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The Role and Function of Criminologists within the Criminal Justice and Private Sector

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Criminology gained prominence as an academic area of study because of the constant threat of crime and the social problems it highlights. Nonetheless, much doubt and criticism exists among professionals within social and human sciences regarding the role, application, value and contributions of criminologists. Criminology is informed by a combination of theory and empirical research enfolded into a body of knowledge on crime as a social phenomenon. In South Africa, criminologists have acquired a more practically oriented role in enhancing service delivery within the criminal justice and private sectors. This article aims to highlight the current (and potential) shift in practice for criminologists in South Africa.

Keywords: criminology in South Africa, criminologists, practitioners, professionals in practice

Introduction

Criminologists have traditionally viewed and applied their profession as a mechanism to promote the enhanced understanding, control, prevention and reduction of crime and criminality (Shearing, 2007). Over the years, developments in the criminological discipline have facilitated this task and progressively contributed to the expansion of its frontiers.

Currently, contemporary criminological focus is rapidly evolving in response to societal and other needs – that is, a more practicable and civic participatory criminology and practice. This article canvasses the past, recent and emerging viable innovations in criminology, especially in the South African context. Furthermore, it advocates for the practical utilisation and application of criminologists in multi-disciplinary spheres related to crime, criminality, and victimology. In South Africa, the demand, role, contribution and application of criminologists has changed dramatically over the past ten to fifteen years. Due to prevailing expert (psychologist) and human resource shortages, criminologists have been in increasing demand as professional practitioners within the criminal justice sector, as well as within private and the corporate environments. L. Bergh (personal communication, April 23, 2007) acknowledges that there are currently only 43 psychologists, of which 12 are busy with their compulsory year of community service, employed by the Department of Correctional Services nationally. This aforementioned gravitation will be discussed in detail in this manuscript.

Discussion

It is clear from the aforementioned proposition that *Criminology* is not just a technical discipline based on theories and theoretical issues. It is rather, an integrated, multi-disciplinary field that amalgamates academic criminology with contemporary social concerns about crime – to have a more practical application such as victim empowerment (i.e., victim-impact statements), pre-sentence evaluation reports/assessments, criminological offender assessment and profiling practices (Coetzee, 2003;

Cornwell, 2003; Du Preez, 2003; Maree, Joubert & Ladikos, 2003).

South African criminologists practice widely within different sectors in society and within the criminal justice sector and the private and corporate sectors. The following section underscores criminologists' contributions within these fields.

Criminologists within the Criminal Justice and Private Sectors

In South Africa, the Criminological Society of South Africa (CRIMSA), a professional and ethical body, regulates the academic and professional standards for academic and practicing criminologists. This body ensures that criminologists adhere to specified standards and appropriately apply their skills, knowledge and expertise within the academia and practice.

A South African accredited criminological journal, *Acta Criminologica*, serves as proof of the various crime-related research outputs delivered by academic and practising criminologists in South Africa. Research topics vary from academic / theoretical debates, development of indigenous crime-related theories, to research outputs concerned with aspects such as (but not limited to, or to be construed as a true reflection of, all research outputs):

The practical role, benefit and application of criminologists; victimology; criminologists' role and contribution in pre-sentencing evaluation reports in courts; criminological profiling; rape in prison; hate crimes; bullying at school; domestic violence and rape in marriage; rape myths; drug abuse among learners; bank robberies; hi-jackings; child and adult prostitution; conservation crimes; polygraphy and criminology; white-collar crimes and offender profiles; sex offender profiles and assessment; serial offenders (rape and murder); farm attacks and killings; child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional and neglect); muti-murders (i.e., murder of individuals for indigenous practices and beliefs); prison gang involvement; recidivism among the South African offender population; abuse of women and the elderly; murder of police officials; contract killings; and paedophiles.

The aforementioned examples/outputs demonstrate South African criminologists' dedication to the development of the science, as well as the diversity and potential application of practitioners within various spheres related to crime and criminal behaviour.

The South African Police Services (SAPS)

Modern criminal profiling has a diverse history stemming from criminology (the study of criminal behaviour), psychology and psychiatry (the study of mental illness) and the examination of physical evidence (the forensic sciences). The first criminologist to try to classify and profile criminals was Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909). Thus, integral to criminal profiling, has been both understanding the origins of criminal behaviour, and classifying criminal behaviour where the criminologist studies the "who", the "what", the "why" and the "where" regarding criminal behaviour, and its origin, nature and impact on society (Hesselink-Louw & Joubert, 2003, p.104-105).

Conducting criminological profiles of unknown and wanted persons (especially serial offenders) for the police has highlighted the criminologist's unique contribution in guiding police work / investigations. Criminologists conduct "soft evidence profiling" (assessment of criminal behaviour, tendencies, motives, causes, modus operandi, unique characteristics of perpetrators) to compliment police officials' and investigators' "hard evidence profiling" that is, crime scene analysis, photographs, DNA samples, and strategies for apprehension (Hesselink-Louw & Joubert, 2003, p.99-100).

Courts

Criminologists are utilized as expert witnesses in South African criminal courts in order to assist the State with victim impact statements, and to present pre-evaluation sentencing reports of convicted individuals. They are engaged in victim impact statements and pre-sentencing evaluation reports.

Victim impact statements. Victim assessments aim to empower, support and highlight the plight of the victims within the criminal justice sector. Criminological services are applied in conducting victim profiles in terms of determining actual risk, victims' needs, victims' rights and victim impact statements (especially in cases pertaining to rape and domestic violence) where the impact of the crime on the victim's emotional, psychological, physical, social and medical functioning, is underlined and scientifically explained. Such statements are mostly prepared to support and determine aggravating factors for sentencing purposes (Clarke, Davis & Booyens, 2003; Davis & Snyman, 2005; Hesselink-Louw & Joubert, 2003; Naudé, 2004).

Pre-sentencing evaluation reports. Criminologists conducting criminological pre-sentencing reports assist jurists to apply a just, appropriate and individualised sentence to perpetrators. They inform the trial court about the particular and individual factors of the offender and his/her personality. Experienced forensic criminologists compile a report of accused persons in order to assist the court with personal and individual information relevant to the case. They also provide a criminological scientific explanation, specialized analysis, evaluation and assessment of criminal conduct. According to Hesselink-Louw (2004) and Labuschagne (2001), such reports promote:

- Equitable Individualised punishment;
- A holistic overview of the offender (offender profile);

- Decision-making regarding suitable measures for specific circumstances (such as determining motivation, causes, triggers and personal influences of criminal conduct);
- A sound structure or framework for the further treatment of the offender;
- A report as an important source of information for offender management and programme planning.

Corrections

Worldwide, the skills, knowledge, experience and expertise attached to offender rehabilitation and treatment are linked to various experts, including social workers, educationalists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and religious workers (Hesselink-Louw, 2004; Hollin, 2001; Myer, 2001; Sheley, 2000). However, the role and practical contribution of criminologists within custodial settings have been grossly ignored (Cornwell, 2003; Hesselink-Louw, 2004; Hesselink-Louw & Joubert, 2003; Maree et al, 2003).

Various national (Bergh, 2003 & Du Preez, 2003) and international correctional experts (Cornwell, 2003) are of the opinion that criminologists can be utilized in an integrated assessment approach for research regarding offenders, the profiling of offenders, evaluation of intervention programmes, and the treatment and rehabilitation of offenders. In this regard Cornwell (2003, p.89) stated that "It is difficult to understand why employment of criminologists within prisons has been neglected to such an extent in the past ... the principal reason for this may lie in a general lack of understanding of what the discipline of criminology actually has to offer in a practical dimension within prisons."

In South Africa, criminologists have been utilised in advisory positions within corrections, and as experts concerning the criminological understanding, profiling and assessment of criminal behaviour (mostly first generation assessments). The inclusion of criminologists within custodial settings (both at private and national correctional centres) has contributed to a multi-disciplinary (containment) approach towards the intervention, management and rehabilitation of offenders (Hesselink-Louw, 2004).

Cornwell (2003) avers that criminologists make a unique and vital contribution, as members of a multi-disciplinary offender assessment and rehabilitation team, in corrections in terms of the:

1. *Induction assessment.* Detailed nature of offence(s) the offender is sentenced for, motivation and modus operandi of crime, circumstances under which the crime was committed, summary of previous convictions and sentences served, inmate's attitude to his/her sentence and possible release from custody, the offender's motivation to utilize his/her current sentence constructively in order to avoid reoffending, adaptation problems and fears, criminal associates (i.e., prison gang membership), details of co-accused, whether the inmate is perceived as a risk in terms of violent and aggressive behaviour, self-harm, escape, and substance abuse (manufacturing, smuggling / trading, handling and receiving of substances). This detailed information enables the prison authorities to determine possible inmate-management strategies (risk, dangerousness and level of supervision), decisions about inmate accommodation, sentence planning.

2. *Case management.* Criminologists can assist correctional management in day-to-day management decisions of inmates (based on the information gathered during the induction assessment). Decisions regarding offender employment within

the custodial facility, cell-mate choices, likelihood for involvement in further crime (while incarcerated), attitudes to authority, and involvement in group and/or individual rehabilitation efforts.

3. *Tactical management.* Through the analysis of offence patterns, the induction profile and security intelligence, inmates posing certain risks are separated within prison to prevent them accumulating in excessive numbers within confined areas – this is especially important in the management of prison gangs and hostage-taking situations. Here, the criminologist can identify trends in the inmate's behaviour and provide valuable operational advice to senior management for the prevention of institutional stability and safety.

4. *Risk assessment.* External risk analysis, i.e., escape risk and management decision in the external escort (court and/or medical purposes) of such inmates. Internal risk based on day-to-day observations of custodial staff, and information from intelligence system – in order to update inmate's profile and prison database, prison and other associations. According to Cornwell (2003, p.88), "The indispensable role of the criminologist is to establish and give operational effect to the criteria upon which the database is designed and constructed in the first instance."

5. *Parole assessment.* Cornwell (2003, p. 88) mentions that "by virtue of their academic training, augmented by the experience of working in custodial corrections, criminologists are uniquely well placed to provide valuable assessments for parole consideration purposes."

Cornwell (2003, p. 88) noted that is important to ask: "Why might it be supposed that criminologists within prisons would undertake the tasks that have been indicated any better than other professionals already employed in these places?" This academic, criminologist and prior prison governor advocates that the answer lies in re-examining "the eight key issues" in criminology as initially proposed by Hood and Sparks (1970, p.5), and in the way in which the learning and training of criminologists derives from these issues. These areas include:

1. understanding the nature of "hidden crime";
2. official and concealed delinquency;
3. sub-cultural and gang delinquency;
4. the classification of crime and criminals;
5. understanding the role of courts and the sentencing process;
6. assessing the effectiveness of punishments and treatments;
7. interaction between forms of treatment and offenders;
8. assessing the impact of imprisonment upon individual prisoners.

In addition, Hesselink-Louw and Joubert (2003) argued that criminologists offer a systematic and dynamic evaluation of offenders in issues / areas related to the analysis of criminal behaviour, the criminal mind, causes, criminogenic traits, motives, triggers and precursors to crime, risk factors, modus operandi, and provide a theoretical explanation for criminal behaviour. It is furthermore, important to recognise the range of methodological, statistical and theoretical skills that are central to criminological learning and the manner in which these can be applied to the requirements for classification and assessment of offenders. Cornwell (2003) concluded by stating that no other discipline embraces all these areas of academic competence, or uses them routinely in its everyday work, whether this is of a practical professional or research based nature. We argue that psychology became involved in a few of the key areas, but that

no other disciplines match the width and depth of academic preparation related to that of the criminologist's.

Criminological Offender Assessment and Profiling Practices

The ideal offender assessment scenario would include an in-depth holistic assessment where unique criminological offender needs and risks are identified for treatment, therapy, development and offender management purposes.

The function of the criminologist pertaining to offender assessment is to identify and explain possible factors related to criminal behaviour and to determine and establish intervention and treatment indicators for therapists working with offenders. This underscores the limitation of criminologists within custodial settings – that is, criminologists are not 'therapists' (do not provide therapy), but are professionals in practice who determine treatment, rehabilitation and intervention targets for therapists and who refer offenders for in-depth clinical assessments and treatment (Hesselink-Louw, 2004). This means that criminologists who work in custodial settings should have the necessary knowledge, skills and practical experience to conduct criminological assessments, recognize offenders with psychological and psychiatric problems, and to refer them to a specialist for in-depth specialist assessment and intervention. This preliminary criminological assessment will assist psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists to focus on clinical analysis and reduce their workload (Alexander, 2000; Hesselink-Louw, 2004).

According to Andrews and Bonta (1998), Coetzee (2003), Cornwell (2003), Du Preez (2003); Hesselink-Louw (2004), Hesselink-Louw and Schoeman (2003), Hollin (2001), Sheley (2000), and Siegel (2004), corrections can benefit in the utilization of criminologists in the following ways:

- a) Criminologists focus on both theoretical and practical levels. That is, criminologists can assist in the development of a scientific, practical assessment structure, acceptable to all role players;
- b) Criminological practitioners can assist in forming a partnership between universities and criminal justice agencies. This could be established to ensure that prepared students assist in the criminological assessment of inmates, which might lead to their actual employment. This pre-supposes a constant flow of trained criminologists, with the professional performance of Correctional Services being enhanced as a result;
- c) Individual criminological offender assessment for treatment and development referrals;
- d) An analysis and identification of specific offender needs and risks (i.e., escape, criminal associations, and criminal attitudes);
 - Interpretation of security intelligence;
 - Statistical analysis of assessment outcomes;
- e) Submission of expert evidence (for the police, courts, Correctional Services, and non-custodial correctional organizations);
- f) Identification of causes, motives, triggers, high-risk situations and modus operandi of criminal behaviour;
- g) Scientific explanation of criminal behaviour;
- h) Compilation of criminal profiles for effective group therapy, and selection of participants in group therapy;
- i) Assistance in the development of effective rehabilitation programmes;
- j) Assistance to Parole Boards in the prediction, evaluation and analysis of criminal behaviour;

k) Evaluation of the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes;

m) Appropriate management of offenders;

n) Finally, criminologists can be utilized to relieve the heavy workload of correctional therapists (i.e., social workers and psychologists) within the Department of Correctional Services.

Core Focal Points for Criminological Assessment and Profiling Practices

Criminological assessments differ from other professional forms of assessment in that they mainly focus on:

- **Criminal behaviour:** the identification, analysis and examination of criminal behaviour and involvement in crime, including the individual's criminal history and criminological analysis thereof;
- **Motives:** the motives for conducting the crime(s), for instance revenge, anger, greed, and/or jealousy.
- **Causes:** factors such as criminal associates and influences, gang/organized crime syndicate involvement, substance abuse, poverty, unemployment, and peer group pressure/influence may play a role in an individual's involvement in crime and criminal behaviour;
- **Precursors / triggers:** factors such as rejection, humiliation, isolation, anxiety, and/or conflict at home could play a role in determining precursors to criminality;
- **Modus operandi:** offence planning, use of violence, force and weapons, persuasion methods to submit victim to crime, specific method used when committing a crime;
- **Victimology:** specifically the victim choice/selection, offender-victim relationship, and characteristics of the victim(s);
- **High-risk situations:** circumstances under which the offender is most likely to reoffend, and the opportunity to reoffend, for instance access to children (i.e., paedophiles);
- **Criminological risk prediction:** probability for future involvement in crime, types of crime, diversity of criminal abilities;
- **Scientific theoretical explanation:** explaining the criminal behaviour / involvement in crime;
- **Safety and security of society:** pre-parole assessments to determine the likelihood to successfully reintegrate the offender into society, the risk the individual poses to society and vulnerable victims (i.e., the disabled, children) and risk probability to reoffend (Hesselink-Louw, 2004).

The aforementioned focus and functions related to the assessment of criminal behaviour are best determined in a multi-disciplinary team – that is, an assessment team representative of a social worker, psychologist, educationalist, religious worker, criminologist, psychiatrist and a health worker. According to McGuire (2001), if these functions, perspectives and expertise of professionals are combined, corrections can expect a more accurate profile of the offender, more accurate and effective rehabilitation efforts, and a better impact on recidivism.

The benefits of including criminologists in the assessment and treatment of offenders are multi-fold. Maree et al (2003) identify the following benefits:

- Correctional rehabilitation programmes are based on sound and scientific theory – the basis and foundation of any criminologist's training and functioning;

- By including the criminologist in the multi-disciplinary rehabilitation team, a holistic perspective of the offender is provided to better pinpoint rehabilitation and treatment efforts;
- Criminologists can diminish the already heavy workload of correctional officials in the treatment and rehabilitation of offenders;
- Corrections can benefit from the assistance, academic skills and knowledge of criminologists;
- Employment opportunities within practice are created for criminologists.

Banking and Security Industry

Criminologists have been in the employ of the banking (i.e., South African Banking Risk Information Centre – SABRIC) and security (i.e., De Beer's Mining Group) sectors for approximately the past eight to ten years and are tasked with among other duties: crime risk information and intelligence, identification, profiling of perpetrators, analysis, explanation and assessment of perpetrators, prevention of crimes pertaining to the banking and security industry (the development of crime prevention models and strategies), crime patterns, motives and modus operandi explanations (Maree, personal communication, July 23, 2007).

Conservation Crime

According to Herbig and Joubert (2006), criminology has incontrovertibly through the years contributed significantly towards understanding and addressing the quandary of conventional crime and criminality in South African society. Criminological research has, therefore, in the fullness of time gravitated towards the more customary and higher profile type of crime in society causing crime categorisation to develop commensurate this trend. Resultantly crime and criminality directed at natural resources have been marginalized and relegated to the periphery of more prominent crime categorisations, such as, white-collar crime, organised crime, economic crime, invisible crime etc – essentially depriving it of its own inimitable identity.

Although chiefly a semantical dilemma, the development and demarcation of a viable and mutually exclusive conservation crime category as a vanguard to conservation criminology will assist criminologists in their quest to research this phenomenon thereby enhancing its theoretical constructs and evolving its frontiers as well as facilitating the task of other criminal justice contributors in implementing rectitude through holistic and sustainable intervention strategies.

Congruous with the theme of this paper it is contended by the authors that conservation crime should be founded on the argument that natural resource manipulation needs to be comprehended and managed within the domain of criminology and that a post-modern criminology equipped for current and future natural resource agendas has the intellectual latitude to embrace conservation and social issues holistically as allied ventures.

Criminology and its application in the conservation crime sphere can facilitate a paradigm shift from the current reactive management of non compliance to the proactive management of compliance. Thereby ensuring minimal natural resource trauma and perturbation and promoting biotic diversity to the benefit of the delicate bionetworks on which mankind's very existence depends.

Polygraph as a Criminological Support Mechanism

The use of polygraph as a means of determining human veracity, although widely applied, is not without controversy. Many arguments have throughout the years been advanced supporting and condemning the use of the technique. Notwithstanding this fact, its utility and multifarious applicability within the criminological landscape cannot be disputed.

The polygraph finds many uses within the remit of the criminologist. For instance, the technique has already been used successfully for, amongst others, the monitoring/surveillance and treatment of sexual offender parolees, screening and vetting of employees – prospective and/or existing, as well as criminal and private oriented investigations. Although seldom employed by criminologists physically, the modern polygraph holds distinct additional application potential to facilitate the criminologist's task. For example it's potential to identify charlatanry by inmates during criminological risk and treatment assessments to facilitate the recommendation of effective treatment and rehabilitative regimens, and in determining candour in the case of victim impact statements and offender pre-sentence evaluation reports could well be regarded as invaluable.

Within the mainstream policing system polygraph can to a greater or lesser extent be used by criminologists to assist with, amongst others, determining the presence/absence of police perjury, corruption and/or dereliction of duty allegations, accuracy/reliability of informant intelligence and/or suspect/witness accounts, pre-employment screening of applicants as well as the resolving of general investigation impasses.

The prospect of undergoing a polygraph examination in any one or combination of the above instances (whether actually administered or not) may encourage witness integrity in the legal process. Therefore, application of polygraph is an invaluable resource for law enforcement functionaries. The sentiments expressed above apply *mutatis mutandis* to the utilization of polygraph by criminologists in the private sector.

Polygraphy is not currently used in the South African corrections system (Knoesen, 1998 and Swart 1998, in Martin, 2001). It has been applied with high levels of success regarding the monitoring/surveillance of paroled/post-conviction sexual offenders in the United States of America (Grubin & Masden, 2005). Given the state of overcrowding in South African prisons, the high level of recidivism, which according to A.E. Hesselink-Louw (personal communication, April 17, 2007) and J.A. Prinsloo (personal communication, April 17, 2007) could be as high as 90%, as well as departmental human resource shortages it would seem to be an expedient method of ameliorating some of the immediate management/rehabilitative/treatment predicaments faced in this arena.

- Due to the polygraph's ability to elicit information from offenders who might be less forthcoming during traditional interviewing/assessment techniques, and bearing in mind that what an offender was prosecuted for rarely represents the true depth of his/her deviance (Kokish, 2003), areas of criminological application of the polygraph in the corrections landscape could, in addition to the aforementioned, include the following:
- determination of veracity during miscellaneous criminological assessments – aiding, amongst others, profile compilation;
- determination of mendaciousness during parole and probation applications – a decision-making support mechanism;

- screening of awaiting trial prisoners – reduce pressure on court system;
- surveillance/monitoring of probationers and parolees (of all types) – increase compliance with conditions, deter recidivism/reoffending and mitigate staff shortages;
- investigation of inmate impropriety – exonerating innocent individuals;
- superior inmate information acquisition for treatment leverage and programme formulation – promoting rehabilitation pathway objectives
- increased deterrence and concomitant minimisation of inmate reoffending risk.

The criminologist, therefore, with his/her superior erudition regarding crime and criminality is in a suitable position to extract maximum benefit from polygraph usage in applications considered generic and those purporting to be more exploratory. The introduction and application of polygraph by the criminologist within a containment team approach involving supervision agents, therapists and allied role-players, wherein there is a continuous exchange of information facilitating progress assessment, problem identification, treatment planning and decision-making is of the utmost importance and an exciting challenge, the benefits of which would certainly seem to outweigh any latent impediments.

Another equally important arena in which criminologists feature, but have only in recent years begun to play a vital albeit underestimated role is within the court process. As expert witnesses for the prosecution or defence, victim impact statements and pre-sentence evaluation reports respectively can be formulated and presented by a forensic criminologist during a criminal trial.

According to A.E. Van der Hoven (personal communication, April 17, 2007), these reports are unfortunately often viewed by judicial officials as being biased accounts presented by the defence, due to the fact that the expert witness is being remunerated by that party. Irrespective hereof the use of these reports is a slow, but deliberate criminological step in the right direction as it allows judicial officials, who do not have specific training in the art of sentencing, to individualise punishment, thereby enhancing rehabilitative potential and reducing reoffending risk and recidivism.

By broadening the criminological horizon through the employment of polygraphy as an associate discipline it is contended that the weight attributed to a pre-sentence evaluation report, or a witness impact statement for that matter, which has been verified as a truthful rendition by an independent forensic psychophysicologist (polygraph examiner) will possess a higher intrinsic value than that attributed to the uncorroborated evidence provided by a criminological expert witness without such professional collaboration. Polygraph authentication can therefore act as a medium for the expansion and acceptance of pre-sentence reports as well as the modification of the judiciary's insular perspective of this beneficial practice.

Courts, unfortunately, do not, as a rule, accept polygraph results as *prima facie* evidence (Beukman, 2005), remain cautious thereof (Cilliers & Martin, 2003) and fluctuate with regard to the amount of significance attributed thereto. Thereby presenting one of the biggest challenges to overcome in this sphere. Polygraph testing executed by suitably qualified experts (such as criminologists), not merely polygraph operators or analysts will improve the credibility of the evidence presented

(2005, p.66) states "this [polygraph] is a very useful tool in the hands of a skilled criminologist".

In summary, therefore, polygraphy in its many guises would seem to possess distinct criminological application and be an invaluable vehicle for the criminologist to utilize in the quest against the burgeoning crime phenomenon. Through polygraph application, irrespective of its controversial nature, criminological horizons can be expanded and the further evolution of this essentially exigent profession instigated.

Conclusion

Having highlighted the professional criminological inputs (as well as potential inputs) in practice in South Africa, it is clear that many challenges remain to effectively incorporate and "sell" criminology as a practical and contributive field within the private, criminal justice and corporate spheres. In this vein it is important to note, however, that criminology/criminologists are by no means attempting to commandeer or dominate the field of crime research and/or application, but rather seek, together with other relevant disciplines in a containment approach, to mobilise action that is appropriate to embrace and where possible breach the frontiers of contemporary crime and criminality application to the benefit of all South Africans.

In South Africa, practising criminologists resort under the category of a "scarce skills/profession." Due to the fact that criminology in South Africa is not a registered profession and hence regulated (as with psychologists and social workers) by a professional regulating body (with clear professional guidelines and boundaries related to this profession), criminologists have to "sell" and promote their services (i.e., types of services and contributions rendered by criminologists) to the criminal justice and private sectors. The professionalisation of criminology/criminologists will enhance employment opportunities for criminologists and it will furthermore increase interest in the field of criminology for prospect practitioners. This will mean that career paths and specialisation fields (i.e., profiling, corrections, crime analysis and research) will be established and criminological services can be integrated into many multidisciplinary fields and approaches.

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