

# Carceral Legacies: Politics and Prisons in Myanmar

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Carceral Geography Conference

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# Vignette

- U Thant, died 1974
- UN Sec Gen 1961-71
- Contestation over corpse
- Students V Govt

- Intersections between history, politics, repression and resistance



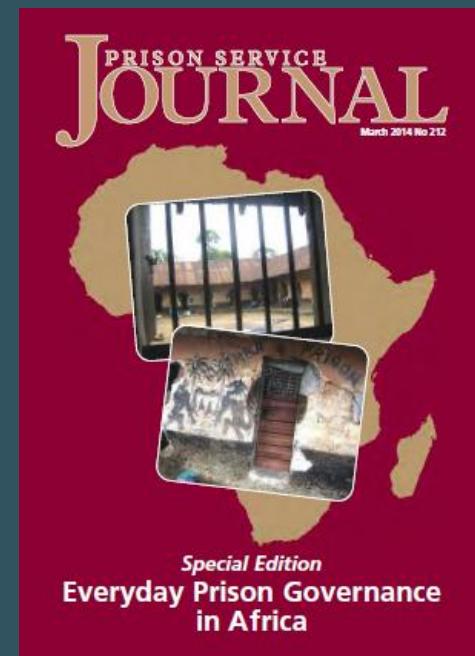
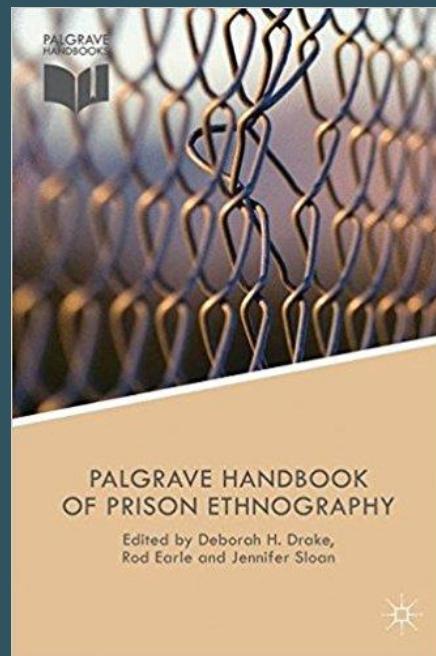
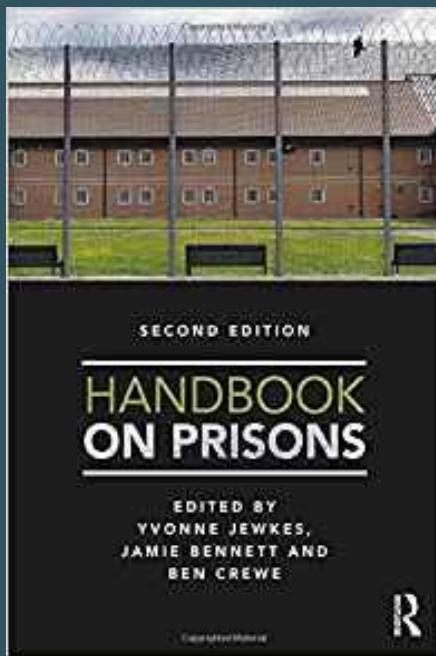
Foto credit:  
<https://archives.un.org/content/un-secretary-general-u-thant>

# Structure

1. Introduction
2. Legacies – a concept
3. Case presentation and analysis: one man's journey into politics in Myanmar
4. Conclusion

Towards better understandings of practices of state- and subject-making, as they take place in time...

# Prisons 'beyond the west'...



This project explores the historical and contemporary role of detention in Myanmar and its significance for the reconfiguration of state and society.

LEGACIES OF DETENTION IN MYANMAR

Project title - AMI DOKU Michel Foucault Free Lectures FB GPRN Eula Burma Soc Analysis 080116 - Dr... andrew jefferson (Dandy) FTU reporting appendices

Legacies of detention practices play a fundamental role in modern states in general, and authoritarian and post-authoritarian states, in particular. This project explores the historical and contemporary role of detention in Myanmar and its significance for the reconfiguration of state and society.

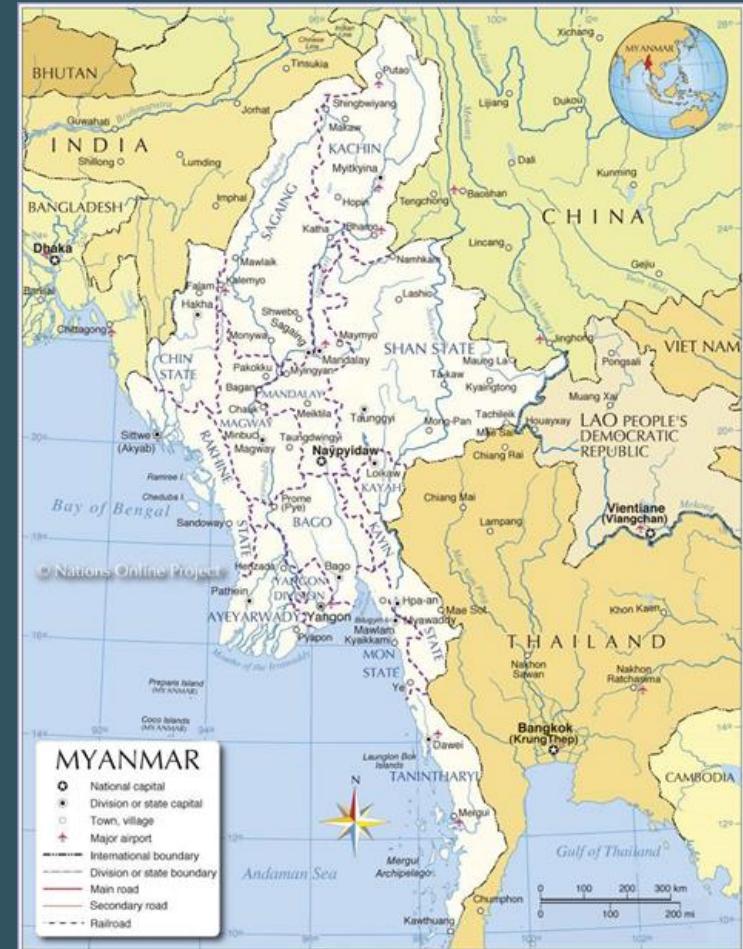
NEWS FROM PROJECT

14.07.2016 New PhD project explores the historical and contemporary role of detention in Myanmar. At a time when the local military regime is trying to renew its grip on power, the project will examine the historical and contemporary role of detention in Myanmar. It will explore how practices of detention have changed over time and how consequences for individuals, institutions, state and society. The project will illuminate processes of reconfiguration of state and society. The project will also explore how detention practices continue to or detract from the establishment and maintenance of democracy and peace.

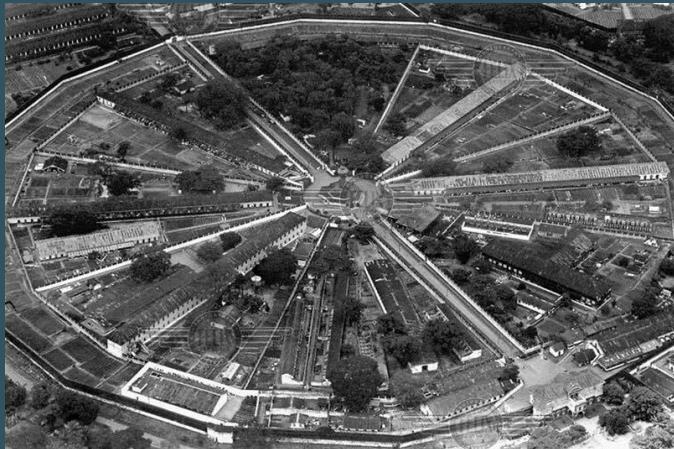
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

RESEARCH THEMES

PARTNERS AND PROJECTS

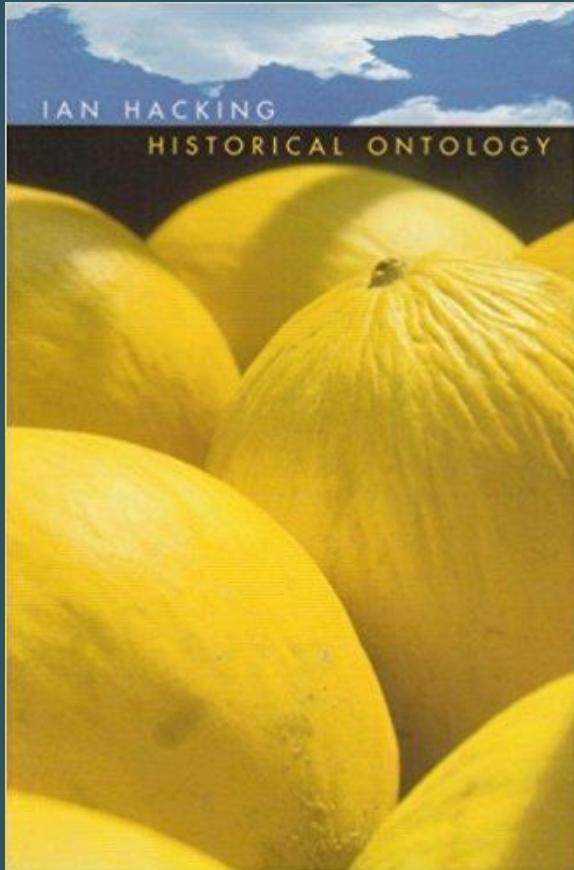


Martin, Jefferson & Bandyopadhyay(2014),  
Sensing prison climates: Governance,  
survival, and transition, *Focaal, Journal of  
Global and Historical Anthropology* 68: 3-17.



“The theoretical purpose of the article is to explore whether an expansive notion of confinement might help us make sense of the lives of people whose possibilities are limited materially, spatially and discursively... The argument is that an expansive notion of confinement that attends to space, time, practices, meanings and states of mind is a useful way of thinking about the situated struggles of people living in prison and relative poverty.”

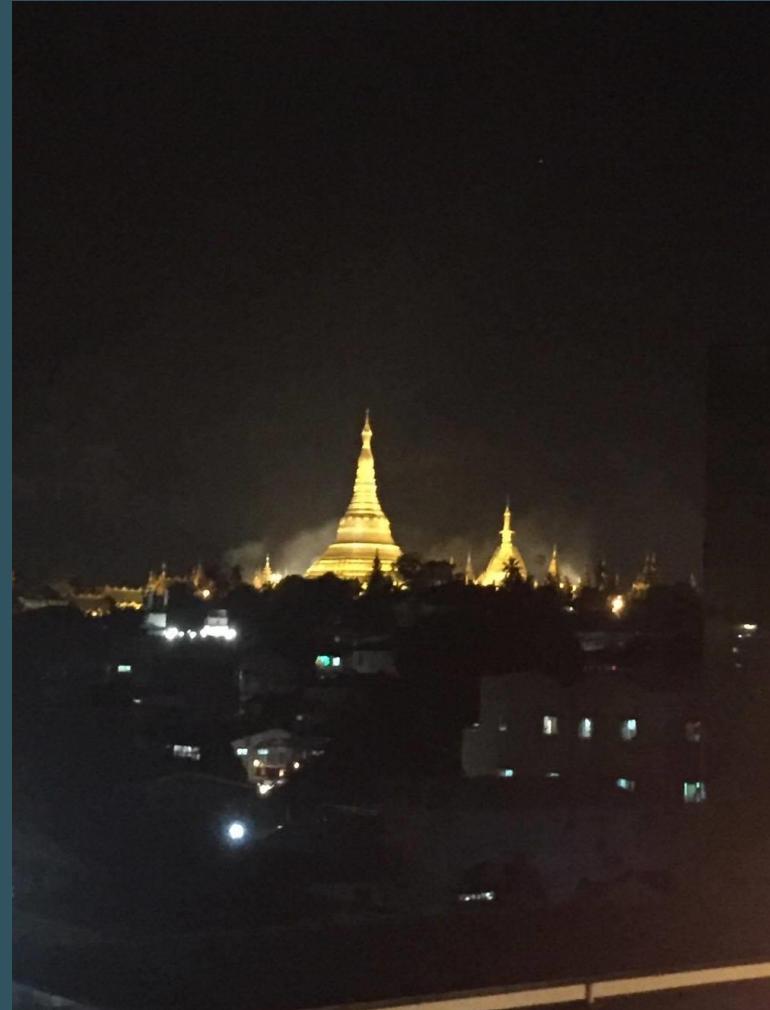
Jefferson, 2012, *Criminology and Criminal Justice*



## Historical ontology is...

‘...about the ways in which the possibilities for choice, and for being, arise in history’ (Hacking 2002: 23).

Our project is not a historical project *per se* but we make use of the past and we invoke a temporal concept (legacies) to illuminate present ‘constitutings’, consequences and directions.



A legacy outlives its giver. It is an imprint, not always clearly decipherable and not always easy to interpret. Legacies, thus, represent a hermeneutic challenge.



It involves a focus on dynamics of production, an orientation to trajectories and influences, and take-up or appropriation...



# The case

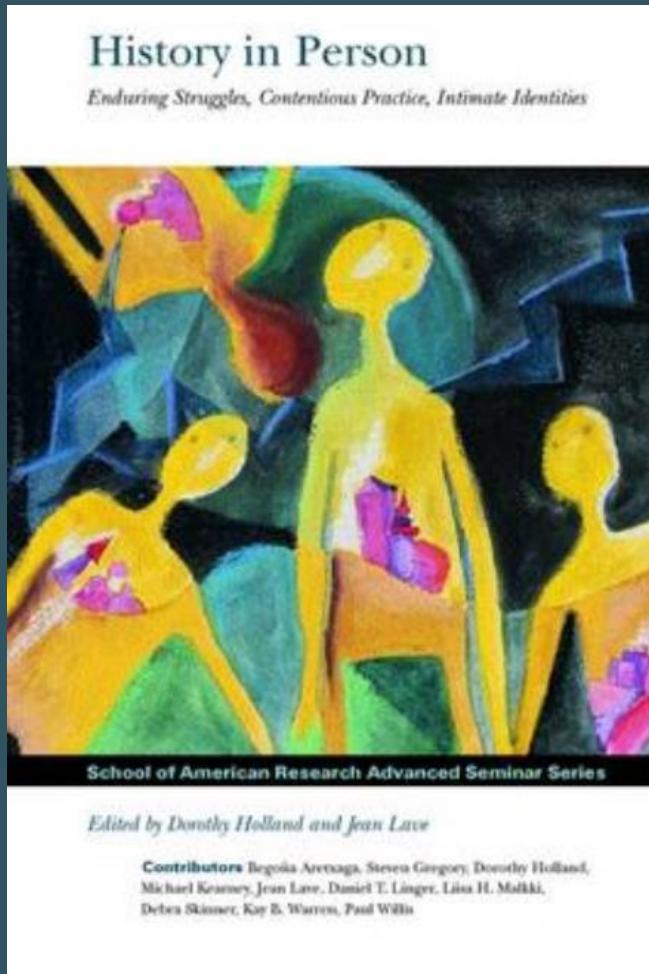
- Thinking about legacies is a promising way to think about the ways practices of carcerality make themselves felt.
- A journey into politics:
  - Exploring what the sites, practices and states of mind associated with incarceration have meant for contemporary politicians in Myanmar, how they have mattered and how they came to matter.



# Timeline

- Early 80s: University
- 8.8.88: Leading role in protests
- 1988-97: Imprisoned; also briefly in 1999
- 1999-2007: Recuperating, laying low
- 2007-14: Forming a family, moving back and forth between country and city
- 2015: Elected to regional parliament





# Holland and Lave (eds)

## History in Person: Enduring Struggles, Contentious Practice, Intimate Identities

# Thanks for your attention!



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