



## Criminological Encounters Now and in the Future

### Lucas Melgaço and Mattias De Backer

On behalf of the editorial team

It is our great pleasure to introduce the second issue of Criminological Encounters. Before we introduce the content of this issue, we would like to first restate to our readers the journal's mission statement. Criminological Encounters is a radically free, independent and open-access journal. We believe that scientific information should not hide behind expensive and inaccessible paywalls but should be accessible for both authors and readers. For such an initiative to exist in the intensifying neoliberalization of academia, we count on the work of volunteers and reviewers who sacrifice their time to offer something to the collective. Our journal is a bold initiative to challenge neoliberal academia by promoting "slow criminology". We believe that the academic world ought to be less worried about rankings, impact factors, the h-index and metrics in general and should focus more instead on meaningful transformations in people's lives, particularly those of so-called "subaltern" or less hegemonic groups. Criminological Encounters also engages with initiatives to decolonize academia by making it a venue for voices typically prevented from being heard by Anglo- and Eurocentric academia. We aim to foster encounters between academics from the so-called "Global North" and "Global South" (see further below). Lastly, this journal is also a venue for encounters between researchers, activists and practitioners. We believe that academia should be less self-contained and should dare to explore the geographical, psychological and symbolic regions beyond the university campus (see further below as well). With this initiative, we aspire to produce a welcoming venue for comparative criminological research around the globe and a venue for creative, inspiring and challenging encounters.

Since the publication of our inaugural issue, we've come across some challenges and, as a result, some changes within the team have occurred. We welcome Mattias De Backer as new co-editor-in-chief (in a dual role with Lucas Melgaço) and a new team of associate editors: Lior Volinz is in charge of book reviews, Iris Steenhout is our associate editor for forums, An-Sofie Vanhouche will be responsible for the opinion pieces and for a section exclusively dedicated to promoting the work of young scholars, Jenneke Christiaens is in charge of the artistic section and Brunilda Pali is section editor for the interviews with academics and practitioners.

Issue number 2 comprises seven contributions, namely three full articles, one interview, one short article and two book reviews.

We open with Michael McGuire's thought-provoking text "Intertheory Relations in the Social Sciences: Criminology as a Physics of the Social?" In this text, he argues that too little attention is paid to intertheoretic relations in the social sciences. As a result, one well-known assumption about the place and the status of criminology has become established, that is, that criminology is a niche subdivision of sociology that only focuses on offending and institutional responses, while not bringing much to the "grand narratives of social science, or to the rich theoretical insights found within its 'master' disciplines like economics" (p. 12). McGuire challenges this assumption by proposing a more radical position in which criminology is given a far more foundational role. This audacious view is supported by three arguments. The first consists of a reference to the history of the social sciences and the role played therein of criminology. The second consists of the observation that social phenomena depend upon a social order secured by the kinds of mechanisms that have been of special interest to criminologists. The third argument associates manifestations of these mechanisms with precepts of how the contemporary world is experienced and governed. We are honoured to be able to publish this text as it asks fundamental questions about the nature of criminology and because it is an inspiring example of the encounters to which this journal wishes to give a platform – in this case, the encounter of criminology and physics.

The second article, "Stuck in the Carceral Web: Prisoners' Experiences of Electronic Monitoring", by James Gacek, promotes an encounter much appreciated by this journal, namely that of criminology and geography. More specifically, the article brings insights from carceral geography and mobility and sets them in a dialogue with penology and electronic monitoring. By researching prisoners with electronic monitoring in Scotland he unveils the pains of having their mobility restrained in a world that is constantly on the move. He concludes his article with a discussion on the consequences of the widening of today's carceral web.

Iris Steenhout's article entitled "Detecting Crime Waves in an Extensive Text Corpus of (Online) Crime News: TheGuardian.co.uk as a Test Case" brings computer sciences and, more particularly, data mining to the field of criminology. In this text, the author argues that the large-scale digitization of news articles offers a remarkably wide range of possibilities for criminology science scholars. The latter are confronted with the challenge of developing new methods and approaches to deal with the massive number of available online data. What the article sets out to do is exactly this: to build several (software) tools and test their efficacy in analysing the data focusing on crime-related topics and the way these are part of news waves. The article analyses crime-related coverage in *The Guardian* over a period of six years, identifying 21 main topics and detecting six types of news waves. The article concludes with some interesting recommendations as to how to further make use of data mining in criminology.

For issue number 2 we had the honour of interviewing David Lyon, one of the most acclaimed worldwide references on surveillance studies. Rosamunde Van Brakel and Lucas Melgaço talked with him about his encounters not only with criminology but also other disciplines like computer science, political sciences, and cultural and religious studies. In this interview, they also asked him about his encounters with scholars from the Global South, particularly his experience with Palestine, and Lyon told us about his new book, *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life*, and its relevance to criminology.

In this issue we also present a new section called “Promising Researchers”, in which short, peer-reviewed articles are published by undergrad or early-phase PhD students. We are introducing this section since we are convinced that young and promising researchers need opportunities such as this to familiarize themselves with the practices of peer review and publishing. In short, we would like to give these promising, early-career researchers a suitable platform. In this issue, we present a short article by Jasmien Bougrine and An Nuytiens based on the field research that the first author undertook in the context of her master thesis. The article explores young women’s personal stories and self-narratives, the role of gender and the importance of one particular basketball project in their self-narratives. The article concludes that stories about discrimination among the participants are legion and that Belgian anti-discrimination laws are inadequate for tackling everyday and covert discrimination. For this reason, the authors argue, research that approaches vulnerable groups as subjects, that acknowledges the issues they deal with and gives them a voice is extremely important.

The issue concludes with two book reviews. The first is by Mike Nellis, who presents a very comprehensive analysis of the work *Pervasive Punishment: Making Sense of Mass Supervision* by Fergus McNeill (2019). Nellis examines how McNeill’s work makes a strong claim for both scholars and practitioners to attend to the pains of (community) supervision in the penal system. His review shed a light on the different inter-personal, methodological and literary encounters in McNeill’s work, each of which makes a strong contribution for the understanding of supervision as a punitive act. The second review, by Danielle Watson, analyses the book *Southern Criminology* by K. Carrington, R. Hogg, J. Scott, M. Sozzo and R. Walters (2018). Watson highlights how the work of Carrington et al. challenges the universal generalizability of scholarship from the Global North.

As a team, we have mixed feelings about our first two issues in light of our mission statement. We are proud and happy with the work undertaken so far, the encounters we have managed to promote and the introduction of a new format such as “Promising Researchers Platform”. Yet, we think there are still many underexplored possibilities and ambitions originally formulated but not yet realized. Firstly, we would like to publish the work of authors coming from the so-called “Global South”; this was one of the main reasons why we decided to engage in this demanding but rewarding venture of starting a new journal. *Criminological Encounters* is there to challenge hegemonic views in criminology

and the monotony of Anglo-American scholarship. We are aware, however, that a journal in English severely limits the opportunities to engage with Global South scholars. To mitigate this limitation, we would like to reiterate here the statement made in the inaugural issue that we welcome articles (and/or translations) in one of the other languages mastered by our editorial team: Spanish, Portuguese, French and Dutch. The second type of encounter that is still missing is that with practitioners and activists.

We will make sure that our next issues offer a stage to these important voices. We also make the journal a venue for artistic interventions in which criminology encounters with arts like photography, cinema, and literature. Finally, we would like to see more debate on controversial contemporary topics. We see Criminological Encounters as a place where constructive confrontations of ideas are possible and we intend to further explore these possibilities in the coming issues.

There are many ways and formats one can publish with us. We work not only with full articles but also with alternative publishing formats. Beyond the section dedicated to young scholars mentioned above, we also work with short opinion pieces, artistic interventions, book reviews and forums. For the latter, we encourage panel organizers in international conferences to collect short contributions from the different panellists and compile them in the format of a forum. For more information on this and the other publishing formats please access our website ([www.criminologicalencounters.org](http://www.criminologicalencounters.org)).

If you want to keep informed about our latest issues you can sub-scribe as a reader on our website, sign our newsletter (<https://bit.ly/35FN4W9>) and follow us on Twitter (@crimencounters). We look forward to receiving your contributions in the future.

