EUROPEAN GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

An international network working towards social justice, state accountability and decarceration since 1973

www.europeangroup.org

Coordinator team: Vicky Canning, KatjaSimončič, Dani Jiménez-Franco

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February 2021 NEWSLETTER
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Introduction: news and next events

Dear comrades and colleagues of the European Group

We hope you continue to keep well and have been able to stay OK (at the very least) as we moved into 2021. Like many of you, we are trying to balance the reality of the current political and pandemic climate and the demands of everyday life. So although we have been quiet on the newsletter front, in fact there is a lot of EG activity and energy going on in the background!

The first thing of note is that – due to the ongoing nature of the pandemic – we will not be holding the conference in person in Turin this year. This seems another disappointing blow after it being such a long time since we all met in Barcelona. However, the reasons are fourfold: 1) it seems increasingly unlikely that this would-be virus-safe; 2) capacity would be significantly reduced in any case; 3) there is likely to be internationalised travel inequalities as the cost of tests to travel increases, forcing a financial inequality division and 4) to reduce unnecessary stress for EG colleagues in Turin at this time.

This brings us to good news (yes – it still exists in the world!) – we will instead run an online series of panels organised as a collective by the Working Group co-ordinators and EG Co-ordinators. As you will see on page 10, this is aimed to begin in April with the British/Irish section – hopefully in person but if this is not possible then it will form the online sessions, which will begin in September. More information will be outlined as the organising process develops.

It is also fantastic to say that the EG has now moved to work in collaboration with Policy Press. As you can imagine, this has been a long process so please give a virtual round of applause/cheers/hugs/thanks to the journal editors Jon Burnett, Ida Nafstad and Lisa White on working through the new Double Issue which will also launch in September. It looks FANTASTIC.

This month’s edition is packed with more information on forthcoming meetings, books and seminars; good news from Iñaki Rivera and the excellent news that EG colleagues in Finland have secured a project focussed on ‘silent agents’. Many congratulations.

We know these are tough times for all, and in particular as news from Myanmar unravels it is likely those in the group from or working with colleagues there will have further considerations – hopes that violence doesn’t escalate further, and solidarity with those targeted or affected.

Take care all - in solidarity,

Vicky, Dani and Katja
I

Academics Against the Introduction of Special University Police Force for Greek Universities Signature Collection

Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected the health, economic, educational and cultural systems globally and the day-to-day lives of people around the world, the Greek academic community was suddenly informed in December 2020 that the Greek government has decided to establish a new police security force for universities under the name: “Squads for the Protection of Universities”. These squads are to be staffed with 1030 police officers who will not have graduated from the 3 years Police Academy degree, which was required so far in police hiring procedures. Rather they will be staffed through rapid hiring procedures of candidates that have declared an interest in becoming police officers. An issue that has also raised concerns within police unions. Despite the lack of proper training, these squads will have the authority to arrest, interrogate, prevent and address any ‘deviant’ or criminal behaviour.

Police stations are to be established within University premises and universities will be obliged to implement a system of restricted access on campuses, which is highly problematic as in some areas, University campuses are the only open-green spaces available to members of the wider community. University authorities will have to facilitate the new patrolling “Special Forces” in “all possible ways” to implement their duties, which include the systematic surveillance of the campus with special technological equipment (CCTV cameras, microphones etc) and the conduct of preliminary “crime” investigations.

Importantly and most worryingly, these squads will not answer to university authorities, as required so far by the autonomous character of universities. Instead, they will directly fall under the mandate of the Greek police. The costs however for their function will lie on the already limited budget of Greek Universities. These aspects are very distant from the protection of academic freedom that the bill alleges to support. Academic freedom entails freedom of scientific research and teaching as well as, the constitutional prerequisite of the fully autonomous nature of universities. Therefore, the fact that these squads will act and be managed and supervised by the Greek police renders this bill unconstitutional regarding the principle of university self-rule. The bill hinders academic freedom and transforms the Greek institutions of higher education in fortresses of control, repression and policing.

Pro-government media orchestrated during the previous months a slanderous campaign aiming to defame the universities and represent them to the Greek public as “centers of lawlessness” and delinquency, an allegation totally unfounded on relevant research or statistics. It also engaged coordinated attacks of defamation targeting the members of the academic community who are openly opposing the bill. Further, the Greek government has attempted to justify its bill through false pretences of ‘best practice’ stemming from examples in the Western World and particularly Oxford University. Such justifications could not be further from the truth and UCU Oxford has openly taken a stance against the bill, while denying the existence of University police force in its premises. It should be clearly noted that no police force is established in any European University. Rather, as is the current case in Greece, security personnel and porters under University’s authorities are responsible for security issues.
The Greek government intends to introduce the bill this month, without any discussion and debate with the academic community and institutions and even though all Greek university authorities, administrations, academics and students are openly against the bill.

We declare that we oppose the operation inside the University of any guard or security force not subjected to the control of University authorities. We oppose a bill that threatens and undermines democracy and obstructs the free circulation of ideas between Greek universities and Greek society.

We consider the funding of the squads from the universities’ budget provocative given the scarce resources available to Greek Universities for teaching, research and infrastructures. The employment of 1030 police officers for universities follows a decade of understaffing in teaching, research and administrative personnel and makes this provocation even more blatant. The fact that the Greek government has chosen to move forward with this bill at a time of a pandemic, where universities minimally function as physical sites for education and research and where there is limitation of the freedom of movement and the right to protest renders such action authoritarian and undemocratic.

We strongly oppose the Greek government’s plans in establishing a Police Security Force within Greek Universities.

Please send your signatures against the bill and in solidarity to Greek Academics to:

Signature collection: NoUniPolice@gmail.com
II

Dear EG members,

We are happy to announce that the Spanish Association for Human Rights (APDHE) has awarded Iñaki Rivera with the 2020 National Human Rights Award, which was delivered last November 26 at Cervantes Institute in Madrid [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vch7DQRpEjU].

From the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina to all countries from where EG members send their support, all of us managed to foil the plan of far-right sectors to turn this vote into another chapter of the persecution to which Iñaki has been subjected for years – a permanent defamation campaign including four court cases still in progress, the last one dating back to 1 month ago.

Our congratulations to our good friends and colleagues at SIRECOVI [https://sirecovi.ub.edu/index_en.html] in Barcelona!

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Only a few words to say to all of you THANK YOU VERY-VERY MUCH! for your help and permanent solidarity with me, with us.

All the very best, comrades!

NO PASARÁN!

Iñaki Rivera
Hello all,

We are pleased to announce an exciting addition to the Policy Press journals list for 2021: *Justice, Power and Resistance*, the journal of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control which is currently published by EG Press. We are delighted to be working together on the re-launch of the journal with Policy Press in September 2021.

*Justice, Power and Resistance* is an international, peer-reviewed journal promoting critical analysis and connecting theory, politics and activism. Working towards social justice, state accountability and decarceration, the journal is primarily a vehicle to make accessible and advance challenging research and scholarship that can be utilised to critically inform contemporary debates and policies.

*Learn more about Justice, Power and Resistance.*

**Call for papers: Pandemics, Policing and Protest**

**Abstract submission deadline December 1**

In a recent interview with *Vanity Fair*, Angela Y. Davis stated that this current moment marks “a conjuncture between the COVID-19 crisis and the increasing awareness of the structural nature of racism” and that such a moment cannot be predicted, but can be taken advantage of. In this spirit we call for articles that are critical of contemporary increases in policing, regulation and social control, much of which at present may be seen as opportunistic in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This special double issue of *Justice, Power and Resistance* seeks critical perspectives on a range of themes linking to ‘Pandemics, Policing and Protest’ and will cover two areas:

- Coronavirus – Crisis, Control and Beyond
- Police Abolition – Critical Perspectives on Policing

*Read the full call for papers to learn more.*

**Sign up for the Justice, Power and Resistance e-newsletter**

and follow [@BUP_Journals](https://twitter.com/BUP_Journals) on twitter for all of the latest news.

Thanks and best wishes,

Thea Cook

Journals Marketing Executive

Bristol University Press and Policy Press

1-9 Old Park Hill, Bristol BS2 8BB, UK
From Social Harm to Zemiology

New book available for pre-order

Vicky Canning and Steve Tombs, preface by Paddy Hillyard

This book outlines key developments in understanding social harm by setting out its historical foundations and the discussions which have proliferated since. It examines various attempts to conceptualise social harm and highlights key sites of contestation in its relationship to criminology to argue that these act as the basis for an activist zemiology, one directed towards social change for social justice. The past two decades has seen a proliferation of debate related to social harm in and around criminology. From climate catastrophe and a focus on environmental harms, unprecedented deaths generating focus on border harms, and the coronavirus pandemic revealing the horror of mass and arguably avoidable deaths across the globe, critical studies in social harm appear ever more pressing.

From Social Harm to Zemiology locates the study of social harm in an accessible fashion, drawing on a range of international case studies of cultural, emotional, physical and economic harms. In doing so it sets out how a zemiological lens can moves us beyond many of the problematic legacies of criminology. This book rejects criminologies which have disproportionately served to regulate intersectional groups, and which have arguably inflicted as much or more harm by bolstering the very ideologies of control in offering minor reforms that inadvertently expand and strengthen states and corporations. It does this by sketching out the contours, objects, methods and ontologies of a disciplinary framework which rejects commonplace assumptions of ‘value freedom’. From Social Harm to Zemiology advocates social change in accordance with groups who are most disenfranchised, and thus often most socially harmed.
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A novel research project in Finland studies silent agents affected by legislation. The aim is to move from an insufficient knowledge base toward inclusive legislative solutions (SILE)

Anne Alvesalo-Kuusi, Maija Helminen, Johanna Vanto, Nea Peltoniemi & Minttu Kopperoinen (Members of the University of Turku sub-project).

Those in society with power and a platform make decisions for and about those with less. Although this might work just fine for the middle class, the most vulnerable people in our society are effectively silenced. We call these people ‘silent agents’. The term comprises people who suffer from severe mental-health problems, the excessive consumption of harmful substances or consumer indebtedness. It also includes children in care, offenders and ‘precarious’ residents such as undocumented migrants and asylum seekers.

Today some of these people are represented by government bodies or organizations, which, in the eyes of society, has legitimized the fact that their own voices still go unheard when their lives are legislated on. Yet, there is ample evidence of callous governance causing them suffering, unforeseen by legislators. This harm could be avoided by adopting genuinely inclusive practices in law drafting. Thus, we challenge the typical understanding of evidence-based policy that relies solely on knowledge produced by experts and science. Instead, we stress the importance of the democratic participation of those with real life experience of their circumstances, regardless of their perceived position in society.

The aim of SILE is to generate new knowledge and working methods to facilitate the building of inclusive and transparent legislation that is socially and ethically sustainable. The purpose is to improve literacy among all parties concerning legislative processes, and to empower silent agents and give them platforms from which to make a meaningful impact.

The consortium is spearheaded by the University of Helsinki, Faculty of Social Sciences with an established international advisory board, including colleagues from the European Group such as Victoria Canning. The project is funded by the Strategic Research Council, Academy of Finland.
VI
Is it a crime to be poor?

You may be interested to look at our new website, Is It a Crime to Be Poor? which was launched after the 11 Nov webinar, please let your students know about it! Thanks.

http://crimetobepoor.org
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEFiLPIWUWk&list=PL5TjiPipilPqjs50AOPV18oumy4A7Ov_1&index=6

Now I'm writing to ask whether you or other colleagues have a post-grad student looking for a research topic -- I've started some research and am hoping to find someone to take it further.

There are many interesting issues involved in this: mental health/cjs; social housing problems/remedies; is it a crime to be poor? It would be a good project for someone with both a sociology/criminology/ law background.

I have recently looked at sanctions for contempt of court. I've analysed 100 recent cases (notes attached). To my mind these cases perfectly illustrate the question 'Is it a crime to be poor?' -- the clearest illustration is the group of cases where people have been sent to prison for begging, and also where there is imprisonment imposed again and again for troublesome (and often very nasty) behaviour linked to mental health issues of various kinds, especially drug and alcohol dependence, which in your circle and mine would lead to medical treatment perhaps on the NHS or an expensive stay at The Priory rather than as a guest of Her Majesty.

I have tried to find out about the guidance given to those who make the decisions in contempt of court cases, and can't find any. Surely such guidance exists? I have read the guidance issued by the Sentencing Guidelines Council in relation to breaches of anti-social behaviour orders made under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 but they haven't given me answers to my questions, which are copied below. I've also looked at Court of Appeal decision in Gill v Birmingham City Council [2016] EWCA Civ 608. I attach the notes of these 100 recent cases.

Attached are two interesting judgments which vividly illustrate two of the constant themes of this type of imprisonment: severe mental illhealth (Legge); intractable issues around social housing (Parker).

With many thanks and with very best wishes

Rona Epstein

QUESTIONS about sentencing for contempt of court

1. What guidance is given to judges/magistrates with regard to how they should deal with contempt of court cases, especially with regard to vulnerable contemnorrs, and in particular those whose behaviour would indicate mental health issues?

2. Does the court have power to order a pre-sentence report? If so, why is it never used?

3. Does the court have the right to request assistance from experts in probation and in social work?

4. What guidance is given to the courts about making a mental health order? In this analysis of 100 contempt of court sentences there were many cases where the evidence suggested
underlying mental health issues, yet not one single mental health order was imposed. Hale v Tanner, LJ Hale: 'There are mental health orders'.

5. What are the guidelines about imposing costs and fines? M. Riley, a homeless alcoholic found to be in a prohibited place (his father’s home) was ordered to pay costs of £2093 (Kingston upon Thames Court, 17.3.2020) – does the court have any duty to conduct a means enquiry to establish whether this is possible? Judge Tear, Brentford County Court, imposed a fine of £120 on two contemnors: was he obliged to conduct a means enquiry?

6. Is addiction a mitigating or an aggravating feature?
   a. Gailene Young, ‘aggravating factor, defendant was drunk’. (Wandsworth Court, 25.9.20).
   b. Jessica Cook, ‘a mitigating feature is her drug addiction’ (Bromley Court, 4.3.20).
   Faye Skuse-Sims ‘drug addiction is a mitigating feature’ (Bristol County Court, 27.5.20).

Rona Epstein
Honorary Research Fellow
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https://www.all4maternity.com/why-are-pregnant-women-in-prison-a-call-for-midwives-for-our-research-study/
https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/resources/supreme-court-decision-detaining-asylum-seekers-was-unlawful
https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/resources/right-family-life-children-whose-mothers-are-prison
VII
“Redressing the harms and violence of ‘othering’ – within and without plague times”. A conference of the British/Irish section of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control

Extended and updated call for papers

...the town immobilized by the functioning of an extensive power that bears in a distinct way over all individual bodies... (Foucault 1975: 6).

Venue: Albert Hall, Nottingham
Date: 22.4.-23.4.2021

The years 2020/2021 mark one hundred years since the beginning of the 1920’s, a period characterised by economic and political unrest in the aftermath of World War I and the crash of the stock market. Importantly, the 1920’s also saw the rise of fascism that relies on systematic strategies and measures of ‘othering’ that serve as expressions of visions of a purified social body.

2020 became a year characterised predominantly by the pandemic of COVID 19. The initial official political and media discourses in the UK adopted war metaphors (e.g. ongoing martial term ‘lockdown’) and was later substituted with a form of repressive collectivism that constitutes and targets scapegoats. Instead of any admission of systematic underfunding and destruction of public services due to the idolisation and structural fostering of an entirely socially irresponsible individualistic and individualising neoliberal capitalist distortion of ‘society’, the political discourse refers to the risk of putting an ‘unsustainable strain’ on ‘our’ NHS that is deemed to emanate from specific parts of the population and/or of new variants of the virus originating in other nations.

Each surge in cases is responded to by threats of and at times implementations of ‘tougher coronavirus restrictions’ whereby such measures originate from and result in fear.
In ‘Discipline and Punish’ Foucault explored how the plague served to legitimate ‘the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life’ (Foucault 1975: 198). This of course reflects the micro-management of ‘bodies’ at the present moment via ‘lockdowns’, behavioural regulations in relation to ‘bodies’ and their spatial distribution, their engagement with prescribed ‘hygienic routines’ and especially their unmediated contact.

To Agamben the ‘camp’ serves as a symbol: “The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule” (Agamben 1998: 168-9)

The pandemic intensified that process of normalisation of the state of exception as this context facilitates the continuous brutal demarcation of a boundary between bare life and political existence.

The resulting processes of political and legal exclusion have profound consequences. People are made to be suspicious of other people’s ‘bodies’ and are told to avoid contact while also being encouraged to police each other which is facilitated by the operationalisation of constructions of ‘enemies’ by means of Othering (Merskin 2004) and so in turns ‘youth’, students, migrants, ‘deniers’ and/or ‘covididiots’ are blamed for the failures, corruption and short-comings of this and previous governments. This constructed dichotomy of ‘us’ and ‘them’, serves as a means of framing the political arena whereby protests are represented as acts of criminal disruption, rather than important aspects of democratic civic participation. The profound existential inequalities within society are denied by the repetitive rhetoric of ‘we are all in this together’ as the concept of ‘social distancing’ is lived and experienced in fundamentally unequal terms.

The dehumanisation of people relies on processes of Othering whereby the processes and structures of ‘othering’ are interdependent with the existence of institutions that reify a specific ‘Order of things’. While Western identity and culture itself can be understood as fundamentally interrelated with and constructed by an othering logic (Said 1985) it is also continuing to adopt reductionist modern conceptions of the ‘body’ as biological entity instead of allowing for alternative understandings of ‘lived bodies’ as social, political as well as emotional and spiritual beings.

This reductionism facilitates the use of decontextualising statistics of ‘bodies’, of assumed ‘risks’ of ‘bodies’ that are based on selective scientific ‘truth’ claims be operationalised as: “For capitalist society, it was biopolitics, the biological, the corporal, that mattered more than anything else” (Foucault 2000: 137).

This conference seeks to challenge the destructive operations of ‘othering’ in different contexts, aims for the abolition of its facilitating structures and ideologies and to explore ways of engaging in critical and creative praxis in the struggle to overcome these.

In order to achieve these aims contributions to the following themes are invited:

◊ Bio-politics of ‘Other’.
◊ processes of ‘othering’ and the continued ‘lived realities’ of slavery.
◊ ‘othering’ of non-human animals, our planet and the Anthropocene.
◊ generating ‘new’ Others (e.g. via early intervention schemes, Brexit-discourses, ‘covidiot’ etc.).
◊ Securitisation and state power: the politics of lockdown in the pandemic.
◊ Covid, corruption and state/corporate crimes.
◊ Criminalising protest (e.g. extinction Rebellion and BLM).
◊ Pandemic and discourse: Moral panic and scapegoating in the times of Covid.
◊ ‘othering’ and the ‘floating signifiers’ of ‘race’ and ‘gender’.
◊ ‘sexuality’/‘gender’ and the generation of ‘other’.
◊ ‘othering’ and geological, cultural and existential ‘sacrifice zones’ and ‘sacrificed bodies’ (care-home deaths; use of DNAR/DNR ‘Do Not Attempt To Resuscitate Orders’ etc.).
◊ transhumanism and ‘othering’.
◊ ‘others’ and visions of a purified social body.
◊ ‘othering’, ‘legislative cleansing’ and genocide.
◊ challenging the Othering and dehumanisation of people; conceptions of shared ‘fraility’ (Turner) and Butler’s concept of ‘precariousness’ as a collectively shared conditions of life (2004, 2009).
◊ queering the normative, re-gaining control of representations, fighting the oppression of ‘othering’ and dehumanization – art i(a)s resistance.

While already existing and accepted contributions are of course already part of the conference program please feel free to send altered and/or new abstracts and other critical and/or creative suggestions for contribution to abeckmann94@outlook.com by 1.3.2021!
VIII

After Strangeways. The past, present and future of prisons

Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. www.crimeandjustice.org.uk

About the webinar series:

The 25-day protest in April 1990 at Strangeways prison in Manchester was the longest prison protest in British history. A report into the protests by Lord Justice Woolf, published the following year in February 1991, laid bare some of the dysfunctions of the prison system that gave rise to the protests. Welcomed by some, others considered it a missed opportunity. Thirty years on, the dysfunctions and problems of the prison system that gave rise to the Strangeways protest are as pressing as ever. Indeed some would argue they are worse. Many prisons across Britain appear locked in a terminal spiral of decline and decay.

In five webinars over five days, we will:

- Discuss the background to the Strangeways protest.
- Recount what happened in those 25 days in April 1990 and the immediate consequences.
- Review the failed attempts to reform the prison system, and address systemic injustices in prisons, since the Strangeways protest.
- Take a long view on 200 hundred years of failure in prisons and consider a future in which prisons are no longer a mainstay of our response to crime.

22–26 February. 9.30 –11.30 (GMT). Register here:
https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/events
IX

*Imagining Abolition: Beyond prisons, wars, and borders.*

Virtual Gathering - Call For Proposals

April 14-17, 2021

The events of 2020 point to the need for a society that moves away from racial and other social-identity based supracieties, colonialism, and racial capitalism, and grows new roots in the values of human dignity, abolition, democracy, and radical transformation. To develop this society, we must interrogate our current understandings of community and justice and develop new conceptions, policies, and practices that we can use to build the “beloved community.” Building community for such abolition requires the vision and participation of all and commitment to working through a complex process. In this spirit, we seek to gather people who have been directly impacted by carceral systems, their friends and family, artists, activists, scholars, and other community members to participate in this *virtual gathering*.

To this end, we invite proposals for papers, roundtables, skill sharing, story-telling, art (including but not limited to visual art, spoken word, and music), workshops, teach-ins, activist trainings, somatics, and other activities, for a virtual gathering that will take place across global time zones *Wednesday, April 14 through Saturday, April 17, 2021*. Proposals and presentations should be submitted in English. Presentations may be possible in any language (though English is strongly preferred), and conference organizers are committed to making translation services available as much as possible.

**Submit proposals by February 20, 2021 to abolition2021@gmail.com**. Proposals should include a title and 200-250-word description of your presentation, along with 50-100 word bios of each presenter designed for inclusion in the conference program. Please provide your full name, any affiliation you would like to include, and preferred email address. Let us know of any needed accommodations, including child minding, ASL, and closed captioning. People who are incarcerated are welcome to submit proposals via email or phone at +1 530-566-6559 (*no other calls please*).

The themes for proposals are open, and are invited to center on any abolition-related topic, such as penal abolition, racial and other social identity-based supracieties, social movements, uprisings, abolition praxis, abolitionist theory, radical democracy, disability, health justice, domestic violence, COVID-19 realities, the medical industrial complex, reproductive justice, support of currently or formerly incarcerated and their families, transformative/restorative justice, reparations, colonialism/imperialism, abolitionist strategies, immigration, or other related topics not included here.

For any additional questions, contact conference organizers at abolition2021@gmail.com
A BIG THANKS to all the European Group members for making this newsletter successful. Please feel free to contribute to this newsletter by sending any information that you think might be of interest to the Group to Vicky/Katja/Dani at europeangroupcoordinator@gmail.com

Please try to send it in before the 25th of each month if you wish to have it included in the following month’s newsletter. Please provide a web link (wherever possible).

http://www.europeangroup.org/

In the meantime – we send all our best wishes to members from our temporary realities.

Salud!

Vicky, Dani and Katja