



EG Working Group



Newsletter October 2020

Summary:

- 1. Research — 2. Conference and Call for Papers — 3. Workshops/Public Event — 4. Resources/Publications — 5. EG Members’ papers— 6. Campaigns — 7. Opportunities

1. Research

‘Still stuck in the system’: Confinement and resistance among (non)deportable people in Denmark

By Annika Lindberg

“We are in the system for eight years, ten years... our children are born in the system, they grow up in the system. They are stuck here”.

These words were articulated by a mother and long-term resident of one of Denmark’s deportation camps, who partook in a protest organised in October 2020 by camp residents against their confinement. I will use their protest as an invitation to reflect on the mundane, bureaucratic violence that permeates Northern European states’ response to border crossers, and to highlight the limits of reformist approaches to address such border violence.

The sites confinement designed by European states to control or deter border crossers are routinely spectacularised in political and media debates, as are their violent outcomes (De Genova 2013). This fall, the EU Commission vowed to continue pushing for the militarisation of Europe’s external borders: meanwhile, the fires in the infamous Moria camp on Lesbos left more than ten thousand border crossers destitute under appalling conditions during the ongoing pandemic. With this contribution, however, I

wish to focus on the mundane, less spectacularised, ‘slow’ forms of border violence that take place outside of public view. In parallel with the militarisation of Europe’s external borders, we have witnessed a proliferation of internal bordering processes, including novel configurations of confinement and ‘hostile environments’ (Canning 2020) targeting migrantised and minoritised groups. While poverty and destitu-



tion mark the life conditions for many border crossers at different stages of their journeys, the deliberate, systemic production of conditions of destitution and marginalisation by states that have the resources and capacity to prevent such suffering, arguable constitutes a particular form of border violence.



The systemic yet often less visible forms of state violence enacted through wealthy welfare states with strong bureaucratic institutions are the focus of a recently published [edited volume](#) by Dalia Abdelhady, Martin Joormann and Nina Gren (2020).



The volume's contributions explore how state violence against border crossers operates through bureaucratic inscription and regulation of border crossers' lives in Northern European welfare states, drawing on examples from Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. These states are known for their (imagined or real) efficiency and strong institutional capacity to provide services to citizens. Yet they also hold significant institutional capacity to exclude those classified as 'undeserving' of inclusion, thereby re-enacting a hierarchisation of human life that has its roots in the colonial enterprise (Mayblin, Wake and Kazemi 2019). The contributions to the volume shed light on how the welfare state is premised on the subordinate inclusion of non-members, whose gendered, racialised and classed difference becomes constituted as threats to the welfare state and society, in a time of reified internal bordering (Abdelhady, Joormann and Gren 2020).

Denmark's deportation camps are one example of how the 'banal' violence of welfare bureaucracies operates in practice (Canning 2020). Drawing on the analysis of the camps offered by residents who, after years of being 'stuck in the system', continue to strug-

gle against it, I will argue that these are sites of neocolonial violence enacted through welfare state bureaucracies.

Denmark's deportation camps, or 'departure centres', were launched in 2013 as part of the (Social Democratic) government's renewed attempts to pressure non-deported people, whose asylum claims had been rejected in Denmark or who had been criminalised and awaited expulsion, to leave the country by making their lives 'intolerable' (see Suárez-Krabbe and Lindberg 2019). The three camps are geographically isolated, located in a former prison, military facility and mental hospital, respectively, and house single adults as well as families with children. Residents are obliged to reside and regularly report their presence in the camps, yet they are not legally detained, and can therefore be held there indefinitely. Meanwhile, they have no right to work or study, receive little or no daily allowance, and are compelled to eat their meals in the camps' cafeteria. The camps have not enhanced deportation rates, but have left people legally stranded, as they are not permitted to remain in Denmark, but have nowhere else to go. Residents are therefore stuck in a condition of isolation, degradation, and forced dependence, which has had detrimental effects on their mental and physical health, in particular among children (Freedom of Movements Research Collective 2018).

Yet the camps have also become sites of political mobilisation. Over the years, residents have engaged in recurrent protests, where they have shed light on and challenged how the camps are 'killing them slowly'. Most recently, and as I am writing this, families in deportation camp Avnstrup have resumed their protests to demand access lead to a normal life, to housing outside the camps, reopening of their asylum cases (the list of demands of the protesters in deportation camp Avnstrup, and links to where and how to support them, can be found [here](#)).



Their articulations correspond well with Achille Mbembe's (2003) analysis of the necropolitical condition that produces group-specific suffering and vulnerabilities, enforced through neglect and deprivation, and which are both foreseeable and preventable.

So far, however, neither political nor bureaucratic actors have acknowledged their responsibility for these harms. Instead, political (non)responses to their struggles have demonstrated the limits of reformist approaches to border violence. For instance, in a recent move to appease demands to get children out of the prison-like Sjølsmark deportation camp, families were moved to Avnstrup camp, which has a less carceral appearance. However, as a resident protester put it, the move merely meant that 'they exchanged the physical fences for mental fences'. Rather than improving their condition, the bureaucratic reorganisation of their lives has subjected the families to even more rigid control measures and (re)traumatising displacement, as children were forced to move away from their school, friends and social contexts.

Residents' continuous struggles, and the political (non)responses to them, shed light on the slow violence targeting 'unwanted' border crossers at Europe's internal border sites. This violence often goes unnoticed, as border crossers are portrayed as responsible for their condition, and their voices are undercut by hostile policies that stigmatise and isolate them from their social networks. Through their political mobilisation, the protesters in the Danish deportation camps are challenging these logics, and demand a right to participation and an end to the policies that 'slowly' cause their social, political and physical death. Supporting their demands is not only important as an act of solidarity but also crucial for us to better understand – and challenge – the banal bureaucratised violence of Northern European bor-

der regimes.

References

Abdelhady, Dalia, Nina Gren and Martin Joormann. 2020. *Refugees and the Violence of Welfare Bureaucracies in Northern Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Canning, Vicky. 2020. '[Bureaucratised Banality: Asylum and Immobility in Britain, Denmark and Sweden](#)'. in: *Refugees and the Violence of European Welfare Bureaucracies*. Manchester University Press

De Genova, N. (2013). 'Spectacles of Migrant "Illegality": The Scene of Exclusion, the Obscene of Inclusion', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36(7), pp. 1180–1198.

Freedom of Movements Research Collective. 2018. *Stop Killing Us Slowly: A Research Report on the Motivation Enhancement Measures and the Criminalization of Rejected Asylum Seekers in Denmark*. Roskilde University.

Lindberg, Annika. 2020. "Minimum Rights Policies Targeting People Seeking Protection in Denmark and Sweden", in Abdelhady, Dalia, Gren, Nina and Joormann, Martin (eds.), *Refugees and the Violence of European Welfare Bureaucracies*. In press with Manchester University Press.

Mayblin, L., Wake, M. and Kazemi, M. (2019). 'Necropolitics and the Slow Violence of the Everyday: Asylum Seeker Welfare in the Postcolonial Present', *Sociology*.

Suárez-Krabbe, Julia and Annika Lindberg. 2019 "Enforcing Apartheid? The Politics of 'Intolerability' in the Danish Migration and Integration Regimes". *Migration and Society*, 1(2).

[Annika Lindberg](#) is a visiting postdoctoral researcher at the University of Copenhagen. She is member of the Freedom of Movements Research Collective and co-author of the report *Stop Killing us Slowly* on the criminalisation of rejected asylum seekers in Denmark. She can be reached at annika.lindberg@soz.unibe.ch



2. Conference and Call for Papers

- **International Handbook of Activist Criminology** —EG Member Vicky Canning, Steve Tombs and Vicky Greg Martin are seeking expressions of Interest for Emerald's International Handbook of Activist Criminology, due to be published in 2022. We are interested in receiving contributions from the activist community as well as the academic community. As a general guide, we encourage people to consider how their proposed contribution might relate to one of the following themes: Histories of activism and criminology, including colonialism and its legacies; Conceptualising activist criminology / activism in criminology; Geographies of activist criminology; Institutional contexts of activist criminology, e.g. social, racial and Indigenous justice; harms of criminalisation; policing; prisons; courts; media; migration and mobility; rights; and violence and sexualised violence; Contemporary activism and criminal and social justice campaigning; Methodologies for studying and researching activist criminology; Future research and new directions in activist criminology Potential contributors should email Greg Martin (greg.martin@sydney.edu.au) by the 12 of November 2020. Please click [here](#) for the call for paper and for further detail on the submission.

3. Workshops/Public Events (webinars)

- **Halfway Home: Race, Punishment and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration**—12 November, 3pm— The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research's Annual Lecture will be presented by Reuben Jonathan Miller from the University of Chicago. To read the full abstract and information on how to register for this event please visit the [Eventbrite page](#). Please note that the link to this event will be emailed to all those who have registered nearer the time to the lecture.
- **Anti-detention and anti-deportation** -12th November 2020- 19:00 GMT. This event is the third in the Sanctuary: What next? series and centres on anti-deportation and anti-detention. An expert panel of speakers from across Canada, USA and UK (chair: Mancina, University of Oxford) will reflect on the increasing entwining of migration and criminalisation and how they have countered such policies, practices and narratives in their respective contexts. Please click [here](#) to have further details about dates and topic, and to register.
- **Working with Incarcerated Women in the Context of Covid 19**— November 23, 2020, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM GMT. The COVID 19 pandemic has exposed a myriad of healthcare, human rights, education, rehabilitation, and capacity issues within the UK criminal justice system. This event brings together speakers from Criminal Justice, Arts and Culture, and the Women's Sector to reflect on how the coronavirus has impacted the lives of incarcerated women and those encountering the criminal justice system at this time. Please click [here](#) for further information.
- **Coronavirus in prisons: What's happening across Europe?** - December 3, 2020, 9:30am - The coronavirus pandemic and the measures implemented to control it have had an extraordinary impact on society. Prisons are no exception, with the number of people incarcerated in penal institutions dropping significantly across the globe. In this webinar we explore changes to prison populations across a selection of European states asking the how the Covid pandemic is transforming prison. This event hosted by the Centre for Crime and Justice is part of the Centre's COVID-19 in prisons project, funded by the Hadley Trust. Please click [here](#) for further information.

4. Resources/ Publications

- **Read, Write, Listen and... Resist!** — November 4, 2020, 3:00-5:00pm EG members Felicity Adams and Fabienne Emmerich will held the second reading session of the platform [Read & Resist](#) (Twitter: [@Read and Resist](#)). Please click [here](#) for further info.
- **Northern Ireland: "I am sir, you are a number": Prisoners faced "systemic inhuman and degrading treatment" in response to 1970s protests, report finds**—Prisoners held in the Armagh and H-Block prisons between 1976 and 1981 were subjected to "systemic inhuman and degrading treatment" that "violated international human rights standards and breached common law and statute", with the full knowledge of the British government, an independent inquiry has found. Click [here](#) to watch the full video.



- **Dépasser le féminisme punitif**—EG member Gwenola Ricordeau in *Cause commune* n°18 • juillet/août 2020. “Plutôt que de se focaliser sur la punition de certains hommes, il est plus pertinent de réfléchir directement et concrètement aux conditions de l’émancipation et de l’autonomie des femmes, notamment matériellement et financièrement”. Please click [here](#) to access the article.
- **Slavery and the Death Penalty A Study in Abolition** — Routledge, Author: Bharat Malkani. The book explains how the historical and conceptual links between slavery and capital punishment have both helped and hindered efforts to end capital punishment. The comparative study also sheds light on the nature of such efforts, and offers lessons for how death penalty abolitionism should proceed in future. Using the history of slavery and abolition, it is argued that anti-death penalty efforts should be premised on the ideologies of the radical slavery abolitionists. To access the podcasts please click [here](#).
- **The Political Economy of Punishment Today. Visions, Debates and Challenges**—Routledge—Authors: Dario Melossi, Máximo Sozzo, José A Brandariz García. Bringing together leading researchers from diverse geographical contexts, this book reframes the theoretical field of the political economy of punishment, analysing penalty within the current economic situation and connecting contemporary penal changes with political and cultural processes. It challenges the traditional and common sense understanding of imprisonment as 'exclusion' and posits a more promising concept of imprisonment as a 'differential' or 'subordinate' form of 'inclusion'. Please click [here](#) to pre-order the book.

5. EG Members' Papers:

- **'I AM SIR, YOU ARE A NUMBER'** - Report of the Independent Panel of Inquiry into the Circumstances of the H-Block and Armagh Prison Protests 1976-1981 —EG member **Phil Scraton** edits this unprecedented report released by the Independent Panel of Inquiry into the Circumstances of the H-Block and Armagh Prison Protests 1976-1981. The report concludes that protesting prisoners in the H-Blocks and HMP Armagh were subjected to systemic inhuman and degrading treatment, in some cases amounting to torture. The report, titled 'I Am Sir, You Are A Number' is the first comprehensive review and analysis of the experiences of men and women prisoners held in the H-Blocks and Armagh following the withdrawal of Special Category Status on 1st March 1976. Prisoners held in the Armagh and H-Block prisons between 1976 and 1981 were subjected to "systemic inhuman and degrading treatment" that "violated international human rights standards and breached common law and statute", with the full knowledge of the British government, an independent inquiry has found. The report is available [here](#).
- **Refugees and the violence of welfare bureaucracies in Northern Europe** — MUP— Dalia Abdelhady, Nina Gren and Martin Joormann (Eds). EG member **Martin Joormann** edited, with the contribution, among the others of EG coordinator **Vicky Canning**, this volume that building on both textual analyses and ethnographic fieldwork in welfare institutions, asylum centres, and refugee communities, this volume provides an in-depth understanding of the complex realities faced by refugees: deterrence and categorisation, struggle and success, mobility and stagnation. As social phenomena, Northern Europe's asylum systems and integration programmes must be understood in the context of the bureaucratisation of everyday life. . It is possible to pre-order the book [here](#).
- **Gaborit L. S. (2020) Visited by spirits – 'Betwixt and between' in meditation and solitary confinement in Myanmar. *Incarceration***—This article takes as its starting point the similar, yet differing, experiences of hearing voices among prisoners in Myanmar. It discusses why the experience of hearing voices described by prisoners is regarded as an occasion to share compassion when it occurs during meditation retreats and as torture when it occurs in solitary confinement. The article is available [here](#).
- **Funding on inmate governance in Brazilian community prisons**—EG member **Sacha Darke** has been awarded a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship to study inmate governance in Brazilian community prisons. (Well done!!!!) . The research focuses on two community prison models, both of which were developed by ex-prisoner-led NGOs. Subject to the COVID-19 situation, the programme of research will involve intensive periods of participatory observation, ethnographic and formal interviews with prisoners and prison workers at two of the prisons regulated by these NGOs. The aim of the research is to question whether disciplinary powers have been appropriately devolved to inmate councils at the two prisons. The outputs from the research will explore the implications of devolving disciplinary powers to inmate councils for theories on prison order and legitimate governance- Click [here](#) for further info about the project.

6. Campaigns

- **Deportation Union: Rights, accountability and the EU's push to increase forced removals** - *Deportation Union*, project promoted by State Watch, provides a critical examination of recently-introduced and forthcoming EU measures designed to increase the number of deportations carried out by national authorities and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex. It focuses on three key areas: attempts to reduce or eliminate rights and protections in the law governing deportations; the expansion and interconnection of EU databases and information systems; and the increased budget, powers and personnel awarded to Frontex. Please click [here](#) for further information.
- **Abolitionist Futures** — is a collaboration of community organisers and activists in Britain and Ireland who are working together to build a future without prisons, police and punishment. They share information and resources to strengthen the network of existing and emerging abolitionist groups and allied organisations. Their aim is to support the flourishing of a diverse, vibrant and powerful abolitionist movement in the Britain and Ireland. Click [here](#) to join the mailing list and [here](#) to have more information.
- **The Statewatch Library & Archive** - This catalogue holds thousands of books, documents, 'grey literature', official reports, pamphlets and other material from social movements, campaigns, government agencies and human rights organisations from across Europe and beyond. In 2018 Statewatch was able to formally open the Library & Archive to the public for the first time. The onset of the coronavirus pandemic has forced them to close it – They are currently looking for support to digitise more of our archive, bringing it to a far wider audience. To have further information and to support the initiative please click [here](#).

7. Opportunities

- **Research and Policy Officers** (Fixed term post)- INQUEST is looking for a Researcher to work with them to sustain momentum around the crucial, longstanding issues of state violence, structural racism, impunity and injustice, in the wake of the killing of George Floyd and the resulting protests. INQUEST's work has seen increased visibility of these issues and our evidence based work has informed activists, media, NGOs, academics and others, and we are keen to maintain and enhance this important role. Please click [here](#) for further information and to apply.



“Discipline and those benevolent gentlemen who carry it into execution do not know what it is that they are doing. I believe that very few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony which this dreadful punishment, prolonged for years, inflicts upon the sufferers; [...] I hold this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain, to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body: [...] therefore I the more denounce it, as a secret punishment which slumbering humanity is not roused up to stay”

Charles Dickens - American Notes for General Consideration (2001 -1842), Chapter VII