Contesting Carceral Logic provides an innovative and cutting-edge analysis of how carceral logic is embedded within contemporary society, emphasizing international perspectives, the harms and critiques of using carceral logic to respond to human wrongdoing, and exploring penal abolition thought.

With chapters from scholars across many disciplines, people in prison, as well as penal abolition activists, the book explores what a future without carceral logic would look like, as well as how such a future is to be developed. The book is also an exploration of penal abolition thought as it is developing in the twenty-first century. Diverse geographical, cultural, identity and experiential frames inform the book’s themes of analysing carceral logic as it harms disparate people in disparate places, creating anti-carcel knowledge, exploring case studies pointing to radical alternatives, and to contesting carceral logic from below. Ultimately, Contesting Carceral Logic provides the reader with an alternative and critical perspective from which to reflect on carceral logic, the punitive state and the criminalizing systems that almost exclusively dominate across the world. Finally, it raises the questions of how we are to build communities as well as transform our response to human wrongdoing in ways that are not defined by racism/ethnocentrism, class war and heteropatriarchy.

Contesting Carceral Logic will be of great interest to not only scholars and activists, but also provides an introduction to key carceral issues and debates for students of penology, criminology, social policy, geography, politics, philosophy, social work and social history programmes in countries all around the world.

Michael J. Coyle, PhD, is Professor, Department of Political Science and “Criminal” Justice, California State University, Chico. He is the author of Talking Criminal Justice: Language and the Just Society (Routledge 2013) and the forthcoming Seeing Crime: Penal Abolition as the End of Utopian Criminal Justice (University of California Press).

Mechthild Nagel teaches philosophy and Africana studies and is the Director of the Center for Ethics, Peace, and Social Justice at SUNY Cortland. She co-edited Prisons and Punishment: Reconsidering Global Penalty (Africa World Press, 2007) and The End of Prisons: Voices from the Decarceration Movement (Rodopi, 2013).
The Routledge Studies in Penal Abolition and Transformative Justice book series provides the leading publishing location for literature that both reflects key abolitionist thought and helps to set the agenda for local and global abolitionist ideas and interventions. It fosters research that works toward the systemic and systematic dismantling of penal structures and processes, and toward social living that is grounded in relationships that consider the needs of all. This international book series seeks contributions from all around the world (east, north, south, and west) that both engages and furthers abolitionist and transformative practice, study, politics and theory. It welcomes work that examines abolition and transformative justice empirically, theoretically, historically, culturally, spatially, or rhetorically, as well as books that are situated within or at the interstices of critiques of ableism, capitalism, hetero-normativity, militarism, patriarchy, state power, racism, settler colonialism, and xenophobia.

Building Abolition: Decarceration and Social Justice
Kelly Struthers Montford and Chloë Taylor

Contesting Carceral Logic
Michael J Coyle and Methchild Nagel

CONTESTING CARCERAL LOGIC
Towards Abolitionist Futures

Edited by
Michael J. Coyle and
Mechthild Nagel
This book is dedicated to all those harmed by the carceral state
CONTENTS

List of contributors xi
Acknowledgments xv
Foreword xvii
by Diana Block

Introduction: penal abolitionism as a challenge to carceral logic 1
Michael J. Coyle and Mechthild Nagel

PART I
The harms of carceral logic: people and places 15

1 Prison provokes people into being more aggressive, hypersexualized, and prone to crime 17
Joseph (Dont’e) Williams

2 If I weren’t white I’d be dead 19
Gabriella

3 Reader 20
Emanuel “Eoz”
4 Carceral other and severing of people, place and land: redefining the politics of abolition through an anti-colonial framework  22
Vicki Chartrand and Niko Rougier

5 The lawlessness of law: outlaw nation, settler colonialism, and a possessive investment in whiteness  36
Mechthild Nagel

6 Not behind bars: the rippling of carceral habitus and corrective violence on the family and community life of prison guards  50
S.M. Rodríguez and Brittany Clark

PART II
Creating anti-carceral knowledge  65

7 Start  67
Emanuel “Eoz”

8 The only advice I got is “Stay out of trouble”  68
David Head

9 Designed to bury you in a mental grave  70
Adrian Outten

10 The courtroom  74
Phillip Johnson

11 Generating abolitionist affect: decarceral feminist methodologies and the closure of Holloway Prison  77
Carly Guest and Rachel Seoighe

12 “There is no justice, there is just us!” Towards a postcolonial feminist critique of policing using the example of racial profiling in Europe  90
Vanessa E. Thompson

13 Against penal humanism: a Foucaudian critique  105
Clécio Lemos
# PART III

## Case studies pointing to radical alternatives

14 Feet on the ground  
*Emanuel “Eoz”*

15 The system is designed for me to fail  
*Douglas Knakmuhs*

16 Incarceration as the worst possible treatment for mental illness  
*Richard Sean Gross*

17 The rhetoric of dehumanization: Japanese American concentration camps and the US criminalizing system  
*Michael J. Coyle and Stephen T. Young*

18 RAP’s significance to the formation of the British abolitionist movement  
*Marc Jacobs*

19 The struggle over the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre: challenging neutralization techniques, fighting state inertia  
*Aaron Doyle, Justin Piché, and Kelsey Sutton*

# PART IV

## Resisting carceral logic

20 Something from here  
*Emanuel “Eoz”*

21 Disenthral  
*Emmanuel X*

22 Contesting the collateral damages of imprisonment from below  
*Valeria Vegh Weis and Julieta Sosa*
Contents

23 Land, race and state: situating the carceral state and the mass imprisonment of Māori in Aotearoa within the settler-colonial landscape  198
   Verena Tan

24 Extreme hazards  210
   Emanuel “Eoz”

Index  211
CONTRIBUTORS

Diana Block is a founding and active member of the California Coalition for Women Prisoners, an abolitionist organization. She is the author of a memoir – Arm the Spirit – A Woman’s Journey Underground and Back (AK Press 2009) and a novel – Clandestine Occupations- An Imaginary History (PM Press, 2015).

Vicki Chartrand is Associate Professor in the Sociology Department at Bishop’s University, Québec. Her general research interests include penal and carceral politics, modern day colonialism, grassroots justice and collaborative methodologies. She has over 15 years of experience advocating for and with women and children, Indigenous communities and people in prison.

Brittany Clark is a graduate of Hofstra University ‘20 with a BA in Political Science and minors in Sociology and Criminology. She is the daughter of a former corrections officer and works full-time in the New York construction industry when she is not completing research on the criminal-legal system.

Michael J. Coyle, PhD, is Professor, Department of Political Science and “Criminal” Justice, California State University, Chico. He is the author of Talking Criminal Justice: Language and the Just Society (Routledge 2013) and the forthcoming Seeing Crime: Penal Abolition as the End of Utopian Criminal Justice (University of California Press).

Aaron Doyle, PhD, is Associate Professor of Sociology at Carleton University and has authored, co-authored or co-edited nine books. Since founding the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project in 2012, his research and teaching have focused on working with communities toward reducing and ultimately ending the use and harms of imprisonment.
Emanuel “Eoz,” writer and rapper, is serving a 10-year sentence in Unit 47, San Martin, Jose Leon Suarez, Buenos Aires, Argentina. He describes his leitmotiv as “If you are creative, everything can be transformed, opportunities depend on you, and if you want something you can get it.”

Emmanuel X has been incarcerated in Louisiana for ten years and is the author of several published manuscripts. He has written under several pseudonyms. He served a juvenile life sentence during which he spoke in two documentary films about redemption and inspiration for others.

Gabriella lives in the US.

Richard Sean Gross was born in 1966 in York County, Pennsylvania. He is now serving life at Phoenix prison in Montgomery County, PA. He has poetry and an essay online at <https://MinutesBeforeSix.com>. Rich is currently seeking a degree from Villanova University and commutation from the Commonwealth. Direct correspondence to: Rich Gross, FF9878, Box 33028, St. Petersburg, FL, 33733, USA.

Carly Guest is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Middlesex University. Her work is concerned with the personal and intimate narratives and memories of political movements, moments and institutions. Carly utilizes creative, narrative methodologies and feminist and critical pedagogies in her research and teaching practice.

David Head is serving a 40-year sentence, having been incarcerated since the age of sixteen in the state of Maryland. He is close to completing an associate degree in business management.

Marc Jacobs is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, University of Portsmouth. His pedagogic practice seeks to stimulate students to become critically and politically enlivened while instilling an optimism that they can make a positive impact toward social justice.

Phillip Johnson is in prison.

Douglas Knakmuhs was first institutionalized at the age of 12 and has been incarcerated since the age of 16. He refuses to be a slave for the system and has been sent to solitary for refusing to work.

Clécio Lemos, PhD, in law from PUC-Rio (2018) was visiting scholar at Columbia Law School (2019). He is the author of the book Foucault e a Justiça pós-penal and is the Portuguese translator of White Collar Crime (Edwin Sutherland). He works as Professor of Law in Brazil.
Mechthild Nagel
teaches philosophy and Africana studies and is the Director of the Center for Ethics, Peace, and Social Justice at SUNY Cortland. She co-edited Prisons and Punishment: Reconsidering Global Penality (Africa World Press, 2007) and The End of Prisons: Voices from the Decarceration Movement (Rodopi, 2013).

Adrian Outten
is currently incarcerated at Western Correctional Institution in Cumberland, Maryland. He has been imprisoned for the last 15 years and writes for newsletters. If you would like to correspond with him, write here: Adrian Outten, # 2583871, Western Correctional Institution, 13800 McMullen Hwy SW, Cumberland, MD, 21502, USA.

Justin Piché,
PhD, is Associate Professor in the Department of Criminology and Director of the Carceral Studies Research Collective at the University of Ottawa. He is also Co-editor of the Journal of Prisoners on Prisons and founding member of the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project.

S.M. Rodriguez
is an Assistant Professor of Gender, Rights and Human Rights at the London School of Economics and Political Science. A scholar-activist, they have spent the last decade researching queer transformative justice movement-making throughout the African Diaspora and organizing with the Audre Lorde Project in New York City. They formerly worked to develop Hofstra University’s programs in critical criminology and LGBTQ+ studies.

Niko Rougier
is Abenaki artist incarcerated in the maximum security penitentiary Donnacona, Québec. Mr. Rougier recently testified at the Commission d’enquête sur les relations entre les Autochtones et certains services publics au Québec to document and provide insight into colonialism in the land now known as Canada.

Rachel Seoighe
is a lecturer in criminology at School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, University of Kent. Working from a decolonial, feminist perspective, her research examines agency and memory, state violence, power and resistance. Rachel’s research is informed by and contributes to civil society activism.

Julieta Sosa
is a lawyer and member of the CTEP (Center of Workers of the Popular Economy) and the MTE (Movement of Excluded Workers). She was the coordinator of the SEDyF (Secretary of Former Detainees and Relatives) and is currently doing grassroots work in the countryside of Argentina.

Kelsey Sutton
is an MA student in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa. As a member of the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project she helped create the #NOPE / No Ottawa Prison Expansion infographic series on the history of carceral expansion in the city.
Verena Tan is an East Asian advocate currently based in Naarm (Melbourne), Australia. She was raised in Aotearoa and has worked for several years in criminal and disability law and advocacy for marginalized communities. She is active in abolitionist, decolonial, feminist and anti-racist social justice movements.

Vanessa E. Thompson is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Department of Social Sciences at Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany. Her research and teaching are focused on critical racism studies, black studies, post- and decolonial feminist theories and methodologies, policing, and abolitionist and transformative justice.

Valeria Vegh Weis teaches criminology at Buenos Aires University and National Quilmes University in Argentina. She is an Alexander von Humboldt Post-Doctoral Researcher at Freie Universität Berlin. She holds a PhD in Law and an LLM in Criminal Law from UBA and an LLM from New York University.

Joseph (Don’t’e) Williams is currently serving seven to fourteen years in Pennsylvania’s Department of Correction. This is his third incarceration and he now studies the reasons for the system’s failure to rehabilitate people.

Stephen T. Young, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Marshall University. His primary area of research is critical criminology with a focus on the intersections of penal abolition, Appalachian studies, whiteness and anti-capitalist movements.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Michael J. Coyle wishes to thank Anne Seiler, who is a conversation partner and a sounding board for developing ideas as well as an endless source of personal support and intellectual encouragement. He is also deeply conscious of all those, within and without the carceral walls, who have deeply sustained him in his work, that is ultimately done because of, inside of and with others in Greece, the US and elsewhere. He thanks them all: family, friends, colleagues, students and more.

Mechthild Nagel is grateful to her partner Philip R. Otieno. In her abolitionist work, she has been guided by people in prison, especially Tiyo Attallah Salah-El who has joined the ancestors. Mechthild has been supported by family and friends in South Africa, Kenya, Europe and North America. She also acknowledges the financial support from the SUNY Research Foundation.
When the California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP) was founded in 1995, we didn’t use the term carceral logic to identify the warped criminal-legal policies, the distorted narratives and the punishing mindsets that had led to the exponential growth of the women’s prison population which began in 1985 and continues till today. But from the beginning, our work sought to uncover the racist and sexist laws, attitudes and culture that sent women, trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people to prison in unprecedented numbers, and the punitive/brutalizing/humiliating conditions that structured people’s experiences once they got there.

We started to fight many of these violences on the ground, launching advocacy to challenge abusive health care, sexual humiliation and harassment, rampant racism, homophobia and transphobia, separation from children and family, extreme sentences, perpetual punishment, voicelessness and invisibility. Twenty-five years later, as the movement to abolish the prison industrial complex in all of its forms has grown tremendously, we see how CCWP has been able to undermine carceral logic and win some important battles by building a community of collective care across the walls.

I started working with CCWP during its first six months. I had recently returned from being underground for 13 years. I had been part of a radical anti-imperialist project taken up in solidarity with Black and Puerto Rican liberation forces in the early 1980s. When I returned to the Bay Area at the end of 1995 with my two children, much of my time outside of work and parenting was occupied with prison visits. I visited my husband, Claude Marks, who was a
political prisoner at Sheridan prison in Oregon with our two young children, and I visited women comrades who were imprisoned at FCI Dublin in the Bay Area as a result of their political actions against the state. After I attended CCWP’s first International Women’s Day event in March 1996 where Angela Davis was the keynote speaker, I decided that the fight for incarcerated women, the most marginalized sector of the prison population, was critical for anti-racist feminist organizing. And so I began visiting the Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF) in Chowchilla, the largest women’s prison in the world.

CCWP was started by women inside CCWF, formerly incarcerated women and activists in the community. When one formerly incarcerated woman, LaTonya, suggested that our acronym – CCWP – could also stand for Caring Collectively for Women Prisoners, we embraced the slogan – an organic expression of the type of across-the-walls community we wanted to build. Leaders inside the women’s prisons knew from hard experience that caring for each other was both a lifeline and critical form of resistance in an environment where guards and staff constantly used divide and conquer tactics to control and punish the people under their authority.

For me, as well as some of the other founding members of CCWP in the outside community, the concept of collective care was a welcome, inclusive antidote to the harsh, male-dominated political line struggles of the 1960s and 1970s left. We were pushed by our connections with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women to understand that collective care needed to be a core value for political engagement. And consistent visits with people inside were central to building collective care.

In my 2009 memoir, Arm the Spirit – A Woman’s Journey Underground and Back, I describe the early experience of being part of a CCWP visiting advocacy team:

We organized visiting teams to go into the prisons on a regular basis to meet with women and develop legal advocacy strategies based upon their experiences with the prison system. Every visit was emotional, educational and galvanizing. When a visiting team walked through the multiple locking gates and heard them click shut, when we looked up and realized that we too were encased by miles of barbed wire fences, we got a tiny inkling of what it meant to be cut off from the rest of the world under the daily, arbitrary control of men and women with guns.

Once we were in the visiting room, sitting face-to-face with a woman who had a life sentence, or another who was anticipating her release in just a few months, a small miracle occurred. A spark unlocked our voices. The gates and barbed wire receded for a few hours while we talked about the children they had left behind, the girlfriends they had found in prison, and the dreams and hopes they nurtured for the future. Our conversations usually began with the enormous difficulties of their lives inside, but they branched out to encompass our lives and dreams and hopes as well (Block 2009, pp. 328–329).

Over the years, these visits have been key to contesting the carceral logic that locks up thousands of predominantly Black and Brown women/TGNC people. Torn from their children and communities, isolated and subjected to the disciplinary regimes of prison, our cross-the-walls collaborations have driven the
development of CCWP’s programs and campaigns to counter inhuman prison conditions and the criminal-legal system as a whole. For us collective care starts with physical, emotional and spiritual support. But it also includes fierce advocacy and organizing on multiple levels to insist on abolition and social/political/personal transformation.

The struggle for basic health care rights in the women’s prisons was the specific catalyst for the formation of CCWP. Charisse Shumate, a domestic violence survivor who suffered from sickle cell disease, was the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against the state of California and the California Department of Corrections, Shumate v. Wilson. The lawsuit demanded multiple changes in the abusive health care system that Charisse and the other plaintiffs had experienced firsthand. Charisse recognized that a lawsuit needed to be complemented by grassroots activism. CCWP was launched to challenge the ways in which Black, Brown and other women were being killed by the lack of basic health care services. The lawsuit was settled in 1997 and some gains were achieved. But most of the grossly negligent conditions continue to this day and have been exacerbated under COVID. CCWP’s medical advocacy has consistently battled this lack of health care which callously sucks the life out of incarcerated people.

To provide a space where the women could directly give voice to the range of their experiences, CCWP soon decided to produce a newsletter which we called The Fire Inside, a name suggested by another formerly incarcerated woman, Dana. In the very first issue in June 1996, Charisse wrote:

If we were allowed to have video cameras or tape recorders, the truth could be seen or heard about the junk yard care we receive. . . . Once again, until there is no breath in my body, I will roar the words HELP stop the killing because we are the forgotten ones.

(Shumate, July 1996)

And in the sixth issue of The Fire Inside, Charisse articulated our philosophy of collective care:

Now please don’t give up. When times get rough, hold your head up . . . It is not a “me” thing. It’s a “we” thing, and together with the dream [legal] team and the help of CCWP (California Coalition for Women Prisoners) there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

(Shumate, December 1997)

By offering an unfiltered record of the brutal conditions inside the women’s prisons and the many beautiful forms of solidarity and resistance that are created to challenge those conditions, The Fire Inside subverts invisibility and the normalization of invisibility, lynchpins of the carceral system.

CCWP has always prioritized support for survivors of sexual violence. A majority of people in women’s prisons have experienced some form of sexual
abuse before they are arrested and convicted. Once inside prison, this abuse is regimented through a daily culture of sexual humiliation and bribery as well as specific acts of assault and rape by guards and other staff. As feminists committed to racial and gender justice, we challenged the laws and legal processes that punished women for their acts of self-defense against violence. Our *Free Battered Women* project helped enact legislation (code 1473.5) which made it easier for women/TGNC people to challenge their original conviction. This significant policy win was augmented by teams of volunteer lawyers and legal advocates who have supported survivors in challenging their sentences and going to their parole hearings, resulting in the releases of hundreds of women over the years.

These affirmative programs have indirectly challenged the logic of *carceral feminism* by exposing the harms that the legal and prison systems cause women. We have insisted that carceral solutions cannot provide justice to survivors of sexual violence in a racist, heteropatriarchal society. I had first confronted early forms of *carceral feminism* in the 1970s, long before that term was coined. I was a founding member of San Francisco Women Against Rape (SF WAR) in 1973. Our principles of unity included a strong commitment to racial justice. We pointed to the racist use of the rape charge against Black men as a key form of white supremacist terror and committed ourselves to opposing the racist manipulation of sexual violence to further white supremacy and state control. However, I left the organization as the state’s all-out strategy to coopt the anti-rape movement began to chip away at our organizational opposition to police and state determined forms of justice for rape “victims.” Over the years, these law and order solutions became dominant within large parts of the anti-violence movement. The equation of justice with arrest, punishment and imprisonment is still widespread in the anti-violence movement and in the society as a whole. Fortunately, SF WAR, unlike many of the other feminist organizations from that period, evolved and is now led by women of color committed to racial justice principles in fighting rape and sexual assault.

The founding of INCITE! *– Women of Color Against Violence* in 2000 challenged the hold which carceral feminism had gained over the anti-violence movement. In 2001 INCITE and Critical Resistance developed a statement, which CCWP contributed to, calling upon social justice movements “to develop strategies and analysis that address both state AND interpersonal violence, particularly violence against women.” CCWP has tried to center this perspective by bringing our work with incarcerated survivors into the anti-violence movement.

In 2015, CCWP became a founding member of Survived & Punished, a national network whose mission is to end the criminalization of survivors of all forms of sexual and gendered violence. Survived & Punished anchors a vision and practice rooted in abolition and offers a radical alternative to carceral feminism. As stated on their website:

The same system that criminalizes, re-traumatizes and further abuses victims is also the one that the anti-violence movement entrusts and authorizes
to protect survivors and create safety. The institutionalization of this racialized “good victim/criminal” dichotomy has left a huge portion of survivors, overwhelmingly Black women, unsupported and unaccounted for by the anti-violence movement.4

As the #MeToo movement exploded in 2017, righteously calling out the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and assault at all levels of society, CCWP worked with TGNC people inside the women’s prisons to launch a #MeTooBehindBars campaign. The project focused on the invisible and unrecorded sexual violence occurring inside women’s prisons on a daily basis. The campaign was catalyzed by a series of attacks on trans and GNC people by correctional officers. These incidents represent a backlash against hard-won legal rights for trans people in prison and the changing cultural norms regarding gender identity. The assaults expose how the carceral logic of prison systems relies on and enforces gender normativity. The #MeTooBehindBars campaign has empowered TGNC and cis women in California prisons to document and resist continued forms of harassment.

Over the past four years, as white supremacy and American nationalism have surged across the US, CCWP has built intentional solidarity with the global struggles of women against the US-led prison industrial complex. The US has exported its model of carcerality worldwide as a means of enforcing colonial and neocolonial control over subjugated populations. In particular, the US and Israel have collaborated on the development of punishment systems that include solitary confinement, torture, sexual violence, surveillance and pre-trial detention as a means of repressing the freedom struggles of entire peoples.

We have brought the experiences of Palestinian women prisoners to the readers of *The Fire Inside*, to illuminate the interconnections between their experiences. Imprisoned Palestinian women have also offered inspiring examples of creative and militant resistance to their conditions of confinement. Through slide shows, pamphlets and workshops we have tried to educate the broader anti-prison movement about the intersections between global structures of oppression and resistance. Learning about and interacting with women’s struggles in Mexico, the Philippines, Brazil and Palestine has reinforced our belief that principles of collective care must expand into radical international solidarity in order to counter the global carceral order.

Our commitment to collective care has proven indispensable in the COVID era. We have provided new levels of mutual aid to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women and TGNC folks. We have increased our regular contact with people inside prison to counter their heightened isolation and to get their reports of unsafe conditions to the public. And we have joined with many other groups to demand mass decarceration, especially for elders and medically vulnerable people, as the only effective means for reducing the risk of infection. But despite the torrent of advocacy, lawsuits and expert medical recommendations, state and Federal officials across the country have shown ruthless disregard for incarcerated lives. In a naked display of carceral logic, most prison releases have been denied
to protect “public safety.” In reality, the state is protecting the sanctity of a punishment system designed to crush lives and spirits.

During the Black-led uprisings that started in response to George Floyd’s murder by Minneapolis police in May 2020, the term abolition has been shouted in the streets, broadcast on network TV, projected on the walls of corporate skyscrapers and painted on sidewalks and storefronts in Minneapolis, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Oakland, Louisville, Rochester and Kenosha. Its popularization signifies rejection of multiple facets of the current political/economic/social system – beyond police, ICE and prisons. At its radical heart, abolition points to the overthrow of racial capitalism and the building of a restructured society which is no longer ruled by white supremacy, gendered violence, carceral logic or capital.

In this insurgent moment, CCWP is honored to be part of a burgeoning movement that is summoning forth an abolitionist future. The struggle continues!

Notes

1 www.womenprisoners.org
3 https://incite-national.org/incite-critical-resistance-statement/
4 https://survivedandpunished.org/analysis/
Introduction

In our era, carceral logic, or the control and punishment mindset that suggests criminalization is the best paradigm to organize human life and to solve social problems besetting the 99% overshadows government thinking and action. The dominance of carceral logic suggests that not only are modern societies indulging in an assumption that has proven false (that threats, punishment and imprisonment broadly work as solutions to social problems), but that in the process they, like a hammer that sees only contexts in which to pummel, have become carceral states that see only contexts in which to punish and imprison. Importantly, the framing and justifying of this carceral logic is one that widely ignores the colonial, racializing and capitalist contexts in which its practices (e.g., policing or imprisonment) were invented.

This book aims to lay out some of the contours of carceral logic and to contest it by highlighting penal abolitionism. Contesting Carceral Logic: Towards Abolitionist Futures provides an innovative and cutting-edge analysis of the way in which carceral logic has become embedded within society, and how we might think, feel and act to leave it in the dustbin of historicity. This book is an exploration of the consequences and harms of carceral logic from around the world and from within and without prison walls. As such, it is a valuable tool for students, activists and scholars engaging with critiques of carceral logic and the numerous ways in which it touches our lives.

Carceral logic leaves almost no area of modern life untouched. Primarily it centers a punitive orientation and a control-through-violence framework that belies the ideology, ethics, institutions and practices built to regulate human economies, relations, differences and problems. Almost without exception, the punitive and control orientation of carceral logic governs the dominant thinking