarding the concept of hate crime itself. Prior to the Foundation’s campaigning, the predominant academic view of hate victimisation was that it was suffered by those from historically marginalised and disadvantaged groups who were targeted due to prejudice against their identity. The aim of the assailant was to remind these minority groups of their ‘rightful’, ‘lowly’ place in the social hierarchy, and of their ‘otherness’ and lack of legitimate belonging (Perry, 2001). However, more recently, and prompted by the activities of the Sophie Lancaster Foundation, scholarly ideas of hate crime have begun to take a different turn, moving away from a group identity-based view of hate crime victimisation towards one in which the individual vulnerability of the victim, and their heightened risk of being targeted, is more significant. In this reformulation, potentially anyone can be a victim of hate crime, with one important caveat: that this is done within what Mason (2014) calls a ‘politics of justice’ framework which acknowledges that the concept of hate crime is underpinned by ideas of justice, equality and the right to live a life free from abuse and harassment. Groups whose actions do not sit comfortably within this (and Mason cites paedophiles as one such group) should not be accorded hate crime victim group status, even if they have been targeted due to hostility against their identity (see also Chakraborti and Garland, 2012; 2015). However, for those groups that can be more easily placed within this framework, such as the
homeless, the elderly and, of course, members of alternative subcultures, this reconceptualization opens up the possibility that their targeted harassment can be recognised as a hate crime too. This would chime more readily with legal and practitioner ideas of hate crime which acknowledge the potential for members of minority and majority communities to be victims of hate crime. For such a relatively small-scale charity, bringing academic and practitioner understandings of hate crime closer together is, for the Sophie Lancaster Foundation, quite a notable achievement.

Conclusions: taking tentative steps forward
This article has outlined a number of issues that have affected the relationship between the realms of academia and policy/practice. Many of these relate to distinct occupational cultures which engender different working norms and expectations, typified by Hall’s (2014) wry ‘lift’ anecdote mentioned above, which encapsulates a number of these cultural and practical issues. It highlights, for example, the distance between the priorities of academics (commonly the generation of new theoretical insights into issues through publishing in ‘heavyweight’ scholarly journals) and those of practitioners, such as, in Hall’s example, the police (which are commonly to find working solutions to problems as speedily as practicable). Other differences, such as those regarding the types of publications most valued by practitioners and academics, are hard to surmount without some profound changes occurring in the way that the scholarly world views research reports and briefing papers. Others, such as practitioner scepticism over the utility of academic theorising, may also be difficult to counter. As we have seen through the two case studies though, progress can be made when those outside of the academy are open-minded enough to embrace theory and research, pointing the way forward by developing theoretical models with real-world applicability (in the example of Case Study One) or influential campaigns that both draw upon and influence academic work (Case Study Two).

Practitioners that take this line will need to be confident that their line managers also buy into this idea, so that they can fully commit to any long-term joint initiatives with academics. They will need to be supported by strong leadership that guarantees organisational commitment or they may feel unable to participate in research project steering groups, for example. As Chancer and McLaughlin (2007) and Hall (2014) remind us, however, scholars need to show leadership too in these situations, and understand that their role is to effect genuine social change rather than leaving this responsibility to others. Of course, many academics do appreciate this point, and their wider sector is increasingly conscious of it too. Indeed, the academy can provide the scope and objective platform for organisations to become involved in research projects in a way that perhaps the other sectors find more problematic (see Schweppe, Haynes and Carr (2014) for an example of how a university-
led project can successfully incorporate a plethora of different sectors and minority interest groups into its work).

As Case Study Two implies, with a degree of open-mindedness and goodwill the gap between the practitioner and scholarly worlds can be bridged. This process can be aided by developing clear lines of communication between the two as well as effective methods of disseminating research findings. This can be accomplished by involving practitioners in all stages of the research process; from the very beginning via the instigation of a practitioner-oriented steering group that provides advice on the project’s direction, methods, tools and ways of accessing target populations, through to advising on the format of the project’s outputs. For their part (and reflecting some of the concerns discussed above) academics must ensure that this practitioner input does not affect their independence or scholarly judgment. As Garman (2011) suggests, this independence means that academics can offer a level of objectivity that is valuable to practitioners, who can, in turn, provide expert guidance on key aspects of their own professional spheres that ‘outsiders’, such as academics, may struggle with. With any joint initiatives certain challenges are unavoidable though, even if all from both ‘sides’ are fully committed to working together. One of these is surmounting the varying performance targets that practitioners and academics are set, as well as the differing occupational values placed upon key activities and outputs, discussed above. With these in mind, how do we, for example, evaluate joint initiatives when their outcomes may be judged in opposite ways, with the same output rated a success in one sphere but disregarded in another? After what time period do we even attempt to judge their success: by the more immediate practitioner timeline or the longer-term academic one? Such issues are not insurmountable, of course, and are best addressed by the involvement of practitioners in academic project steering groups from the start, when the key parameters and targets of the research can be set in ways that satisfy the different parties. With these agreed, the success of any projects will be easier to evaluate.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that, often, the criteria used for assessing the success of any joint ventures across the different sectors may not be as divergent as portrayed above. As Hayman (2012) suggests, many of the larger NGOs have their own research departments that undertake work either by themselves or in conjunction with academics, with both sets of actors under pressure from funders to demonstrate the ‘real world’ impact of their work. Many of these research departments are populated by former academic researchers, who understand the pressures that operate within the different realms, and indeed the ‘cross-pollination’ between them has created what Chancer and McLaughlin (2007: 164) describe as the ‘new model’ criminologist, adapted to working across these divergent environments. Not only this, but many NGOs (and indeed policymakers) are not driven by the same ‘urgent’ need to deliver outputs as for example, the police
(and others in the practitioner sphere) are, and can afford to ‘take their time’ in a fashion similar to that of academics – at least to a degree. These sorts of nuances are worth noting, and for academics, should be borne in mind when developing research partnerships across the separate spheres.

As the Sophie Lancaster Foundation case study demonstrates, campaigns around the victimisation of identity groups provide us with an excellent opportunity to develop good practice that can connect the seemingly disparate practitioner and academic worlds. They can draw upon, and then influence, academic research, while also prompting policy makers to feel ‘compelled to recognize and to try to deal more sensitively with issues like domestic violence, sexual harassment and hate crimes’ (Chancer and McLaughlin, 2007: 159). Thus issues such as hate crime can motivate different groups to work together, perhaps out of a sense of necessity, thereby having to devise working methods that can deliver results.

For their part, academics can contribute to better working relationships in two key ways: by framing research questions in ways that will generate genuinely useful findings, and by discovering means to ‘translate’ these findings into recommendations or guidelines that inform and impact upon changes in practice (Garman, 2011). This would compel scholars to deliver research outputs that are more practitioner friendly, in terms of presentation and format, thereby putting the onus upon practitioners to be open-minded enough to take on board their findings.

It should be acknowledged here though, as Giannasi (2014) suggests, that in the last few years the occupational cultures of practitioners and academics have inched closer to one another, with the police, for example, moving from a ‘force’ to a ‘service’ with all the cultural shifts and partnership working that this entails, while academia, with its increasingly neo-liberal agenda, is becoming more target-driven and time-pressured. The two realms may not therefore have to undertake too many further changes in order to meet each other somewhere ‘in the middle’.

Even with this ‘rapprochement’ in mind, research findings can be more successfully implemented if they are part of a project that impacts locally, which is the level that most practitioners work at, can relate most easily to and see the benefits of most clearly. Scholars therefore must try to avoid presenting their work in the abstract ways that they are wont to do, and the hate crime arena offers an excellent arena for developing this new approach. If the lessons from the successful case studies above can be learnt and applied, then the field of hate crime provides the chance of developing joint projects at a local level that could have real and meaningful impact – something that both academics and practitioners will have as their long-term goal.

References


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2 University of Surrey, UK.

3 By June 2015 Dark Angel had been viewed 410,000 times on YouTube.

4 Non-governmental organisations.