

Conference Report 'The Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector: Emerging Scholarship'

CRIMVOL: The International Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Research Network

British Academy, London

9th – 10th January 2017



SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR
CRIMINOLOGICAL
RESEARCH

LEVERHULME
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About CRIMVOL: The International Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Research Network

CRIMVOL is an international, multidisciplinary criminal justice voluntary sector research network for academics, practitioners, and policymakers. The network fills an important gap in scholarship and infrastructure: the criminal justice voluntary sector is more topical than ever before, but has not received academic attention commensurate with its importance anywhere in the world.

The network is chaired by Dr. Philippa Tomczak (Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow, University of Sheffield Centre for Criminological Research, Author of [*The Penal Voluntary Sector*](#)). Philippa won funding from the British Academy (Rising Star Engagement Award) and the Socio-Legal Studies Association (Seminar Competition) to launch the network at an inaugural international conference in June 2017. Philippa's Leverhulme Trust Early Career Scholarship has also contributed to the programme. The network already has over 70 members.

Thanks to generous funding from the British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award scheme, the network benefits from a steering group of specialist early career researchers drawn from England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Eire, Finland, Denmark, and Canada. The network is championed by Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms (Universities of Cambridge and Sheffield) and Professor Joanna Shapland (University of Sheffield). Dr. David Thompson (University of Sheffield) supports the running of the network and has recently authored a book exploring the involvement of the voluntary sector in criminal justice.

The network brings academics, practitioners, and policy makers together to establish a 'state of the art' criminal justice voluntary sector research agenda, paying particular attention to:

- Identifying needs and gaps in the research capacity of academics, practitioners, and policymakers;
- The range and adequacy of theoretical and methodological tools used in criminal justice voluntary sector research, and the ethics of such research;
- Voluntary sector governance, regulation and safeguarding in commissioning, contractual and informal service delivery relationships with statutory agencies; and
- The effects of contractual provisions in shaping voluntary organisations' activities.

Introduction

Following a successful [inaugural conference in Sheffield in June 2017](#), and four thematic panels at the [2017 American Society of Criminology annual conference in Philadelphia, USA](#), CRIMVOL were delighted to present '**The Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector: Emerging Scholarship**' at the British Academy in London. Day one comprised a steering group meeting for the early career scholars, with expert oversight provided by Professor Joanna Shapland (University of Sheffield) and Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms (Universities of Cambridge and Sheffield). Dr Philippa Tomczak presented her reflections on key questions for criminal justice voluntary sector scholarship, including the importance of rigorously defining the sector, and facilitated a discussion of the CRIMVOL network's and members' progress so far, along with potential next steps. The group was then joined by Anne Fox of Clinks (the organization supporting voluntary organisations that work with offenders and their families in England and Wales) and Chris McCully of Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum (collaboration of voluntary sector organisations working in criminal justice in Scotland). Anne and Chris kindly provided a useful and stimulating discussion about how voluntary organisations and academics could work together in future, drawing on their extensive experience in the field. We continued these discussions over dinner.



Day one



Steering group members at the end of day one

On day two the group was joined by delegates from academia and practice. Early career CRIMVOL members presented their international criminal justice voluntary sector research and received expert questions from Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms (Universities of Cambridge and Sheffield), Professor Loraine Gelsthorpe (Director of the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge) and Professor Joanna Shapland (Director of the Centre for Criminological Research, University of Sheffield). We were also delighted to receive a keynote lecture from Professor Kerstin Svensson (Professor of Social Work, University of Lund, Sweden).

Panel 1 included presentations from:

Samantha McAleese, Carleton University (Canada)

From Democratic Under-Labourer to Political Activist... and Beyond. Reflections on the role(s) of the public criminologist

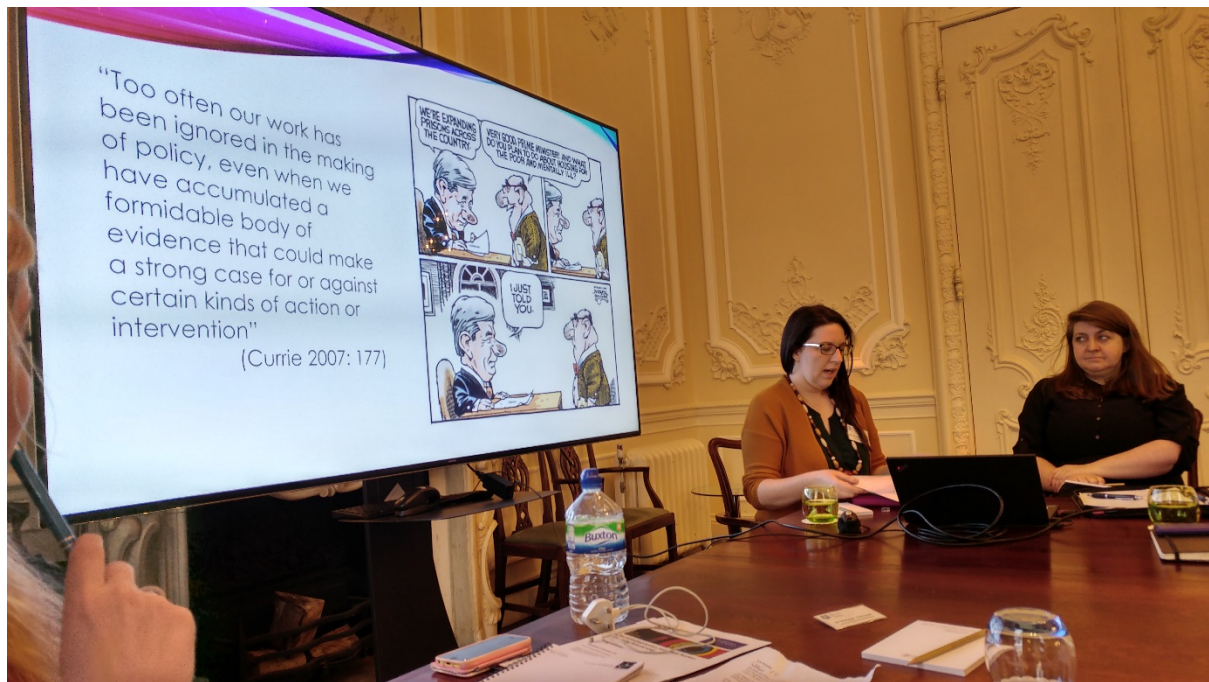
Ella Simpson, Bath Spa University

Being the change you want to see: The importance of frontline practitioners' stories in understanding the penal voluntary sector

Gillian McNaul, Queen's University Belfast

The Third Sector Dilemma: Tensions of practice within regimes of harm

Chair: Dr Philippa Tomczak, University of Sheffield



Samantha McAleese kicking off the day's talks

Panel 2 included presentations from:

Dr Gill Buck, University of Chester

Politicisation or Professionalization? Exploring divergent aims within UK voluntary sector peer mentoring

Abi Salole, Sheridan College/ University of Toronto (Canada)

Client/Helper Subjectivities in the (youth serving) Penal Voluntary Sector

Melissa Pepper, University of Surrey

Doing More for Less in Changing Times? The Use of Volunteers in Policing

Chair: Dr Hannah Graham, University of Stirling



Dr Gill Buck presenting



Melissa Pepper presenting

Our keynote lecture from Professor Kerstin Svensson, University of Lund (Sweden) was entitled: *Relationships between NGOs, volunteers and the state in Sweden: Prison, probation and victim support.*



Panel 3 included presentations from:

Maija Helminen, University of Turku (Finland)

Nordic Penal Voluntary Sectors: Exploring the volume, nature, outcomes, potentials and challenges of the voluntary sector involvement in Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, and Swedish prisons

Dr David Thompson, University of Sheffield

Webs of control and compliance by an 'optional extra'

Gemma Morgan, Swansea University

Enhancing Evidence-Based Practices in the Voluntary Sector: Inter-Agency Communication and Organisational Factors

Chair: Dr Nicola Hughes, Dublin Institute of Technology



Day two

Feedback from event attendees included:

"Thanks so much for arranging the meeting this week. Really enjoyed it and found it so, so useful to get feedback from the criminology glitterati that is Shapland, Gelsthorpe and Bottoms. My work with CRIMVOL has really helped me to locate my research in a broader context and I was frantically scribbling down additions to my draft structure throughout the meeting".

"Well done – re yesterday. I thoroughly enjoyed the day – and thought it very worthwhile as a concept – as well as event".

"I wanted to thank you again for the events you ran. I really enjoyed them both and got so much from them professionally".

“Thank you for all the work you’ve done on the Network. It really is an incredible achievement and in terms of my own personal experience, has really stretched me to locate my research in more focused and nuanced ways than I ever thought possible and that might actually make a difference at an applied level”.

Presentations from the CRIMVOL events so far will feed into the 2019 special issue of the Howard Journal of Crime and Justice (edited by Professor Ian Loader, University of Oxford). This landmark special issue is entitled ‘The Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector in Comparative Context’ and is edited by Dr Philippa Tomczak. We also hope that the early career scholars will arrange future events on this topic.
