



Carceral Power in World Historical Context

Bridging the Methodological and Theoretical Contributions of World-Systems Analysis and Radical Criminology

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Abstract

This paper invites a conversation between world-systems perspective and radical criminology to contribute to a more robust materialist, historical, and global understanding of policing, prisons, and carceral power. We trace the genealogy of these two approaches to the larger transformations of global capitalism in the 1960s and 1970s, including ruling class responses to capitalist crises vis a vis neoliberal restructuring as well as the social struggles waged by antisystemic movements. Both world-systems and radical criminology brought a critical and Marxist perspective to the liberal social sciences, yet dialogue between them has been lacking. On the one hand, world-systems analysis offers a structural explanation of capitalism but often side-steps the role that carceral power plays to manage the system's deepening contradictions. On the other hand, radical criminology focuses on carceral power but often limits its analysis to advanced core countries and not to the entire capitalist system. We argue that bringing these two critical approaches together can offer us a renewed Marxist perspective to the interrelated issues of capitalist crisis and carceral power and thus make possible new lines of inquiry and research best suited for grappling with the major contradictions of capitalism in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: World-Systems Analysis, Radical Criminology, Capitalist Crisis, Global Capitalism, Neoliberalism, Security, Carceral Power, Carceral State



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In February of 2023, news emerged that El Salvador was embarking on its most ambitious penal project to date: the construction of the world's largest prison. Located in Tecoluca, a suburb 45 miles outside of its capital city, the sprawling 410 acre "mega-prison" known more formally as the Terrorism Confinement Center (Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo, abbreviated as CECOT) is built to house an estimated 40,000 prisoners, and will rival Turkey's Marmara (Silivri) prison, currently the world's largest high-security prison. To announce its opening, president Nayib Bukele immediately took to Twitter to share a stark video of the first 2,000 suspected gang members to be transferred there. The men were shown in a very vulnerable state—standing sullenly, half naked with only white boxer briefs and their tattoos visible, clasping their hands over their newly shaved heads, being herded around by prison guards, and ordered to sit one after another, stacked together like sardines on a corner of the wall (BBC News 2023). The mega-prison represents a culmination of Bukele's *mano dura* or "iron fist" policies, which have included a *state of exception* that has justified the profiling, mass arrest, and detention of anyone alleged to be a gang member—in many cases children as young as twelve years old (Linthicum 2023). Prior to the building of CECOT, El Salvador had the fourth highest incarceration rates in the world, trailing behind the United States, Rwanda, and Turkmenistan (Penal Reform International 2022). As has been reported, the building plans for the new mega-prison show that anticipation of overcrowding is built into its design (Murray and Smith 2023). For instance, each cell will hold a hundred prisoners who will all sleep on the floor without a mattress and share just two toilets and sinks (Iones 2023). While international human rights organizations have decried the mass arrests and detentions, Bukele's "war on gangs" has garnered him many accolades at home. Known as the selfie-loving millennial president and a "mini-Trump" (Ruiz-Alba and Mancinas-Chavez 2020), his *mano dura* policies have made him one of the most popular elected leaders in Latin America with widespread support especially among working class Salvadorans who have been deeply affected by the escalating gang violence (Blitzer 2022). In February 2024, Bukele was reelected with an overwhelming majority of votes and his party won almost all the seats in the National Assembly, a direct outcome of *mano dura* policies (BBC News 2024).

Starting in the 1980s and reaching a fever pitch with the election of Donald Trump in the United States in 2016, the violence of transnational gangs like MS-13 have been framed as issues of national security that have been used to push for stricter immigration policies and expansion of policing and carceral power. As Marxist scholar Steven Osuna (2020: 5) argues, MS-13 have served as a "transnational moral panic" which has "obscured the results of the transformation of the global economy and its effects on El Salvador, the Central American region and US cities like Los Angeles." The ruling elite of El Salvador has turned to gangs "as the single explanation for every single problem" (Abrego and Osuna 2022: 60) plaguing El Salvador, most of which have been caused by their economic policies. Bukele's penal policies, as Osuna (2020) compellingly argues, have led to a depoliticization of crime that obscures the real material forces that shape everyday violence. Bukele's draconian penal policies can also be interpreted as the latest example of what Michelle D. Bonner (2019: 10) terms *punitive populism* in Latin America, which "at its core," as she argues, "is composed of calls for the state to provide greater security and control

measures in the form of more and tougher laws and punishments, as well as more police with greater powers and discretion.” Drawing on a comparative analysis of Argentina and Chile, Bonner (2019) shows neoliberal restructuring has transformed mass media into the mouthpiece of police and politicians who have offered a simple solution, that of law and order policies to complex societal and structural problems. These policies prey on the everyday people’s fears about public safety; and instead of addressing the root causes of deepening economic insecurity, promote punitive policies that target the most marginalized and vulnerable racialized groups in society. For example, in El Salvador, *punitive populism*, as Osuna (2020) argues, is an outcome of various structural factors that can be traced to the crisis of global capitalism in the region including the limits of the Salvadoran revolution, the development of neoliberalism in the country, and the export of U.S.-sponsored punitive policies targeting a new generation of relative surplus populations. The young people that have joined MS-13 in Los Angeles and in El Salvador were children of refugees stemming from the decades-long civil war and who were locked out of any and all economic opportunities.

Yet the rise of punitive populism is not unique to either the United States or Latin America and is increasingly becoming a global norm. For example, in recent decades across peripheral and semi-peripheral regions including India, Brazil, Philippines, Turkey, and Uganda, we have witnessed rise of authoritarian state policies that rely on popular support to promote the expansion of policing and carceral power (Gönen 2020; Kenny and Holmes 2020; Robinson 2020; Axster et al. 2021). The rise of authoritarian right is being met with resistance on the left, largely on the defensive, fighting against deepening inequalities. In recent years, police violence has been the tinder that has sparked massive protests around the world struggling to articulate a liberatory alternative vision to the wretched capitalist status quo. For example, most recently in the United States, the George Floyd rebellion in the summer of 2020 was an expression of popular discontent against the carceral state and the austerity measures that have expanded police power most keenly felt by Black Americans (Shanahan and Kurti 2022). It was the most important challenge to the capitalist status quo since the Occupy movement’s response to the 2008 financial crisis (Shanahan 2022). This growing right and left wing populism signals that the neoliberal consensus that has operated since the 1980s is now in deep crisis (Bonanno 2017, 2019). Yet the current ruling class response to the deepening capitalist crisis has not been cohesive either. As Marxist theorists David Ranney (2014) and Don Hamerquist (2023) remind us, the crisis of value has generated much confusion among the ruling class, which remains increasingly divided about which path forward to pursue. Ranney (2014) argues that our chaotic and uncertain period is marked by a “churning and flailing,” meaning that various forces are contending for power and a way out of this mess which can inspire either hope for those on the side of human liberation or sink us deeper into barbarism. Along similar lines, William Robinson (2023: 5) argues that the current moment of crisis is not ushering a new hegemonic power where political power is concentrated in one state, but instead a shift “towards political multipolarity” which means a period of “prolonged economic turbulence and political decay.” This scramble for global power is leading to important divisions within the transnational ruling class (Robinson 2023) that are beyond the scope of this paper but

very important nonetheless for understanding the contemporary moment, especially as they pertain to the question of *carceral power*, which refers to the policies and apparatuses of containment, control, and punishment across various geographies of late capitalism (Story 2019; Berger 2021). Our intervention here is a call for understanding the materialist basis of carceral power, situated in a global and historical context of the crisis of capitalism.

Contemporary scholarship on carceral power and the carceral state has emphasized how in this moment of deepening capitalist crisis, state actors, nongovernmental institutions and the transnational ruling class are relying on greater repression and social control (Robinson 2020) to keep the lid on deepening inequalities. And as we will discuss in the upcoming sections, carceral power grew in response to the last period of capitalist crisis, which gave us neoliberalism (Bourgeois 2015; Gilmore 2007; Wacquant 2009; Robinson 2020; Robinson 2022; Abrego and Osuna 2022; Shanahan and Kurti 2022). Starting in the 1970s, both state and transnational actors across the world-system have relied on greater criminalization, the militarization of policing, and other forms of social control to suppress any threat to its mandate to accumulate and respond to the crisis of value. Some scholars consider neoliberalism a more predatory form of capitalism, and the ruling elites' embrace of financialization and austerity would support this claim (Ong 2006). However, the use of repression alone to restore profits and grease the oils of the engines of capitalist accumulation in a moment of crisis, a dystopian present that Robison (2020) refers to as "the global police state," would be a suicide mission for the ruling class. Neoliberalism is already creating widespread popular dissent and a crisis of legitimacy across the world system, as seen in the rise of both right wing and left wing populism. Hence, it's important to also pay attention to how carceral power can also enable more reformist measures especially in core countries like the United States where we have seen more popular support for criminal justice reforms as a means of shoring up legitimacy for the capitalist social order.

As scholars and activists writing critically about surveillance, policing, and other attendant formations of the carceral state in the United States and Turkey and who were trained in historical sociology and world-systems analysis, we want to contribute to a more robust conceptualization of the material basis of carceral power on a global scale that can shed light on the contemporary growth, multiplicity, and connections between systems of control and carceral power. Therefore, in this paper, we would like to contribute to a dialogue between world-systems analysis and radical criminology to highlight the connections between their history, and their conceptual and methodological contributions that would lend new questions and lines of inquiry to this end. How might bridging the perspectives of world-systems analysis and radical/Marxist criminology offer us new paths for understanding the role of carceral power and its multiple formations? What role does policing/carceral power play at this phase of global capitalism? What carceral connections are there between seemingly different contexts of the world-system? What is the role of hegemonic powers in building carceral power around the world? How can a global, historical, and materialist approach to carceral power challenge the depoliticization of crime and punishment (as the Salvadoran case makes clear) that is unfolding across the world? These are some of the questions that guide the lines of inquiry that we propose.

Capitalist Crisis and Transformation: The Rise of Radical Criminology and World-Systems Analysis

The roots and the concerns of both radical criminology and world-systems analysis are deeply connected, yet explicit connections and conversations among them remain few and far in between. We trace their genealogy to the global social, political, and economic transformations of the 1960s and 1970s, including the rise of antisystemic movements that escaped the boundaries of traditional leftist political parties and labor unions to challenge the capitalist status quo and the globalization of capital beyond the confines of the nation-state. Both world-systems analysis and radical criminology fostered a commitment to public intellectualism and radicalism that was deeply shaped by the New Left, a broad political movement that brought together activists disillusioned with the authoritarianism of the old Communist parties and who sought to build new coalitions and movements to brought together developed a trenchant critique of Stalinism while remaining steadfast in their political commitment to oppose capitalism and to reignite the struggle for of human liberation.

The year 1968 was a high point in New Left activism as radical protest movements swept across the world. The new year kicked off with the Tet offensive and Americans and the world at large watched as South Vietnamese and American troops sought to regain control of cities and towns from the Viet Cong. That year also witnessed the intensification of local and global political struggles against the capitalist status quo ranging from the anti-war protests erupting on American college campuses, to anti-colonial struggles for independence in the global South, and autonomous struggles “at home” in the United States led by Black people, women, and queer people. It was a time of great political possibility and a revolutionary horizon seemed within one’s grasp. As the radical criminologist and activist Tony Platt reflected, unlike our contemporary era, this past period was an “optimistic time in world history” (Kurti 2021). Students also emerged as key political actors in the unfolding political struggles and social movements of the day. They openly challenged the structure and role of universities in maintaining the military-industrial complex and reproducing the wider capitalist status quo, developments that had important consequences for the creation of world-systems analysis and radical criminology.

In April of 1968, students at Columbia University in Morningside Heights, on the edge of West Harlem, New York City, gathered to protest their opposition to the university’s insidious plan to expand its tentacles into surrounding working-class Black and Latino neighborhoods. The university administrators were planning to take over Morningside Park, owned by the city, to build a segregated gym which would keep out the area’s Black and Latino residents, even requiring that they enter the gym from the bottom while Colombia students entered from a separate upper entrance. This was seen by many students and surrounding Harlem residents as a land grab from its predominant Black community. Another key issue was Columbia’s affiliation with the Institute for Defense Analyses, a major player in the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war that led students to occupy the university, even taking a dean hostage. Both demands were made by the Students for Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Afro-American Society (SAS), the latter proving

themselves to be more disciplined and ultimately the group that Wallerstein supported (Bergensen 2000; Wallerstein 2018; Calhoun 2023).

As Craig Calhoun (2023: 273) recounts in a recent reflection of Wallerstein's intellectual contributions published by the *Journal of World-Systems Research*, the 1968 uprising "was a watershed in personal terms and development of world-systems analysis as well as in transformation of the world-system." Wallerstein's years at Columbia exposed him to the dominant liberal sociological paradigms that he would spend the rest of his life challenging and also connected him politically to the unfolding anticolonial struggles in Africa. In 1960, he met with Franz Fanon in Accra, Ghana—an experience that deeply shaped his intellectual life and scholarship (Bergensen 2000; Martin 2000; Martínez-Vela 2001; Wallerstein 2009; Calhoun 2023). Wallerstein's dissertation fieldwork on national formation in Africa and this connection to anti-colonial struggles was not unique to intellectuals of his generation. Other key figures associated with the early development of world-systems analysis, including Giovanni Arrighi and Samir Amin, also "spent formative years in Africa and Latin America studying processes of capitalist development while learning from (and contributing to) local movements in the 1960s and 1970s" (Payne, Korzeniewicz, and Silver 2022: 9). Their early political experience helped them to develop a trenchant critique of Eurocentrism that advocated for an understanding of the uneven structural development of the global South as a central feature of the modern capitalist world-system. In 1976, Wallerstein moved to Binghamton in upstate New York to help launch the Fernand Braudel Center and would remain there until 2005. As Calhoun (2023) argues, the founding of the Braudel Center demonstrated Wallerstein's commitment to building institutions that would help to remake social science.

Similar to the genealogy of world-system analysis, radical criminology was also shaped by the rise and defeat of antisystemic movements of the 1960s. As Tony Platt (1988: 133), one of its early active participants notes, "radical criminology was self-consciously organized and built by a small core of faculty and students who had been politically active for many years or who had been radicalized by their experiences in the 1960s." In the 1960s, the campus of University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) was engulfed in activism that crisscrossed the Civil Rights, the Free Speech Movement, and the anti-Vietnam War protests. In 1964, the campus became the site of the largest anti-war protests and free speech movement protesting the university's restrictions of political activities on campus. Students demanded that they be able to conduct political activity on campus, which university administrators had banned. The Free Speech movement radicalized and politicized many students who engaged in civil disobedience and direct action tactics to protest for the right to free speech. These resistance struggles, and the reaction of the university administrators and state actors to them, helped to galvanize for the creation of a radical wing of scholars and students within the School of Criminology (Shank 1999; Shwendinger and Shwendinger 2014; Platt 2023).

The Berkeley School of Criminology was the mission of the Berkeley's Police Department's first chief, August Vollmer, who later became an academic and proponent of "police science." As Tony Platt (1974) has argued, police science was emblematic of the technocratic tradition in

mainstream criminology that focuses on reforming the police and making them a more effective force in the repression of the working class. This role became even more crucial following the urban uprisings of the 1960s, sparked by acts of police violence and threatening the status quo. The federal government relied on various riot and crime commissions to modernize and reorganize police and criminal justice institutions (Platt 1988). “While the riot and crime commissions of the 1960s ushered in a reorganized and increasingly repressive state apparatus,” as Platt (1988: 129) argued, “this era also generated political and ideological challenges to long standing, liberal conceptions of justice, as well as a radicalization of significant sectors of the academic community, including the seemingly impenetrable field of criminology.” The popular and militant critique of criminology that took root at the Berkeley School of Criminology reflected the wider radical outlook engulfing the campus community (Platt 1988). The connection between the university and the wider community cohered around a radical and Marxist analysis of social control, policing, and punishment. As a result “radical” criminology was housed at UC Berkeley, where the Center for Radical Criminology operated until 1976, when it was finally closed from pressure by the university administration and the state of California. The main opposing forces facing radical criminologists in Berkeley were not just right-wing actors like then-governor of California, Ronald Reagan, but liberal criminologists within the university who remained committed to police professionalization and reform.

Radical criminology worked arduously to challenge the main assumptions of liberal mainstream criminology, especially as they pertained to questions of crime and social control that were becoming an important backdrop for the emergence of law-and-order under Nixon. As Jeff Shantz (2014: 2) reflects, “Berkeley School radicals identified the real sources of social harm in society—state, military, and corporate actions.” In 1972, a small group of students and educators at the Berkeley School of Criminology founded the Union of Radical Criminologists (UCR), which they intended to be a national organization (Shank 1999). Their work and collaborative scholarship culminated in the publication of the classic text, *The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove: An Analysis of the U.S. Police* (The Center for Research on Criminal Justice 1975). UCR affiliated scholars edited and published the journal *Crime and Social Justice*, founded in 1974 as the first radical criminology journal and the predecessor of what would later become *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict and World Order* (Shank 1999; Kurti 2021). A year later, *Crime and Justice* also took over *Issues in Criminology*, a journal published by Berkeley’s School of Criminology which risked being discontinued as the university’s administration schemed to close down the School. As Tony Platt reflected in 2010,

radical criminology at Berkeley was part of and responded to a much larger left movement that exposed the injustices of criminal justice, took on the inadequacies and cowardice of liberalism, created debates about the ideology of criminology, humanized the incarcerated population, and educated millions about the ties between imperialism, militarism, racism, and criminal justice.

Radical criminology thoroughly critiqued the reformism that was at the heart of liberal mainstream criminology, which included a reliance on technocratic solutions to complex social problems (Platt

1974). As David Stein (2013: 75) has argued, radical criminologists also challenged “the socially dominant definitions of violence to include state violence—and centrally, warfare.” Through their research projects and connections with wider social movements, radical criminologists confronted the depoliticization of crime promoted by the discipline, and instead placed it in the larger social, political, and economic context of capitalist social relations.

And it was not just U.S. based scholars who offered a materialist and Marxist critique of crime and punishment. As Berkeley based radical criminologist Gregory Shank (1999) reflected, radical criminology took root also in Canada, Italy, the UK, Australia, and Germany; and there emerged an organic synergy across scholars in different localities that led to further collaboration, including continuous contributions to the U.S.-based radical criminology journal, *Social Justice*. As was the case in the United States, the development of radical criminology abroad was similarly shaped by the rise of antisystemic movements. In Italy, a new generation was challenging the accommodations that more established left and communist parties made with the capitalist status quo. State violence and the prisoner rights movements were inspiring new scholarship such as Dario Melossi and Massimo Pavarini’s (1981) *The Prison and the Factory*, which made the case for a Marxist analysis of the history of the origins of the penitentiary. Melossi was also a central figure in reviving the scholarship of George Rusche and Otto Kirchheimer’s (1939) *Punishment and Social Structure*, a seminal text that offers a Marxist analysis of punishment (Shank 1999; Melossi 2013; Platt 2013).

In the UK, similar transformations prompted a deeper interest in working class culture and institutions that could change society for the better. At the center of the mass movements in the 1960s were once again university students. Just three years after its founding, Warwick University was enveloped in radical struggles and movements, earning the moniker “Red Warwick” (Winslow 2013). It was there that E.P. Thompson, a historian and New Left public intellectual, established the Centre for the Study of Social History. Under his tutelage, scholars such as Douglas Hay and Peter Linebaugh, among others, collectively examined crime and punishment from a historical materialist perspective. While at times critiqued for romanticizing working-class criminality, the work of these social historians—especially their collective effort, *Albion’s Fatal Tree*, published in 1976—argued against the instrumentalist Marxist view that the law and crime served as a tool of bourgeois rule and oppression (Hay et al. 1976). Instead, they demonstrated that ruling class authority over the working classes was not a coherent project, and often its strategies were hindered by popular opposition. The contributions of these Marxist social historians of British history reflected a burgeoning interest in the Marxist approach to the study of crime and punishment. Their focus on working class culture and how ordinary people understood their experiences, an aspect of the growing field of “cultural studies,” would inspire another leading New Left theorist: Stuart Hall.

Hall was writing at a time that the neoliberal consensus was being consolidated across the United States and he was deeply interested in the transformations that this new political conjuncture engendered: racialized police violence, state retrenchment, destruction of social services, and a move towards an authoritarian populist state. Four years after founding the Birmingham Centre

for Cultural Studies, Stuart Hall, then an emerging New Left public intellectual, took over the center until 1979 and helped pioneer various approaches to the study of culture that took seriously race and the color line and were shaped by an engagement with Marxism, feminism, and Gramscian analysis. The collective work of Stuart Hall and others led to *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (Hall et al. [1978] 2017), which provided a critical examination of the racialized law and order campaign around “mugging” situated in the wider context of capitalist and hegemonic crisis, and thus deeply politicized crime.

Engaging with the unfolding terrain of class struggle has been at the heart of both radical criminology and world-systems analysis. The point was not to study and theorize about social problems, but to uncover the hidden structures that create and maintain the capitalist system so that we can act upon and change them. A concern with how theory informs class struggle was paramount to both perspectives. Radical criminology and world-systems analysis also share other similarities: a critique of orthodox social science, as well as a historical and global focus.

World-systems analysis was first articulated by Wallerstein in his 1974 seminal paper, *The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis*. Two years later, he published *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* ([1976] 2011). Wallerstein (1991: 14) himself rejected the idea that world-systems was a theory, opting instead to use the term analysis, “a new language” to explore the “three supposedly distinctive arenas of society, economy and politics.” World-systems analysis reinvigorated historical sociology with the concern on long term historical changes (Robinson 2011). From the 1970s onwards, Wallerstein and his collaborators provided a fresh perspective to mainstream liberal sociology, including a subsection titled “political economy of the world-system” in the American Sociological Association and various journals including the *Journal of World-Systems Research* housed in the Braudel Center at Binghamton University.

Similarly, in Berkeley, California, radical criminologists offered a critique of liberal criminology which included: the taken for granted assumption of crime that reinforces state’s values, reform of the criminal justice system, and “extension of the welfare state capitalism and gradualist programs of amelioration, while rejection radical and violent forms of social and political change” (Platt 1974: 3), and lastly “rejection of macroscopic theory and historical analysis, in favor of an emphasis on behaviorism, pragmatism and social engineering” (Platt 1974: 3).

Finally, in their critical stances, Marx’s writings on capitalism as a system have been indispensable to the work of radical criminology and world-systems analysis. For Wallerstein, as for Marx, the capitalist system is crisis ridden, and in particular moments, it is unable to reproduce itself. Wallerstein argued that neoliberalism constituted an attempt to revive capitalism that is not sustainable in the long run. He remained steadfast in his prediction that neoliberalism would be unable to overcome the structural crisis that the capitalist system is in and that renewed commitment to social democracy was also futile. He consistently argued that the current crises spelled out capitalism’s endgame and a transition to a new world-system was inevitable. Yet, the

course of this new system was not necessarily anti-capitalist; without a robust left alternative, the social order that he imagined emerging from the crisis would be a far worse future, akin to the barbarism that Rosa Luxemburg wrote about.

While world-systems analysis and radical criminology have been steadfast in their commitment to offering a Marxist critique of capitalist social relations, crime, and punishment, their contributions continue to be marginalized by mainstream liberal social science. The division of academic labor that Wallerstein often critiqued in his writing unfortunately continues to dominate the disciplines of history, political science, sociology; and we might add to this criminology today. The social scientists who inch away from the narrow preoccupations of their discipline have no choice but to frame themselves as interdisciplinary scholars. Furthermore, liberal social science is proving incapable of responding to growing far-right attacks and the threat of a mass base fascist movement. For example, in the face of growing far-right attacks, as we are seeing in states like Florida, which has moved to ban sociology from university core curriculum, the response of the American Sociological Association has been to reiterate the need for objectivity in research. While scholars of world-systems analysis and radical criminology have critiqued the value-free laden social science research and exposed its limits, decades later mainstream social science continues to ignore their contributions.

Yet, similar to the 1960s, mass popular protests against racist police violence as we saw with the rise of Black Lives Matter (BLM) from 2014 and reaching a new militant height in 2020 has once again put the question of state violence at the center of our analysis. A new generation of critical criminologists, many of them influenced by organizing against prisons and police violence, are once again challenging mainstream liberal criminology, which continues to be concerned with procedural justice, police, and prison reform. With the mainstreaming of police and prison abolition, the discipline is undergoing another reckoning like the one it experienced in the 1960s and 1970s. We should heed the lessons learned, especially the repression and accommodation that followed. In the 1970s, while radical voices in academia were shut down, mainstream criminology did make some small concessions and incorporated critical voices within the discipline, even though they remained marginal.

In the 1970s, threatened by the Marxist ideologies that framed radical criminology, many criminologists reframed its materialist concerns with crime and punishment as “critical.” Like most of the social sciences, the discipline witnessed an epistemological turn. By replacing radical with critical, the field sought to legitimize some of its critiques, albeit mostly by likening it to labeling theory while ignoring its Marxist roots. For instance, writing in 1974, at the heyday of radical criminology’s critique of mainstream criminology, Gresham Sykes (1974: 208), a well-known American sociologist and criminologist, completely sidestepped its use of the term “radical” and dismissed it as “misleading since it suggests a particular underpinning that probably does not exist.” He instead moved to replace radical with critical and spent the rest of the essay acknowledging the need for the discipline to acknowledge and accommodate critique.

Today, inspired by growing interest in prison and police abolition, critical criminologists are calling for a return to the radical critique of police, prisons, and carceral power. For example,

Michelle Brown and Judah Schept (2017) have called attention to how slow mainstream criminology has been to engage abolitionism and interdisciplinary scholarship on critical carceral studies. In 2020, their clarion call was buttressed by a large-scale popular uprising against the carceral state, moving abolitionism from the margins of academia to the mainstream. Responding to mass popular outcry about racist police violence, a new generation of abolitionists are making connections between white supremacy, state violence, and capitalist social relations. They include seasoned abolitionist scholars and social justice activists like Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2022) and Mariame Kaba (2021), but most importantly also a generation of young people politicized by the world events of the past decade. The main challenge facing today's abolitionists is remaining faithful to revolutionary abolitionism that cannot be coopted by liberals to advance reform and legitimize the brutal capitalist social order (McQuade 2020; Shanahan and Kurti 2022).

Capitalism's Endgame and Carceral Power in the Twenty First Century: New Lines of Inquiry

World-systems analysis and radical criminology developed at a time when neoliberal ideas were increasingly being embraced by a ruling class looking for a solution to the global crisis of profit stagnation and an ideological alternative to the threat of communism, fascism, and social democracy. As Wendy Brown and Verónica Gago (2020) argue, the reach of this new orthodoxy was nothing short of brutal. For example, in the global South, the rise of neoliberalism was accompanied and often enforced by military dictatorships and state repression. In Chile, the neoliberal order was constructed through a U.S.-supported coup that toppled Allende's democratically elected left-wing Unidad Popular government and inaugurated the vicious counter revolutionary military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Brown and Gago (2020) warn us, however, against a simplistic understanding of neoliberalism which examines it as just simply about destroying the welfare state and propping up a more ruthless social order. As David Harvey (2007: 29) reminds us, neoliberalism was "a political scheme aimed at reestablishing the conditions for capital accumulation and the restoration of class power," its triumph over other competing models like Keynesianism is an important piece of the puzzle which scholars have tried to understand by focusing on the various economic, political, and ideological aspects.

Falling under the broad umbrella of "carceral studies," an interdisciplinary group of scholars including radical and Marxist criminologists, political scientists, historians, and anthropologists have contributed to our collective understanding of how neoliberalism has produced harsher forms of social control to respond to a global growth of surplus labor that is increasingly racialized and gendered (Gilmore 2007; Wacquant 2009; Neocleous and Rigakos 2011; Axster et al. 2021). For example, the retrenchment of welfare and rolling out of the penal state has led to greater state emphasis on surveillance and social control to manage an increasing number of people who have been thrown out of the labor market and rendered surplus (Wacquant 2009; Robinson 2020). In recent years, the welfare state's capacity to surveil and criminalize the racialized poor has come under greater scrutiny, thus revealing public services like education, social services, and healthcare

to be anything but neutral value institutions (Piven and Cloward 1993; Neubeck and Cazenave 2001; Shanahan and Kurti 2022). Other scholars provide strong evidence for how welfare state retrenchment and mass incarceration are intertwined to regulate poor and working-class Black and Brown women especially (Roberts 2012; Kohler-Hausmann 2015; Abramowitz 2023). Society and its contradictions in this new era were being “governed through crime”—the regulation of the racialized poor and disposable populations which relied more and more on the police/security apparatus (Simon 2007).

Racial and class dynamics have also been central to studies of the American carceral state. For instance, in the United States, scholars like Michelle Alexander (2020) have argued that the era of mass incarceration and the penal archipelago it has produced are a new form of racial control whose roots go back to slavery and the Jim Crow era. Other scholars taking a more explicitly Marxist approach have explored the role of police and mass incarceration in regulating working class Black communities devastated by the forces of deindustrialization and globalization (Taylor 2016) and as a state response to threat of the urban and Black led uprisings of the late 1960s (Camp 2016). Scholars like Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007), for instance, brought a Marxist analysis to the role that prison growth in California played in a moment of deepening capitalist crisis. A book edited by Jordan Camp and Christina Heatherton (2016), *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter*, examines how capitalist crises serve to both expand and legitimize police power as well as create possibilities for liberatory social movements (i.e., BLM).

While historically policing and prisons have served the function of disciplining and managing a recalcitrant working class across the color line, as new studies of the carceral state make clear, their role and function has become more generalizable and not reducible to formal state institutions. For example, in their book *Prison by Another Name*, Maya Shenwar and Victoria Law (2021) examine the insidious ways that the carceral state extends beyond the prison walls and traps working class people into a cycle of shame, stigma, debt, and punishment. The expansion of the carceral net has been aided by the rise of technology, including predictive policing, ankle monitors, surveillance cameras, and other measures that seek to predict and calculate the risk that someone will commit a crime (Benjamin 2019). The use of technology to surveil greater numbers of people has been dubbed by Shoshana Zuboff (2019) as “surveillance capitalism.” In her 2019 book, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Zuboff explores a darker side to the digital revolution and shows Silicon Valley and other corporations are mining our data to predict behavior. Other scholars have followed suit and have expanded our understanding of how carceral technologies are being deployed to classify and coerce “unwanted” racialized populations (Benjamin 2019).

Carceral power also goes beyond the state institutions and consists of collaborations between state and private companies. For example, new and vital scholarship has examined the rise of intra-agency collaborations to expand surveillance and policing (McQuade 2019), the growth of private immigrant detention centers (Golash-Boza 2015; Lindskoog 2019; Paik 2020), private probation (Kurti 2018; Shenwar and Law 2021), private security forces which today outpace state police forces (Platt 2019; Dölek and Rigakos 2020) and even how workplaces have been changed and shaped by surveillance technologies and the profit motive (Ryzik and Kissoon 2022; Van Oort

2023). Other important developments like the rise of a fascist threat are being used as a justification to solidify social control. A recent example of this is Facebook pairing up with Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research lab, founded by a former Obama administration national security advisor, to fight fake news and disinformation around the world (Menn 2018). In other instances, carceral technologies are embraced to reform the criminal justice system, like the new technologies used by correctional authorities to heighten security inside of prisons, leading to new forms of smart/digital prisons (McKay 2022).

Research examining the effects of neoliberalism on the American carceral power has prompted scholars to expose similar dynamics across the world. For example, in recent years, studies on European racist border fortification, policing practices against migrants from Middle East and Africa and the criminalization of immigration (Wacquant 2005, De Giorgi 2010; Linke 2010; Barker 2012; Loyd, Mitchelson, and Burridge 2012; Melossi 2012; Bigo 2014; Besteman 2019; Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020), ethnographies of racialized policing in the urban spaces across Europe, and Latin America (Wacquant 2008; Samara 2010; Fassin 2013; Penglase 2013; Alves 2018; Salem and Bjørn 2020), studies of expanding policing and surveillance (Seri 2012; Dölek 2015; Gönen 2016; Mcquade 2019; Caldeiro 2000), wars on drugs around the world (Bourgeois 2015; Gönen 2020; Osuna 2020), and the suppression of working class movements and dissidents through multiple techniques of police and prison across in different social contexts have been explored (Martin 2002; Uitermark and Nicholls 2014; Yonucu 2022).

All these studies trace the growth of penal/carceral power both in the United States and around the world. But they are not simply comparable instances, they also substantiate what William Robinson (2020) has called "the global police state," which is an analytical shorthand for the various ways that the transnational capitalist ruling class has embraced greater repression, war-making, and authoritarianism to meet the mandates of capital accumulation in an era of deepening capitalist crisis. While world-systems analysis has focused on the various forms of crises endemic to capitalist world-economy, it has often ignored the rise of neoliberal globalization, dismissing it as simply an aspect of how global capitalism functions. By focusing on the crisis of capitalism and the rise of a transnational ruling class as an important product of the neoliberal era, William Robinson has made an invaluable contribution to our understanding of how this class layer is formed and its articulation with other capitalist factions and state apparatuses.

Like Robinson, we are curious about the trajectory of carceral power at the global level in this current moment of crises. This means thinking about the scale of analysis that can best capture local and global complexities. Most of carceral studies scholarship, including radical criminology, has thus far mostly focused on carceral power at the nation-state level. How does a focus on the global level push us to think more broadly about carceral power?

Scale of Penal/Carceral Power

One of the most important contributions of world-systems analysis has been its understanding of how capitalism developed, how it operates globally, and how imperialism, colonialism, trade, and

unequal exchange on a world scale are fundamental pillars of global capitalism. A world-systems analysis offers us a framework beyond the nation-state as a unit of analysis, and one which can incorporate the global workings of capitalism onto the expansive archipelago of security/police/carceral formation. However, world systems analysis treats the nation-state as a part of an “inter-state system,” and the focus remains on the relations of the states within this system rather than the state apparatus and its carceral dimensions. Radical criminology, on the other hand, centers the role of these penal and carceral institutions in the fabrication and maintenance of capitalist order, especially in their repressive function in the overall class struggle. Scholars like Mark Neocleous (2021), moreover, invite us into a more nuanced understanding of the role of police beyond repression. In his important theorization, Neocleous posits police in the fabrication of the capitalist order. Rather than being only a repressive response to so-called problem populations, police serve to shape and organize the social, moral, economic, and political order. In this sense, our task is to merge the frame of global capitalism and hegemonic power that is provided in world-systemic analysis with critical studies of the carceral and police power.

One of the most recent efforts to combine both is William Robinson’s (2020) *Global Police State* which examines how the global capitalist economy, and the ruling class are relying on a greater embrace of security and policing apparatuses to respond to the deepening crisis of accumulation. Robinson (2020: 12) focuses on the transnational capitalist class and their project of regulation which “[has] become progressively invested in global police state.” As he shows, managing “savagely inequalities” in the global capitalist system relies on the formation of a “global police state” (Robinson 2020: 12) Unlike most studies of carceral power, Robinson’s analysis escapes the bounds of the nation-state and locates “global police state” in connection to a transnational capitalist class and state. He offers three developments that signify the global police state: (1.) the systems of mass control of the working class and surplus populations, the border controls, mass incarceration, wars on crime and large scale surveillance practices; (2.) “militarized accumulation” that is the profitable industries of warfare and security; and (3.) the rise of neo-fascism, that inform and legitimize authoritarian and racializing state formation—which seem to be more fitting with the traditional understanding of police state as the elimination of rights and omnipresence of police power. What is unique about Robinson’s take is that the police/security field does not merely have a repressive function but an economic one linked directly to the processes of capitalist accumulation. Here his analysis comes close to other Marxist scholars of anti-security study, including George Rigakos (2016), who makes similar arguments about the productive aspects of war, repression, policing, and security. For Rigakos (2016) and Robinson (2020), the police/security and the industries they are produced by, then, offer functions beyond repression and pacification. For instance, Robinson’s second point regarding “militarized accumulation” locates police and systems security as a form of a capital fix: securitization that can add to the accumulation processes. Militarized accumulation and accumulation by repression is also one of the ways to overcome the overaccumulation problem and the resort to war and violence, and the penal/security state promises immense profit making. For example, we have seen the growth of military budgets as well as security spending of state governments as well as the private

industries that are funded by the drive to manage the wrenches of the capitalist world-system. As the global capitalist crisis deepens, the push to violently open new spaces and people to commodification and exploitation adds to the logic of the repressive function of “the global police state.”

Robinson’s work is rare in its ability to truly take a look at the global formations of carceral and police power as it specifically relates to contemporary material realities of capitalist crisis. Even as we may disagree with some elements of his analysis, it poses challenges to existing comparative investigations that bring together different cases around the world to talk about the global aspects of carceral power. These investigations certainly help us see the connections and parallels, but they often do not engage in an understanding of the global security formations within the world-systemic functioning of global capitalism (Khalili and Schwedler 2010; Sudbury 2014; Camp and Heatherton 2016; Karpiak and Campbell Garriott 2018). So, taking a world historical and systemic focus, what are the important transformations of our contemporary crisis that we should be attentive to and what do they mean for understanding the role of carceral power?

Carceral Power and Hegemony

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding how policing and carceral power have helped to secure American legitimacy and hegemony abroad. The concept of hegemony is most associated with Italian communist Antonio Gramsci who used it to examine how the ruling class shapes the social order. Hegemony for him was about the ways in which capitalist order is maintained not simply by force but also through consent. Hegemony has also been a key concept in world-systems analysis. For instance, according to Wallerstein (2004: 94), hegemony “refers to those situations in which one state combines economic, political, and financial superiority over other strong states, and therefore has both military and cultural as well as economic and political power.” For Wallerstein and other world-systems thinkers, the capitalist world-system is led by the existence of a hegemonic power that directs flow of capital as well as rolling out cultural and political mechanisms to maintain and reproduce the system. Recently, scholars have taken up the ways that policing projects have been central to maintaining American hegemony globally. For example, in *Policing the Planet*, Jordan Camp and Christina Heatherton (2016) have brought together critical scholar and activist perspectives to understand the global embrace of broken windows policing. They argue that this broadening of police power was a direct result of neoliberalism restructuring unfolding on a global scale. In his 2019 book, *Badges Without Borders*, Stuart Schrader explores how the United States exported police expertise around the world on the heels of the Cold War, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. Schrader gives the example of how American domestic policing programs were exported abroad through institutions USAID through the Office of Public Safety (OPS), the International Police Academy (IPA), the CIA, Army, and the FBI. These programs helped to professionalize policing forces abroad using new technologies. Looking at policing as a transnational project helps to illuminate how policing at home and abroad reflected broader concerns with security, legitimacy, and hegemony. These

questions have also been explored by Brendan McQuade (2021), who takes a world systemic approach to these issues. He argues that in the cases of U.S. intervention in the Philippines, the Vietnam war, and in the wars waged in the Middle East, intelligence technologies were utilized to pacify the populations there, while these technologies were revised and expanded to regulate the problems it faced “at home” in the United States (McQuade 2021). Brendan McQuade’s work on the U.S. hegemony and intelligence policing shows how pacification and policing play a central role in the reproduction of capitalist accumulation and hegemony, as well as the relational formation of carceral power. He asserts:

Security practices—policing, warfare, surveillance and intelligence, and even social policy—are refined and continually reformed through world-encompassing police-wars, the global pacification projects oriented toward creating and maintaining the conditions for capital accumulation on a world scale.... Police-wars are the passive revolutionary mobilizations to repress and accommodate successive waves of antisystem struggles (Arrighi 2005). They are global class projects: pacification oriented toward accomplishment and maintenance of capitalist hegemony and management of systemic cycles of accumulation. (McQuade 2021: 111)

The lens of multipolar hegemony can also be useful for understanding the role of superpowers like China and Russia in the rise of carceral power and *punitive populism* across the world. Rather than a period of hegemonic transition from West to East as explored historically Giovanni Arrighi and others, today, different powers are contending for the lead role of world hegemon. China is already playing a central role in this fight through the ramping up of its carceral power not only within its national boundaries but increasingly abroad. Recent scholarship has examined the expansion of surveillance and carceral power in China, especially to clamp down dissent and repress its Muslim minority. But Chinese carceral power is being increasingly deployed abroad. Countries like El Salvador, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Kenya, and Egypt are adopting policing and surveillance technologies; and this adoption is also about the hegemonic expansion of “Chinese norms” in government (Nantulya 2023; Talamas 2023). The question we should be asking is how could these different directions carceral power take be connected to Robinson’s (2023) “political multipolarity” and the overall contemporary climate of hegemonic uncertainty?

Of course, global hegemony is not seamless; it is unstable and unpredictable, and crisis-ridden. From the uncontrollable dictators of peripheral nation-states to failed military invasions, widespread mass political unrest, and counter hegemonic movements, the core powers’ hegemonic role is under continuous disruption. But alongside the cultural and political tools to maintain hegemony, security and police and other repressive apparatuses work to regulate capitalist accumulation, producing ideological claims to legitimacy by relying on the security discourses of crime, terror, internal, and external enemies. Such discourses provide the foundations of consent of the masses, especially those who do not identify themselves with the “dangerous populations.” As anti-security scholars argue, projects of pacification of capitalist economic and political orders rest on the security proses and the targeting of populations who are deemed as sources of insecurity (Neocleous and Rigakos 2011; Seri 2012; McQuade 2021). For instance, global flow of migrants

and refugees prompted by social, political, economic, and climate crises have prompted fortification of borders and have generated new border security mechanisms, while the racialized migrants are consistently constituted as the “criminals” and “invaders” where they arrive (Loyd, Mitchelson, and Burrige 2012; Aliverti 2020). Writing on São Paulo’s crime issues, Teresa Caldeiro (2000) shows how crime discourses garner support of middle-class citizens for authoritarian police practices and human rights abuses against populations who are deemed “criminal.” Most recently, as we argued at the beginning of our paper, Bukele’s rise in El Salvador despite the massive human rights violations his *mano dura* strategies have rested, the elimination of the insecurities from gangs provides the legitimacy as the “neoliberal scapegoat” for the authoritarian state practices (Abrego and Osuna 2022). Growing *penal populism* around the world reflects the existence of consent through the practices of coercion and repression. In turn, repression, coercion, and authoritarianism can operate as tools for creating hegemony. As Thomas’ (2009: 163) reading of Gramsci shows, the concepts of consent and coercion are not dichotomous but mutually constitutive. He writes: “Consent is one of the forms of forging the ‘composite body’ of a class alliance, while coercion deployed against the excluded other.” The consent of the “allies” rests on the capacity to dominate the “others;” the coercion of the carceral power in the face of insecurities associated with “criminal” and “dangerous” populations.

However, repression/coercion can also create problems of legitimacy for states, hegemonic powers, and the transnational ruling class. For instance, recent shifts in the United States point to how the state is wising up to this problem as mass incarceration has begun to lose legitimacy and calls for reform now saturate the political landscape. For example, the liberal economist Joseph Stiglitz, most famously associated with calls for a progressive capitalism, has called mass incarceration a “tragedy.” He sees himself as part of a progressive and reformist trend among the transnational ruling class that is seeking to produce a more equitable capitalism. While the United States continues to remain the world’s largest incarcerator, there is a shift towards decarceration, alternatives, and reforms in response to the legitimacy crisis that exposed movements against mass incarceration and police violence there. Similarly, the United States is seeking to reform a notorious San Quentin maximum-security prison, located just outside of San Francisco, California. Gavin Newsome, California Governor’s liberal governor who campaigned and was elected on a platform of criminal justice reform, has announced plans to turn the once notorious mega-prison and the state’s oldest prison into a rehabilitation center modeled after Scandinavian and Norwegian prisons. The focus according to these reports will be on job training and education. This signals the turn to what James Kilgore (2014) calls “carceral humanism,” or the repackaging of jails and prisons as social justice providers. It is also a growing trend of reformism that challenges Robinson’s argument about the “global police state” and demonstrates that state and transnational ruling class drive towards authoritarianism and carceral power is more uneven and less complete. It also points to the enduring role of state actors in shaping carceral power that is often elided by focusing on transnational ruling class alone. These kinds of uneven transformations engender new forms of analysis and questions that can establish greater relationality, a point to which we turn below.

Relationality of Carceral Power/ Formation.

Another contribution of the world-systems analysis framework might provide a critical input to understanding of global carceral power and its heterogeneous formations. Distinguishing core, peripheral, and semi-peripheral areas within the capitalist-world system, world-system analysis provides us with a lens into different roles and positions in the capitalist accumulation process. And these positions and roles are not just comparative, they are relational. As Wallerstein (2004: 17) puts it: “In world-systems analysis core-periphery is a *relational* concept, not a pair of terms that are reified, that is, have separate essential meaning” (italics in original). Within economic terms, this relation is mainly about the flow of surplus value from peripheral to core, based on an unequal exchange. But flow between core and periphery goes beyond surplus value and includes political and cultural formation as well.

For instance, reading the history of penal/carceral institutions and strategies, we know that often institutions and technologies at the core adopted or they inform the peripheral settings through colonial and imperial domination. The modern prison projects in nineteenth century Latin America, for example, largely borrowed from the English and North American prison models (Salvatore and Aguirre 1996; Buffington 2000). In his work on colonial powers in Puerto Rico, Kelvin Santiago-Valles (1994) demonstrates how racial capitalism and colonialism rested heavily on criminalization and punitive formations in transforming and incorporating Puerto Rico into the systems of exploitation. Similarly, the contemporary police in Turkey adopt Giuliani style zero tolerance strategies (Gönen 2013), and the reform language and tools from core countries (Babül 2017; Akarsu 2020). Supermax prisons were first invented in the United States, and then exported to different parts of the world including Brazil, Turkey, New Zealand, and now El Salvador (Ross 2013). These examples show that the formation of carceral power in national contexts often relied on the carceral formations in other contexts, thus making carceral relational.

Moreover, relations among different geographies are never one directional. A significant intervention of scholarship on carceral power has been to show that the co-production of carceral formations and institutions relies on dynamics of uneven power relations. Bernault (2003) examines, for instance, how Europe’s modern prison complexes geared towards discipline laboring populations without the use of corporal punishment are not isolated from the use of torture, flogging, and other forms of violence in colonial prisons in Africa; they are, rather, co-constituted. Similarly, Mike Brogden (1987) argues that British police directly learned from the colonial policing experience in India. Alfred McCoy’s (2009) and Jung Moon-Ho’s (2022) work on policing in colonial contexts and how they informed policing and surveillance in the United States also show the roots of technologies and strategies of crisis policing, particularly on racialized subjects. Varied penal techniques, as Chalcraft (2005: 29–30) argues, reflect the existence of “multiple regimes of production and exploitation” as well as a process of racialization in the capitalist world-system. The conditions and workings of prisons for instance depend on the respective positions of the states within global capitalism, and they are co-constituted. In a few

recent studies of contemporary carceral/police power, this relationality comes forth to the center. McQuade's (2021) work on intelligence-led policing and Schrader's (2019) investigations of how the U.S. global counterinsurgency both show how the U.S. operations beyond its borders have revised and shaped policing in the United States. Similarly, relying on a world-systemic framework, Jeff Halper's (2015) work on Israel's security state offers an account of police, pacification, and security at the junction of core-periphery relationality. In *War against the People*, Halper shows how Israel's security industry relies on the occupation in Palestine to develop its centrality in the global security market. Thus, the apartheid regime imposed on the periphery is the "laboratory" for larger systems of police and pacification globally, exported through the Israeli security industry. As Halper (2015: 13) claims, the core's hegemonic role relies on the security industry and apparatus that "not only secure vital resources and transportation routes between the peripheries and the core, but also protect the ruling classes and their middle-class allies from endemic unrest and resistance" across core and the periphery.

Understanding different expressions of global police/carceral state with a framework drawn by a world-systems analysis may be a path to understanding the workings of global carceral power and system of pacification. In this sense when we are looking at a global carceral state, one option might be to look for a unified system, but the other one is to investigate instances of carceral power in relation to the larger whole. These options bring up important methodological questions. Discussing political structures of the world-system, Wallerstein (2004) reminds us that a defining feature of a world-economy is that it is not bounded by a unitary political structure. What unifies the structure most is the division of labor which is constituted within it. In turn, we can argue that many units and expressions across different geographies ultimately play a role in maintaining global capitalist relations, as well as its racialized hierarchy and uneven distribution of violence. In this way, world-systems analysis provides us with the methodological tools to "to rethink once isolated 'cases' as 'parts' of a larger whole and begin to think through the mutual constitution of these part-whole relations" as McQuade and Shrader (2022: 20) propose, borrowing from Philip McMichael's (1990) methodological contributions. Through such a lens, for instance, El Salvador's mega-prison constitutes a part of the larger carceral state formation, connected directly to anti-gang policing in LA's racialized neighborhoods and the mass incarceration policies in the United States. Other political projects underway like decarceration in the United States or the formation of probation in Turkey may temporarily provide a solution to the problem of overcrowding of prisons, but carceral power continues to be a central tool to control "surplus populations" in different geographies of global capitalism. Since the formation of probation in 2005 in Turkey, for instance, Akgül, Akbas, and Kule (2019) show both the number of prisoners and probationers have increased significantly. In addition, targets of those criminal justice institutions there too have been racialized poor and underemployed young men, who were deemed as "problem populations" (Gönen 2016).

Furthermore, Leslie Gates and Mehmet Deniz (2019: 63) propose an alternative, "outside-in" perspective. This perspective urges us to explore how "politics in any given nation-state could be related to its position within that structure of inequality." For instance, how does a political

transformation that seems “inside” a specific nation-state like El Salvador for instance, relate to the capitalist world-economy? Aren’t the horrific photos of El Salvador’s “mega-prison” connected to the peripheral position of the country whose experience of capitalism and structural crises have been extremely disruptive? How can we understand the political formation of *penal populism* in a particular context as a transformation that relates to the capitalist world-economy? The world-systems analysis and its historical sociological methodological intervention are indeed ripe with new fields of inquiry and new perspectives into understanding the global dimensions of carceral power.

Conclusion

A new edited volume by Corey R. Payne, Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz, and Beverly J. Silver (2022: 5) entitled *World-Systems Analysis at a Critical Juncture*, calls for a renewed world-systems tradition that can “engage more productively with other critical perspectives, searching for synergies while recognizing the tensions.” In this paper, we have argued that radical criminology is one of those perspectives where a “synergy” is starting to develop. We highlighted the scholarship that already contributes to this conversation and offered lines of research and questions to explore global dimensions of carceral power that can recognize the divergences and variations between carceral responses. The lines of inquiry that arise from these two schools are particularly important for the current moment of global capitalist crisis. Together they can pose questions about maintaining a system that is suggested to be in its endgame; they urge us to look at both the totality of global carceral power and its different directions; they can propose concepts/frameworks like “hegemony” or “core and periphery” in relation to carceral power formation. Global crises, and the crises of neoliberalism and the shifting hegemonic powers, have implications for questions of criminology, carceral power, and its global trajectory. World-systems analysis and its methods can offer important input to the explorations of those questions. Likewise, radical criminology’s focus on police, security, crime, and prisons can contribute to a deeper understanding of the contradictions and crisis of global capitalism.

This conversation also has implications for contemporary antisystemic struggles, especially since police violence has been the tinder that has sparked the last wave of uprisings. The roots of the two schools of thought we tried to bridge here were shaped by the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. Recently, movements like the George Floyd rebellion and the rise of Abolition in the United States, the riots that burned France in the Summer of 2023, and Iranian people’s struggles against theocratic state and its police are all instances where direct experiences with policing and carceral power have ignited popular resistance against the capitalist status quo. We can anticipate that more uprisings will occur as the crisis deepens and capitalism’s endgame becomes ever more evident. Lines drawn from world-systems analysis and radical criminology can contribute to theorizing and reflecting on how carceral power functions on a global level, while still being attentive to the role of nation-state as an important political actor in framing penal policies and responding to antisystemic struggles fighting for a more liberatory future.

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