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Lesley McAra

CRIMINOLOGY IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

Welcome to this anniversary edition of the European Society of Criminology newsletter. I hope that you, your family and friends are safe and well.

This is my last Presidential message at the end of what has proved a tumultuous year. The global pandemic has impacted almost every facet of our lives, and is likely to have far reaching consequences for education and research. In this message I am going to offer some reflections on the past twenty years of the ESC, and the challenges which the global pandemic currently poses for theory and method within criminology. The message will conclude with some thoughts about the implications of these challenges for the future of criminology as both an applied and theoretically informed field of enquiry.



PAST PROGRESSIVE

The ESC was established in 2000 with the objectives of: convocation (bringing scholars together from across Europe and beyond); capacity building (fostering research and training within academic institutions); exchange and cooperation (amongst scholars from Europe and internationally); and dissemination (of criminological knowledge at the European level) (see: Constitution of the ESC). It is instructive, however, to read through the early editions of the Society's newsletter (published for the first time in 2002) and review the themes which framed the first set of conferences in Lausanne, Toledo and Helsinki. Here there is evidence that European Criminology was viewed by some of the Society's founding members as a normative project (as well as a methodological and theoretical one). This is captured in closing lines of Professor Josine Junger-Tas's final Presidential Message from 2002:

'Dear colleagues, these are my thoughts and my hopes for the future. We have made a good start. May we develop a European Society of Criminology that reflects truly European values: those of the Enlightenment – emphasising reason, empiricism, and human rights – and those of social care and support for the losers in our society.'

Her words echo the subject matter of the first ever plenary session at the Lausanne Conference (2001) namely: 'Concentrated Disadvantage and Crime'. And in launching the European Journal of Criminology, its first Editor-in-Chief, David J Smith, argued that key drivers of a European Criminology were not only the heightened political concerns about security and

crime control across Europe (particularly in the wake of the September 11th attacks in the United States), but, critically, also the need to find a counterbalance through the promulgation of human rights protocols and conventions and a wider European criminological conversation (Smith 2004).

Our Society has grown exponentially since these early days: with a 250% rise in participants at our annual conferences and a membership now of around 1000. And as I noted in my first Presidential Message (2019), with this growth has come evidence of increased diversity of subject matter and greater specialisation. Currently the Society hosts 34 working groups, covering: methods (quantitative and qualitative); pedagogy and careers; variant 'criminologies' (Balkans, cultural, narrative, life-course and developmental); crime types (drugs, homicide, immigration, atrocity crimes); and justice (policing, sentencing, prison, juvenile justice); and much more. And a number of these groups have made explicit commitments to engage with policy and practice, and bring research evidence to bear on law, process and intervention. Over time, the Journal too has had increased scope and impact – the number of editions per year has been expanded to cope with increased submission rates, and heavy citations of published articles led to the Journal receiving its first ever impact factor. Our Society has also played a role in building criminological capacity across European jurisdictions, including the provision of fellowships to enable conference participation from postdoctoral or graduate students from a range of Eastern European countries. We also celebrate the contribution of scholars across the life-course through our awards. These are all developments of which the Society can be justifiably proud and demonstrate, in no small measure, the ways in which the Society has met its core objectives. But, 20 years on, whither the normative project?

PRESENT TENSE

If, as Smith suggests, the first decade of the European criminological project was driven in part by the fall-out from the September 11th terrorist attacks, it would seem that the global pandemic forms yet another critical juncture with profound implications for crime and its control.

Ben Stickel and Marcus Felson (2020) have claimed that the covid-19 pandemic forms the backdrop to largest natural experiment in the history of criminology,

with the capacity to test the impact of sequential lockdowns and stay at home orders on the routine activities of populations. Whilst recorded crime has been in long-term decline across many jurisdictions internationally, there is evidence that lockdown and stay at home orders have resulted in further rapid and dramatic drops in crime rates (see for example, Halford et al 2020, Mohler et al 2020, Scottish Government 2020). However this does not hold for all forms of crime. Studies internationally have found increases in domestic violence (Boxall et al 2020), cybercrime and fraud (Collier et al 2020), with lockdown exacerbating the risks of child abuse² (Romanou and Belton 2020, Campbell 2020) and creating new opportunities for organised criminal groups to exploit (Europol 2020).

However, the implications of the pandemic, arguably, go further than this. Indeed, the impact of the virus reflects a global social order riven with inequalities – death rates are significantly higher amongst the most poor and dispossessed, older people, and those from specific ethnic backgrounds. Silent voices include some of the hardest-to-reach groups such as travelling communities, asylum seekers and migrants, those experiencing homelessness, as well as those living with end-stage illness (McAra 2020). The virus is also exposing a justice gap, with prisons in some jurisdictions becoming hotbeds of virus transmission and, in others, places of isolation and despair, as efforts to prevent infection lead to lockdowns for 23 hours a day, deteriorating prison conditions and rights violations (Gulati et al 2020, Franco-Paredes et al 2020). The policing of the pandemic also may be impacting disproportionately areas of multiple deprivation, with some international evidence emerging of widespread procedural injustices (Jones 2020, McVie 2020). It is still early days and much more research is needed to track and understand these phenomena. But it is important to acknowledge that covid-19 impacts both situational contexts and adaptations at the individual level, at the same time as reinforcing the structural contexts and institutional cultural practices which reproduce and intensify social harms and concentrated disadvantage.

1 Speakers – Anthony Bottoms, Manuel Eisner, and Robert Sampson; with Per-Olof Wikström in the chair.

2 Romanou and Belton 2020, in particular, attribute this to a combination of stressed caregivers, reduction in child protection services, and increased exposure to abusers within the home or online.

FUTURE CONDITIONAL

The transformations wrought by the global pandemic present us now with the opportunity (and, I would suggest, the imperative) to revisit the Josine Junger-Tas's founding ambition for the Society.

The complex and multi-level effects of the pandemic, and their potential for both direct and indirect impacts on crime and justice, demonstrate forcibly the inter-dependencies of the institutional and policy frameworks across Europe and the continued need for criminological enquiry to engage with its counterparts in the fields of health, social care, education, economy, politics and more.

Whilst the pandemic has highlighted the fragility of extant social orders, critically it has also exposed some fundamentals of human connection – volunteering, grass-roots activism, small acts of kindness and altruism; facets of the human experience at the micro-level that belie the inequalities described above (McAra 2020). Importantly the pandemic too has highlighted the need for global cooperation and speaks to the moral responsibilities of nation states beyond borders as well as to the benefits which a reinvigorated public realm can bring.

The European Society of Criminology forms an important site of methodological and theoretical crossings, as well as a place of convocation, debate and challenge. As such our community can speak to the twin dynamics of both micro-connectivity and macro-co-operation. But in contributing to recovery and regeneration and in setting an agenda for our third decade, I believe we need to re-engage with a number of normative questions: what are the conditions of a just social order; what promotes social solidarity; what are the structural conditions which support human flourishing; how can human rights discourse come to infuse and transform institutional cultural practices? As David J Smith so eloquently argued: (2004, p12): 'scholarship is a constant act of renewal of the collective memories of what has been thought and discovered and a systematic effort to build on it'.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the European Society for giving me the opportunity to serve as President. It has been a great honour. My last duty as President, will be to welcome you to our e-conference in September. On the opening evening of the conference I will be chairing a plenary session, with speakers from criminological societies across the globe including: Sandra Walkate, President British Society of Criminology; Dan Nagin, President Elect American Society of Criminology; Tara McGee, President Australian and New

Zealand Society of Criminology; and Shin'ichi Ishizuka, Executive Board Member of the Asian Criminological Society. We will be debating crime, justice and social order in a time of pandemic and the future direction of Criminology. Join us!

End note: In my first Presidential Message I reported on a project Lieven Pawels and I were hoping to launch during 2020 about the impacts of European Criminology on policy and practice. Sadly this project too has been delayed by the pandemic. However, I hope that we will be able complete it by the end of the Society's 20th anniversary year and certainly in time to report back in a later newsletter and at our conference in Bucharest 2021. Please look out for further information about how you can participate!

Lesley McAra is Professor of Penology at the University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh, Great Britain

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CANDIDATES FOR ESC OFFICES

▼ CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT



CATRIEN BIJLEVELD

Catrien Bijleveld is senior researcher at NSCR, the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement, and professor of Research Methods in Empirical Legal Research and Criminology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Since late 2019, she is also part-time council member of the Netherlands Scientific Council

for Government Policy. Graduating from Leiden University as a research methodologist (1986), she subsequently obtained a doctorate in Data Theory on State space analysis of categorical data (1989). Much later, after having worked at the research center of the Netherlands Ministry of Justice, she also graduated in Criminal Law



(2002). It is from that period that she became involved in criminological research. Working at the NSCR and at the Vrije Universiteit, she conducted mainly criminal careers research, particularly longitudinal research on sex offenders and young adults who had been raised in care. She wrote several textbooks on research methodology for criminologists that are widely used across the Netherlands, most recently one for the study of international crimes.

Catrien Bijleveld was one of the founders of the European Society of Criminology and was an at large Board Member from 2006 to 2008. 'I am a firm believer in and supporter of European criminology, and

consider it a great and important achievement that we have this society and our European journal that is so widely read and highly ranked. The European conferences have grown immensely, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively, and are now at least as varied and interesting as the conferences we flock to across the pond, such as the ASC. It is very important that the European society is inclusive for all Europe, and for junior as well as senior researchers, and for that it is vital that young researchers assume prominent roles and tasks in our society and the journal, and that the society's conferences are well accessible for researchers from less affluent European countries.'



CANDIDATE FOR AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBERSHIP



FERNANDO MIRÓ-LLINARES

My name is Fernando Miró-Llinares, I am 46 years old and I was born in Ibi, a little town in the province of Alicante, in whose capital I have been living for 17 years. I am currently a Professor of Criminal Law and Criminology at the Miguel Hernández University in Elche, and I am the head of the CRÍMINA Research Centre for the Study and Prevention of Crime at the same university, a young but already leading research centre thanks to the tireless work of a magnificent human group with great research talent of which I am especially proud. Although I started my career as a Criminal Law teacher at the University of Alicante, I have been more than 20 years at the Miguel Hernández University, where I have been Dean of the Faculty of Social and Legal Sciences for 8 years.

At my University I have been teaching for 20 years in very diverse undergraduate and graduate courses, I have also promoted the creation of several university degrees, among them the Degree in Public and Private Security

of the Miguel Hernández University, and I have directed several degree and graduate courses, being at present the Director of the Master in Analysis and Prevention of Crime and of the Phd Program in Criminology, from where I have directed 6 doctoral theses. I am also co-founder of PlusEthics, a spin-off of the Miguel Hernández University dedicated to provide legal and ethical design to R&D projects on Public Policies and Security especially related to technology and its social impact.

I consider myself essentially a university scholar, passionate about teaching and research, and involved in management when necessary. At the research level, I have been and am a lover of two worlds: on the one hand, that of the philosophy of justice and criminal law; on the other, that of the social scientific study of crime and the response to it and its social impact. I do not deny any of these disciplines and I humbly try to make contributions to both that are enriched by a vision that is

far from labels and truly transdisciplinary. My scientific production has been constant, with more than 100 publications both national and international, among which my works on Criminal Law, Criminal Policy, Environmental Criminology, Crime Trends, and in particular in recent times Technology and Criminal Justice and Cybercrime should be highlighted. My main works have been published in Spanish, of course, and have had an impact both in Spain and Latin America. In recent years I have also published in English, particularly in relation to the analysis of crime in cyberspace and the application of the theories and applications of environmental criminology to crime perpetrated on the Internet.

I am also a member of seven international networks of great reputation, among which are besides the European Society of Criminology, the American Society of Criminology, the European Society of Criminology, the International Society of Criminology, the COMJIB, or the Spanish Society of Criminological Investigation to which I am presenting myself as president in the coming weeks. I am also a member of the International Criminal Law Association and I have recently been designated General Rapporteur for the topic of Artificial Intelligence and Criminal Justice for the next four years.

As for research projects, during my career I have participated in more than 30 national and international research projects and contracts, being the lead researcher in more than 20 of them. Among them are the European projects “Pericles: Policy recommendation and improved communication tools for law enforcement and security agencies preventing violent radicalisation; “Arisa II. Assessing the Risk of Isolation of Suspects and Accused: The impact of the media”; “SAFETY4RAILS. Data-based analysis for SAFETY and security protec-

tion for detection, prevention, mitigation and response in trans-modal metro and Railway networks”; “SUCCESS. Strengthening Criminology Teaching”; “IcARUS. Innovative Approach to Urban Security”; and “SECU4ALL. Training local authorities to provide citizens with a safe urban environment by reducing the terrorist attacks related risks in public spaces”.

Also, national projects funded by the Spanish Government such as “NEXO. Criminology, empirical evidence and criminal policy. On the incorporation of scientific data for decision making in relation to the criminalisation of conducts”; “CiberHache. Incitement to violence and hate speech on the Internet. Real scope of the phenomenon, typologies, environmental factors and limits of legal intervention”; or “RISKMENT. Environmental risk assessment of accidents with alcohol: geographical variables, procedures and tools for improving the effectiveness of controls”. I would also like to highlight my work for the European Union in providing technical assistance for the formulation of a criminal investigation program in the SICA countries, as well as support for the Central American Security Strategy. Likewise, my work for the COMJIB, by participating in the elaboration of a pre-legislative work on the creation of a proposal of substantive criminal law on cybercrime in Latin America, or my participation in the expert commission for the elaboration of the reform of the Honduran Criminal Code.

Given the proposal made for my nomination, and with the essential spirit of learning much more about criminology in Europe and to contribute my experience to what is required, I have decided to accept and apply to become a member of the ESC Board. If I am elected, I will work hard to promote the essential work of the ESC and to continue to advance towards their goals.

▼ NOTE OF THE EDITOR

Csaba Győry

ESC NEWSLETTER RENEWED

If you have been wondering where your ESC Newsletter is, do not worry: you did not accidentally throw it out with publisher flyers and the diverse academic spam that greeted you on your desk when you returned to your office after the lockdown was lifted. There has been none this year.

This has two reasons. One is, obviously, the pandemic, which put an extraordinary extra stress on us academics, especially on us teaching at universities. Most of us not only had to move our teaching online at a very short notice but had to produce new teaching materials and learn new ways of student-teacher communication: in one word,

reinvent university education on the go. All the while taking care of our kids and making sure they themselves attend their online classes and learn as intended. The other one is more important: The Newsletter is in the process of renewal. This, too, suffered delays due to the pandemic, but soon a new, enhanced website will go online, and the design will be renewed too. At the same time, the Executive Board has decided to slash the print edition (though the pdf version will remain), with the exception of the summer (conference) issue, which we will continue to print – not this year, however, again due to the pandemic and the postponement of the conference.

The main reason for the changes is the costs. In many ways, the print edition has fallen victim to the extraordinary success and expansion of the ESC. Membership numbers almost tripled since I took over the Newsletter editorship in 2011, and a large part of the new members are from overseas. Posting costs, as a consequence, also rose quite dramatically, even for the unpredictable and excruciatingly slow cheaper surface mail option we used. At the same time, advertising income has been falling. While for many years the considerable advertising income helped us to keep the Newsletter successfully within the budget even with rising membership numbers, advertising now covers only a fraction of the total costs. This is mostly due to changes in the ways of advertising. Our biggest advertisers were universities and publishers, which are increasingly opting for more sophisticated and targeted online advertising campaigns over ads in publications like the Newsletter.

Those who know me and who have been on the Board know that this is a decision that does not come lightly to me. There had been propositions before to go fully online, but I have resisted them forcefully for a long time. But now I also accept that the rising costs do not make the Newsletter viable within the established budget, and it is questionable whether the ESC should cover the costs of three print issues annually, when the money for that could probably be better spent elsewhere, like on the summer school or other projects.

And the end of the regular print edition also offers an opportunity for renewal! Not only of the now somewhat dusty design of the website and the pdf version, but also, and more importantly, of the content.

But first, a note on what will not change. There will be three issues a year as usual. You will receive this as always per email. The pdf version of the three issues will also remain, only with a renewed design. The usual content of the issues (president's column, profile of the conference organizers, essays on the criminology in the host country of the annual meeting, working group reports, candidate profiles, and others) will not change. The second, summer issue will continue to be printed and distributed at the conference venue (due to the postponement of the 2020 meeting this first print edition will be published in the summer of 2021).

The website will change more dramatically. First of all, now there will be content on the website that will be independent of the issues. These will include, among others criminology-related news, "research highlights", short presentations of research results, articles, or significant international research projects.

For time-sensitive discussions of actual events that have relevance to criminological research from a criminologist's perspective, the new website will also launch a blog. Written by academics, the blog will also be aimed at journalist, policymakers and a more general audience. Post will be about 600–1200 words long. Some of these can be commissioned by the Newsletter editor; the editor will cooperate with the European Journal editor(s) to invite authors of recent articles to summarize their findings in a blogpost; working groups will also be encouraged to propose topics and authors. Individual pitches by researchers will also be welcome.

The jobs and funding page will also be enhanced and extended. We intend to take our long ambition to make the ESC the foremost online hub for criminology job adverts and PhD and post-doc funding offers more seriously. The new website will feature a customized interface which will enable university administrators, university departments and research institutes to register and upload job adverts directly onto the website (with an approval process).

All in all, the changes will not be dramatic, but considerable. Stay tuned for the launch of the new website!

Csaba Gyóry, editor of the Newsletter