

Programme

Conference: Criminalization, Citizenship and Democratic Dilemmas

By CrimScapes Research Project
@ Refugio Berlin, Lenaustr. 3-4



The conference focuses on the intersections of democracy, social justice and citizenship in diverse fields of criminalisation in Europe, asking in particular about what we term “the dilemmas of democracy” that follow from the policies and practices of criminalisation as we have documented in our work. The conference includes contributions by representatives of NGOs and activist groups engaged in fields of criminalisation in Europe, and also by humanities and social science scholars who have influenced our work and thinking.

As an event, then, the conference is intended to be a space for exchanging with other academics, community groups, NGOs and policy makers on possible strategies to rethink democracy in light of the dilemmas extracted from our work.

Nov 8th, 1:45 - 8 pm

[2 pm] Vanessa Thompson
 "Policing the Surplus Crisis, Carceral Racism and Abolitionist Resistance"

[4 pm] Panel
 Criminalisation & Politics of In/Visibility: Hate Speech, S&R, Court Watching

[6:30] Activist Talk (eng/de)
 with Justice Collective, Mission Lifeline, EuroNPUD, Pro Abortion Movement and others

Nov 9th, 11:30 am - 8 pm

[11:30] Book Discussion
 Deniz Yonucu: Police, Provocation, Politics, Counterinsurgency in Istanbul

[2 pm] Jonas Bens
 "Punishment and/as Colonial Violence"

[4 pm] Panel
 Criminalisation & Politics of In/Visibility: Sex Work, AMR, Women's Prisons

[6 pm] Graphic Novel Launch
 Exhibition, Reading, Q&A, Drinks

Nov 10th, 11:30 am - 5 pm

[11:30] Panel
 Politics of Emotion in Fields of Criminalisation: Drug Use, Abortion, HIV/AIDS

[2 pm] Workshop
 Criminalisation will not save us! Developing a policy brief together

[4 pm] Summary

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Wed, Nov 8th (Day I), Doors open: 1:45 pm

2 pm – Keynote and Q&A: Vanessa Thompson. Policing the Surplus Crisis, Carceral Racism and Abolitionist Resistance

Hosted by Agata Dziuban (CrimScapes Principle Investigator at Jagiellonian University Krakow)

Over the last decades, state violence and the punitive condition have expanded in and beyond various European countries against the background of the neoliberal racial capitalist crisis. At the center of this carceral condition lies the figure of migration as well as surplus. The policing of blackness and banlieue spaces, political urban moral panics about 'clan criminality' or swimming pools as well as the increasing fortification and neo-imperial externalization of borders are expressions of this carceral conjuncture. This condition cannot be reduced merely to colonial continuities, but rather articulates as a specific form of carceral racism. Drawing on Stuart Hall's analysis of policing, crisis and criminalization, as well as on abolitionist feminist theories and organizing, this talk addresses crucial articulations of carceral racism, a form of racism that operates through the criminalization as well as abandonment of migrant as well as non-migrant 'surplus' populations. In this talk, I delve into the articulations of carceral geographies in European contexts, from the shores to urban spaces, prisons and (post-) welfare institutions, to flesh out the operations of carceral racism. Building on black radical and abolitionist conjunctural analysis as well as on present abolitionist organizing, I further discuss that these modalities of crisis and surplusification urge us to think differently about multiple modes of resistance and possibility.

Vanessa E. Thompson is an Assistant Professor and Distinguished Professor in Black Studies and Social Justice in the Department of Gender Studies at Queen's University, Canada. Before she moved to Ontario, she was a lecturer at the Institute of Sociology at Goethe University Frankfurt and at the Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences at European University Viadrina, Germany. Her scholarship and teaching focuses on black studies and anti-colonialism, abolition and abolitionist internationalism, critical racism, migration and gender studies, and activist ethnographies. She has co-edited *Abolitionismus. Ein Reader* (Suhrkamp, 2022) together with Daniel Loick, a special issue on Black Feminisms with *Femina Politica* (2021) and her book *Black Socialities. Black Urban Activism and the Struggle beyond Recognition in Paris* is forthcoming with Manchester University Press. Vanessa organizes with abolitionist feminist movements in Europe and globally and is a member of the International Independent Commission on the Death of Oury Jalloh.

4 pm – Panel I: Citizenship and the politics of in/visibility (I)

Hosted by: Agata Chelstowska (Jagiellonian University Krakow)

Todd Sekuler (HU Berlin): Regimes of visibility: Anonymity as threat and resource in the regulation of online hate in Germany

Invisibility – especially the anonymity of online users – has been framed as both a threat and a resource in the regulation of online hate, sometimes both at the same time. Building on ethnographic research with content moderators, who evaluate and thereby regulate online content, and a critical analysis of the policies and positions about online content regulation by the German government and selected online platforms, this presentation analyzes the regimes of visibility that have come to regulate the moderation of online hate, and selected dilemmas for democracy that emerge through such forms of governance.

Jérémy Geeraert (CESDIP Paris): In-/re-visibility of migrants in activist activities

Based on ongoing research with pro-migrant activists in Europe, this paper questions the process of invisibilization of migrants of colour in discourses, representation and practices. While white activists tend to be put at the centre of attention and action, in particular when they are being criminalized, migrants seem to disappear in the background. In a second step, this paper presents activists' attempts to re-frame migrants to give them back agency and visibility.

Mitali Nagrecha (Justice Collective): Court-Watching. Making racist criminalization visible.

It is well-established in Germany that people from racialized and migrantized groups are racially profiled by police, and therefore more often subject to police controls. It follows that people from these groups are also criminalized as a result. For the last year, Justice Collective has been observing criminal court trials in Berlin, Germany to understand what the criminalization of migrant and racialized groups looks like: What are people charged with? What are their experiences in court? This is a project of making criminalization visible—because official statistics only provide very basic data and no information on race and ethnicity. Through this project, we seek to show and understand what societal role racist criminalization plays, as a step towards changing these systems.

6:30 pm – Activist Round Table

Navigating criminalized landscapes: a discussion with activists from across Europe

In this round table, activists from various criminalized landscapes will delve into topics like surveillance, policing and punishment, highlighting how they permeate conditions of life and activist movements. Panelists will briefly introduce themselves, sharing their roles and experiences within these complex, often overlapping landscapes. We will then discuss the role of criminal law in their lives and activism, and the impact of surveillance and punishment on their work. We will also examine efforts to gain recognition by the state, and whether the state and the law are viewed as resources or threats - and when. Finally, panelists will discuss experiences of, and potentials for, collaboration across groups and movements. With: Marianna Iwulska (PL, EuroNPUD - European Network of People Who Use Drugs), Axel Steier (GE, Mission Lifeline International e.V.); Mitali Nagrecha (Justice Collective), Aleksandra Knapik (Łódzkie Dziewuchy Dziewuchom Pro-Abortion Movement), (BesD Berufsverband Sexarbeit) and others.

Thursday, Nov 9th (Day II), Doors open: 11:15 am

11:30 am – Book Presentation/ Discussion: Deniz Yonucu. *Police, Provocation, Politics. Counterinsurgency in Istanbul.*

An astute analysis of the mutually constitutive relationship between police/military forces and sources of political dissent and resistance in working-class neighborhoods of Istanbul.

Choice

In *Police, Provocation, Politics*, Deniz Yonucu presents a counterintuitive analysis of contemporary policing practices, focusing particular attention on the incitement of counterviolence, perpetual conflict, and ethnosectarian discord by the state security apparatus. Situating Turkish policing within a global context and combining archival work and oral history narratives with ethnographic research, Yonucu demonstrates how counterinsurgency strategies from the Cold War and decolonial eras continue to inform contemporary urban policing in Istanbul. Shedding light on counterinsurgency's affect-and-emotion-generating divisive techniques and urban dimensions, Yonucu shows how counterinsurgent policing strategies work to intervene in the organization of political dissent in a way that both counters existing alignments among dissident populations and prevents emergent ones.

Yonucu suggests that in the places where racialized and dissident populations live, provocations of counterviolence and conflict by state security agents as well as their containment of both cannot be considered disruptions of social order. Instead, they can only be conceptualized as forms of governance and policing designed to manage actual or potential rebellious populations.

2 pm – Keynote II: Jonas Bens (Universität Hamburg). *Punishment and/as Colonial Violence*

Hosted by Beate Binder (HU Berlin, CrimScapes Project Leader)

Critical thinking on modern law and the state has insisted that punishment plays a crucial role as an instrument of class domination. Punishing the 'other' of the bourgeoisie — be it in terms of class, gender and/or race — has been, and continues to be, a central instrument of colonial governance — both in the European centre as well as the colonial periphery. But in addition to punishment as colonial violence in this sense, there is also a broader complex relationship between punishment and colonial violence. As anthropological perspectives reveal, there is a tremendous diversity of indigenous notions of punishment that Eurocentric thinking — including dominant strands in Western Radicalism — tend to make invisible. This paper draws from ethnographic research both in Acholi communities in Uganda in the context of the International Criminal Court's transitional justice interventions and in Maasai communities to the background of ongoing demands for the restitution of ethnographic collections in European museums. By thinking with indigenous notions of punishment relevant in these contexts, and by showing how ongoing colonial power relations tend to marginalize these non-Western conceptions, this paper aims to contribute to ongoing debates on the relationship of punishment, law, and the state in the colonial-capitalist world order.

Jonas Bens' work focuses on law, indigeneity, statehood, and colonialism in capitalist modernity.

4 pm - Panel II: Citizenship and the politics of in/visibility (II)

Hosted by: Jérémy Geeraert (CESDIP PARIS)

Agata Dziuban (Jagiellonian University Krakow): Legal Ambiguity and Institutionalized Abandonment: Modes of Sex Work Governance in Contemporary Poland

The contemporary landscape of sex work criminalization emerges as a complex entanglement of sex work, migration, anti-trafficking, fiscal and labour policies. Rather than working in isolation, those different policy measures interact to shape the sex workers' working and living conditions. Informed by ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with national and migrant sex workers, I argue that this policy assemblage translates into conditions captured by me as legal ambiguity, and institutionalized abandonment, for those performing sexual labor in Poland.

Tiia Sudenkaarne (University of Turku): A Queer Feminist Framework for Justice: Bioethics of Vulnerability and Visibility in the Case of Antimicrobial Resistance

In this paper I discuss the queer feminist framework for bioethics I have suggested in my previous work (Sudenkaarne 2021). Key concepts in this framework are vulnerability and the bioethical principle of justice. As an example of ethical ramifications of certain scientific modes of viewing, I discuss bioethical voyeurism in relation to layered queer vulnerabilities to explore the pathways between justice and vulnerability. Further along this pathway, I also consider "antibiotic vulnerability" (McPherson et al 2021) in relation to gender and sexuality in politics and ethics of antimicrobial resistance.

Friederike Faust (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen): Hide and Seek: Modes of Citizenship Under Conditions of Carceral Care

The current prison system in Germany is characterized by the simultaneity of control and care. I use the term carceral care to understand how these two facets of modern state governance are inextricably entangled in everyday correctional practices, and shape the conditions prisoners have to navigate. I argue that these conditions produce a mode of citizenship in which prisoners are caught up in a permanent game of hide-and-seek with the state: The attempt to escape state control to some extent is accompanied by a persistent longing for rights and entitlements in the form of state care. My argument is based on observation protocols and interviews I conducted during six months of ethnographic research in a women's prison in Germany.

6 pm – Drinks & Pre-Launch of An (Ethno-)Graphic Novel on Criminalisation

In REFUGIO Café, we'll take a closer look at and celebrate the creation of an ethnographic novel about the social and political implications of criminalisation in everyday life. As ethnographers and activists, we wonder: what are the lived realities these growing politics of threat and uncertainty are forming? How do the criminalized (and other individuals and groups) navigate and get by under the conditions of criminalisation? Ethnographers, artists and activists came together to create 8 different stories. It's time to discuss the hardships and benefits of this process - and to celebrate the result together.

Exhibition - Introduction to the Novel - Reading - Q&A - Drinks & Finger Food

Friday, Nov 10th (Day III), Doors open: 11:15

11:30 am – Panel III: The Politics of Emotions in Fields of Criminalisation

Hosted by: Mathilde Darley (CESDIP PARIS)

Justyna Struzik (Jagiellonian University Krakow): Confining boundaries of agency in criminalized settings. On lived experiences of people who use opioids in Poland

While agency is a very significant notion in the social sciences, meant to capture individual and group subjectivities and account for possibilities of change, in contexts marked by hopelessness and continuities of violence it can potentially constrain the deciphering of different strategies undertaken to survive and persist. Drawing on ethnographic research among people who use opioids in Poland, this presentation will critically explore the relevance of agency for research on contexts of chronic crisis. At the same time, I will show how opioid users work themselves to make their lives livable by navigating complex and hostile environments.

Juulia Kela (University of Helsinki): HIV criminalization, emotion and institutional resistance?

Through ethnographic interview material, and media and legal-archival analysis, this presentation will reflect on institutional capacities to build or challenge HIV criminalization, and how charges of emotion inform these processes. Stemming from critical medical criminologist Trevor Hoppe's challenging of the imaginative of 'patient zero' by introducing that of 'lawmaker zero' (2018), I will be responding to Hoppe's 'plea' to turn our gaze to the figures of authority to ask: who defines and who carries out the legal life of HIV? How does the medical-legal construction of HIV rest on emotion?

Agata Chełstowska (Jagiellonian University Krakow): On productive disappointment. Reflections from the pro-abortion movement in Poland

The pro-abortion movement in Poland is founded on a series of disappointments - and new hopes. This new wave of social movement has transformed the crimscape of abortion not only by reacting to certain events in abortion criminalisation (tightening of abortion ban in 2020, criminalization of activists), but also by redefining hope - methods, goals and orientations of abortion activism in an increasingly criminalized environment. In this paper I will map out the fundamental disappointments connected to abortion criminalisation: from disappointments in the justice system; an evolving dialogue with politics; an abandonment of suffering as a tool for claiming rights; to a growing distrust in medical professionals. I will also show how these disappointments could be seen as productive turning points toward a more radical, embodied movement for abortion accessibility and appreciation. Finally, I will map out the dilemmas around criminalization, resources and visions of the future, evolving within the movement and connected to the questions of hope. The paper is based on ethnographic research in the transnational pro-abortion movement active in conditions of abortion criminalization in Poland.

2 pm – Workshop: Criminalisation will not save us! Policy recommendations

Hosted by CrimScapes team members

Criminalisation is often framed as an obvious and effective tool for managing perceived threats to the safety and security of societies. Our research shows, however, that the application of criminal law can include many harmful and unjust consequences, often exacerbating the vulnerabilities of already marginalised individuals and communities. Rather than achieving or enhancing justice and security, criminalisation might actually contribute to reinforcing structures of oppression.

In this session, we give voice to members of various communities experiencing criminalisation in a number of fields: sex work, drug use, abortion access, migration and others. The discussion will center shared experiences and reflections on the consequences of criminalisation, and produce particular recommendations for policy making on the local, national and European levels. Existing community-based practices and solutions, as alternatives to criminalisation, will inform the development of a policy brief.

4:15 – Gleanings: Summarizing and Discussing the Conference

With: Beate Binder, Agata Dziuban, Salla Sariola, Mike Laufenberg

Hosted by: Todd Sekuler

This event is hosted by the CrimScapes research team.

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