

University of Oxford
Centre for Criminological Research

The Changing Face of Crime and Criminal Policy in Europe

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Contents

Introductory Note.....	iii
1. Hans-Jörg Albrecht: Penal Policies and Criminal Sanctions: A Look at Developments and Trends in Europe	
1. Introduction: Penal policies and criminal sanctions	1
2. Current developments in the use of criminal sanctions in Europe: A new concern for imprisonment	3
3. Looking back to the 1960s and 1970s	7
4. Changes in penal policies and systems of criminal sanctions in the 1980s and 1990s.....	10
5. Conclusions	22
2. Martin Killias: Fighting Evils or Preventing Harm: Switzerland's Drug Policy as a Test of Situational Crime Prevention Policies?	
1. Introduction.....	24
a) <i>Drugs as a motor behind Europe's crime trends</i>	24
b) <i>The emergence of 'needle parks'</i>	25
2. Heroin prescription in Switzerland	26
a) <i>The practical side of medical heroin prescription</i>	26
b) <i>The effects of the programme on crime</i>	27
i) General effects of the programme	27
ii) The programme's effects on crime among drug addicts.....	27
iii) Aggregate level data	31
iv) The effects on public opinion.....	32
3. From drugs to crime policy	33
3. Matti Joutsen: Criminal Policy and Victims of Crime: A European Perspective	
1. Introduction.....	36
2. Basic needs.....	36
3. The special needs of crime victims	37
4. The strengthening of victimology in Europe	38
5. Strengthening of voluntary organisations.....	40
6. Strengthening of interest in crime prevention	41
7. Offering an alternative to criminal proceedings.....	43
8. Changing the criminal justice system	43
a) <i>Restitution from the offender</i>	46
b) <i>State compensation</i>	47
9. Conclusions: trends in victim policy in Europe.....	48

4.	Jan M van Dijk: Trends in Crime Prevention: Some Lessons from The Netherlands	
1.	Introduction.....	57
2.	Crime prevention in The Netherlands.....	59
	<i>a) The 1970s</i>	59
	<i>b) The Roethof Committee (1983)</i>	60
	<i>c) Exemplary projects</i>	61
	<i>d) Structures and institutions</i>	61
	<i>e) The larger towns policy (1995)</i>	62
3.	Discussion.....	63
5.	René Levy: Neighbourhood versus Europe: The Dilemma of French Policing	
1.	The present-day French police system: a snapshot.....	68
	<i>a) The National Police and National Gendarmerie</i>	68
	i) The National Police.....	68
	ii) The National Gendarmerie.....	69
	<i>b) 'Police forces' within administrations and public services</i>	69
2.	The challenge of 'local' policing.....	70
	<i>a) Fear of crime, public expectancies and police performance</i>	70
	i) Is fear of crime justified or an alienated perception?.....	70
	ii) Fear of crime and police performance.....	72
	<i>b) The difficulty of integration in local safety schemes</i>	74
	i) The National Gendarmerie: a threatened model.....	74
	ii) The National Police: persistent failure.....	76
	iii) The other players: municipal police departments and private security agencies.....	78
3.	The Europeanisation of police forces and its effects.....	80
	<i>a) The mounting power of customs: toward a third State police force</i>	82
	<i>b) Reinforcement of the stereotype of 'true police work'</i>	83
4.	Conclusion.....	84
6.	Nestor E Courakis: Football Violence: Not Only a British Problem	
1.	Objectives and organisation of research into Greek hooliganism.....	88
2.	The main findings of the research.....	89
	<i>a) Preliminary remarks</i>	89
	<i>b) Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the subjects</i>	90
	<i>c) The attachment to the football teams and to the fan club</i>	91
	<i>d) Forms of deviance</i>	92
	<i>e) Overview of the factors which contribute to incidents</i>	93
	<i>f) Responsibilities related to the incidents</i>	94
3.	Theories that attempt to explain hooliganism.....	96
	<i>a) Individual level</i>	96
	<i>b) Family, school, employment and peer groups</i>	96
	<i>c) Crowd psychology and circumstantial factors</i>	97
	<i>d) The broader social context</i>	98

Introductory Note

The essays published in this *Occasional Paper* arose from an opportunity for the Oxford Centre for Criminological Research to collaborate with the Faculty of Law at the University of Athens when Nestor Courakis, Professor of Criminology and Penology at Athens, was Hellenic Studies Visiting Fellow at Brasenose College in the spring and summer of 1997.

He kindly agreed to join me in hosting the annual Trinity Term seminar series on aspects of criminal policy, held at All Souls College in May and June 1997. We agreed that the time was ripe to choose a European theme. So we invited a distinguished European criminologist to each weekly session to assess the way in which criminal policy was developing in their special field of interest. Each chose his own formula. Some covered a Europe-wide canvass, others spoke about the situation in their own country, and some brought evidence to bear from their own research. We would like to express our gratitude to the Oxford Programme for Hellenic Studies for making a grant to enable us to support this venture and to our guest speakers who so readily agreed to join us.

The papers covered important themes. So much interest was evoked when they were first given that we decided to encourage our guests to translate their contribution into a text for publication and to update them where necessary. While this has taken some time to do, we are nevertheless confident that there is nothing 'dated' about them to detract from their value.

Hans-Jörg Albrecht, the Director of the Max-Planck Institute in Freiburg, provides a wide-ranging overview of the varied responses of European countries to new concerns about crime and forms of criminality. In particular, he draws our attention to two themes. Firstly, the growing bifurcation between the criminal sanctions developed for resident and migrant offenders. Secondly, the different approaches considered appropriate for individual 'common' criminals as opposed to organised criminality, where new types of penal sanction based on forfeiture and new investigative and surveillance techniques are taking the place of traditional forms of punishment.

Martin Killias, Director of the Institute of Criminology at the University of Lausanne, gives a penetrating account of the impact of a controversial heroin prescription programme carried out under clinical supervision in Switzerland. He shows convincingly how such an approach increased the prospects of social rehabilitation and drastically cut involvement in criminality.

Matti Joutsen, Director of HEUNI in Helsinki, employs his unrivalled knowledge of the subject to bring us up to date with developments concerning the needs of victims of crime and their involvement in the criminal justice system across the continent.

Jan van Dijk, then Professor of Criminology at Leiden University and Director of Strategic Planning in the Dutch Ministry of Justice (now Head of the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention in Vienna), reviews, with characteristic succinctness and clarity, the variety of interesting approaches to crime prevention undertaken in the Netherlands. He concludes by raising important questions about the prevention of violent crime and stresses the need to evaluate new approaches properly if public support for crime prevention, rather than increased punitiveness, is to be maintained.

René Lévy, Director of CESDIP in Paris, opens our eyes to the tensions resulting from demands on the French police system to adapt, on the one hand, to local needs and priorities for security at the municipal level whilst, on the other hand, developing effective means to combat the growing amount of transnational crime. His explanation of why the French police have failed to rise to these challenges gives a fascinating insight into an inward-looking police culture.

Finally, Nestor Courakis discusses the series of research projects he directed into the phenomenon of 'football hooliganism' amongst hard-core soccer fans in Greece. He analyses, in the context of theoretical attempts to explain this behaviour, the characteristics of the participants, the extent to which they had been involved in violence, the situations in which violence arose, and the reasons why they were attracted to it. Furthermore, he discusses the extent to which other persons and institutions may have acted in ways that stimulated football violence, and raises the important question of whether they should bear some of the responsibility with the participants themselves.

Hannah Bichard, Christine Holder and Sylvia Littlejohns deserve many thanks for helping to prepare these papers for desktop publication.

It is with pleasure that the Centre for Criminological Research, with the generous financial support of the Oxford Programme for Hellenic Studies, now makes them available to a wider audience.

Roger Hood
Director, Centre for Criminological Research
Oxford, April 1999