

BOOKLET OF ABSTRACTS

COMMON SESSION 2026 Spring, Vilnius

OPENING PANEL

Aleksandras Dobryninas – Vilnius University

“Criminal Justice as Spectacle: Views from the Gallery”

In this presentation, the author explores perceptions of criminal justice issues through the lens of "viewers from the gallery," or, in other words, primarily from the perspective of public discourse. The metaphorical association of theatre with themes of crime, guilt, and punishment encourages contemplation of the human experience regarding safety and justice, engaging audiences through compelling narratives. Criminal justice, as a collection of concepts and a structured system, consistently presents a rich subject for theatrical exploration, featuring archetypes such as "immoral criminals," "innocent victims," "astute detectives," and "dedicated attorneys." Moreover, this theatrical perspective not only illuminates the “social reality of crime” but also subjects the system itself to public scrutiny, framing it as a performance that invites critical evaluation of the roles played by its participants—professionals, offenders, and victims alike. By conceptualising these interactions as performances and examining the role of media in shaping these theatrical representations, the analysis highlights viewers' motivations, societal influences, and emotional dynamics. This perspective fosters a critical inquiry into the ethical implications and systemic challenges of seeking justice beyond modern theatrical containers.

I PANEL Digital Realities and Surveillance

Nikolaos Koulouris – Democritus University of Thrace

“The Panopticon, the Synopticon, the Malopticon and other forms of Surveillance: Reasons and Mechanisms to Watch and be Watched”

The paper addresses various forms of “-opticism” as they develop across the social field as a whole, as well as in specific settings and among particular social groups (in prisons and other institutional environments, among different segments of the population such as migrants and groups engaged in social protest, in mass media and social networking platforms, at borders, etc.), the processes of surveillance, and the arguments put forward to justify or criticise it. “Navigation” in various forms of surveillance starts from Foucauldian, Bentham-inspired “Panopticism”, as a diffuse mechanism of power which produces self-regulating subjects, combined with Mathiesen’s “Synopticism”, which describes a society of mass media visibility-made influence, distraction, and cultural power. It then proceeds to McNeill’s “Malopticism”, the discriminatory targeting and control of “undesirable” populations and Bigo’s “Banopticism”, the surveillance of exclusion and its other variations, aiming to show its potential to evolve from body-, image- and data-watching to the constant visibility of all by all and the breaking of meaning.

Vytautas Kaktinas – Vilnius University

“The Internet of Bodies as moral infrastructures: structural social control by Big Tech”

The Internet of Bodies (IoB) is a socially constructed techno-social network of social actors whose biometric, genetic, social data is externally, internally and embeddedly collected, and used for (un)stated dataveillance purposes. H. S. Becker (1968) proposes the classical concept ‘moral entrepreneurs’, and defines ‘rule creators’ and ‘rule enforcers’ as social actors capable of shifting social order according to their own moral system. In the case of IoB, the Big Tech corporations of Global North – Alphabet (Google), Amazon, Meta Platforms (Facebook), Apple, and Microsoft – are lead by CEOs and corporate boards as ‘rule creators’.

‘Rule creators’ decide to create moral infrastructures – biotechnological devices and digital platforms – which could be interpreted as a medium of global consumer culture. It is embedded with corporate morality of the powerful that enforces the knowledge of what is considered an ‘(in)dividual body’, ‘healthy lifestyle’, and ‘normal daily interaction’. The systems are powered by big data and routinely perform dataveillance based on ML algorithms. Thus, I propose to consider them as modern ‘rule enforcers’. Performatively, these infrastructures could be seen as ‘the stage’, where as the power and social control is usually hidden – ‘behind the scene’ – from their users. In this presentation, I empirically showcase the illustration of ‘the global stage’ – the IoB infrastructures controlled by the Big Tech. I analysed the OpenCorporates’ dataset of legal registry data containing more than 300M entries and 140 jurisdictions from corporations’ incorporation to 2026. I mapped global biotechnological economic activity of the Big Tech: corporate ownership and control relationships of other IoB-related subsidiaries. The results of exploratory quantitative analysis indicate heterogeneous IoB corporate networks across different jurisdictions. Findings suggest further

research to consider qualitatively contextualising the externalisation and objectivation of the processes of corporate IoB social control.

Hedi Misaeva – Erasmus University Rotterdam

“Digital Contamination: Misogynistic Attitudes and the Moderating Role of Individual Factors”

The current study aimed to investigate the influence of misogynistic content on implicit biases and explicit hostile attitudes toward women, alongside moderating effects of self-esteem and sexual frustration. Male participants (N = 176) above the age of 18 were randomly assigned to the experimental (incel-content) or control (neutral-content) group. Attitudes were measured pre- and post-exposure. Previous research led to the hypotheses that (1) implicit bias would increase for the experimental group, (2) explicit attitudes would remain stable across measurements and groups, and (3) moderation effects would be significant. Results revealed a significant effect of time for implicit bias, with an increase for both groups, and no significant interaction with the content manipulation. However, explicit attitudes remained stable across time and manipulation; moderation effects were also not found.

Loreta Matačiūtė, Vilnius University

“Experiencing electronic monitoring in probation in a techno-managerial system”

20th–21st century punishments and namely measures restricting freedom, adopt the rationale that it is not merely retribution but must ‘improve’ the person and/or their social situation. Arguments for increased use of electronic monitoring are based on presumptions, that it is a good alternative to imprisonment, it is a cheaper measure, and it is more purposeful to pursue rehabilitation in relative freedom. Additionally, in political discourse the expansion of electronic monitoring can be associated with progressiveness: of both institutions and staff, as well as their aim for efficiency. Electronic monitoring is provided as the answer for common imprisonment problems and promotes the view that imprisonment is no longer the primary form of punishment.

However, in academic discourse many authors critique such presumptions, arguing that this can make a favourable environment for “electronic monitoring industry” and mass surveillance (McNeill 2019) – meaning the issue of net-widening of the punishment system, where it starts targeting and encompassing groups of people, which would typically not be imprisoned but are now being electronically monitored (i.e. low risk to reoffend, or persons who have committed crimes of lower severity; Nellis 2023).

This paper presents findings of a qualitative study based on interviews with 30 individuals serving probation sentences and 8 probation officers. It analyses their experiences and perspectives on the current electronic monitoring system in Lithuania. Key themes that emerged include the relationship between surveillance and the ankle-tag as a symbol, as well as criticism regarding the appropriateness of electronic monitoring and problems within the existing legal framework. The findings indicate that in Lithuania electronic monitoring exhibits features of the “industry” and net-widening, prompting a reconsideration of how bureaucratic systems employ modern technologies in the name of efficiency (techno-managerial approach) and present this as a marker of a progressively advancing system.

II PANEL State, Power, and Institutional Failures
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Margarita Gasparinatou – Democritus University of Thrace

“Rule of Law and Crimes of the Powerful: The Instrumentalization of Legality”

The presentation examines the relationship between the rule of law and crimes of the powerful through the theoretical lenses of critical criminology, sociology of law and the concept of state–corporate crime. The starting point of the analysis is the observation that violations of legality do not occur only through the direct breach of legal rules, but often through processes unfolding within the very institutional frameworks designed to uphold them. Drawing on this perspective, the paper analyses three recent cases that have generated significant public debate in Greece: the surveillance scandal involving spyware, the Tempi railway disaster and the management of EU agricultural funds through the national paying agency (OPEKEPE). These cases display key characteristics of organizational and state–corporate crime, as they emerge at the intersection of state institutions, administrative structures and economic interests. The analysis further identifies a set of mechanisms through which responsibility may be institutionally managed or diffused. The presentation argues that the study of crimes of the powerful exposes a fundamental tension between the normative promise of the rule of law and the actual operation of legal institutions in contexts marked by significant asymmetries of political and economic power.

Thomas Duke Labik Amanquandor – University of Oslo

“Performing tractability: How locally grounded anti-corruption perspectives are ignored in policy formulations processes”

This presentation will explore despite extensive stakeholder engagement and participation on anti-corruption policy formulation locally grounded socio-legal realities of systemic corruption are rendered ineligible through tractability performance.

Despoina Tzani – Democritus University of Thrace

“The play of corporate responsibility in the Greek gambling sector. How state-industry collaboration normalises social harm”

Gambling has been associated with a wide spectrum of harms, ranging from individual financial and psychological distress to erosion of the family and wider socio-economic consequences. Yet in recent years, the gambling industry in Greece has launched a rather subtle image-enhancement campaign through CSR events and sponsorships, investing in sectors that are far from coincidental: health, sports, and education. They renovate hospitals, restore playgrounds, school courtyards, and neighbourhood courts, sponsor famous athletes and sports teams. These acts of social responsibility have two protagonists: the gambling industry and the state. Public officials, including Greece’s prime minister, regularly participate in related events, are photographed alongside representatives from the gambling industry, and praise them for their contribution and social sensitivity. Through this public endorsement, the state appears to offer public value, and gambling companies present themselves as ‘generous donors.’ Behind the scenes, however, other activities and aspects of this sector are kept out

of sight. These initiatives create space for the gambling industry to widen its influence; they primarily function as marketing practices; they make gambling operators interlocutors of the state. Drawing on Stanley Cohen's concept of interpretive denial, this paper argues that the state's performative engagement with gambling operators contributes to the normalisation and moral neutralisation of harm, either by gambling per se or originating from it. Moreover, this ideological shift further legitimizes the material expansion of gambling in Greece, also highlighting a potential conflict of interest, as public bodies that are expected to regulate and oversee gambling companies ultimately build a mutual relationship of give-and-take with them.

Alexandra Dusch – University of Hamburg
“Liberty & Language: A Critical Analysis of Carceral Language”

Liberty & Language is an ongoing master's thesis project, which aims to investigate how institutional language constructs the identities of people who are incarcerated within official documents of the New York City Department of Correction (NYCDOC). The project focuses on an interdisciplinary approach, which combines educational science and critical criminology. For this purpose, the theoretical background of this thesis points out the normalization of mass incarceration in the United States and the role of language in the Prison Industrial Complex, which continues to create social inequality for profit. For this matter, it is necessary to analyze how language conceptualizes a form of symbolic power that shapes social realities and reinforces institutional authority. The central research question of this work asks how people who are incarcerated are linguistically constructed in NYCDOC documents. The data corpus includes 79 publicly available NYCDOC documents, published between 1982 and 2025, including directives, rulebooks, and policy statements by the institution itself. These documents provide insight into how institutional actors describe, control and address people who are incarcerated.

Methodologically, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach following Jaeger et al. (2024) is used to examine the institutional documents. This method enables a systematic examination of discourse levels, structures, strands and positions. Among other things, a focus of this methodological approach is a linguistic analysis, which includes terminology and implicit assumptions. Particular attention is given to how terms like „inmate“ or „offender“ contribute to create stigmatization, dehumanization, and how acted violence is reduced to „incidents“.

By focusing on official documents, this thesis contributes to discourse research by revealing how institutional language shapes the perception on the outside and the life of those who are inside.

III PANEL
Gender, Violence, and Justice

Sara Baccaro – Ghent University

“Femicide prevention and prosecution: A comparative analysis of legal frameworks“

Femicide, defined as the killing of women because of their gender, is one of the most extreme forms of gender-based violence in the world. Despite various international obligations, European Member States have adopted significantly different legal responses to this issue, resulting in significant disparities in institutional practices and justice outcomes. This research offers a critical comparative analysis of femicide criminalization in Italy and Belgium, two countries that have taken opposite paths despite facing similar challenges in fighting gender-based violence. Italy introduced femicide as a standalone penal offense through Law 181/2025, while Belgium enacted the Stop Femicide Act 2023 as a framework law, defining the phenomenon but not introducing a specific criminal offense. This discrepancy is not just a difference in ambition; it also reflects deeper tensions between gender-specific and gender-neutral approaches to criminal law. Drawing on feminist criminology and critical criminology, this research examines how these differing legal frameworks translate into concrete institutional practices across law enforcement, prosecution, and the judiciary. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining comparative legal analysis with semi-structured interviews with legal professionals and victims' rights advocates.

The analysis is structured around the Istanbul Convention's 4Ps framework: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Policy. It reveals how both countries struggle to achieve a balanced response across more than one of these dimensions. Key findings highlight persistent gaps in risk assessment, secondary victimization, police training, and lack of resources, undermining the practical effectiveness of legislative reforms in both jurisdictions. The significance of this research is not just academic; as European Member States increasingly confront gender-based violence as a concrete reality, understanding how legal frameworks and policies influence institutional practices could provide valuable insight for future policy change. The research aims to highlight possible solutions and systemic issues, providing more efficient and appropriately funded approaches to addressing femicide across Europe.

Marije de Vries – Erasmus University Rotterdam

“From Rejection to Resentment: Masculinity, misogyny, and the justification of violence in the incel community“

Incels, short for involuntary celibates, are an online community of men who identify as unable to form romantic or sexual relationships, despite wanting to. This thesis explores how self-identified incels construct masculinity and perceive women, and how these views relate to the justification of violence. Drawing on the concept of hegemonic masculinity and ambivalent sexism theory, the thesis examines how gendered hierarchies, misogyny, and perceived exclusion are reflected in the incel community. A qualitative research design was set up, combining a discourse analysis of online incel forums and semi-structured interviews with incels. In this presentation, I will first elaborate on the incel community, after which I will discuss the methodology and findings of the thesis.

Hanna Theresa Vesely – Ghent University

“Beyond lone wolves: Incel violence as gendered terrorism“

This paper critically examines the extent to which misogynistic violence associated with incel ideology can be understood as a form of gendered terrorism rather than isolated acts of individual violence. Drawing on interdisciplinary literature from terrorism studies, feminist criminology, and existing research on radicalisation, the paper aims to challenge traditional interpretations of terrorism that frame incel attacks as a result of individual behaviour.

The paper shows that incel-related violence is embedded within a shared ideological framework that is characterised by misogyny, antifeminist backlash and narratives of shared victimhood. Beliefs such as the “black pill” theory and the “80/20 rule” construct women as gatekeepers of sexual access and illustrate a perceived disadvantage of incels. A central characteristic is the personal grievance and collective injustice, which contribute to the normalisation and justification of violence. The research further highlights that the communicative and symbolic nature of incel violence aligns with key definitions of terrorism. Incel attacks are often accompanied by manifestos or online statements, which indicate that they are intended not only to harm immediate victims but also to send a message to a broader audience. Online platforms play an important role in this process as they facilitate the spread of such ideological content, reinforce grievance and enable forms of network radicalisation through memes and other digital content.

Incel-related violence shares key characteristics of gendered terrorism, like ideological motivation, communicative intent, and focus on broader social targets. The paper concludes that understanding incel violence through this lens is crucial to conceptualising the phenomenon accurately and addressing the social and political implications.

Teuta Hoxha – Ghent University

“The limits of law reform in addressing femicide: A critical criminological perspective“

Over the past two decades, femicide has increasingly been recognised as one of the most extreme manifestations of gender based violence, prompting feminist movements worldwide to demand stronger legal responses to the killing of women because they are women. In response, numerous jurisdictions have adopted femicide or femicide laws, aggravated homicide provisions, or comprehensive gender violence frameworks. While these reforms have been celebrated as historic achievements that symbolically acknowledge the gendered nature of lethal violence, their capacity to produce substantive protection and prevention remains contested.

Drawing on feminist criminology and critical criminology, this paper examines the limits of criminal law reform in addressing femicide as a structural and political form of violence. It argues that femicide legislation often individualises what is fundamentally a structural and political form of violence, displacing attention from state responsibility, institutional neglect, and broader social inequalities. While criminal law reform performs important discursive and symbolic work, it remains structurally ill suited to confront the socioeconomic, patriarchal, and institutional conditions that sustain femicidal violence.

The analysis adopts a qualitative, literature based comparative approach, examining femicide legislation and its effects in three contexts: Latin America, Spain, and Belgium. Latin America is analysed as a region of early adoption shaped by sustained feminist mobilisation amid deep inequality and chronic impunity. Spain represents a European model with a comprehensive, institutionalised gender violence framework that nonetheless faces persistent judicial resistance and implementation

gaps. Belgium, following the adoption of its 2023 femicide law, provides a contemporary case of emerging legal recognition at an early stage of implementation.

Across all three contexts, the paper identifies recurring patterns: symbolic criminalisation without structural transformation, persistent implementation failures, the individualisation of responsibility, and the reinforcement of state legitimacy without corresponding accountability. The findings reveal a central paradox of femicide law reform: legal recognition creates the appearance of state action while leaving the structural roots of femicidal violence largely intact. The paper concludes by emphasising the need to move beyond punitive, law centred responses toward structural, intersectional, and socio political solutions centred on prevention, social protection, institutional reform, and state accountability.

IV PANEL Migration, Borders, and Exclusion

David Brotherton – CUNY John Jay College

“The Criminological Imagination of Migration in the Age of Deportation“

In the last several decades the issues of the “border” both internal and external have taken a more prominent place in public policy in countries both in the global north and south. By 2024 over 300 million people were said to be migrants across the globe, this is double the number in 1990. Both the migration experiences of the U.S. and Ecuador reflect these massive changes in international demographics that cannot be understood outside of changes in structural formation of capitalism, the state and dominant notions of both the welfare state and buen vivir set against hegemonic notions of abyssal thinking at the epistemological level. In this moment of rapidly changing boundary-making communities experience different states of anomie as they seek spaces to live, work and prosper against the daily challenges of precarity, instability, fragmentation and apocalyptic experiences that include war and climate extinction. Such dramatic changes to our experiences of making daily life demand a new criminological imagination to make sense of the threats to our lives and the possibilities to overcome them.

Matthew Block – CUNY Graduate Center

“Knitting-Granny Saviors, Clergy Drag, and the Marvelous-Real Spacetime of Sanctuary: Performativity and Prefiguration in the NYC Sanctuary Movement“

Over the past decade, sanctuary movements have become one of the most significant grassroots responses to the expanded regime of crimmigration in the United States. Scholars often frame these sanctuary mobilizations as performative “acts of citizenship,” drawing on Isin’s and Butler’s claims that citizenship and rights come into being through their enactment. From this perspective, sanctuary mobilizations transform citizenship by disrupting dominant meanings and generating new rights. Yet many sanctuary actors explicitly adopt an abolitionist orientation, and reject borders, citizenship and the nation-state more generally, treating immigration regimes as systems to be opposed rather than reformed. Based on seven years of participant observation, I maintain that sanctuary mobilizations are hybrid projects: while acts of citizenship seek to repair and legitimate citizenship, acts of sanctuary challenge its legitimacy through the withdrawal of consent. Acts of sanctuary thus mark moments when a post-citizenship order of meaning briefly surfaces, repurposing citizenship’s repertoire while both anticipating and prefiguring its obsolescence.

Kalliopi Orfanaki – Democritus University of Thrace

“Border control and imprisonment: From deterrence to the exhaustion of prisoners belonging to populations in motion“

The subject of this paper is the theoretical -and empirical investigation of the relation between border control policy and Prison - as it emerges from the narratives of prisoners who have experienced violent separation from their countries of origin. The central goal is, through "criminological understanding/verstehen" (Ferrell, Hamm, 1998), to study the impact of power relations on the inner

structure of the individual belonging to a particularly vulnerable population group, such as prisoners from third countries, in the contemporary neo-liberal context.

Specifically, the proposed presentation aims, through the narratives of foreign national prisoners from third countries who have been imprisoned in Greece for immigration – related crimes (i.e., crimes committed primarily by migrants and related to the mode of entry or residence status in the host country), to highlight a) their experiences of detention and treatment by the criminal justice system - practically depicting the phenomenon of “crimmigration”, b) the consequences of the prevalence of a border control policy within the prison, which leads to the exhaustion (Ansems de Vries & Welander, 2016) of prisoners from third countries, as evidenced by the imposition of disproportionate, long term sentences and the deterioration of living conditions during imprisonment, and finally c) the ideological and symbolic dimensions that emerge at the level of the implementation and safeguarding of human rights, when there is an attempt to remove an undesirable detainee from third countries from Greek society in exchange for the cancellation of his sentence, within a logic of managerial control over prison overcrowding.

The research field is defined as "prison". The search is carried out in the largest prison in Greece, Athens Prison of Korydallos (for men), with a random representative sample of male prisoners belonging to population groups with experience of violent separation from their countries of origin.

Paulina Medek – Erasmus University Rotterdam

“Cleaning“ the border: The eviction industry in Calais and Grande-Synthe“

At the French side of the English Channel, migrants’ living sites are subject to routine evictions – every 48 hours in Calais and at least once a week in Grande-Synthe. By assuming that illegalised migrants and the police are the main actors, other actors are neglected in border studies. This includes economic bystanders whose borderwork is non-essential and/or replaceable. Whereas the French police remove migrants from space, the French police contract a cleaning company to ‘clean’ and dismantle migrant camps. To explore the social and structural relations surrounding evictions in Calais/Grande-Synthe, this (ongoing) research project poses the question: How is borderwork performed through the eviction cycle in Calais/Grande-Synthe?

Using ethnography, I draw on two months of fieldwork as a volunteer for Human Rights Observers. The objective is to outline the system of the eviction cycle by mapping the constellation of actors and their practices shaped by a culture of secrecy. Through following eviction convoys to document cleaning and clearing operations of living sites, I obtained observational and conversational data. Relying on the criminology of borderwork as theory, I understand borders as sites of lawlessness social separatedness. Through this lens, the absurdity and ambiguity of borders is exposed. Evictions present “a big theatre” in which different actors perform different roles. I deduce that the France/UK border is performed by diverse border actors and materialises through an eviction industry.

V PANEL
Environmental Harm and Green Criminology

Bakole Yalire Eliode – Utrecht University

“Rhino horn laundering opportunities in South Africa“

Rhino horn laundering in South Africa emerges as a structured opportunity space at the interface between legal wildlife management systems and transnational organised crime. This presentation highlights the opportunities that facilitate the laundering of rhino horns in South Africa. Drawing on multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with law enforcement, prosecutors, private rhino owners, investigators, journalists, and scientists, the preliminary findings indicate that laundering is not an isolated act but a networked process. Opportunities arise through the manipulation of permitting systems, pseudo-hunting schemes, stockpile mismanagement, and the strategic use of legal markets. Corruption functions as a central enabling mechanism, allowing the falsification of documents, circumvention of controls, and selective enforcement. These practices are further reinforced by crime convergence, where rhino horn trafficking intersects with financial crimes, illegal mining, and arms trafficking, thereby enhancing both operational capacity and resilience. The study also identifies the roles of positional power and economic incentives in shaping decision-making, as well as coercive dynamics that deter resistance within institutions. This study contributes to green criminology by highlighting how environmental harm is produced through embedded governance failures and adaptive criminal strategies within global illicit markets.

Dimitra Kalampaliki – Democritus University of Thrace

“Burned into the Screen: Cinematic Wildfires through a Green Cultural Criminological Gaze“

Wildfires are not merely "natural disasters". They are also socially, politically and economically produced harm events, driven by climate crisis, corporate extractivism, (colonial) land mismanagement, and state failures of prevention and accountability, among other structural forces. From the Australian Black Summer to the Greek Attica fires, such events expose entrenched inequalities in both the production of ecological harm and the distribution of its consequences, placing them at the heart of Critical Green Criminology.

In an effort to expand and strengthen this conversation, by reflecting on how such harm is framed at the level of discourses, this study turns to the field of cinematic representations, drawing on Green Cultural Criminology, to examine how wildfire cinema constructs meaning around ecological harm, crime, and responsibility, a choice informed by the enduring cultural prominence of the disaster film genre.

Situated within a broader research article developed in collaboration between two critical criminologists and a film scholar, it draws on a non-exhaustive mapping of films identified through systematic searches across major film databases and review platforms (e.g. IMDb, Letterboxd), selecting those in which agricultural fires occupy a dominant narrative role, and identifying recurring representational patterns.

Preliminary analysis of selected cinematic representations will engage with questions of how wildfire harm is framed, whether and how accountability is assigned, which structural causes are acknowledged or suppressed, and how suffering is made legible - or foreclosed - across socioecological lines. The

study ultimately attempts to navigate through wildfire cinema's distribution of the sensible, attending to what is rendered (in)visible.

Joke Grisez – Utrecht University

“The Lingering Bitterness of ‘Ceylon Tea’: Unveiling the politics of violence within the tea estates of Up-country, Sri Lanka”

It was with the arrival of the British colonists that the tea production of Sri Lankan ‘Ceylon tea’ was kickstarted. After decennia of tea production, not much has changed for the community of ‘Estate Tamils’. For years, this ethnic group, originally brought over from the Indian shores, has been discriminated against and negatively influenced in all aspects of life. Despite their suffering, not much actions seems to have been taken to change their position. All those involved seem to have accepted their faith, no longer in search of the reason why and how such suppressing structures have been and still remain in place. Through in-depth, ethnographic research, this thesis uncovers what forms of violence the tea estate community of the Sri Lankan Up-country is subject to. By shining light on the origin of these ongoing problems, this research will show who benefits from these slumbering forms of violence and how these processes still remain in place to this day. Through the combination of both the disciplines of criminology and anthropology, the politics of violence that lie at the core of the construction and upholding of these suppressive structures will be brought to attention, giving new insights into the complexities of the tea estate community and adding to literature and ongoing debates within both disciplines.

Abby van Vliet – Utrecht University

“Peru’s Stolen Memories: A Criminological Exploration into the Silent Destruction of Peru’s Cultural Patrimony by Huaqueros, Farmers and Traficantes de Terreno”

I will be presenting my masters thesis: Peru’s archeological heritage faces widespread looting. This study explores the harms of archaeological looting (huaqueo), focusing on its impact cultural heritage, local communities, and national identity. Data were obtained from ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and observations. Findings show that looting is not only economically driven but also shaped by cultural traditions and leisure. While huaqueo is often framed as organized crime, findings show that many huaqueros work more informally and disorganized. This study also found other serious threats to archeological sites, including urban and agricultural expansion. Using a cultural criminology and social harm perspective, this thesis highlights the importance of local and global awareness, stronger (international) legal frameworks and improved law enforcement strategies to fight heritage crimes more effectively.

VI PANEL Technology, Science, and Criminological Inquiry

Bettina Paul – Hamburg University

“Machine faith and techno-scepticism in lie detection“

In contemporary societies automation and machine learning are supposed to introduce objectivity and limit human bias. This is based on a firm belief in the power of the machine. Meanwhile, there exists a deeply rooted distrust and scepticism towards technological solutions. The paper argues that machine faith and techno-scepticism are not a paradox that can be overcome, but rather constitutive elements that characterize the use of technology in social contexts. Using contemporary lie detection, the paper will show how polygraphy relies on a belief in a machine and a distrust of its abilities. Therefore, I will examine the performance of the “imagined instrument” (Littlefield) as it manifests within the reciprocal worlds of public perception and off-stage psychological practice, particularly in the context of the German judiciary system. Drawing on insights from a qualitative project on contemporary lie detection in Germany, I will argue that lie detection can be conceptualised as an antinomy— the simultaneous coexistence of trust and distrust in the machine.

Stefano Mazzilli Daechsel – University of Oslo

“Spectral Figures: Polygenic Risk Scores and Criminology“

This paper presents the findings of a genealogy of genetic risk in the study of criminal and antisocial behavior. We argue that the recent rise of the polygenic risk score (PGR) in biosocial criminology as a metric of genetic risk should be seen as part of a longstanding process of spectralization, understood first and foremost as the shift from discrete risk categories to the continuous distribution of genetic risk along spectra. The spectrum, we contend, has emerged as an ordering device that poses new problems for criminologists. To tease out these problems, we appeal to the spectrum’s etymological sibling the spectre. Following Derrida, who binds the spectre to questions of temporality, corporeality, and responsibility in his Specters of Marx, we argue that the spectralization underpinning the PGR demands critical interrogation and an abundance of caution given the dangers and dark legacies of criminalizing bodies on the basis of genetics.

Huybrechts Merel – Ghent University

“The niche body: A zemiological analysis of structural harm caused by androcentrism in the health sciences“

Historically, women were excluded from medical trials under the pretext that female bodies were too variable for rigorous research. This led to a “male-as-norm” paradigm where women were perceived as “small males,” effectively ignoring biological sex differences and sex-specific symptom presentations. This paper argues that women are still confronted with the same systemic bias, resulting in significant diagnostic delays across various medical fields. Adopting a zemiological perspective, the paper frames these inequalities not as mere clinical oversights, but as forms of institutionalized social harm.

Through a comprehensive literature review, this paper offers an overview of three main mechanisms that, in interaction with each other, produce diagnostic delay. Firstly, the phenomenon of medical

gaslighting reduces women's chances of receiving a proper diagnosis. Secondly, the underfunding of female-dominated diseases creates a medical field where these conditions are devalued and deprioritised. Lastly, the existing knowledge gap is enlarged by this structural underfunding and justifies in turn the systemic dismissal and normalisation of female pain.

The paper illustrates the manifestation of these mechanisms through four clinical cases: "contested" chronic illnesses, endometriosis, autism spectrum conditions (ASC) and cardiovascular disease (CVD). The findings stress that these three mechanisms do not operate in isolation but form a self-perpetuating network of systemic bias, intertwined and reinforcing each other. The paper concludes that addressing diagnostic delay requires more than clinical adjustments. Instead, it demands a fundamental shift in the political and economic structures of medicine to move beyond the male-centric norm and ensure epistemic justice for all patients. Because in the end, the personal is political.

Charlotte Van Ranst – Vrije Universiteit Brussel

"Research into organized crime: based on a gendered story. A narrative literature review providing feminist and queer frameworks on gender as analytical tools"

The way knowledge is produced is indicative of its outcome, which influences how individuals are categorised. However, it is challenging to break free from a world defined by constant hierarchies that determine who is seen as a valuable perpetrator or a credible victim. Gender has long been overlooked in research into organised crime, although there has been increased attention since the late 1990s.

Nonetheless, there remains a gap in which frameworks would be appropriate to study gender in organised crime. The use of, for example, gender-based data ensures that gender narratives are active in criminological research into organised crime: they marginalise, reproduce hegemonic notions, and ensure that the dichotomous aspect of gender stays at the forefront. Moreover, those narratives create epistemological weak spots. The question is how we can deal with this and whether it is possible to step away from such categorisation. My research reflects on this using a narrative literature study. With the research question: How are gender narratives active in research into organised crime, and how do they differentiate from feminist and queer frameworks on gender?, my study explores how feminist and queer frameworks on gender could serve as analytical tools to conduct research into criminal phenomena. It therefore aims to open a discussion of whether we could break free from an all-encompassing gender category.

VII PANEL Public Engagement and Policy Reform
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Damián Zaitch – Utrecht University

“The XTC shop. Discussing how to regulate XTC/MDMA“

Public understanding of drug regulation remains limited, despite increasing calls for evidence-informed reform. The XTC Shop (Utrecht and Amsterdam) and XTC Expo (Ghent) were developed between 2022 and 2025 as immersive, art-based installations to engage citizens and stakeholders in the debate on legal MDMA regulation. Visitors explored three hypothetical sales settings—pharmacy, smartshop, and club/festival—each illustrating distinct regulatory models. Across three sites, over 4,800 visitors attended and 2,161 completed surveys assessing knowledge and preferences. Qualitative feedback was collected through interviews and focus groups. The installations effectively communicated complex policy trade-offs and stimulated reflective dialogue. Participants reported improved understanding of MDMA risks and regulatory options, and increased support for legal regulation under strict public health conditions. Across contexts, visitors rejected commercialization and favoured safety, information provision, and age verification. Limitations included audience self-selection, high operational costs, and limited participation from policymakers and law enforcement. Immersive, participatory formats such as the XTC Shop can foster informed debate, depolarize public attitudes, and enhance democratic dialogue on drug policy reform. To maximize impact, future initiatives should target more diverse audiences and strengthen institutional engagement to translate public reflection into meaningful policy learning, also supported by pilot experiments.

Nikoleta Despotidou – Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences

“The Memeification of a Scandal: Opekepe“

A presentation of the "Opekepe" scandal in Greece, as well as a look into the "memeification" that followed after the broadcast of the case examination and the questioning of the suspects on national television. This presentation is a dive into the scandal and the global phenomenon that is the "memeification" of tragic events by the generation Z.

Melita Taurauskaite – Utrecht University

“When red lights turn green: Exploring sex worker advocacy efforts that lead to Belgium’s innovative decriminalisation reforms“

Sex workers have historically been excluded from policy-making processes that directly affect their livelihoods, largely due to stigma, criminalisation, and moral governance. While existing research has extensively examined sex work regulatory models, less attention has been paid to the political processes through which sex workers themselves influence regulatory change. This thesis addresses this gap by examining the role of sex worker-led advocacy organisations in shaping Belgium’s 2022 decriminalisation of sex work and the subsequent 2024 labour protection framework. Using a qualitative research design, the study draws on semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, complemented by document analysis of policy texts, media coverage, and advocacy reports. It is then guided by a multidisciplinary framework that combines critical criminology and social movement

theory. This allows for a comprehensive examination of both the structural conditions of political exclusion and the mobilisation strategies used to contest them. The findings show that Belgium's reforms resulted from long-term advocacy, strategic alliance-building, and the effective use of political opportunity structures, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the study also highlights ongoing implementation challenges, including institutional resistance, uneven municipal practices, and continued stigma. This thesis thus contributes to the criminological debate on power, state omission, and social inclusion by grounding it through the lens of sex workers gaining political agency.

Kaatje Roelant – Vrije Universiteit Brussel

“Violent inaction. Grey governmentality, biopolitical subtraction, and the production of the living dead-subject among Moroccan 'undocumented' minors“

Moroccan ‘undocumented’ and unaccompanied minors are a visible presence in Brussels’ streets. Despite the right to protection and care, many experience homelessness, material deprivation, and recruitment into drug trafficking. This paper examines how the governmental responses to these minors can be understood through a Foucauldian lens of governmentality, thereby specifically focusing on grey migration governmentality, biopolitical technologies of subtraction, and understanding the living dead-subject.

Drawing on twelve hours of action interviews with first-line actors, supplemented with reports, newspaper articles, and peer-reviewed literature, this paper maps how everyday practices shape the lives of Moroccan ‘undocumented’ and unaccompanied minors in Brussels. Rather than overt repression, governmentality operates through violent inaction: a constellation of fragmented, inconsistent, and often contradictory interventions that cumulatively withdraw care. Practices such as non-registration, categorisation, restricted access to housing and healthcare, and the dismantling of informal living spaces produce conditions of extreme precarity. This is accentuated by policing practices, or action, within a void of care, or violent inaction. These biopolitical technologies of subtraction generate what Achille Mbembe conceptualises as living dead-subjects, positioned at the intersection of multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities while simultaneously resisting and navigating these constraints.

By foregrounding the micro-practices of grey migration governmentality, this paper illuminates how diffuse, depoliticized forms of power produce profound marginalisation, and calls for a shift from violent inaction or non-governing towards unconditional care.

VIII PANEL Carceral Spaces and Experiences

Thomas Akoensi – University of Kent

“Infectious diseases risk in prison, the systematic neglect of prison officers in Ghana“

Globally, prisons are recognised as environments of elevated infectious disease risk, yet the occupational health of prison officers has received comparatively little scholarly attention. This paper addresses that gap by examining how Ghanaian prison officers experience, perceive and are affected by the risk of contracting infectious diseases in their daily work. A mixed-methods design was employed, combining semi-structured interviews with 78 officers, sustained observational fieldwork across multiple prison facilities in Ghana, and a cross-sectional survey of 1,062 officers administered in 31 prisons operated by the Ghana Prisons Service (GPS). Qualitative data were analysed thematically. Survey items measuring infectious disease risk underwent factor analysis and reliability testing, yielding a robust six-item scale. Four interlocking risk themes emerge from the data: (1) prison overcrowding and dormitory congestion creating ideal conditions for airborne and contact-transmitted diseases; (2) specific officer routines – morning unlocks, hospital escorts, headcounts, use-of-force incidents and contraband searches – that systematically expose officers to bodily fluids and pathogens; (3) an absence of health provisions for officers, including personal protective equipment (PPE), routine immunisation and regular medical check-ups; and (4) the lack of diagnostic facilities, isolation capacity and reliable information about the health status of people in prison. Survey findings corroborate qualitative accounts: over 70% of officers confirmed unavailability of PPE and lack of immunisation, and officers rated their overall infectious disease risk as markedly high. This paper is among the first to examine occupational infectious disease risk among prison officers in a sub-Saharan African context using a mixed-methods design. It extends the international prison health literature by demonstrating that the structural conditions producing infectious disease risk in Ghanaian prisons are qualitatively distinct from, and in some respects more acute than, those documented in higher-income jurisdictions.

Eirini Stamouli – Panteion University

“Criminal Justice as Theatre: Performers, Viewers, and Reviewers in the Golden Dawn Trial“

This paper examines criminal justice as a performative and theatrical process through the lens of cultural criminology. Moving beyond the conventional understanding of the criminal trial as a purely technical legal mechanism, it conceptualizes it as a public stage where authority, morality, guilt, victimhood, and punishment are symbolically constructed and contested. Drawing on the cultural criminological emphasis on emotion, symbolism, media representation, and collective meaning-making, the study highlights how crime and control are embedded within broader cultural practices. From this perspective, the courtroom emerges not merely as a neutral site of fact-finding and legal application, but as a performative arena in which various actors communicate and negotiate meaning before multiple audiences. This dynamic becomes especially pronounced in high-profile political trials, where legal processes intersect with ideology, historical memory, media attention, and public sentiment, transforming trials into national narratives about identity, conflict, and democratic values. Focusing on the trial of Golden Dawn in Greece, the paper analyzes one of the most significant political trials in post-dictatorship history. Following the 2013 murder of anti-fascist musician Pavlos Fyssas and the subsequent prosecution of Golden Dawn as a criminal organization, the case evolved into a prolonged and highly visible judicial process, culminating in the landmark 2020 conviction and

its confirmation on appeal in 2026. The presentation argues that this trial can be understood as a form of criminal justice theatre, in which competing narratives about fascist violence, democratic legitimacy, victimhood, and punishment were publicly performed and interpreted. By examining the roles of performers, viewers, and reviewers, it demonstrates that criminal justice operates not only through legal procedures, but also through spectacle, symbolism, and public interpretation.

Karolina Vysockytė – Vilnius University

“Frontstage and Backstage: Performing the “Good Prisoner” and Subcultural Survival Practices in Panevėžys Women’s Prison“

This presentation explores how the role of the “good prisoner” is performed in Panevėžys Women’s Prison and how, alongside this institutional performance, informal survival practices emerge in everyday prison life. It is based on qualitative research conducted in Panevėžys Prison, drawing on ethnographic observation, informal conversations, and semi-structured interviews with imprisoned women and prison staff. The study focuses on the main prison setting and examines how social order is shaped not only by formal control, but also by informal relations, expectations, and strategies of adaptation. The findings suggest that imprisoned women are encouraged to display behavior that is institutionally rewarded: obedience, calmness, compliance with rules, and active participation in programs and prison routines. Performing this role may provide access to benefits, better evaluations, or more favorable living conditions. At the same time, everyday life in prison also involves informal norms, mistrust, labeling, power displays, exchanges, and distancing strategies that function as ways of coping with a controlled environment. These practices should not be understood simply as signs of deviance, but rather as rational responses to structural conditions created by imprisonment itself. The presentation argues that the performance of the “good prisoner” is not merely an individual choice or proof of rehabilitation. Rather, it is shaped by institutional expectations and reward mechanisms, while backstage practices reveal the hidden social dynamics through which women navigate prison life and survive within it.

Cami Leenaert – Vrije Universiteit Brussel

“Power, voice, and participation. A critical criminology study of youth participation mechanisms and experiences in residential youth care in Flanders“

This research studies how participation is organised and experienced within Flemish residential youth care. It addresses the tension between formal participation rights and the everyday reality of participation in institutional care settings. Using a qualitative exploratory single-case study, data was collected through online questionnaires answered by five young residents and five professionals in one Flemish residential facility. A feedback session with six residents was held to refine the questionnaire as an evaluative instrument. The findings show that participation is present, but unevenly meaningful. Young people generally have the opportunity to express their views, particularly in everyday interactions. Yet, their influence on outcomes remains conditional and limited by adult authority, institutional routines and protective logics. The study confirms the gap between voice and influence identified in existing literature, while also showing that participation is partly shaped by discursive accessibility. It contributes a critical, practice-based understanding of participation as relationally enabled, organisationally mediated, institutionally bounded and discursively structured.

IX PANEL

Film: Sex Work: It's Just a Job, discussion

Alex Vitale – CUNY John Jay College

“Sex Work: It’s Just a Job” shares the voices of an incredibly diverse group of sex workers discussing the ways in which they would benefit from decriminalization rather than current prohibitionist approaches including “end demand” or the “Nordic Model.” The film tracks organizing efforts to decriminalize sex work in New York State, including the successful campaign to repeal the discriminatory “loitering for the purposes of prostitution” law, which was used primarily to criminalize trans people in low-income immigrant communities.

X PANEL Media, Perception, and Social Impact

Mattias De Backer – Vrije Universiteit Brussel

“What happens in hot spots? What “emotional geographies” can bring to spatial criminology“

The city and the spatial have always been central themes in criminology, but, arguably, with a rather thin and one-directional understanding of the dynamics between people and place. To explore what "emotional geographies" can bring to analyses in spatial criminology, this lecture focuses on findings from previous research in Brussels' disadvantaged neighbourhoods currently known nation-wide as drugs hot spots. The paper asks the straightforward questions: what happens in hot spots? And what makes these locations particularly vulnerable to become such hot spots?

Hauke Wolff – University of Hamburg

“The impact of Peter R. de Vries’ murder on Dutch journalism“

This study examines the effects of the murder of Peter R. de Vries on Dutch journalism. Based on interviews, first findings indicate heightened risk awareness and strengthened security practices, while journalists continue their work largely undeterred.

Maria Luisa Fernanda Rispa Hoyos – Middlesex University

“The power of words: The impact of police interviewer’s judgment error and apology on sexual violence victims in simulated interviews“

This experiment examines how a police interviewer’s judgment error and apology affect a sexual violence victim’s secondary victimization, trust in the interviewer, rapport, and willingness to provide information. Ninety students from Peru were asked to imagine being sexual violence victims and were interviewed online by a mock police interviewer. Participants were randomized into three conditions: judgment error without apology, judgment error with apology, and a no-error control. The judgment error involved suggesting the victim was partly responsible for their victimhood, citing women’s clothing choices and questioning men’s masculinity. Our findings show judgment errors reduced trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information while increasing secondary victimization; apologizing improved trust and rapport but did not affect secondary victimization or willingness to provide information. These outcomes indicate that judgment errors in sexual violence victim interviews can negatively impact the interviewing process and outcomes and highlight the importance of an apology.

Alina Oster – University of Hamburg

“Perception of risk and the role of community after prevented terror attacks“

This ongoing master’s thesis project examines the behaviour of Taylor Swift fans following the last-minute cancellation of several concerts in Vienna in 2024 due to a concrete terrorist threat. The study aims to explore why some fans chose to attend spontaneous fan gatherings in public spaces despite official warnings, while others stayed away.

This research investigates how and why people behave like they do in the aftermath of a publicised, prevented terror attack that could have directly affected them. Such situations offer

valuable insights into individual coping mechanisms, perceived needs after potential disasters, the role of community and subjective risk perception during crises. While research exists on emotional responses and behaviour following terrorist attacks, there is limited understanding of behavioural patterns in cases where an attack was prevented. Examining this specific scenario provides an opportunity to better understand coping processes in a world increasingly perceived as uncertain. To address these questions, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with Taylor Swift fans who held tickets for the cancelled Vienna concerts. The collected data will be analysed using qualitative content analysis to identify key factors influencing decision making and subjective perceptions of safety, community and personal coping strategies.