



Abstracts

Finance, harm and white collar crime: An international workshop

Kollegiesalen, Brinellvägen 8, Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden

DAY ONE - 15th October 2015



Date: 15th October 2015, Time: 10:45

The morality of neo-liberalism: State-corporate corruption and violence

David Whyte, Professor of Socio-legal Studies, University of Liverpool, UK

This contribution will trace out a new set of moral rationalities that have emerged from the neo-liberal project. With a focus upon state-corporate corruption and violence in the UK, it will discuss how the institutional coordinates of impunity for particular social harms - a key factor in their production and reproduction - has intensified in the neo-liberal era. It will further show how a new set of political moralities gives impetus to this renewed politics of state-corporate impunity.



Date: 15th October, Time: 11:40

Prospects of corruption control: A cross-country perspective

Tina Søreide, Norwegian School of Economics, Norway

Countries all over the world have strengthened their legal platform for acting against corruption. An absolute majority has signed the United Nations anticorruption convention, and many countries regulate foreign bribery in their criminal code. In practice, governments' propensity to secure enforcement of their criminal law regulation of corruption varies substantially. Relevant factors that appear important for understanding this variation are associated with countries' political system, the organization of their law enforcement system, and characteristics of their economy. This presentation addresses primarily the latter category, and explains why enforcement is likely to depend on the government's main source of state revenues. Implications for international players/other governments are debated.



Date: 15th October, Time: 13:30

The Hellenic crisis: Regulatory fundamentalism and injustice

Nikos Passas, Northeastern University, USA

My findings on the origin and handling of the Greek debt crisis are at odds with that depicted by media and talking heads influencing public opinion and public policy in Europe. How did we get there? The Monetary Union's structural flaws played an important role but there was more. Oft-cited sources include tax evasion and an oversized civil service fed by nepotism practiced by conservative and socialist governments over many years. These undeniable problems cannot account for the bulk of the debt nor its steady growth from 1980 up to this day. However, its debt was set at very high interest rates. With this presentation we illustrate how contemporary Greece has been victimized by lawful but awful policies and white-collar crimes and calls for restorative justice.



Date: 15th October, Time: 13:50

Limiting finance capital and regulatory control as non-penal alternatives to high-risk securities frauds in an age of globalization

Gregg Barak, Eastern Michigan University, USA.

The presentation begins by describing the forces of free-market capitalism and the failures of securities law to prevent Wall Street fraud and looting. It then discusses the inefficacies as well as the non-controlling state-legal interventions into these securities violations, past and present. The presentation concludes by summarizing the argument and identifying twenty related policy proposals and/or political drives that are anti-neoliberalism to the core and that reflect an alternative paradigm viewed as absolutely necessary for changing the prevailing power relations of free-market capitalism and for curbing the crimes of high-risk securities frauds.



Date: 15th October, Time: 15:00

Situational crime prevention and white-collar crime

Michael Benson, University of Cincinnati, USA

This presentation explores the applicability of ideas drawn from situational crime prevention theory to white-collar crime. Situational crime prevention theory assumes that crime can be reduced, if not altogether prevented, by altering the situational contingencies surrounding criminal opportunities. The presentation begins by describing the origins, assumptions, and basic tenets of the situational crime prevention approach. It explains how these assumptions

and tenets must be modified in order to apply the situational approach to white-collar crime because of the distinctive characteristics of white-collar criminal activity. Examples illustrating how the situational approach could be applied to recent instances of white-collar crime are provided. The paper concludes with a general discussion of current methods used to control white-collar crime and the potential benefits of using the situational approach as a framework for choosing among crime control techniques.

DAY TWO - 16th October 2015



Date: 16th October, Time: 9:15

Housing finance and mortgage stress

Manuel B. Aalbers, Professor, Department of Geography, University of Leuven, Belgium

Housing finance is often seen as enabling homeownership, but finance can both enable and constrain homeownership and other forms of housing. Subprime loans are a case in point: widely advertised as enabling homeownership for groups hitherto excluded, most subprime loans were granted to people to refinance their mortgages or as second mortgages. Subprime, and in particular predatory, loans frequently result in mortgage foreclosures at the individual level and housing abandonment at the neighbourhood level. It is not just defaulting borrowers that are hit; in addition, there are severe spill-over effects on housing prices, crime and neighbourhood decline. This is well-researched in the U.S., but many other countries also have some sort of subprime or predatory lending that often causes more harm than good: even if they do not result in default and repossession, such loans can cause a great deal of “mortgage stress”. My presentation will focus on these issues applied to the European context.



Date: 16th October, Time: 10:10

Construction sector and white collar crime in Sweden

Pia Bergman, The Swedish Tax Agency, Sweden

My presentation will primarily concern the tax strategies to both reduce serious economic crime and how we work to identify those who act criminally in the market. Although I will present three arrangements that are both relevant for the construction industry and other industries, the focus of my presentation will be on serious economic crime in the construction industry in Sweden.



Date: 16th October, Time: 11:15

Secondary victimization of professionals accused of white-collar crime

Sofia Wikman, Technology Royal Institute of Technology (KTH).

The social-constructionist line of criminology has accelerated since 1963 when Howard Becker argued that those who draw the lines between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour perhaps are more interesting than those who cross them. “Deviance is created by society, not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an “offender”. From this position, culpability arises out of our ways of seeing and describing acts. For all acts, including those seen as unwanted, there are dozens of possible alternatives. The criminal prosecution of professional mistake is seen as growing problem in a number of safety-critical domains such as healthcare and finance, as it may seriously threaten safety initiatives in these fields. But at the same time, secondary victimization of professionals accused of crime also meet obstacles related to victimology, as well as the epistemological propensities in criminology.



Date: 16th October, Time: 13:30

Organizing tax avoidance in large corporations

Nubia Evertsson, Stockholm University, Sweden

This presentation will present some of the results of my ongoing research on tax avoidance. Based on cross-national data on corporate tax avoidance in 22 countries the role of the top leadership of the organizations in the adoption of tax avoidance schemas is discussed. Additionally, the presentation illustrates some of the structures of tax avoidance often used by Swedish companies involved in this practice.



Date: 16th October, Time: 14:25

The national strategy for the prevention of financial crime in Sweden

Stefan Lundberg, Chief District Prosecutor and National coordinator of the Economic Crimes Bureau, Sweden, Ekobrottsmyndigheten.

End of the workshop: 16:30