



**CRIMVOL**  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH

# **TEACHING THE PVS**

**13 JANUARY 2022**

**VIRTUAL SESSION**

**SUMMARY REPORT WRITTEN BY SAMANTHA MCALEESE**

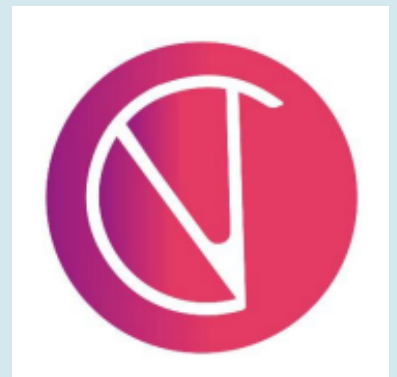
# ABOUT CRIMVOL: THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE VOLUNTARY SECTOR RESEARCH NETWORK

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 (Senior Research Fellow, University of Nottingham, author of *The Penal Voluntary Sector*) and Dr Gill Buck (Senior Lecturer in Social Work at the University of Chester).

CRIMVOL was established with the generous support of the British Academy (Rising Star Engagement Award) and the Socio-Legal Studies Association (Seminar Competition). A core focus is the development of specialist early career researchers and scholar-activist work.

CRIMVOL has hosted seven virtual working paper sessions and the first 'Teaching the PVS' session took place in January 2022. These sessions aim to provide a supportive, accessible, informal forum for early-career scholars who research the criminal justice voluntary sector.



# TEACHING THE PVS:

THE INTENT OF THIS SESSION WAS TO PROVIDE SPACE FOR CRIMVOL MEMBERS TO REFLECT ON AND DISCUSS HOW THEY DO OR COULD INCLUDE THE PENAL VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN UNIVERSITY CURRICULA. MEMBERS WERE ASKED TO BRING ALONG IDEAS AND EXAMPLES TO SHARE WITH OTHERS.



## DISCUSSION:

Attendees with teaching experience agreed that they do not typically spend too much time on the PVS in the classroom. It can be tough to know what to focus on, especially at the undergraduate level. It is difficult to introduce the topic without unpacking all elements, as there is often no time or space for this.

Some reflected on their own experiences learning about the PVS at the undergraduate level, noting that it was insufficient. Often, discussions of the sector are 'sprinkled' throughout other courses (mostly criminology, psychology, and social work) leaving students with a limited and fragmented understanding. Students do not typically learn more about the PVS until they complete a field placement/practicum, or if they decide to pursue research on the sector as part of their graduate studies.

## DISCUSSION CONT'D:

Attendees suggested various approaches to amplifying teachings on the penal voluntary sector, including: collaborating on course outlines, designing an international course, and creating a virtual space to share assignments, lectures, and other course content.

During the virtual session, Abigail shared an example of an assignment she has facilitated called **Mapping Youth Justice**. The assignment asks students to collaborate on creating content for a website (unpublished/offline), with a focus on building a historical timeline of the youth PVS in Canada.

Others suggested that assignments like this could be useful in facilitating collaboration between students from other universities and in other jurisdictions. This would allow for a more informal international PVS course that would not require navigating complicated university bureaucracy. Assignment 'pilots' like this could help build the case for a more formal international course/module on the PVS.

There was also a suggestion to begin drafting a textbook that could lay the groundwork for teaching the PVS.

## SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Attendees discussed various approaches to teaching the PVS including collaborating on course outlines, designing an international course, and creating a virtual space to share assignments, lectures, and other course content.

The suggested next steps/areas for collaboration among CRIMVOL members are:

1. Establishing an internal resource (e.g., a Google Doc) to share ideas for teaching the PVS. This could also be a space where we begin to build a course outline.
2. Writing an article on teaching the PVS that includes reflections on experiencing teaching the content thus far and providing concrete examples of what people are doing.
3. Encouraging greater involvement from students (both undergraduate and graduate) via course assignments on the PVS and research projects.