

Leeds Historical Criminology Seminar

'Funding Justice or Fuelling Crime? The Political Economy of Crime and Justice in Historical Perspective'

Schedule

10.50: Welcome & introduction

11.00: Pamela Cox & Ruth Lamont, 'Righting a wrong: what does it mean for a victim to access justice in a criminal trial?'

12.00: Stephen Farrall, 'Exploring the impact of Thatcherism on crime'

13.00: Lunch

14.00: Zelia Gallo, 'The political economy of punishment in times of crisis: reflections from Italy, and beyond'

15.00: Roundtable

16.00: Close

Abstracts

Righting a wrong: what does it mean for a victim to access justice in a criminal trial?

Pamela Cox, University of Essex

Ruth Lamont, University of Manchester

The status and role of the victim in the prosecution of crime through the criminal trial has varied greatly over time. The rights available to the defendant in a criminal trial are often the focus of current procedural protections, whereas the role of the criminal trial in providing justice for the wrongs suffered by the victim of crime can often be a lesser feature of the modern legal and broader justice system. Attempts to secure the status of the victim in the trial process and sentencing have sought to secure the interests of the victim, but the success of these procedures remains contested. The interdisciplinary ESRC funded research project 'Victims: Access to Justice through the English Criminal Courts', led by Professor Pamela Cox, explores the patterns of victims' access to justice over three centuries, tracking the rights, resources and services available to victims. These have altered significantly as the role of the victim in making a complaint and pursuing the prosecution has evolved. Increasing legalisation and bureaucratisation in the prosecution of crime has arguably led the victim further away from the centre of this process with fewer resources available to them. In this paper, we aim to explore what it means for a victim to access justice and how this can be conceptualised for the purposes of both modern and historical analysis. We will explore some of the current challenges presented to victims in accessing the court by appropriately resourcing victims in their historical context to consider how the victim may be said to have received justice for a criminal wrong.

Exploring the impact of Thatcherism on crime

Stephen Farrall, University of Sheffield

Drawing on three ESRC-funded grants, this talk will summarise the impact of 11 years of New Right social and economic policies on crime and the criminal justice system. The talk will draw upon data from the British Crime Survey/Crime Survey for England and Wales, the British Social Attitudes Survey, officially-recorded data on crime, and two longitudinal data sets of people born in 1958 and 1970. I will argue that Thatcherite radicalism shaped both the criminal justice system and the experiences of crime for ordinary citizens in a number of ways.

The political economy of punishment in times of crisis: reflections from Italy, and beyond

Zelia Gallo, King's College London

This paper discusses the penal implications of the Eurozone crisis, using Italy as a critical case study with which to reflect upon the possible broader impact of crisis on punishment across European polities. The paper argues that in Italy the management of the Eurozone crisis – the ‘politics of austerity’ – will in the long term exacerbate penal punitiveness, and transform penal moderation into a narrow, personalistic good rather than a civic, self-reflexive value. The paper illustrates how such transformations can be anchored not just to the economic effects of austerity, but also to the institutional reforms and to the changed political practices that austerity politics have entailed. The paper will query the extent to which such transformation give institutional form to the crisis of representative democracy. With its focus on political institutions and practices the paper further reflects on the methodology that the political economy of punishment can adopt going forward: one that emphasises the role of *politics* within the political economy of punishment.