

CRIMVOL: The International Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Research Network

Tenth CRIMVOL virtual working paper
session: May 11, 2023

Paper Presenters: Dr. Kaitlyn Quinn, University of Missouri–St.
Louis and Dr Samantha McAleese, Carleton University, Ontario.
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Hidden Figures: A Manifesto for naming the PVS



CRIMVOL
CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH

Event Chair and Report Author: Dr Gill Buck, University of
Chester.

About CRIMVOL: 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 hosted their tenth virtual event on Thursday 11th May 2023 with a presentation from [Dr. Kaitlyn Quinn](#), University of Missouri–St. Louis and [Dr. Samantha McAleese](#), Carleton University, Ottawa.

Hidden Figures: A Manifesto for naming the PVS

Abstract: The penal voluntary sector (PVS) is an important, complex, under-theorized area. Its non-profit, non-statutory organisations are highly significant in the operation of punishment around the world, yet it is neglected by scholars (Tomczak and Buck, 2019a; 2019b). In 2022-23, CRIMVOL members established a sub-group: 'teaching the PVS' to share resources for teaching about the sector in higher education. Early group discussions indicated that the inclusion of the PVS in criminology curricula was inconsistent or in some cases absent. We collaboratively began to map the PVS within the discipline of criminology, through a content analysis of international conferences and have a long-term goal to map course curricula and published works. Our initial work indicates that the PVS is 'there but hidden' within disciplinary meetings and that a vast array of terms are used to define this work. This hidden-ness creates a problem for criminology both ethically and methodologically. Without naming the voluntary/non-profit nature of much re-entry/ rehabilitation work, the scale of the sector and many of the dynamics of interventions are masked. There is also a risk of extraction from organisations without acknowledgement or full analysis. This working paper will provoke discussion about naming the sector so that it may come into academic view, be critically understood, and more fully inform teaching within the discipline. It will present sub-group work to date and invite contributions and considerations from members.

This session reflected on the development of a working group within CRIMVOL who have been tracing and reflecting on the presence (or absence) of the PVS in curricula and conference papers. **Whilst most courses refer to or include voluntary sector placements for students, few appear to consistently include analysis of the sector in curricula.** Whilst many researchers use the PVS as their site of study, few make this explicit, referring instead to a raft of generic markers such as re-entry, re-settlement, outreach, social services. Indeed, the PVS itself has a huge range of labels, which vary by local and national setting (the team have uncovered 37 in initial searches). These variances and omissions may be **obscuring the significance** of the PVS, creating a state centric bias in criminology and social work which can overlook the role of the voluntary sector in criminal justice.

Discussions reflected on the need to make visible the PVS as a significant site, but also on the limitations and complexities of 'mapping'. They reflected on the ethics of hidden-ness and how it could support extractive relationships. Language was reflected on along with the varied goals and approaches of sector members, which span policing and carceral interventions to abolitionist activism. The group agreed many of these tensions could not be resolved but there is a need to bring light to them.

The working group have also been sharing teaching resources with a long-term goal of developing accessible curriculum materials for others to draw on. If you are interested in joining the discussions and/or sharing thoughts and materials to inform your teaching, get in touch with Melissa (teaching the PVS subgroup chair) on M.J.Pepper@greenwich.ac.uk

Upcoming CRIMVOL dates:

- **Thursday 13th July 2023 15.00-16.30 GMT** Mapping and teaching the PVS subgroup.
- **Thursday 14th December 2023, 15.00-16.30 GMT** – Working paper session (proposals invited). Email Gill on g.buck@chester.ac.uk