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► **To cite this version:**

Fabien Jobard, Jacques de Maillard, Tom Vander Beken, Antoinette Verhage, Christophe Vandeviver, et al.. Criminological Research and Strategic Choices. Making Strategic Choices in Social Science Research, 7, Maklu, 2023, Gern Research Paper Series, 978-90-466-1213-2. halshs-04360883

HAL Id: halshs-04360883

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-04360883v1>

Submitted on 3 Dec 2024

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Introduction

Criminological Research and Strategic Choices

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The GERN Summer School has become an important and long-running tradition in their PhD trajectory for many PhD students. The GERN Summer School is a joint event organized annually in collaboration with several universities under the umbrella of the GERN-group¹. GERN (“*Groupe européen de recherches sur les normativités*”) is a scientific network present in ten European countries and beyond, uniting researchers from different disciplines.

This summer school was first organized in Ghent in 2012, visited several universities in Europe (Sheffield, Porto, Versailles-Saint-Quentin, Dortmund, Ljubljana²) and returned to Ghent after 10 years for its 8th edition. Although the initial plan was to organize the summer school in September 2020, as has also been the tradition, we actually organized a Spring school for the first time because the COVID pandemic forced us to postpone the session. Fortunately, the participants were very persistent and remained enthusiastic about participating even though they had to wait 1.5 years.

The Spring school was designed to bring together PhD students from different criminology related disciplines and a diversity of universities and nationalities. The central focus of the GERN Summer Schools is the study of topics related

¹ See: <https://www.gern-cnrs.com/index.php/archives/ecoles-dete/> - here you can also find the programs of previous summer schools.

² Ghent 2012, Sheffield 2013, Porto 2014, Paris 2015, Dortmund 2016, Ljubljana 2018, and Porto 2019.

to deviance, crime and social control, but each Summer School has a dedicated central theme. The school culminates in the publication of a peer-reviewed book that is part of the GERN Research Paper Series published by Maklu Publishers.

The 2022 Ghent Spring School focused on the theme ‘making strategic choices’ in PhD research trajectories. On March 21-23, 2022, ten PhD students were welcomed at the Faculty of Law and Criminology of Ghent University³. Prior to their participation, each student wrote a paper on their PhD research. During the summer school, all students enthusiastically presented their PhD research, taking us to very different corners of criminological studies and using a wide range of research methods. Their presentations, combined with the keynotes delivered by the lecturers, resulted in very interesting conversations and discussions. Several experts not only provided their feedback on the papers and presentations by the PhD students, but also gave their views on making strategic choices in criminological research. *Tom Vander Beken* discussed the topic of research design. *Jacques de Maillard* elaborated on qualitative research and qualitative methods. *Christophe Vandeviver* presented recent developments on open access publishing and *Joanna Shapland* explained how to get published successfully.

Students revised their papers after this first round of reviews, and revised their papers again after a second round of reviews.

The result of these discussions and insights, which were also reflected in the revisions of the papers, have been written up in this book. The book contains a total of 11 papers. Nine papers were presented at the 2022 Ghent Spring School, whilst two papers were presented at an earlier GERN Summer School organized in Porto in 2019⁴.

Content of this issue

In the first paper of this issue, Shaïn Morisse describes how his research seeks to understand penal abolitionism, both historically and conceptually. In his

³ With special thanks to Yinthe Feys and Fien Van Damme for their practical and administrative support for this summer school, and to Daniel Ventre for his administrative work in the production of this volume.

⁴ The editors would like to Pedro Almeida (Universit  de Porto) for the organization of the summer school in Porto in 2019.

paper entitled “Towards a Social and Transnational History of Penal Abolitionist Ideas and Movements in Europe (since the 1960s)”, he considers penal abolitionism as a movement in Europe that existed since the 1960s. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, his PhD aims to develop a theoretical approach to abolitionism.

The second paper deals with a highly sensitive topic, entitled “A Social Constructionist Approach to Paedophilia, Child Sexual Abuse, and Relevant Preventative Policy Making in the USA, the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands”. In this paper, Maria Sklavou discusses policy approaches to paedophilia and child sexual abuse. In this international comparison, the author presents her PhD research in which she studies the securitization of paedophilia and child sexual abuse and analyzes the moral panic surrounding these topics. She shows that through innovative research methods, such as the diary method, the discourse around these topics can be studied from a new angle.

Femke Lenjou presents her PhD research on the role of customs authorities in society and the focus on this actor within criminology. In her paper “*Customs’ Evolving Role in Society from a Criminological Point of View: A State of the Art and Explorative Qualitative Research Project*” the author shows how customs have evolved into a broader and more encompassing role in society as the focus of their activities has shifted more toward guarding security, safety, and health. Using both observations and interviews, she charts the role of customs and convincingly illustrates why this body deserves more attention within criminology.

In the fourth paper entitled “*The Methodological Outline of the Use of a Factorial Survey Design to Study Sport-Related Match-Fixing*”, *Lucie Vanwersch, Annick Willem, Bram Constandt and Wim Hardyns* describe how match-fixing will be studied. In her PhD, the first author will use a factorial survey design to study two types of sports, amateur tennis and soccer, and try to get a handle on match fixing in these two sports. The authors critically assess the methodology and provide a clear analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of this method.

The fifth paper by *Sophia De Serrano* studies another criminological domain, drug supply. The paper is titled “*Using Social Network Analysis to Unravel Illicit Drug Supply Networks: A Systematic Literature Review*”. In her paper, the author attempts to find out to what extent social network analysis is a useful method to study drug supply networks. Thus, the systematic review that is

presented in this paper provides important insights into the applicability of social network analysis in this particular field.

Eva Blomme uses a similar method, a scoping review, in the sixth paper that is titled “*A Scoping Review on the Role of Race and Ethnicity in Criminal Justice Diversion to Treatment*”. The scoping review presented by the author analyses disparities in diversion to treatment on the basis of race and ethnicity and attempts to find explanations for possible disparities. As such, she provides a clear review of the literature on this topic and makes a compelling case for more research linking sentencing disparities to diversion to treatment.

The seventh paper in this issue also uses a systematic literature review to study prisoner misconduct. The authors, *Miriam Pina* and *Jorge Quintas*, discuss the results of the systematic review in which they analyzed official or self-report measures of prisoner misconduct. The authors emphasize the importance of having reliable data on prisoner misconduct. The paper, “*Measuring Prisoner Misconduct through Official or Self-Report Measures: A Systematic Literature Review*”, clearly illustrates how official data on this topic are not always reliable and explores the value of other measuring methods such as self-report data.

In the eighth paper of this issue, *Fien Van Damme* addresses the topic of electronic monitoring and its impact on children. In “*The Experiences of Impact of Parental Electronic Monitoring on the Daily Lives of Children*”, the author shows how the impact of electronic monitoring on the children who are also present in the households where electronic monitoring is imposed, has not previously been studied before. In her paper, she discusses the research design she plans to use and presents a number of tailored innovative methods that will be used in her PhD research.

Katrina Edwards in her paper “*Researching Victims and Victim Services in England and Wales*” shows how in England and Wales victim support services have undergone profound changes. In her paper, the author discusses the crucial role of gatekeepers in enabling access to organizations and victims. The author convincingly argues how decision-making processes can be studied through appropriate access and how her research could positively impact her respondents in terms of organization and personal growth.

The tenth paper by *Philipp Martin Dau* shifts the focus to another criminological actor: the police. In the paper “*Policing Geographies: A Crime*

Science Approach to Effective Crime Reduction and Police Presence”, the author explores how to study the impact of police presence on crime rates. He warns of the statistical challenges associated with linking police presence to crime, but also points to the innovations in methodology that can enable new ways of doing evidence-based policing.

The final paper by *Alexis Provost* deals with accelerated criminal procedures. In his paper *“Rushing to Find Out: A Comparison of the Knowledge Process in Accelerated Criminal Procedures in France and Germany”*, the author describes in a comparison between France and Germany how in two derogatory procedures the rights of the defence are affected. He shows that the impact of the German procedure is less intrusive than the French procedure. Using observations of hearings in both countries, the procedures could be compared and differences and similarities identified.

In conclusion, we believe that this issue of the GERN Research Paper Series combines an impressive collection of papers and covers a very broad spectrum of the criminological field. This richness is reflected both substantively (in the diversity of topics and organizations that are addressed) and methodologically. The papers present both innovative and more traditional research methods, in a qualitative and a quantitative research tradition. This shows how criminological research continues to develop at a rapid pace, giving space to new and pioneering methods and topics.

Ghent, January 2023