

PRISONS RESEARCH CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Greetings and good wishes to everyone who is living or working in prisons, carrying out research at this time, or otherwise involved in criminal justice. These are challenging times.

The Cambridge Institute of Criminology Prisons Research Centre (PRC) quietly celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. The PRC was established in 2000 under the Directorship of Alison Liebling. It attracts funding from the Prison Service, several research councils (for example, the Economic and Social Research Council, the European Research Council, the British Academy, The Leverhulme Trust) and from other organisations. Its members include Professor Alison Liebling (Director), Professor Ben Crewe (Deputy Director), eight Research Associates: Dr Katherine Auty, Dr Susie Hulley, Dr Alice Ievins, Dr Julie Laursen, Dr Ben Laws, Dr Kristian Mjåland, Dr Anna Schliehe, and a new fixed-term Lecturer in Penology, Dr Bethany Schmidt. There are also currently 13 PhD students conducting individual research projects, often linked to other research going on in the Centre (see below). Associate Members include Dr Ruth Armstrong, Helen Arnold (a past Research Associate), Dr Adrian Grounds, Dr Joel Harvey (a former PhD student and Research Associate), Dr Amy Ludlow, and Assistant Professor John Rynne. We also welcome Dr Kate Herrity, who is now a Mellon-Kings Junior Research Fellow in Punishment at King's College, Cambridge. Centre members are provided with additional intellectual support and friendship by Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms, and other colleagues in the university.

The Prisons Research Centre aims to provide a lively research environment in which a coherent strategy of high-quality research can be pursued, and integration between funded and non-funded, and applied and theoretical projects can be facilitated. We investigate how prisons operate, socially, morally and operationally, how they are experienced, and the relationship between these

moral and social qualities, and their effects. Members of the PRC team carry out methodologically rigorous and theoretically relevant field-based studies addressing problems of human and social values, punishment practices, and the organisation and effects of aspects of prison life. We strive to forge links with other prisons researchers, scholars in the broader fields of criminology and sociology, and with practitioners. Our vision is to develop a rigorous and person-centred model of social inquiry.

This year, we would like to extend our warmest thanks to all those who have offered support, in whatever way this was expressed, following the tragic events at Fishmonger's Hall in November 2019. Our thoughts are with all those who were affected by the day's events and repercussions.

Professor Alison Liebling

Research projects – Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship



Many congratulations to **Alison Liebling**, who has been awarded a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship (2020-2023) to spend 80% her time on the project '*Moral rules, social science and forms of order in prison*'. Major Research Fellowships provide replacement teaching costs to enable well-established academics in the humanities and social sciences to focus for two or three years on a specific piece of significant, original research. Alison retains Director of the Prisons Research Centre responsibilities, PhDs and post-docs, committee work, and some MSt teaching.

Alison recently contributed to the Justice Focus podcast series, talking about her professional life and some of her sources of inspiration for this project. See:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/21-prof->

[alison-liebling-appreciative-inquiry-moral/id1506809396?i=1000494670388&fbclid=IwAR2Gvk1EqseCYVF5jpdEYK7r0_wCfZyMqOQN_fxXiakrlvMceOE840YSg9A.](https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaa047)

She is preparing the 7th edition of the Oxford Handbook of Criminology, with her colleagues Professors Shadd Maruna and Lesley McAra.

Recent publications

Liebling, A., Johnsen, B., Schmidt, B.E., Rokkan, T., Beyens, K., Boone, M., Kox, K. and Vanhouche, A.S. (2020) 'Where two 'exceptional' prison cultures meet: Negotiating order in a transnational prison'. *British Journal of Criminology*.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaa047>

Liebling, A., Williams, R. and Lieber, E. (2020) 'More Mind Games: How 'The Action' and 'The Odds' have Changed in Prison', *British Journal of Criminology*.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaa046>

Liebling, A. (2020) 'Prisons, personal development, and austerity', in Ugwu-dike, P., Graham, H., McNeill, F., Raynor, P., Taxman, F. and Trotter, C. (2020) (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Rehabilitative Work in Criminal Justice*: pp. 193-206.

Liebling, A. (2020) 'The changing 'regime of the custodians': Visions of order and authority in high security prisons in England and Wales, 1988-2019' in Crewe, B., Goldsmith, A., and Halsey, M. (eds) *Power and Pain in the Modern Prison: Revisiting the Society of Captives*. Oxford University Press Clarendon Series.

An Evaluation of Shared Reading Groups in Psychologically Informed Planned Environments

Professor Alison Liebling, Dr Katherine Auty, Judith Gardom, and Elinor Lieber

The aim of this research was to identify and describe the contribution that Shared Reading groups make to the work of Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs) in

prisons. PIPEs have been developed jointly by the NHS and HMPPS as part of the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway, to support 'stuck' prisoners (and former prisoners) through a pathway of change. Shared Reading groups, run by The Reader, are offered weekly in all prison PIPEs. The Reader has developed a distinctive model which differs from other reading groups in that literature is read aloud in the group session, rather than in advance. A wide range of participants are therefore able to share the literature, whether or not they are confident readers. Short stories, sections of novels, and poetry are made accessible to participants by a trained Leader, who elicits the discussion of individual and shared responses. The shared reading of literature is thought to provide opportunities for PIPE residents to participate socially, communicate more effectively, and make meaningful sense of themselves, others, and the world around them.

The research took place over two Phases. Phase 1 involved fieldwork at three sites (two Category C prisons and a prison for women). The research team attended and observed Shared Reading groups, spent time learning about the environment of each PIPE, engaged in informal conversations with participants, group facilitators and staff members, and recorded one-to-one interviews. At an early stage in the research, the team hosted the Reader Organisation's three-day 'Read to Lead' training event at the Institute of Criminology, at which eight prison officers were trained to become Shared Reading group facilitators. One member of the research team, Judith Gardom, is now a qualified Reader Leader. We also started a Shared Reading group of our own.

On the basis of the qualitative data generated during Phase 1, the research team developed a new research tool, the Measuring the Experience of Reading Groups (MERG) survey. The MERG consists of 50 statements, and invites a response on a 5-point Likert scale. Its development makes use of the methodologies of Appreciative Inquiry and 'ethnography-led measurement', used in the

creation of the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life survey (MQPL). The MERG is intended to provide a way of measuring the often nuanced aspects of the Shared Reading experience which might contribute to growth or positive change. The statements for the MERG attempt to authentically reflect the language and experience of participants, and its 10 dimensions fall into two broad groupings: 'holding' experiences (*Feeling secure; Absorption; Ordinarity; Supportiveness; Memory and recognition*), and experiences of 'growth' (*Being myself; Confidence and agency; Openness to and engagement with others; Meaning and understanding*).

During the second phase of the evaluation, the MERG was administered twice at six-month intervals in six prisons to members of the Shared Reading Groups, alongside the Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instrument (IOMI) which was completed by the wider PIPE populations as well as reading group participants, for comparison. The research team continued to develop their contextual understanding of the varied PIPEs and Shared Reading groups throughout the fieldwork.

Overall, the Shared Reading groups were regarded very positively by participants, and engagement with literature in this 'shared' and open way was described as highly meaningful. The ten dimensions of the MERG were thought by participants to capture aspects of Shared Reading that were most highly valued. Participants rated almost all at three (out of five) or above across the sites. The highest rated dimensions were *Ordinaryness* and *Being myself*. The quantitative results showed that the more sessions a SR group participant attended, the higher their mean dimension score. This relationship was statistically significant for four dimensions: *Feeling secure, Ordinaryness, Memory and recognition, and Meaning and understanding*.

We also found a measurable and significant difference in IOMI scores between participants in Shared Reading and non-participant PIPE

residents, with participants reporting higher levels of *Wellbeing, Hope, Agency and self-efficacy, and Interpersonal trust*. The more sessions participants attended, the higher their scores on *Hope, Motivation to change, Interpersonal trust, and Relationships with staff*. These results were found for both men and women, and across the age range of the participants. These findings made theoretical sense and they were supported by individual, first-person accounts of experiences of change over time.

Analysis of the data suggested that participants in Shared Reading groups experienced complex processes that could contribute to positive change, and that were very close to the overall aims of PIPEs. These processes included: moving between comfort and discomfort; being able to experience discomfort from a secure base; moving between familiarity and difference, or support and conflict in the group; being able to read or hear literature that is imaginatively engaging without being overwhelming; and taking a personal risk of the right size. However, these processes were gradual and not simply linear. Individual participants engaged or drew back from these processes, and we sometimes observed them stalling, or being avoided. Aspects of the group that were most highly valued included its continuity and weekly regularity, the ways in which it 'brought the outside in', and the way that the activity could be enjoyed for its own sake, rather than being instrumentally therapeutic or rehabilitative. At its best, participants developed new habits of, or capabilities for, communication and reflection.

Two main underlying processes contributed to development and change: i) 'venturing out from a secure base': a process in which experiences of feeling secure, ordinaryness, support, absorption, and access to memory and recognition created over time in a Shared Reading group made it possible for someone to act with greater self-governing agency; and ii) 'imaginative consideration and connection', in which access to and engagement with imaginative literature

provided an intermediary object for thinking about and finding possible meanings in emotional experience, including remembered experience, together and individually. Although these processes often took place at the individual level, the conditions were provided by the shared nature of the Shared Reading experience.

In a statistical model exploring the relationships between the dimensions and some possible pathways, we found that *Mutual Support*, *Ordinariness*, and *Meaning and understanding* (all facilitated by a *Feeling of Security*) led to a stronger sense of *Being Myself*, which in turn built *Confidence and agency*: that is, beginning to develop a deep, single, centred nucleus of being, self-governance, and self-direction, or 'establishing the self as a seat of action' (Haigh, 2013, p. 14). This makes it more possible, theorists suggest, to pursue human goods, including relationships with others, in a full and self-responsible way.

That *Meaning and understanding* featured alongside *Supportiveness* and *Ordinariness* as among the key conditions from which the effects of Shared Reading arose, suggested that it is not just the relational aspects and ethos of the group that mattered, but the specific activity of reading together that is important for the effects of Shared Reading – the access to language, imagination, ideas, and resources for thinking. In other words, we saw in our findings an indication that Shared Reading has distinctive qualities arising from the particular activity of *reading* that give it value in PIPEs.

An unexpected finding was the extent to which PIPEs differed in the extent to which they embodied 'PIPEyness', defined in this study as '*a person-centred, supportive, professionally competent and attentive environment in which safety, understanding and growth are prioritised and facilitated*'. The PIPEs which we considered to fulfil PIPE criteria more fully had higher scores for 'effects beyond the reading sessions', indicating that better PIPE environments may enhance Shared Reading experiences. Shared

Reading could, however, be a positive experience for PIPE residents even in settings with a lower level of 'PIPEyness', sometimes acting as a 'refuge' or space for thought. Where Shared Reading was most successfully practiced, it could be a model in miniature of 'PIPEyness', even in PIPEs that did not themselves fully embody the PIPE ethos and aims.

Shared Reading made an important contribution to PIPE staff competence, especially through the Reader training and experience of leading groups. The MERG research instrument has been positively received by The Reader, who plan to use it in their own internal evaluations. The Institute of Criminology reading group, which follows a reading aloud model inspired by this project, is entering its fourth year.

Recent publications

Liebling, A., Auty, K., Gardom, J. and Lieber, E. (2020) *An Evaluation of the Meaning and Impact of Shared Reading in Psychologically Informed Planned Environments in Prisons*. London: Ministry of Justice Analytical Series.

Professor Ben Crewe



Ben is the Principal Investigator of the ERC-funded study 'Penal policymaking and the prisoner experience: a comparative analysis' (see

below) and the ESRC funded project 'Life imprisonment from young adulthood: a longitudinal follow-up study' (see below). He continues to be series editor of the Palgrave Series in Prisons and Penology, with Professor Yvonne Jewkes and Professor Thomas Ugelvik, and, with the same colleagues, recently launched a new journal, published by Sage: *Incarceration: An International Journal of Imprisonment, Detention and Coercive Confinement*.

His book, co-written with Dr Susie Hulley and Dr Serena Wright, titled *Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: Adaptation, Identity and Time*, was published by Palgrave earlier this year. Ben continues to serve as a member of the HMPPS Separation Centres Advisory Committee and the HMPPS Close Supervision Centres Advisory Committee, and as a Trustee of the Prison Reform Trust, where he chairs the Prisoner Engagement Advisory Board. In March 2020, he was Plenary speaker at the 'Nordic Punishment at a Crossroads conference' at the University of Oslo. He was also the plenary speaker for the ICPA's Online Learning Academy on 'Innovative models of offender management and intervention: creating a rehabilitative culture' in November 2020.

Recent and ongoing publications

Crewe, B., Goldsmith, A. and Halsey, M. (eds) (forthcoming) *Power and Pain in the Modern Prison: Revisiting the Society of Captives*. Oxford: OUP, Clarendon.

Crewe, B., Hulley, S. and Wright, S. (2020) *Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: Adaptation, Identity and Time*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Crewe, B. (2020) 'The depth of imprisonment', *Punishment & Society*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474520952153>

Crewe, B. and levins, A. (2020) 'Tightness, recognition and penal power', *Punishment & Society*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1462474520928115>

Schliehe, A., Laursen, J. and **Crewe, B.** (under review) 'Loneliness in prisons'.

Bickers, I., **Crewe, B.**, and Mitchell, R. (2020) 'Offender Supervision, Prisoners and Procedural Justice', *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice* 58(4): 477-495.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/hojo.12343>

Wright, S., Hulley, S. and **Crewe, B.** (in press) 'The pains of imprisonment for life in late adolescence and emerging adulthood', in L. Abrams and A. Cox (eds) *Handbook on Young People and imprisonment*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Crewe, B. (2020) 'Afterword', in Turner, J. and Knight, V. (eds) *The Cell*. London: Palgrave, Macmillan.

Research projects

Penal policymaking and the prisoner experience

Professor Ben Crewe, Dr Kristian Mjåland, Dr Alice levins, Dr Julie Laursen and Dr Anna Schliehe

Funded by the European Research Council, this research programme (known as 'COMPEN') is a comparative analysis of policymaking and prisoner experiences in England & Wales and Norway. Its primary goal is to bring into relief the nature and experience of penalty in countries that are considered 'exclusionary' (or 'neo-liberal') and 'inclusionary' (or 'social-democratic') respectively in their social and penal practices. Specifically, a key objective of the research is to test empirically the assumptions of the 'Nordic exceptionalism thesis' i.e. the claim that penal practices in the Nordic countries are milder and more humane than those in other nations. Conceptually, the research draws upon a framework that has been developed to understand different aspects of the prison experience, formed around the ideas of the 'depth', 'weight', 'tightness' and 'breadth' of imprisonment. This framework seeks to move beyond the kinds of metrics (such as imprisonment rates and material conditions) that have often been used as indicators of levels of punitiveness and penal harshness. The research also foregrounds the roles of shame, stigma and 'penal consciousness' – the prisoner's sense of what is being done to him or her through state punishment – in shaping prisoners' attitudes and adaptations to imprisonment.

The project comprises four sub-studies, each of which has been undertaken in both jurisdictions: an exploration of processes of entry into and exit from the prison system; ethnographic analyses of the exercise of and responses to penal power among female prisoners and men convicted of sex offences; a study of the experience of deep-end custody; and an analysis of policy formation and the penal field. All fieldwork is now completed, and we have begun the process of analysing and writing up the qualitative and quantitative data from all of these studies.

Among the publications that are currently in progress are articles on: forms of loneliness in prisons; a comparison of 'deep-end' units in England & Wales and Norway; the idea of 'relational normalisation' (a supplement to the more legalistic and material 'normality principle'); 'radical hope' among prisoners approaching release; a comparison of the treatment of men convicted of sex offences in England & Wales and Norway; Norway's 'flagship prison', Halden; open prisons in England & Wales and Norway; experiences of the cell; talk, risk and power in women's prisons; and an overall comparison of prisoner experiences in England & Wales and Norway.

Recent publications

Crewe, B. (2020) 'The depth of imprisonment', *Punishment & Society*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474520952153>

Crewe, B. and levins, A. (2020). 'Tightness, recognition and penal power', *Punishment & Society*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474520928115>

levins, A. (2020) "Perfectly individualized and constantly visible"? Lateral tightness in a prison holding men convicted of sex offences', *Incarceration: An international journal of imprisonment, detention and coercive confinement*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2632666320936433>

levins, A. and Mjåland, K. (under review) 'Laissez-faire inclusion and authoritarian exclusion: Comparing the experiences of men convicted of sex offences in England & Wales and Norway'.

Jewkes, Y., Mjåland, K. and Laursen, J. (in progress) 'Imaginary Rehabilitation in the Imaginary Prison: the broken promises of Nordic penal exceptionalism'.

Laursen, J. (in progress) 'Radical hope, rituals and (dis)order - exploring prisoners' experiences of release from prison in England & Wales and Norway'.

Laursen, J., Mjåland, K. and Crewe, B. (2020) "'It's Like a Sentence Before the Sentence": Exploring the Pains and Possibilities of Waiting for Imprisonment', *British Journal of Criminology* 60(2): 363-381.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azz042>

Schliehe, A., Laursen, J. and Crewe, B (under review) 'Loneliness in prison'.

Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: A Longitudinal Follow-up Study

Professor Ben Crewe, Dr Susie Hulley and Dr Serena Wright (Royal Holloway, University of London) (Twitter: @LifeImprisonmnt)



Between 2012 and 2016, we conducted the largest study to date of men and women serving life imprisonment from a young age. Funded by the Economic and



Social Research Council (ESRC), the research project involved interviews with 125 men and 21 women who had been given a minimum tariff of 15 years or more when aged 25 or younger. In addition to this, we also asked a wider sample of the population to complete a survey on the problems of long-term imprisonment (N=313). From 2016 onwards, we published a series of



articles on various aspects of the findings in journals including *The British Journal of Criminology*, *Justice Quarterly*, and *Theoretical Criminology*. In 2020,

our monograph based on the study – *Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: Adaptation, Identity and Time* – was published by Palgrave MacMillan. Described by Jonathan Simon as ‘the deepest empirical look at adaptation and survival in long-term imprisonment for over forty years’, the book has now been reviewed in several international journals.

Beyond this, we have tried to engage in a number of ways with practitioners, policymakers and the public. We co-authored ‘The Long Read’ supplement for the Prison Reform Trust’s 2019 *Bromley Briefings*, focussing on the rise of long-term imprisonment in England and Wales, supported by a launch event in the Houses of Parliament in Spring 2020. We published an analytical summary of our key arguments for the Ministry of Justice in 2019. We also co-authored a chapter on responding to individuals convicted of murder for *Crime & Consequence*, an edited collection published in 2019 by The Monument Trust and Clinks. This chapter was subsequently reproduced by Ben Crewe in an audio format, to support a podcast version of key chapters in the book. Our research findings have shaped various forms of policy and practice, including the re-organisation of the Long-term and high-security estate, and the management of young prisoners serving life sentences.

In December 2019, we were awarded a grant worth £682,000 from the ESRC to conduct a 30-month longitudinal follow-up, in which we will attempt to re-interview everyone involved in the original study. The aim is to explore how our participants’ lives have changed since 2013-14, including their orientation to their sentence and offence, their relationships within and beyond the prison, their experiences of the ‘depth’ of imprisonment, and their sense of self. More specifically, drawing on work by Margaret Archer, we will be exploring how exactly our participants reflexively engage with their circumstances, particularly with the existential matters that seem to preoccupy people serving life sentences. Around 30 of our original participants have now been released into the community on life licence, so we also intend to interview them about their experiences of life post-release.

We have used the first six months of the project to develop further publications (see below), and to engage in a further range of dissemination activities. These include an *Authors-meet-critics* session about our monograph at this year’s European Society of Criminology conference and an article in the national prison newspaper, *Inside Time*. Upcoming activities and events include an HMPPS ‘Insights’ talk, a book launch, and an episode of the *Secret Life of Prisons* podcast on long-term and life imprisonment. We are also in discussion with an artist to produce a graphic comic booklet (working title: ‘Reflections on life’) for HMPPS to provide to newly life-sentenced prisoners.

Recent and ongoing publications

Crewe, B., Hulley, S. and Wright, S. (2020) *Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: Adaptation, Identity and Time*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wright, S., Hulley, S. and Crewe, B. (in press) ‘The pains of imprisonment for life in late adolescence and emerging adulthood’, in L. Abrams and A. Cox (eds) *Handbook on Young People and imprisonment*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Crewe, B., Hulley, S. and Wright, S. (2019) 'Long-term imprisonment from young adulthood', National Offender Management Service analytic summary.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819752/experiencing-long-term-imprisonment-from-young-adulthood.pdf

Violence, Friendship and Legal Consciousness in the Context of 'Joint Enterprise'

Dr Susie Hulley and Dr Tara Young (University of Kent)



'Joint enterprise' is a complex set of legal principles, which outline the circumstances in which two or more people can be convicted for a single

criminal act. It is also referred to as 'secondary liability' and 'complicity liability'. This area of law has attracted a great deal of criticism, particularly as research shows that it is used to convict disproportionate numbers of Black and Mixed race men of serious violent offences, including murder (Crewe et al 2014, Williams and Clarke 2016). In addition to this, individuals convicted of murder as secondary parties report feeling that their conviction and sentence are illegitimate (Hulley et al 2019).

The goal of the project is to make a theoretical and empirical contribution to the debate on joint enterprise, to inform policy makers, criminal justice practitioners and young people. The study is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), with additional funding provided by the Isaac Newton Trust. The study has four central aims:

1. To examine young people's social relations and how these relations shape their involvement in serious group violence;

2. To document young people's legal consciousness – their perceptions and experiences of the law – as it relates to serious violence generally and joint enterprise specifically;
3. To explore criminal justice practitioners' interpretations of young people's social relations and the extent to which these influence practice in cases of serious group violence; and
4. To document criminal justice practitioners' legal consciousness and the impact of recent changes to the law on practice.

The fieldwork was completed last year, with the research assistance of Dr Gary Pritchard. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with:

- 41 legal practitioners with experience of cases of multi-handed violence (Homicide and Trident 'gang' police detectives and prosecution and defence lawyers);
- 36 prisoners convicted of serious group violence when they were aged between 16 and 25, and who, at trial, were convicted (or whose co-defendants were convicted) via the law on secondary liability; and
- 56 young people in the community, aged between 16 and 25, with various experience of serious group violence (ranging from no experience to considerable involvement as witnesses, victims and perpetrators).

Creative workshops were also undertaken with nine young people in the community and five male prisoners, to explore young people's social relations and prisoners' experiences of being implicated in a criminal case involving secondary liability. Body maps were used 'to visually represent [these] aspects of [their] lives, their bodies and the world they live in' (Gastaldo et al 2012).

Recent and ongoing publications

Young, T., **Hulley, S.** and Pritchard, G. (2020) 'A "Good Job" in Difficult Conditions: Detectives' Reflections, Decisions and Discriminations in the Context of 'Joint Enterprise'', *Theoretical Criminology* 24(3): 461-481.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480620907592>

This paper reports on interviews with homicide and 'gang' detectives in London in which they rebut accusations of racial stereotyping when investigating multi-handed crimes. Instead, they argue that disproportionality is the result of larger numbers of BAME men being involved in violent crime and that they are simply trying to achieve their 'ultimate concerns' of justice for victims and public protection within this 'difficult' structural and cultural context. Drawing on Margaret Archer's social realist theory, we argue that police action cannot be divorced from the context in which detectives practice but that there are racialized aspects to this process that reflect the concept of 'colourblind racism'.

Hulley, S. and Young, T. (under review) 'The wall of silence, joint enterprise and the legal trap'.

Internationally, the 'wall of silence' has been identified as a threat to successful police investigations and criminal trials. In the UK, attempts have been made to break down this wall by improving community trust in the police and increasing the legal risks for individuals who remain silent in police interviews. However, based on the findings from our study, this paper argues that framing silence in this way ignores the role that the criminal justice system plays in generating silence among suspects in multi-handed cases. Specifically, while cultural narratives explain young people's refusal to engage with the police in the community, for those who become suspects in an investigation into serious multi-handed violence, silence is primarily generated by concerns about the legal risks of talking, due to the low threshold at which multiple individuals can be charged

using the doctrine of joint enterprise. In this context, then, joint enterprise ensnares young people in a particularly precarious trap, as they remain silent due to the legal risks of talking and, in turn, their silence is interpreted as guilt.

Hulley, S. and Young, T. (under review) 'Justifying joint enterprise: The problems of (un)fair labelling and (dis)proportionate punishment'.

Despite changes to the interpretation of the doctrine of joint enterprise in *R v Jogee* and *Ruddock* [2016] UKSC 8, questions remain about the legitimacy of the law in this area. Based on our interviews with criminal justice practitioners working on cases of serious violence, this paper argues that the law of complicity continues to be justified and applied by the police and prosecution lawyers based on theories that over-emphasise secondary parties' contributions to the substantive offence and on policy and practice imperatives. In line with many of the defence lawyers who participated in the study, we argue that the law of complicity, and its application, continues to disregard normative assessments of culpability and contradict fundamental principles of fair labelling and proportionate punishment. The paper concludes by calling for changes to prosecutorial practice and further law reform, to recognise a continuum of culpability and ensure that the actions of individuals are fairly labelled and proportionately punished.

Young, T. and **Hulley, S.** (under review) "'It's tantalising evidence but you've got to look at the wider picture": the utility of social media evidence in cases of group-related violence'.

Drawing on interviews with police detectives and legal practitioners, this paper explores the way in which social media is used in the investigation and prosecution of serious violence. It illustrates how information mined from the social media accounts of suspects is converted into evidence and used by the prosecution in the pursuit of a conviction in

'joint enterprise' cases. In this article, attention is drawn to the potential (mis)application and (mis)interpretation of online content in criminal investigations involving young men associated with 'gangs' and 'gang-related violence'. While safeguards, in the form of the PACE legislation, exist to prevent the admission of prejudicial evidence in court, findings from this study suggests that harmful social media content can slip into criminal trials. The results reveal where such material is admitted into evidence it has the potential to negatively influence jury decisions and criminalise individuals who become 'guilty by association'.

Post-doctoral researchers



Dr Katherine Auty joined the Prisons Research Centre as a Research Associate in 2012, and was recently promoted to the

position of Senior Research Associate. She was previously a PhD student in Forensic Psychiatry at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary, University of London. Using data from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development, she examined the intergenerational transmission of psychopathy, personality disorders and criminal offending. Some of her PhD work was published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* and the *British Journal of Criminology*. Next year she will be presenting some of this work at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Orlando, Florida.

Katherine continues to work with the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) and Staff Quality of Life (SQL) survey data, producing quantitative analysis from the datasets, and participating in fieldwork exercises. Recent analyses have involved an attempt to design a survey tool to assess trauma-informed practice in two female prisons, and this work is currently

being written up in collaboration with several other PRC colleagues.

Katherine (in collaboration with Alison Liebling) recently finished a study that analyses the relationship between prison moral and social climate and reoffending. It relates data from the measuring the quality of prison life (MQPL) survey carried out in all prisons in England and Wales to official Ministry of Justice data on proven reoffending. The sample contains data from 224 prison surveys conducted between 2009 and 2013, from a total of 24,508 prisoners. Results indicate that several of the MQPL dimensions are related to rates of proven reoffending for each prison. As the MQPL survey measures the moral, relational and organizational quality of prison life for prisoners, overall these findings suggest that higher moral quality of life, or higher interior legitimacy, supports better outcomes for prisoners on release. This is consistent with theoretical expectations about the links between legitimacy, engagement in prison programs, well-being, and compliance with the law. This work was published earlier this year in *Justice Quarterly*.

Katherine's most recent analyses involve a project to understand the impact of imprisonment on prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm and an investigation of differences in perceptions of prison social climate (as captured by the MQPL) for those at risk of suicide and self-harm. She has also been completing a research project (with Alison Liebling, Judith Gardom and Elinor Lieber) that started in January 2019 on the 'Shared Reading project' (formerly 'Get into Reading') in six English prisons (see above).

Recent publications

Auty, K. and Liebling, A. (2020) 'Exploring the Relationship between Prison Social Climate and Reoffending', *Justice Quarterly* 37(2): 358-381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2018.1538421>

Auty, K. (2020) 'Meditation in Prison', in M. Farias, D. Brazier and M. Lalljee (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Meditation*. Oxford: OUP.



Dr Alice levins has been a member of the PRC since she started her PhD in 2013. In October 2019, she started working on 'A good life in

prison? Everyday ethics in a prison holding young men', funded by an ESRC New Investigator Grant. This project will explore how young adult male prisoners (those aged between 18 and 24) define and pursue a 'good life' while they are incarcerated. It hopes to offer a more 'appreciative' account of the social worlds of imprisoned young people, who are normally seen, by academics and politicians, as both dangerous and vulnerable. By making use of the growing literature in the anthropology of ethics, Alice hopes to produce an account of the way in which people in prison try to live morally meaningful lives, and to find 'goodness' even in a context defined by stark power imbalances, severe deprivation, and complex social relationships.

Alice has also been working on projects related to her earlier work, most of which has concerned the imprisonment of men convicted of sex offences. Among her recent publications are an article with Ben Crewe building on his earlier work on 'tightness', and one alone on collective self-regulation or 'lateral tightness' (see below). She has also submitted an article with Kristian Mjåland, which compares the punishment of men convicted of sex offences in England & Wales and Norway, and which challenges conventional depictions of neoliberal jurisdictions as exclusionary and social democratic jurisdictions as inclusionary but invasive. It argues that the punishment of men convicted of sex offences in England & Wales was demanding but exclusionary whereas punishment in Norway operated in a way which was formally

inclusionary but surprisingly laissez-faire: prisoners retained their legal rights during and after their incarceration, but the lack of opportunities to discuss their offending meant that their sentences were rarely experienced as meaningful and their formal inclusion was not enough for them to feel substantially included after release.

In addition, Alice is currently preparing a manuscript for a book entitled *The Stains of Imprisonment: Moral Communication and Social Relationships in a Prison for Men Convicted of Sex Offences*, which should be published in 2023 by University of California Press as part of their Gender and Justice series. The book builds on her PhD research and seeks to bring sociological research on the experience of imprisonment into conversation with work on the purpose of punishment and the best way of responding to harm. Its main argument is that prisons are morally communicative institutions: they say something to those they hold about the offences which led them there and the implications these offences have for their moral character, and much of this moral meaning is communicated through the prosaic yet power-imbued processes which make up daily life in custody. However, the prison which is the focus of this book shamed prisoners in such an all-encompassing, exclusionary and permanent way that it discouraged them from engaging in serious moral reflection on the harms they had caused. It spoke much more effectively about the shameful of the wrongdoer than about the wrongfulness of the criminal act. The prison may have been morally communicative, then, but it did not promote accountability. Through the book's empirical description of the moral messages which were circulated through the lived experience of imprisonment, it will contribute to normative discussions about the role imprisonment plays as a response to sexual harm, and the extent to which it takes us closer to and further from justice.

Recent and ongoing publications



levins, A. (in progress) *The Stains of Imprisonment: Moral Communication and Social Relationships in a Prison for Men Convicted of Sex Offences*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

levins, A. and Mjåland, K. (under review) 'Authoritarian exclusion and laissez-faire inclusion: A comparison of the imprisonment of men convicted of sex offences in England & Wales and Norway'.

levins, A. (under review) 'Power, shame and social relations in sex offender imprisonment'.

levins, A. (in press) 'The society of "sex offenders"', In B. Crewe, A. Goldsmith and M. Halsey (eds) *Power and Pain in the Modern Prison: Revisiting the Society of Captives*. Oxford: OUP, Clarendon.

levins, A. (2020) 'Perfectly individualized and constantly visible'? Lateral tightness in a prison holding men convicted of sex offences', *Incarceration: An international journal of imprisonment, detention and coercive confinement*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2632666320936433>

Crewe, B. and **levins, A.** (2020) 'Tightness, recognition and penal power', *Punishment & Society*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1462474520928115>

levins, A. (2019) 'Finding victims in the narratives of men imprisoned for sex offences', in J. Fleetwood, L. Presser, S. Sandberg and T. Ugelvik (eds) *The Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology* (pp. 279-300). Bingley: Emerald.

Dr Julie Laursen joined the Institute of Criminology and the PRC in June 2016, as a Research Associate on the COMPEN project (see

above). She is also a College Research Associate at King's College, Cambridge. Together with colleagues, Julie is spending most of her time writing up findings from the COMPEN study, on topics including loneliness in prisons, 'radical hope', a comparison of 'deep-end' units in England & Wales and Norway, and Halden prison (see below).

Julie was recently awarded a Reintegration Fellowship from the Carlsberg Foundation and a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship to study the 'forvarings' sentence in Denmark where indeterminate sentences are given to people who commit serious offences and who are deemed likely to reoffend due to previous offending and their mental state. While there is a fairly rich literature on indeterminate imprisonment in the Anglophone countries, the last exploratory study of indeterminate imprisonment in the Nordic countries was conducted over 50 years ago. The research project will provide an in-depth examination of the experience of being indeterminately sentenced by a court and of serving an indeterminate sentence in prison, illustrating the connections between the wider aims and functions of the penal state and the everyday practices, experiences and interactions in prison. Usually, there is a sharp distinction between the allocation and delivery of punishment; the first happens in courts and the second in penal institutions. Using ethnographic research methods (participant observation, in-depth interviews and a Dialogue Group), Julie's project will address this gap in the scholarship by focusing on the experiences of the indeterminate sentenced in the two arenas of punishment.

Julie will be employed in the COMPEN project until March 2021, where after she takes up her new Fellowship based at Law, Copenhagen University. She will continue to collaborate with colleagues in COMPEN and the PRC in general. Julie is looking forward to being able to be physically present with colleagues and friends from the Prisons Research Centre and beyond again, not least since she has been confined to

her house with a (very sweet) baby since September 2019.

Recent and ongoing publications

Crewe, B., Mjåland, K. and **Laursen, J.** (in progress) 'Exceptionalism in exceptional places? Comparing deep-end confinement in England & Wales and Norway'.

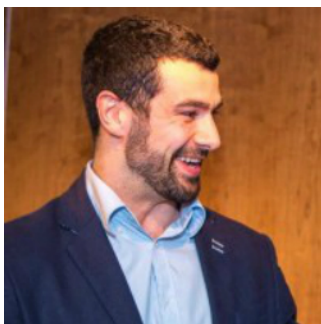
Laursen, J. (in progress) 'Radical hope and (dis)order - exploring prisoners' experiences of release from prison in England & Wales and Norway'.

Jewkes, Y., Mjåland, K. and **Julie Laursen** (in progress) 'Imaginary Rehabilitation in the Imaginary Prison: the broken promises of Nordic penal exceptionalism'.

Schliehe, A, **Laursen, J.** and Crewe, B. (under review) 'Loneliness in prison'.

Laursen, J., Mjåland, K. and Crewe, B. (2020) "'It's Like a Sentence Before the Sentence": Exploring the Pains and Possibilities of Waiting for Imprisonment', *British Journal of Criminology* 60(2): 363-381.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azz042>



Dr Ben Laws is a post-doctoral researcher in the PRC, working on a research project titled 'Prisoner Emotions at the Margins:

Understanding the pathways to destruction and healing among prisoners in solitary confinement'. Funded by an ESRC New Investigator grant, this 30-month project, which began in March 2018, is now in its second year. The study explores the emotional dimensions of segregation units in England and Wales, based on a five-month fieldwork period in the segregation unit at HMP Whitemoor, talking with prisoners and officers

informally and conducting semi-structured interviews.

Solitary confinement is often described in the academic literature as an ecology of cruelty and even a form of psychological torture. Yet, there is debate over the effects of segregation units in England & Wales, with some arguing that impacts are either short-lived or even enlightening for some prisoners. The first substantive output from this project is an article (under review) focusing on prisoners who orchestrated their own segregation in HMP Whitemoor (titled: '*Segregation Seekers: An alternative perspective on the solitary confinement debate*'). Around 60 per cent of the prisoners interviewed in Whitemoor felt more comfortable in segregation than in the mainstream population. But this was rarely spoken of as a 'positive' choice. Rather, prisoners described a kind of 'negative benefit' and sought out solitude because it provided relief from the strains of interacting with others, particularly relating to long-standing tensions organised around 'Muslim gangs' or 'pressures to convert'. The main argument of the article is that solitary confinement cannot be easily separated from the broader context of the prison environment. While segregation units are often isolated from main prison quarters – in secluded parts of the grounds – they are not islands separate from it, and need to be understood within this context.

This taut research environment in Whitemoor has led, quite organically, to therapeutic reflection sessions with the Tavistock and Portman clinic. These sessions include the discussion of fieldwork notes and sometimes crossover into more personal explorations. The assumption is that psychoanalytical insights can offer an illuminating perspective in prisons research. In real terms, this means investigating how psychodynamic ideas such as 'projection', 'suppression' and 'denial' can be conceptually relevant, and empirically grounded, in understanding the daily operation of segregation.

Ben has recently secured a contract with Palgrave Macmillan to write a book called *Caged Emotions*, which will combine the findings from Ben's doctoral thesis with his current project on solitary confinement. It will foreground the emotional dimensions of prison life and discuss what emotions can tell us about well-established themes of adaptation and control in prison. Ben has also published an article in *Theoretical Criminology*, about how we might conceptualise selfhood in more inclusive ways in criminological writing; and co-authored articles with Elinor Lieber in *The European Journal of Criminology* and Yvonne Jewkes in *Punishment & Society*. The first seeks to understand and share the various expressions of care in men's prisons, and the second tries to 'map' the emotional dimensions of space women's prisons.

Recent and ongoing publications

Laws, B. (forthcoming) *Caged Emotions: An alternative perspective on adaptation, control and solitude in prison*. London: Palgrave.

Laws, B. (under review). 'Segregation seekers: An alternative perspective on the solitary confinement debate'.

Jewkes, Y., & **Laws, B.** (in press). 'Liminality revisited: mapping the emotional adaptations of women in carceral space', *Punishment & Society*

Laws, B. (2020) 'Reimagining 'the self' in criminology: Transcendence, unconscious states and the limits of narrative criminology', *Theoretical Criminology*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480620919102>

Laws, B. and Lieber E. (2020) 'King, Warrior, Magician & Lover: Understanding expressions of care among male prisoners', *European Journal of Criminology*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370819896207>



Dr Anna Schliehe

joined the Institute of Criminology and the PRC in June 2016, as a Research Associate.

She is also a College Research Associate at King's College,

Cambridge. Anna has

spent most of the last year on maternity leave but returned to work since the end of September 2020 to continue her work on the COMPEN project (see above). Together with colleagues, Anna is spending most of her time writing up findings from the COMPEN study, on topics including loneliness in prisons, cell-sharing and a comparison of open prisons in Norway and England & Wales (see below). She is also working on curating an online exhibition of COMPEN photographs entitled: 'Perspectives and the art of comparison'.

Anna is the treasurer of the Carceral Geography Working Group (see www.carceralgeography.com) and as part of this, she continues her work of organising academic exchanges, events and teaching on the topic in an international and interdisciplinary way. She is currently working on establishing the field in Germany and is co-editing a special issue with *Geographica Helvetica* on carceral geography that emerged from the first carceral geography session at a German conference last year. Anna is currently finishing a manuscript for a monograph called: *Young Women's Carceral Geographies: Journeys In, Out, and Beyond Confinement*. She will be employed on the COMPEN project until June 2021 and is currently applying for funding to do her own research project which is partly building on COMPEN work.

Recent and ongoing publications

Henriksen, A.K. and **Schliehe, A.** (2020) 'Ethnography of young people in confinement – on subjectivity, positionality and situated ethics in closed space', *Qualitative Research*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120904873>

Crowley, A.R., **Schliehe, A.** and Vogel, M. (in press) 'Girlhood incarcerated: Perspectives from secure care', in M. Vogel and L. Arnell (eds) *Living like a girl - Agency, social vulnerability and welfare measures in a European context*. London: Berghahn Books.

Schliehe, A., Laursen, J. and Crewe, B. (under review) 'Loneliness in prison'.

Fraser, A. and **Schliehe, A.** (under review) 'Carceral urbanism: Crime, space and order in the post-colonial city'.

Schliehe, A. (in progress) *Young Women's Carceral Geographies: Journeys In, Out, and Beyond Confinement*. Emerald Publishing.

Schliehe, A., Crewe, B. (in progress) 'Top-bunk, bottom-bunk - the geographies of cell sharing'.

Liebling, A., Auty, K., **Schliehe, A.** and Crewe, B. (in progress) 'What is trauma-informed practice? Towards operationalisation of the concept in two prisons for women'.

Mjåland, K., **Schliehe, A.** and Laursen, J. (in progress) 'Contrasts in freedom: A comparison of low-security imprisonment in England & Wales and Norway'



Dr Bethany Schmidt was appointed to the three-year post of **Lecturer in Penology** at the Institute of Criminology in October 2020. This role replaces Alison Liebling for the duration of her Leverhulme Major

Research Fellowship. Bethany will take over much of Alison's teaching and research project management responsibilities, in addition to the continuation of 'outreach' MQPL+ work, including international projects, and other projects which form part of the PRC's overall research activities.

Bethany is currently engaged with two projects. The first, in partnership with Dr Andrew Jefferson from DIGNITY, is a longitudinal study of the quality of life in Tunisian prisons. Intensive ethnographic fieldwork has been carried out in four prisons, alongside interviews with former prisoners, and other criminal justice and NGO stakeholders. The study has explored several aspects of prison life in Tunisia: e.g., prison policy and the practice of punishment pre- and post-revolution; the gendered experience; the role of civil society and human rights in reform; terrorism; staff-prisoner relationships; and how power and authority are exercised in this transitioning context. Engagement here has also included a cooperative relationship with Avril 9 University and the development of their MSc course in 'Criminology and Prevention of Delinquency', which brings students and prison practitioners together. This course is the first of its kind in North Africa. Bethany and Andrew were delighted to deliver the course's inaugural lecture on doing prisons research. The second (with Alison Liebling) is a newly commissioned project from the Norwegian Correctional Service, which aims to assist five Eastern European countries in their reform efforts to improve prison provision and practice. Bethany has been working closely with local researchers and practitioners within each jurisdiction as they adapt the MQPL and prepare for implementation in their respective countries.

In October 2019, Bethany and Alison led a workshop entitled 'Are Hope, Possibility, and Reform Achievable in Prison?' for Argentine Federal Prison Service practitioners in Buenos Aires. This was a follow-up to their two-week 'Senior course in penology and prisons research' in 2018, which also featured Richard Sparks, Fergus McNeill, and Shadd Maruna. The course culminated in a special international issue of the Argentine Federal Prison Service's Institute of Criminology Journal, published in 2019, with articles that reflected content delivered in the senior course: <http://www.spf.gob.ar/www/instituto-de->

Bethany, with Kate Herrity and Jason Warr, has also co-edited the book *Sensory Penalties: Exploring the Senses in Spaces of Punishment and Social Control* (Emerald Publishing, due out February 2021). The book contributes to the growing body of sensory scholarship by expanding anthropological practices and craft into the field of criminology and criminological research.

Over the next year, Bethany plans to publish from her doctoral research, 'Democratising Democracy: Reimagining Prisoners as Citizens Through Participatory Governance', which includes plans for a book. This work brings democratic theory and prison sociology together empirically, as it examines prison democratisation processes through co-governance.

Recent and ongoing publications

Herrity, K., **Schmidt, B.E.** and Warr, J. (eds) (forthcoming) *Sensory Penalties: Exploring the Senses in Spaces of Punishment and Social Control*. Bingley: Emerald.

Liebling, A., **Schmidt, B.E.**, Beyens, K., Boone, M., Johnsen, B., Kox, M., Rokkan, T. and Vanhouche, A.S. (under review) 'Doing team ethnography in a transnational prison'.

Schmidt, B.E. and Jefferson, A.M. (2021) 'Sensing transition: exploring prison life in post-revolution Tunisia' (2021), in K. Herrity, **B.E. Schmidt** and J. Warr (eds) *Sensory Penalties: Exploring the Senses in Spaces of Punishment and Social Control*. Bingley, West Yorkshire: Emerald Publishing.

Liebling, A., Johnsen, B., **Schmidt, B.E.**, Rokkan, T., Beyens, K., Boone, M., Kox, M. and Vanhouche, A.S. (2020) 'Where two "exceptional" prison cultures meet: Negotiating order in a transnational prison', *British Journal of*

Criminology.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaa047>

Jefferson, A.M. and **Schmidt, B.E.** (2019) 'Concealment and revelation as bureaucratic and ethnographic practice: Lessons from Tunisian prisons', *Critique of Anthropology* 39(2): 155-171.

Schmidt, B.E. (2019) 'La voz de los internos' ('The Prisoner's Voice'), *Revista de Criminología, Instituto de Criminología, Servicio Penitenciario Federal, Argentina* 5: 105-124.

PhD students

Ellie Brown – 'Understanding the use and experience of segregation in English prisons'



Ellie is in the final few months of completing her PhD, is supervised by Alison Liebling and Nicola Padfield. As a

qualified lawyer, Ellie is interested in how the law has shaped the experience of segregation and is adopting a socio-legal approach to her research. Ellie undertook her fieldwork in HMP Whitemoor, a high security prison. She spent four months conducting interviews with prisoners and staff, as well as observing prison practices. During her fieldwork she explored: (i) the processes involved in segregating individuals; (ii) how segregation was typically used; and (iii) the experience of segregation.

Ellie's PhD focuses on three main areas of inquiry. First, it explores how segregation is and should be used, and how the law sets the parameters of such usage (in theory at least). Second, despite there being a *language* of law, she identifies how the functioning of law - in this particular unit - is impacted by the culture of those responsible for its implementation. Third, she examines how legal frameworks are not only capable of being overridden by the *culture of*

people but also the *culture of context*; undermined and subverted by practical, psychological and procedural barriers.

Ellie was recently awarded the Cambridge Society for Applied Research prize. Alongside her PhD, Ellie directed the Cambridge Pro Bono Project and taught for the Learning Together programme in HMPs Grendon, Whitemoor and Warren Hill.

Recent and ongoing publications

Brown, E. (2020) 'A systematic review of the effects of prison segregation', *Aggression and Violent Behavior*.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2020.101389>

Aiden Cope – 'Opening new prisons: a comparative study of the penal field'



Aiden is in the fourth year of his PhD, supervised by Alison Liebling. He is conducting a comparative study of the penal field in two legal jurisdictions, focusing on HMP Berwyn (England & Wales) and

Ravenhall Correctional Centre (Victoria, Australia). Aiden's study aims to describe the changing shape and purpose of new prisons in different jurisdictions. It explores the changing nature of the penal state and the tension between increasing financial pressures and the high aspirations apparent in recent penal policy.

Aiden spent the third year of his PhD analysing interview data and creating case studies of his fieldwork sites. These case studies will describe the composition of the penal field in both jurisdictions and describe how this composition mediates macro level trends and pressures to shape and influence policy outcomes. The aim is to deepen knowledge of what takes place in the gap between global political and social trends and specific policy outcomes. During the coming year

Aiden will complete final interviews in both jurisdictions, analyse the data he has already collected and write up his results.

João Costa – 'Peace Behind a Veil of Ignorance (VOI)'



João's PhD project is supervised by Alison Liebling and outlines and seeks to pilot a systematic procedure that could consistently lead communities divided by war to minimise the impact of

violence. Drawing on research on emotions, social justice, identity, and intergroup conflict, the project is structured around an exercise that builds on the idea of the VOI, a concept introduced by John Rawls that became the cornerstone of one of the most influential theories of social justice of the last century, and could lead to two context-specific interventions in local communities, that is, villages or small towns. It may later be integrated into larger peacebuilding initiatives, complementing their efforts and contributing to increased positive effects, social cohesion, and perceptions of peace.

Currently at the fieldwork preparation phase, João has turned the project into a programme proposal and is searching for funding and partnerships with international organisations and NGOs. The goal is to find an organisation that would implement the project in the field under his supervision as the lead researcher. To this end, he has created a video animation that explains the core aspects of the VOI project that is available online.

While pursuing his PhD, João is working full-time as the Head of the Portuguese National Preventive Mechanism against torture and other cruel, degrading, and inhuman treatment of persons deprived of their liberty.

Recent and ongoing publications

Costa, J. (forthcoming) 'The monitoring work of the National Preventive Mechanism: qualitative and quantitative elements', in D. Fink et al (eds) *Proceedings from the 2019 Portuguese Prison Photo Project Conference Lisbon, 23 and 24 May 2019*.

Costa, J. and Fink, D. (forthcoming) 'COVID-19 pandemic and the responses in prisons in Portugal and Switzerland', in D. Fink et al (eds) *Proceedings from the 2019 Portuguese Prison Photo Project Conference Lisbon, 23 and 24 May 2019*.

Liebling, A. and **Costa, J.** (in press) 'Being human as a method and research finding in social science', in D. Coffman (eds) *People, Nations, Traditions in a Comparative Frame: Thinking about the Past with Jonathan Steinberg*. London: Anthem Press.

Conferences / international meetings

- Participated in the High-Level meetings on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and in a parallel workshop on safeguards in the first hours of police custody (November 2019)
- Presented the Contributions of the Portuguese Ombudsman in the Seventh Periodic Review of the Implementation of the Convention Against Torture at the United Nations in Geneva (November 2019)
- Participated in a series of three online expert-meetings on "Monitoring Prison Violence" within the framework of the EU Project "Working towards harmonised detention standards in the EU – the role of NPMs"
- Speaker at the 2nd Iberian Conference on Resilience and Wellbeing, organised by the Católica Research Centre for Psychological, Family, and Social Wellbeing, presenting my PhD project (October 2020)

Sophie Ellis – 'Legitimacy in prison-based psychology practices'



Sophie's PhD research, supervised by Ben Crewe, concerns perceptions of legitimacy in prison-based psychology practice. She is interested in what makes 'good'

psychology in prison, in the eyes of those who experience it. Her research will explore legitimacy-related perceptions and processes in psychologist-prisoner relationships. For example, how does trust build up and break down? What constitutes fair treatment in a prison psychology context? What practices are seen as more or less legitimate by prisoners? How do psychologists negotiate their own legitimacy (with their audiences and themselves)? How do legitimacy-related perceptions affect psychological decision making? How are such perceptions related to prisoners' engagement with psychologists?

This first year of her PhD has comprised reading, reflection and deconstruction of what power, legitimacy and fairness mean in prison psychology. It has involved tracing the history of psychologists in prison and mapping the complex structural influences that have shaped their current role in the system. It has also involved more ground-level analyses of psychologist/prisoner commentary, and conversations with psychologists and ex-prisoners, to better understand how their working relationships are experienced. Fieldwork will entail a semi-ethnographic study of psychologists and prisoners working together during psychological risk assessments and treatment, incorporating conversations-with-purpose, observation and interviews. The study is unique in that no study has explored the views and experiences of psychologist-prisoner dyads working together, or followed the evolution of their relationships over the lifetime of a piece of clinical work.

Sophie has also continued her involvement with the Families and Imprisonment Research (FAIR) Study, a longitudinal study of families affected by paternal imprisonment, run by Dr Caroline Lanskey. In November 2019, she presented at the national HMPPS meeting of the IPP Project, to discuss how a resilience-based approach might be applied to IPP prisoners and their families. In March 2020, she presented at a Probation Institute conference, to describe FAIR Study findings, particularly family experiences of probation supervision. She has drafted a paper drawing upon the FAIR Study's experiences of longitudinal participant follow-up, exploring how spatial and temporal factors shape participant retention.

Recent and ongoing publications

Ellis, S., Lanskey, C., Markson, L., Souza, K., Barton-Crosby, J. and Lösel, F. (in progress) 'Retaining participants in longitudinal studies: The role of space and time'.

Judith Gardom – 'The Meaning of Reading in Prison: An Exploratory Study in Two Men's Prisons in the East of England'



Judith PhD is supervised by Loraine Gelsthorpe and Alison Liebling, funded by the ESRC and supported by the University of Cambridge ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership.

Although reading books in prison is widely believed to be important and beneficial, little is known about the book-reading practices of men in prison, the roles that reading plays in their everyday lives, or how their reading relates to their needs and concerns. The aim of Judith's research is to contribute new knowledge in this area, and offer a framework for understanding the implications for both prison and reading.

Over an eight-month period, Judith conducted 53 interviews with men in two contrasting Category C prisons, exploring their current and past experiences of reading in prison, and aspects of their life experiences. Using prison libraries as a base, she observed and took part in everyday activities including library induction, reading groups, programmes linking prisoners with their families through recording stories, and peer mentoring of beginner readers; shadowed librarians in their everyday work in the library and other areas including segregation and education; and held extensive conversations with librarians, volunteers, prison officers and senior staff.

Judith has spent the past year analysing her research data and is in the process of writing up, using a frame of reference that combines insights from the anthropology of reading, reader-response theory, and prisons research. Judith identifies cultures of book-reading that are shaped by prison environments and by the prison population, existing alongside a wide variety of individual preferences and reading practices. Reading in prison combines distinctive elements of limitation and possibility, and men who read move between modes of reading that favour what is known and predictable, and modes that are individually creative, critical, ambitious or experimental. Her data suggests that there are complex and intimate relationships between the development of men's reading in prison, and particular concerns that arise in prison environments: using time and making time go; retaining meaningful connection with family; finding ways to exercise agency; avoiding or experiencing emotions; and constructing a self-narrative.

Judith participated in the Institute of Criminology's Moral Anthropology and Penology group and presented on Cheryl Mattingly's 'first person virtue ethics' and 'moral laboratories' at the 2019 PRC conference.

Judith has continued to work on the Evaluation of Shared Reading in PIPEs project for HMPPS and

the NHS, writing the final report with Alison Liebling, Katherine Auty, and Elinor Lieber (see above).

Ben Jarman – ‘Moral development and ethical



self-governance among men imprisoned for murder’

Ben is entering the third year of his PhD, supervised by Ben Crewe, which explores ethical development among

men serving life sentences for murder: how their personal ethics are affected by the conviction and the sentence; how they respond to the moral messages conveyed by punishment; how their priorities change as the sentence proceeds; how their personal ethics interact with the demand to self-govern and ‘reduce risk’; and how some lifers generate feelings of hopefulness and meaning despite the difficulties of their predicament.

Ben’s PhD builds on and develops pilot research carried out for his MPhil, which provided the basis of an article in the *British Journal of Criminology* published in 2020 (see below). One focus is how the perceived moral status of an



offence affects lifers’ feelings about the rehabilitative opportunities on offer in the prison. Do people who have committed particularly heinous offences feel a heavier burden of shame? If so,

how does this affect their feelings about the idea that they should change, and the rehabilitative services and opportunities (such as work, training, education or offending behaviour programmes) on offer from the prison?

The second year of the PhD was spent carrying out and transcribing interviews with 30 men at HMP Swaleside and 18 at HMP Leyhill. The PhD’s

emerging findings point to a more nuanced view of adaptation to imprisonment than described in recent studies, emphasising ‘imported’ factors in its account of how people adapt to very long sentences. There appear to be significant differences in attitudes to punishment and risk reduction among men sentenced in youth, middle age, and when older. There are also considerable differences in ethical self-evaluation among those whose offences took place in different circumstances, with some men far more readily shouldering labels such as ‘risky’, ‘dangerous’ or ‘murderer’ and working within this identity, and others continuing to dispute or question their culpability even as they participate in risk-reducing interventions and work towards objectives on their sentence plan. Although much of this will not be surprising to practitioners, the PhD will provide a systematic description of these patterns, and situate this within a growing body of work considering the ethical and moral (as well as simply the risk- and recidivism-related) implications of sentencing and punishment.

Recent and ongoing publications

Jarman, B. (2020) ‘Only one way to swim? The offence and the life course in accounts of adaptation to life imprisonment’, *British Journal of Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10/ggs23w>

Deborah Kant – ‘The prison and the city: a tale of two cultures’

Deborah is a finishing PhD student, supervised by Alison Liebling. Her research explores the relationship between personal biography, institutional culture and locale in the personal and professional narratives of prison officers.

Previous research (for example Liebling 2008; Crawley 2004) has shown that prison officers share certain occupational traits such as a sense of camaraderie and social cohesion, and an appreciation of humour and ‘straight talk’, as well as a cynical outlook, sense of nostalgia for a shared past, and mistrust of people outside their

group. However, research has also shown that there are distinct 'schools' of officers, whose philosophies affect their approaches to care, punishment, management, and other such matters (see, for example, Tait 2008; Liebling and Kant 2017), which are influenced by broader institutional cultures specific to the prison. Deborah's research explores this distinction and analyses how the professional role and self-definition of uniformed staff have developed within the context of changing socio-economic contexts and prison officer demographics, and the cultural norms associated with occupational communities and distinct places.

Deborah's research focussed on frontline staff and managers at two large and busy men's Category B local prisons in the North and South of England. Her findings suggest that officer cultures are informed by a complex interplay of individual agency and structures of the penal field, their work role, and locale. The internal organisation of each prison in this study was influenced by broad economic and social shifts experienced at a national level. However, layers of history, labour relations, kinship and community ties unique to the cities (and regions) in which these prisons were located lent a distinct character to each locale. Officers' motivations, experiences, and narratives were coloured by these 'local flavours' and contributed to distinct organisational cultures. Their sense of place figured strongly in how they understood and performed their work. These findings suggest that the concept of the 'total institution' needs to be re-evaluated in the context of the late-modern prison. In the words of the late Doreen Massey, 'Geography Matters!'.

Together with Alison Liebling and colleagues from the Freie Universität Berlin and Universität Köln (Germany), and Universität Bern (Switzerland), Deborah has been working on an adaptation of MQPL+ for the Swiss and German contexts. In 2019-2020, she presented on MQPL+ at the 16th Wissenschaftliche Tagung der Kriminologischen Gesellschaft in Vienna, and fed back on her findings to the Public Sector Prisons South management team.

Elinor Lieber – 'Caring Encounters: Exploring Kindness and Support among Male Prisoners'

Elinor is entering the third year of her PhD,



supervised by Alison Liebling. Her research aims to explore forms of informal inter-prisoner caregiving. It suggests that communion and mutual support are fundamental features of the prison society,

operating alongside some of the more commonly researched aspects of prison social life, such as aggression, individualism and internal exploitative economies. While prisoner memoirs are full of moving portrayals of kindness and friendship, these remain largely absent in academic accounts of imprisonment. In an environment filled with mistrust, this study sets out to investigate how care grows, and how it is regulated by prisoners, staff, and by the structural characteristics of the prison.

Elinor has recently completed fieldwork in HMP Warren Hill, where she spent five months conducting interviews, semi-ethnographic observations and social network analysis. The majority of her fieldwork focused on one wing, with the aim of forming strong relationships and gaining a refined understanding of the intricate dynamics between prisoners. This involved spending a large amount of unstructured time on the wing, shadowing participants through their days, as well as involving prisoners in the development of the social network aspect of the research. The wing studied was an integrated wing, housing both 'mainstream' male prisoners and men convicted of sex offences. This allowed Elinor to explore the intersection between care and power, the boundaries of caregiving, and the conditions under which mutual support can even transcend traditional prison hierarchies and moral rules.

During the coming year, Elinor will complete her data entry and analysis and will begin to write up her thesis. She also continues to be involved with the Evaluation of Shared Reading Groups in Psychologically Informed Planned Environments project, working alongside Alison Liebling, Katherine Auty and Judith Gardom (see above).

Recent and ongoing publications

Liebling, A., Williams, R., and **Lieber, E.** (2020) 'More mind games: how 'the action' and 'the odds' have changed in prison', *British Journal of Criminology*.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaa046>

Laws, B. and **Lieber E.** (2020) 'King, Warrior, Magician & Lover: Understanding expressions of care among male prisoners', *European Journal of Criminology*.



<https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370819896207>

Tania Mejia – 'Prison pen-pals: the value of correspondence and support from individuals not known to prisoners prior to their incarceration'



Tania is a first year PhD student, being supervised by Ben Crewe, whose research is about prison pen-pals. Decades of criminological research suggest that maintaining social

relationships outside of prison is crucial for prisoners' successful reintegration into the community. While most prior research on prisoner social support and ties has focused on

in-prison visits from family and friends, other forms of communication may also influence their incarceration experiences and post-release outcomes. Organizations and websites, such as www.WriteAPrisoner.com, give people in prison the opportunity to list a profile online in hopes of acquiring a pen-pal, a new friend, and a connection to the outside world. Public websites like these give anybody with internet access and interest in corresponding with a prisoner the opportunity to send a letter. Despite the potential impact of prison pen-palling, there is a lack of research about the exchange of letters between people in prison and individuals not known to them prior to their incarceration. Using surveys and interviews with prisoners in California, this qualitative study will attempt to fill the gap by exploring inmates pen-pal experiences and what role support from a stranger can have on incarceration experiences, cognitive transformations, identity changes, rehabilitation, and wellbeing.

Martha Morey – 'The construction of prisoner masculinities through experiences of work'

Martha is completing her PhD, supervised by Ben Crewe, on how prisoner masculinities are constructed through experiences of work. She has developed a typology of prisoner masculinities based on over 80 interviews across three establishments and is exploring how men found diverse purposes in 'purposeful activity', as well as the extent to which prison work assists them in leading 'a good and useful life'. The study finds that without more nuanced and individualised understandings of the men who do prison work, including their past lives and work experiences and their imagined futures, prison work will continue to serve primarily instrumental purposes that are limited to improving prisoners' lives while inside, as opposed to on release.

Daniel Packham – ‘The experiences of former military service personnel in prison in England and Wales’



Daniel has continued work on his PhD part-time, supervised by Ben Crewe, studying the experience of imprisonment amongst ex-military personnel in prisons

in England. Drawing on insights provided in Goffman's (1961) analysis of the 'Total Institution', Daniel's research is concerned with the similarities and differences between military institutions and prison institutions and how experience of life in the military might impact upon the experience of imprisonment. The study aims to investigate and establish how ex-military prisoners experience their time spent in prison with a particular focus on concepts of identity and self-conception, social status, attitudes towards authority, perceptions of state legitimacy, and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships with other prisoners and staff. Daniel's research study involved completing more than forty semi-structured qualitative interviews with former military prisoners and members of prison staff in seven prison establishments of various security categories around England. Daniel is currently writing up his findings, while continuing to apply his research and analytical skills learned from his PhD training in his full-time role as the Deputy Head of the Middle East and North Africa Research Hub at the Department for International Development.

Ailie Rennie – ‘A short longitudinal study of life sentenced prisoners' pre-release expectations and post-release realities’



Ailie's PhD, supervised by Ben Crewe and in its first year, will explore life-sentenced prisoners' expectations of re-entry compared to the multi-layered, complex, and challenges of post-release life. Building on her MPhil dissertation,

the study will employ a short-longitudinal design, including semi-structured interviews with around 30 male and female lifers within English prisons, conducted one month prior to release (T1) and two months post-release (T2). It will also involve interviews with probation officers whose role is to assist lifers in their re-entry. The research looks to explore whether expectations and realities are consistent a) between male and female lifers; b) before and after release; and, c) between lifers and their probation officers. Further, it will consider what influences these expectations by exploring the dual functions of cognition (positive mindsets vs realistic views; Souza et al 2015) and the role of hope. The interviews will explore matters beyond the material and relational dimensions of post-release life, focusing on existential issues such as shame, stigma, and the impact of the life licence. The quantitative component of the research will investigate the anticipated and actual difficulties of life in the community.

Fabio Tartarini – ‘The process of human flourishing in prison: a short-longitudinal research in a local English prison’



Fabio is writing up his research on the process of human flourishing in prison, supervised by Ben Crewe. In the literature, human flourishing is defined as the experience of life going well, and is the combination of feeling emotionally positive and

functioning effectively, in psychological and social terms (Huppert and So 2013). Flourishing is intrinsically linked to the concepts of health intended as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’ (WHO 1948) and represents a protective factor against self-harm and suicide in prison (see for example, Kelliher Rabon et al 2018; Liebling 1992). At the same time, enhancing positive well-being in prison creates the necessary substrate for rehabilitation and desistance, and for prisoners to lead law-abiding lives on release (Laws and Ward 2011).

Based on research undertaken in a local prison in England, Fabio’s work represents the first short-longitudinal and systematic exploration of the process of human flourishing in prison. Starting from an exploration of prisoners’ definitions of what it means to flourish in prison, this research identifies the social, psychological, and structural factors affecting the variations in both definitions and individual levels of human flourishing over time. Some of the key findings relate to the contextual nature of the concept of human flourishing and its evolution through time: prisoners’ conceptualisations of flourishing expanded from a reactive concern with surviving the pains and limitations of imprisonment, to more future oriented and self-centred definitions. In other words, the establishment of sound coping strategies was a pre-requisite for increasing concern with self-improvement and successful reintegration in society.

This research aims to inform theory and practice relative to prisoners’ rehabilitation, as well as supporting the identification of prison environments that are conducive to well-being and a rehabilitative culture (see Mann et al 2018). It also aims to explore the connections between the process of human flourishing and the early stages of desistance.

Recent and ongoing publications

Tartarini, F. (under review) ‘Human flourishing in prison and well-being: an exploration of

prisoners’ definitions and experiences of imprisonment’, in B. Searle, S. Pykett and M.J. Alfaro (eds) *A Modern Guide to Well-Being Research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Visiting scholars



Dr Kate Herrity was awarded her doctorate in Criminology in 2019 from the University of Leicester, for her PhD: ‘Rhythms and routines: sounding order in a local men’s prison using aural ethnography’. She was elected to the Mellon-King’s Junior Research Fellowship in Punishment in order to pursue her current research project – which extends ideas introduced in her thesis – exploring the relationship between sound and social emotion amongst different prison populations.



Dr Kristian Mjåland joined the Prisons Research Centre in 2016, as a Senior Research Associate on the COMPEN project. He is now employed as an Associate Professor in Sociology at the University of Agder, Norway, and is a Visiting scholar at the PRC. Kristian’s research interests include comparative penology, prison social life, offender rehabilitation, and drug use and drug economy in and beyond prisons.

While working on the COMPEN project, Kristian was mainly engaged in fieldwork within Norwegian prisons and interviews with key penal policymakers in Norway. Together with colleagues, he is currently writing up several articles, on topics such as ‘deep end confinement’, open prisons, egalitarian cultures

within Norwegian prisons, and prison officer perceptions of men convicted of sex offences.

Kristian has organised and hosted several public conversations in Kristiansand, Norway, through his role in a 'public social science' initiative at the University of Agder, Norway, on topics such as Climate change (November 2019), Drug reform (February 2020) and Artificial intelligence (June 2020). He also produced two podcasts for the same initiative during the lockdown.



Professor Frank Neubacher is Director of the Institute of Criminology of the University of Cologne. Having

earned degrees in law and political sciences, he gained working experiences at the Universities of Bonn and Cologne as well as at the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division in Vienna. His research combined topics related to politics and crime. While his dissertation examined the xenophobic arson attacks in Germany throughout the 1990s, his 'habilitation' dealt with the criminological foundations of an international criminal jurisdiction. After holding positions in Dresden and Jena, he moved back to Cologne where his focus shifted to prison issues and he conducted three research projects on prison violence, funded by the German Research Foundation. His research interests cover prison climate research, the criminology of international crimes, organised crime, and crime in developing countries. In recent years, he has been teaching in Georgia and Kenya and in 2014-15 served as President of the Kriminologische Gesellschaft, the Scientific Association of German, Austrian and Swiss Criminologists. He is the author of the textbook *Kriminologie* (fourth edition 2020).



Frank is visiting the Institute from 1 October to 15 December 2020, and will be a Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall. He

intends to write a paper on prison climate research, finalise a research proposal, and jointly prepare another paper on crime in developing countries with his wife Ulrike. On their way to Cambridge they fell in love with Dartmoor National Park. Frank loves taking photographs, vintage cars (Italian and British), Jazz Music from 1955-1965 (particularly Soul Jazz), cooking (and eating) and, more recently, Tribute and Dartmoor Jail Ale.

We welcome our visitors and often build lasting collaborations and friendships.