EUROPEAN GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

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

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I. Conference report

Economic Crisis and Crime: From Global North to Global South
44th Annual Conference of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control
Escola de Psicologia/School of Psychology, Universidade do Minho (Pólo de Gualtar), Braga, Portugal

This year’s conference took place in Braga in Portugal. The organizer of the conference, Luísa Saavedra, Ângela Maia, Marlene Matos, Miguel Cameira, Paula Cristina Martins, Eunice Seixas, Hugo Gomes and Rui Abrunhosa, the secretariat Ana M. Silva and Ana S. Ferreira and the stream coordinators did a wonderful job in organizing the conference. The sessions, infrastructure and the food were all very well taken care of. All attendants were warmly welcomed by the School of Psychology.
The conference presented more than 90 papers, organized in seven topical sessions. There were three plenary sessions, and more than 150 participants from around the world.

The first day of the conference provided a plenary session by Ivone Cunha, who spoke about Portugal's distinctive drug policies, which gave the audience and
visitors to Portugal a good introduction to the country’s decriminalized relation to drug consumption.

The rest of the day was used for the first parallel session and the launch of the European Groups new journal, *Justice, Power and Resistance*. The editors and authors of the foundational issue gave inspiring and engaging presentations of the journal, its ideas, foundations and content. The journal is based on voluntary work, in which the people involved have done an amazing job. It was pointed to the need for more volunteers. If you are eager to contributing please contact the europeangroupjournal@gmail.com.

The second day of the conference held two stimulating parallel sessions, a plenary discussion and the Annual Group Meeting (AGM). The plenary session “Economic Crisis and Crime: From Global North to Global South” set out to discuss the main topic of the conference. We had asked people from countries throughout Europe, from south to north, to contribute with views from their countries, and bring them together to discuss this topic from various perspectives. They represented the current issues based on discussions within the academic community of their country. The goal was to make the plenary session the results of a common reflection among the EG members, and promote the debate in each country. Andrea Beckman
represented the UK, Per Jörgen Ystehede Norway, Helgi Gunnlaugsson Iceland, Alvise Sbraccia Italy, and Alejandro Forero Cullar represented Spain.

The closing day brought another motivating parallel session and John Moore held the plenary session discussing post-colonial perspectives.

The parallel sessions brought various themes of interest to the group, but to sum up there were some issues given particular attention, showing where some of the main interest of the group is currently situated. These themes were, in addition to the main topic of economic crisis and crime, accountability of the powerful, and post-colonialism. (This is of course based on the sessions we attended and discussions with other member of the group, so other participants who attended other session and discussions might have a different impression.)

All delegates would probably agree to the success of the conference. The delegates were very well attended to throughout the three days (we doubt that anyone have ever had so many delicious cakes during so few days before). The conference dinner at the Migaitas on Friday was a welcomed breather located in a beautiful garden, and its welcoming atmosphere made for a great social environment.

AGM Report
The AGM was held on Friday, the second day of the conference. Many of the conference delegates had found their way to the meeting, which was of great importance since this forum is the highest decision taker in the group. The following points were discussed and up for decisions and information:
Conference 2017
Turkey as a venue for the 2017 conference was decided at the AGM in Tallinn in 2015. This decision was at the time taken without anyone voicing any objections. However, during 2016 we have received a number of e-mails from EG members expressing their trepidations about having this conference in Turkey, especially in the aftermath of the attempted coup. We thus decided that this was an issue we needed to address and discuss again on this year’s AGM in Braga. We would like to thank Aimilia who agreed to answer questions about hosting the conference in Turkey raised by the group at the AGM – a difficult role to be put in. At the AGM it was decided to have a vote. The questions were: 1) Who will definitely go to Turkey (33 out of 65 voted that they would go to Turkey), 2) Who will go for a Plan B, which was to host the conference a different place in case it shows to be too difficult to arrange it in Turkey (10/65 voted for plan B), and 3) Who will definitely not go (3/65 voted that they would abstain from coming). The strongest vote was for sticking to the Turkey plan, but as showed by the number of voters, many also refrained from voting. The Braga AGM decided that the conference should be held in Turkey in 2017, and also that if there are circumstances showing that this will not work out, the conference will be held in Lesvos.

Conference 2018
Many suggestions for a conference venue for 2018 were raised, but no one could make any commitment at this point. However, Slovenia was one of the suggestions and after the conference we have been in touch with the representatives from Ljubljana, who received the endorsement from their institution after only a few days. The suggestion was circulated through the steering committee and the national representatives who endorsed Ljubljana as conference venue for 2018. Therefore, the European Group Annual Conference 2018 will be hosted by the Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law, in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Katja Simončič and Aleš Završnik will lead the organizing team in Ljubljana.

Motions
Two motions were up for discussions; one on the French burkini ban and one in regard to death in the Mediterranean and the responsibilities of the states. With some amendments the burkini ban motion were endorsed. The text can be read here [http://www.europeangroup.org/?q=node/114](http://www.europeangroup.org/?q=node/114). The text for the Mediterranean motion was not yet finished, but the motion was endorsed in principle. The finished text will be circulated in the steering committee and among the national representatives. The motion on the burkini ban can also be read at page 15 in this newsletter.
**Newsletter**

Ida and Per reminded the delegates that the newsletter is a collective effort and encouraged the national representatives and everyone else to contribute with news of relevance for the group from their respective countries.

**Aftermath**

In the aftermath of the conference several topics have been up for discussions among the national representatives and the steering committee in which we as coordinator and secretary, conference organizers and stream organizers should take into consideration organizing future conferences. To include activists and social movement more actively in the conference, and connect the conference to the place it is being held in a higher degree, was one of the general issues. In regard to future conferences we will have to put our utmost efforts into achieving this in various ways in the preparation and implementation of conferences, in panels, discussions and social programs – drawing both on the members of the groups own experiences and those of local activist. Further, introduction and information about the group’s aims and principles in the opening and concluding sessions should be a returning point on all conferences, and also to inform what AGM is at the opening of the meeting in courtesy for new members. There were also a debate on how we can structure the program of the conferences and new events to include in the program: Sessions for discussions on issues facing critical researcher; fewer parallel sessions; sessions with only discussion, something that can be achieved through
including roundtable sessions in the program; involving more students; focus on gender balance in panels; and panels in other languages.

Conference 2017 - Lesvos
After the conference the discussion in regard to Turkey as a venue for the 2017 conference continued among the Steering Committee and the National Representatives. The result of lengthy discussions was that, sadly but understandable, Aimilia withdraw her offer to organize the conference in Turkey. We will then have to effectuate plan B, meaning that the European Group Annual Conference 2017 will be held in Lesvos. More information about this will come in the November newsletter.

Thank you all for this year’s conference! We are looking forward to seeing you next year!

PS: We are always looking for interesting and relevant articles to publish in the newsletter. We would love to get contributions from the conference participants based on their presentations. If you are interested please contact Ida and Per at europeangroupcoordinator@gmail.com

In solidarity
Ida and Per
II. Prisons: Places of Harm and Dehabilitation
By: David Scott, The Open University

On the 4th October UK Justice Secretary, Liz Truss, delivered her speech Prisons: places of safety and reform to the 2016 Conservative Party Conference. For Truss the UK ‘justice system’ is “incorruptible” and “the best in the world”. If we follow the principles of meritocracy, it will become a “justice system of all talents” that “works for everyone” providing “justice for all”. Although Truss digresses away from prisons (to talk about the courts and a new Bill of British Rights) her central arguments focus on how the Conservative government is “going to make prisons work”. Sadly her speech is nothing but the same old story, harking back to the "making prisons work" rhetoric employed by Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw in 1997, as well as regurgitating an idea with a 200 year record of abject failure.

Truss starts her speech by talking about a prison governor who was assaulted by a prisoner but still came into work the following day. She later highlights the “abuse, intimidation and violence” experienced by prison officers, citing data claiming to show that last year prison officers were attacked on average 15 times a day [5,423 recorded attacks in 2015]. In a key message directed to our “brave” and “dedicated” prison officers she states: “I promise you this – I will do everything in my power to protect you”. Prisoner assaults are from now on to be treated as “serious crimes”.

HMP Manchester [Strangeways] - Photo by David Scott, 2016
Further protection will come via more intensive drug testing and greater prison officer numbers and authority.

**Harmful Evidence used for Political Legitimacy**

Before we go any further let us consider some of these points in more detail. First the official data. Over the last few years the Prison Officers Association [POA] has called for a “zero tolerance” approach to prisoner violence and encouraged members to report every single incident that could be considered an assault. As a result, the recorded number of “attacks” on prison officers has dramatically increased. Prison officers have also allegedly been encouraged by the POA to seek medical assistance irrespective of obvious injury, the end result being that such incidents appear in recorded medical data sets. What we do not know – what is not actually indicated such data - is the seriousness and harm of the recorded incidents. The apparent deliberate manipulation of data therefore means we should treat such claims of evidence with considerable caution – as indeed should the UK ‘Justice Secretary’.

Further, drug testing has been a tried and tested failure in terms of measuring or deterring substance usage in prisons for more than 20 years. More rigorous testing will not solve the problem of Spice or any other ‘drug’ in prison: substance usage is systematically generated by the pain, isolation and difficulties in building and sustaining relationships in prisons. Drug testing does not change this. Nor does it alter the wasting of life, boredom and loneliness of the prison place. But what about the increases in prison officer numbers? Truss in her speech makes a commitment to employ 400 new prison officers. Yet what this fails to take into account is the recent decline in prison officer numbers in the Prison Service of England and Wales and the deep underlying structural problems confronting prisons. More prison staff will not address the daily inhumanities, harms and degradations characterising prison life. Further, the introduction of the 400 new staff is only a remedial measure to address the most obvious problems associated with the recent staff cuts, for new prison officers will only be employed in “prisons that have seen sharp rises in violence in recent years”.

**A Distorted Picture of Violence in Prisons**

For Truss, the priorities of reform are on identifying prison officers as victims of prisoner violence and protecting prison officer safety, but there is no mention in her speech of prison officer violence or prisoner safety, or the truly terrible reality that in the last year we have seen the highest rate of self-inflicted deaths in prison ever recorded in England and Wales. At best, the account of violence by Truss is partial. At worst, it gives a distorted picture mystifying the true reality of violence in prison. We know that the data of violence against prisoners by prison officers is much more difficult to record than violence perpetrated by prisoners. This is because of the
nature of officer violence (it could involve violence during restraint procedures) and that prisoners may fear repercussions if they report violence by officers. There is also problems regarding whether the prisoners account will be believed by other prison staff charged to investigate such incidents. That violence against prisoners by prison staff occurs, however, is evidenced in prisoner and prison officer autobiographies as well as other official accounts, both historical and contemporary. Further, the hidden ‘institutionally-structured violence’ and the harmful outcomes generated by the prison place are also neglected in the speech by Truss. As of the 29th September 2016 there were 84 Self-Inflicted Deaths [SIDS] in prisons (and 43 awaiting classification). Sadly this number is only going to rise in the final three months of this year. A prisoner is recorded as attempting to take their own life every five hours and a prisoner is recorded as self-harming once every 20 minutes. The seriousness of such events cannot be questioned.

Liz Truss, Justice Secretary - Source: www.pressandjournal.co.uk, 2016

Wanted: Obedient, Disciplined and Reliable Staff

A further, and quite significant proposal from Truss in her speech is a commitment to employ more prison officers who are from the armed forces. In her words “Who better to instil the virtues of discipline? Who better to show what you can achieve in life with courage and integrity? [Personnel from our armed forces] will help our prison officers lead the change.” This policy commitment is revealing for a number of obvious reasons. When the ‘reformed prisons’ of England and Wales were being introduced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, prison reformers felt that ex-servicemen would be ideal to run prisons, both as governors and prison officers. The prison reformers wanted obedient, disciplined and reliable staff to replace the old ‘turnkeys’ and prisoners who had ran the prisons and jails in the UK before that time. The emphasis of ex-service men (and women) as prison officers reflects a particular penal ideology – one not just of reform but also of
authoritarianism. The infamous ideas of 'hard fare, hard bed and hard labour' that underscored the Victorian prison regimes overseen by Sir Edmund Du Cane were built on such punitive assumptions. Questioned in terms of efficacy and morality, the implementation of Du Cane’s harsh regimes were often associated with ex-servicemen prison officers. Whilst this proved largely mythical – prison officers have never been exclusively from the army, air-force or navy and so on – it led the Gladstone Report of 1895, which itself arose due to public outrage against the Du Cane regime, to undertake a detailed survey of the number of ex-service men in the prison system in the 1890s. The call by Truss for greater discipline clearly indicates a vision of more punitive times to come. Truss also blatantly disregards the fact that currently there are a large number of ex-servicemen prisoners. The disastrous failure of current policies regarding the care and re-entry of ex-service personnel into society will not be addressed by increasing their employment as prison officers.

The Human Costs of Prisons

Truss also leads us to consider the 'the human costs of prisons' beyond merely those of prison staff, but her focus here is primarily in terms of victims of 'crime'. Yes, there is some recognition in the talk that prisoners have problems. Contradicting her point on meritocracy, she shows awareness that prisoners are some of the most “damaged” people in society. Truss notes problems around literacy, mental health and sexually-violent victimisation. But her concern is not with prisoners because we as a society fail to meet their needs before, during or after prison. Instead of prisoners squandering their time in prison Truss would rather have them undertaking “purposeful activity” in an endeavour reduce recidivism rates. The key beliefs of her position though are crystal clear – prisoners should be made better people in prison in the interests of law abiding others. Prison reforms are for those on the outside rather than those we house behind the prison walls.

Truss talks of her “optimism” and the need to join her as a “champions of change”, whilst at the same time recognising that most ex-prisoners re-offend, more than half within one year of release. Her assumption is that prisons are places of potential reform if managed correctly. The grand solution, as discussed above, is to give prison governors and prison officers more powers and to spend £1.3 billion to “sweep away our decaying Victorian jails and putting in place new modern prisons”. What is missing though is any reflection on two important factors driving this change. First, a number of the Victorian prisons are built on land which is highly attractive to property investment. Either through pulling down the prisons or transforming the existing buildings into gated communities for exclusive accommodation, the selling off of such Victorian prisons could generate sizeable capital. Second the proposed new prisons are to be ‘supersized’. Such large new
prisons, housing between 1,000 – 2,000 prisoners, are cheaper to run, are less staff intensive and could swell the volume of private prisons in the UK. Such reforms are evidence of placing profits over people and looking to solve social problems through penal confinement. What Truss misses is that prisons always have been places of harm and dehabilitation rather than safety and reform.

Throughout her talk – which actually offers little new - there is no mention of the vast evidence from 200 and more years that 'reformed prisons' have never achieved the goals that she aspires too. The vision presented by Liz Truss is one of discipline and policies which only exacerbate despair. It is one which must be challenged.
III. Motion on the burkini ban

This conference believes that the French ‘burkini ban’ represents an Islamophobic assault on women’s right to choose what to wear. The ban is yet another case of the French authorities using the language of secularism and counter-terrorism to demonise Muslims – and particularly Muslim women. This includes a ban on the headscarf for public sector workers and on the wearing of religious symbols in schools. It is also part of a disturbing trend of racist and Islamophobic state policies and practices across Europe which seek to criminalise and demonise Muslims as an ‘enemy within’.

We stand in solidarity with Muslim women in France and oppose all attempts to tell women how to dress.
IV. News from Europe and around the world

Iceland

Monthly crime statistics
Crime statistics for August 2016 have been published for the capital area. Reports of burglaries have never been as few in a single month since the start of measuring crime statistically in 1999, or 47 in total. The report can be found here.

Guilty verdict for nine Kaupthing bankers
The Supreme court has found nine former Kaupthing bankers guilty of market manipulation in the biggest case connected with the financial collapse in Iceland back in 2008. All nine defendants were accused of having given a false and misleading impression of demand for Kaupthing shares by means of deception. Hreiðar Már Sigurðsson, former Director of the bank, who had previously received a five and a half year sentence for his involvement in the Al-Thani case, was given a sixth-month extension to his prison sentence. That means he will serve the maximum penalty for an economic crime – six years – as the supreme court did not accept the prosecutions demand for an increased penalty of half the maximum penalty. Get the news report here.

Seminar in honor of Ragnheiður Bragadóttir birthday
A seminar celebrating the 60 year birthday of Ragnheiður Bragadóttir former chair of NSfK and professor of law at the University of Iceland, was held in late September. Honoring Ragnheiður with presentations on legal and criminological matters were names such as Annette Storgaard, Annika Snare, Helgi Gunnlaugsson, Kolbrún Benediktsdóttir and Jónatan Pór mundsson. Topics ranged from punitive issues, through sexual crimes, to cybercrime. The need for amended laws because of a changed crime landscape through cybercrime was discussed along with issues such as the need for further legal amendments in laws for sexual offences.
Norway

The Second Narrative Criminology Symposium

- the Oslo series

Time and place: June 15, 2017 - June 16, 2017, Professorboligen, Oslo, Norway

Key note speakers include among others: Phillip Smith, Jeff Ferrell, Keith Hayward, Sarah Colvin, David Canter, Lois Presser and Shadd Maruna. For full list see call for paper. Photo: wiki commons.

Narrative criminology studies how stories instigate, sustain, or effect desistance from harmful action. Grounded in a narrative understanding of self-making, narrative criminology analyses stories about crime not as accounts of “what really happened”, but as examples of the performative work individuals do on themselves and their surroundings, and the effects these have. Narrative criminology explores the narratives of offenders as well as other relevant groups such as criminal justice professionals, crime victims, politicians, and journalists.

A main goal for the Narrative Criminology Network is multidisciplinary cooperation; we want to bring together perspectives from the disciplines of criminology, sociology, anthropology, psychology, history and law in a true exchange across national and disciplinary boundaries.

Please see:
http://www.jus.uio.no/ikrs/english/research/projects/networkfornarrativecrim/events/second-narrative-criminology-symposium.html
Sweden

**Citizen journalism opens door to cyber bullying**

Often hailed as a more democratic form of journalism, citizen journalism, where the public contributes to the reporting, analysis and dissemination of news, has a dark side, according to a recent study. Sociologist and criminologist Agneta Mallén at Lund University in Sweden in.news.yahoo.com

![Researcher Agneta Mallén. Credit: Lund University](image)

**How citizen journalism can lead to cyber bullying - phys.org**

Citizen journalism is often seen as a more democratic form of journalism, where the public contributes to the reporting, analysis and dissemination of news.
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 Ida/Per at: europeangroupcoordinator@gmail.com

Please 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).