

CLAS Open Seminars

Monday 22 January - 5:15pm

SG1 Ground Floor, Alison Richard Building, 7 West Road, CB3 9DT

[Sacha Darke](#) (University of Westminster)

The Evolution of the Brazilian Carceral Collective: From Conscientisation and Union to Equality, Autonomy, Dialogue and Human Value.

Sacha Darke, Reader in Criminology, University of Westminster

Since 2008, I have researched social order in Brazilian prisons and the means by which prisoner organisation has evolved and violence reduced since the country's first major carceral collective, the Red Command, called on prisoners to unite against state oppression in the 1970s. Mostly I have focused on state-administered prisons, which are so poorly resourced that staff rely on prisoners to take on housekeeping responsibilities and to govern the cellblocks. Across the country, prisoners are formally employed in the place of operational support staff to work as cooks, cleaners and porters. In some facilities, prisoners work as guards and carry keys to the cellblocks. Of particular significance to everyday prison order, staff also increasingly rely on inmates to manage interpersonal and community conflicts. In recent years, I have extended this research to voluntary-sector APAC prisons, 67 of which have been inaugurated in the past 20 years. In these social reintegration centres – as they are formally known –, the social order of the common prison system is reproduced through the medium of officially constituted inmate councils and as part of a wider focus on dignity, harmony and civic responsibility.