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Gorazd MEŠKO
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New Risks, Crime, Policing, Courts, Prisons and Security in the
Post-COVID-19 Times – Challenges and Opportunities, Book of Abstracts

Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe



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Faculty of
Criminal Justice and Security

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New Risks, Crime, Policing, Courts, Prisons and Security in the Post-COVID-19
Times – Challenges and Opportunities

Book of Abstracts

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About the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Slovenia

The Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security joined the University of Maribor (UM FCJS) as a fully-fledged member twenty years ago. Before, it was the internal school of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovenia, established in 1973 as a department of the Higher School of Public Administration of the University of Ljubljana. In 2023, it celebrates its 50th anniversary. Later, it changed names and became the Higher School of Internal Affairs (1980s) and College of Police and Security Studies (late 1990s). In 2004, the UM FCJS established its research institute, which has developed research and has also been active in international and European research. In addition to the research institute, the UM FCJS is known for its PhD programme, which has been the only non-US PhD programme a member of the Association of Doctoral Programs in Criminology and Criminal Justice (ADCCJ) since 2009. This conference spans even further back, to 1996, when ambitious colleagues started this great biennial event that has grown into the leading regional international criminology, criminal justice, and security conference in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2023, the UM FCJS celebrated its 50th anniversary, and in 2024, its 20th anniversary of the Institute of Criminal Justice and Security Research. The UM FCJS (and its predecessors) is two years older than the University of Maribor. The University of Maribor, the second largest public university in Slovenia, is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in September 2025.

About the Conference

The Biennial International Conference on *Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe* addresses contemporary challenges in the field of criminal justice and security by encouraging the exchange of the latest views, concepts, and research findings from criminal justice and security studies among scientists, researchers, and practitioners from all over the globe. The conference aims to highlight new ideas, theories, methods, and findings in a wide range of research and applied areas relating to policing, criminology, security, and social control. The conference strives for the collaboration of different stakeholders in developing knowledge and experience that contribute to more secure and safe societies. For the past three decades, the conference has contributed to the growth of criminology, criminal justice, and security research, networking of researchers, policymakers, and professionals, as well as students. The conference participants' contributions have been published in high-profile edited volumes, international journals, and other outlets accessible to scientific and professional communities.

On the Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe Conferences

GORAZD MEŠKO

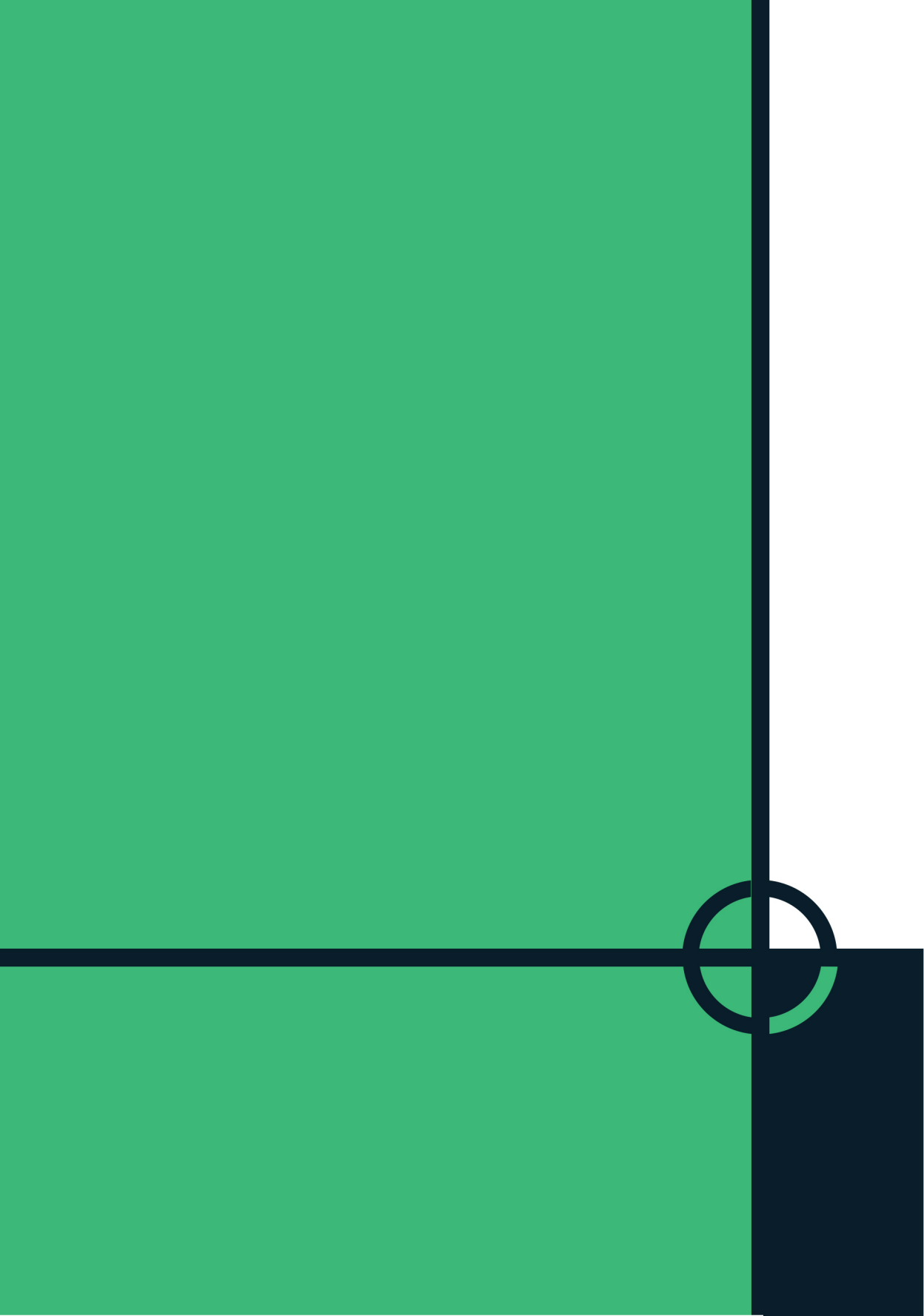
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The conference Policing in Central and Eastern Europe was organised for the first time in 1996. The first conference was subtitled Comparing Firsthand Knowledge with Experience from the West, followed by Organizational, Managerial, and Human Resource Aspects (1998), Ethics, Integrity, and Human Rights (2000), Deviance, Violence and Victimization (2002), Contemporary Criminal Justice (2004), Past, Present and Future (2006), Practice and Research of Social Control (2008) and Unconventional Deviance (2010). The conference was renamed to Criminal Justice and Security in 2012. Topics discussed were Contemporary Criminal Justice Practice and Research (2012), Understanding Professionalism, Trust and Legitimacy (2014), Safety, Security and Social Control in Local Communities (2016), From Common Sense to Evidence-based Policy-making (2018), Rural and Urban Security and Rural Criminology (2021, online due to COVID-19 pandemic) and The UN SGDs and Responses to Crime and Security Threats, and Fair Criminal Justice Systems (2023). The title of the 2025 conference is New Risks, Crime, Policing, Courts, Prisons and Security in the Post-COVID-19 Times. The following topics are discussed: Contemporary Uncertainties, Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice, Safety and Security in Contemporary Society, Police, Policing and Research, Legitimacy of Policing and Criminal Justice, Cyber Criminology and Cyber Security, Green Criminology and Criminal Investigation.

Keywords: criminal justice, security, criminology, conference, topics



Plenary Addresses

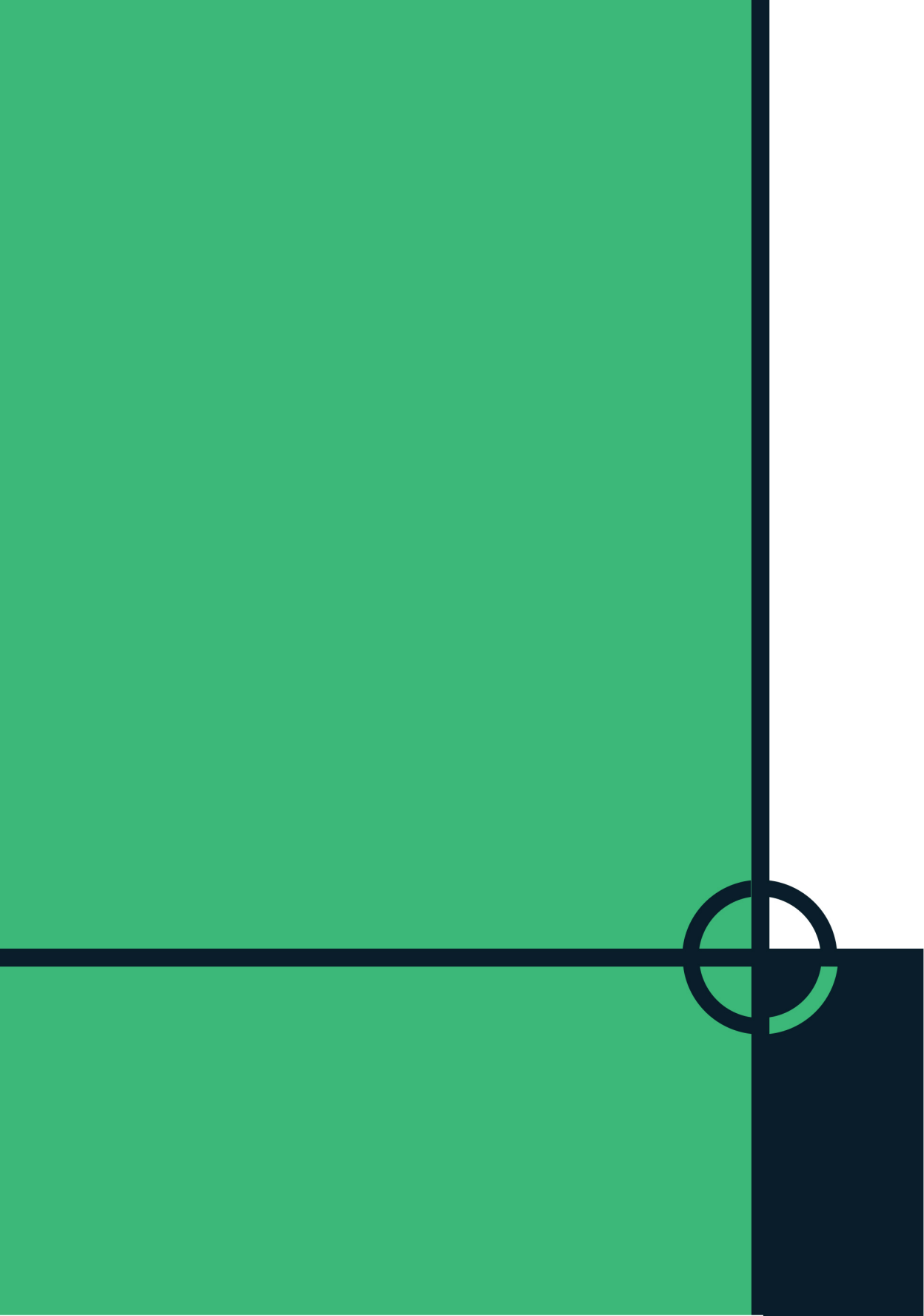




Plenary Session I.

Living in a
Fast-Changing World
Full of Uncertainties





Abrupt Changes and Long-Term Transformations

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Security assessments in Western Europe have been fundamentally revised since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since the war in Palestine has escalated, freedoms of expression and assembly appear to be restricted. Against the backdrop of security and legal concerns, massive processes are developing whose interpretation is still unclear. Why would Western Europe, having established quasi-colonial domination over Russia, want to fight it in a proxy war? Why would the USA, based on “the Right of the People ... to effect their Safety and Happiness”, support the genocide in Gaza? To explain these and similar paradoxes, abrupt and unexpected changes, we will examine the long-term systemic processes that have led to our current historical situation. Amid the disorder of a closing epoch and the contradictions of a multiplicity of possible futures, we will seek the elements of a more secure condition for humanity.

Keywords: world-system, systemic cycles of accumulation, contemporary capitalism, restauration of capitalism in historical socialisms, uneven and combined development

Unpacking the Security Discourse and Perceptions of Threats in Western Societies

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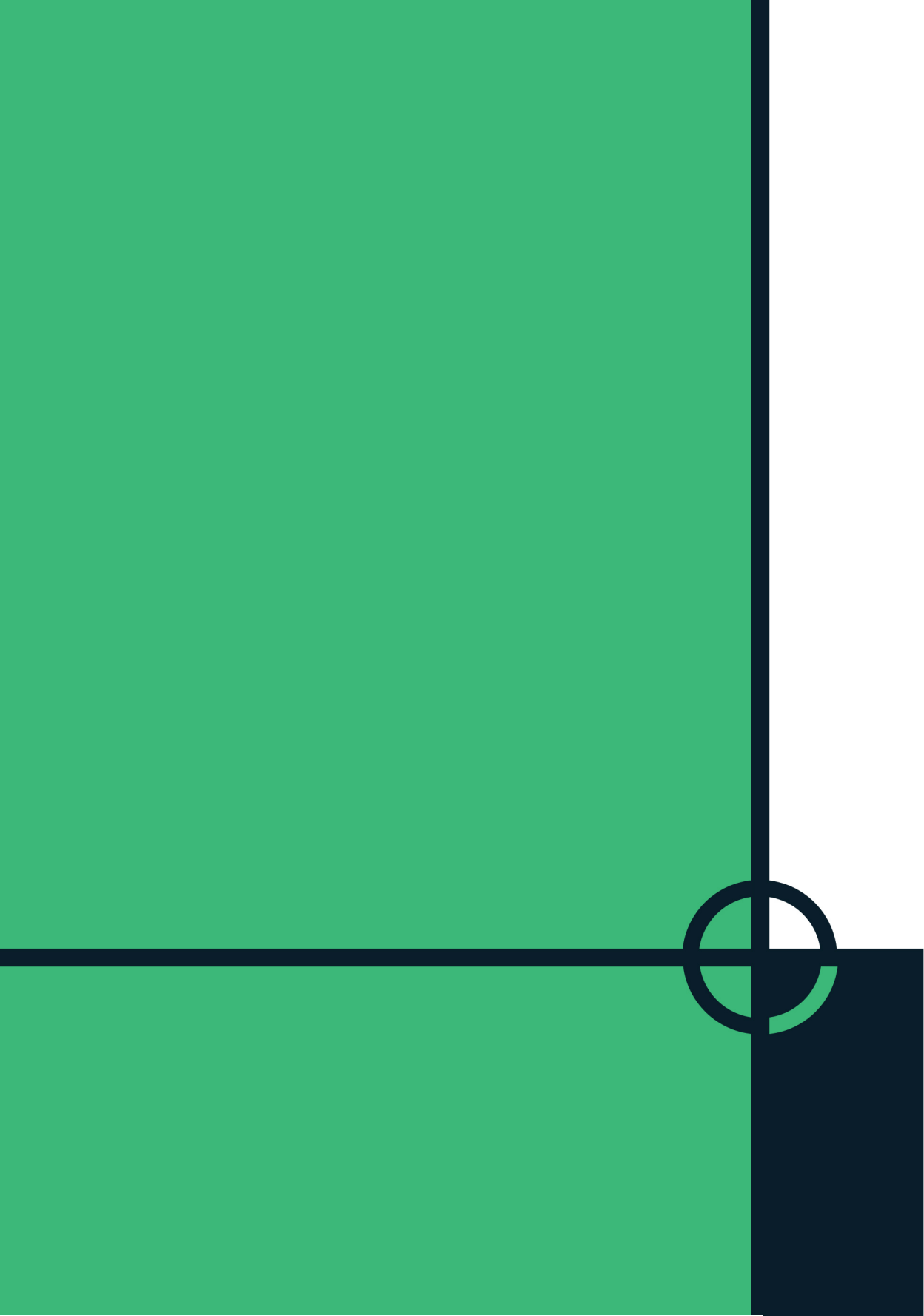
Contemporary Western societies are marked by political divisions, increasing hate, intolerance, and even violence towards people from the other side of the political spectrum. One of the main tools used for mobilisation of political support is issues connected to crime, safety, and security. In this power play, many dangers are exaggerated or fabricated to justify actions that would otherwise be unacceptable. Rather than addressing the real threats and challenges (such as the dominance of international corporations, rising inequalities, tax evasion, misinformation and disinformation, cyber threats, climate change, rising nationalisms, and racism), sociopolitical discourse often focuses on topics that invoke (negative) emotions and create divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ This approach frequently leads to moral panic and securitisation. The reactions of states towards so-called illegal migrations, ‘bogus’ asylum seekers, and economic migrants serve as clear examples of the exploitation of specific issues for political purposes. Going beyond dominant policies and public discourse, we should consider the roles different countries – with an emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe – play (according to world systems theory) in the current global capitalist system, which de facto depends on international migrations.

Keywords: political divisions, moral panic, securitisation, international migration, Central and Eastern Europe



Plenary Session II.
Comparative Criminology,
Criminal Justice and
Security Studies





Security Fields Pre- and Post- COVID-19: Some Conceptual, Empirical and Practical Challenges

MATT BOWDEN

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The COVID-19 pandemic has potentially altered how we think of governing crises, it has raised some serious challenges for security governance. Considerable thought has been given in the criminological literature on related ideas of 'nodal security governance', 'plural policing' and networked and relational systems that are said to augment, and in some instances replace, police bureaucratic organisations in managing complex, globally produced risks. Common across these perspectives is that security is produced by a multiplicity of actors, including, but not exclusively, police organisations. In these 'nodes' and 'networks', actors share information and data as forms of capital and can convert these resources into more powerful sources of legitimacy. This paper puts forward a relational conceptualisation of security production and how it might be captured empirically. It draws upon an empirical study of security producers in Ireland, ranging from public, private and civil security actors, showing that these exist within a relational yet competitive field. The presentation considers whether actors have the mental and practical capabilities for ordering and controlling future crises, given their current frameworks, capabilities and cultural tools have been formed in the pre-COVID-19 security governance paradigm.

Keywords: security governance, COVID-19, field concepts, relational methodology, security assemblages

The Changing Security Sector – Decentralised, Pluralised and Privatised but Still Effective and Accountable?

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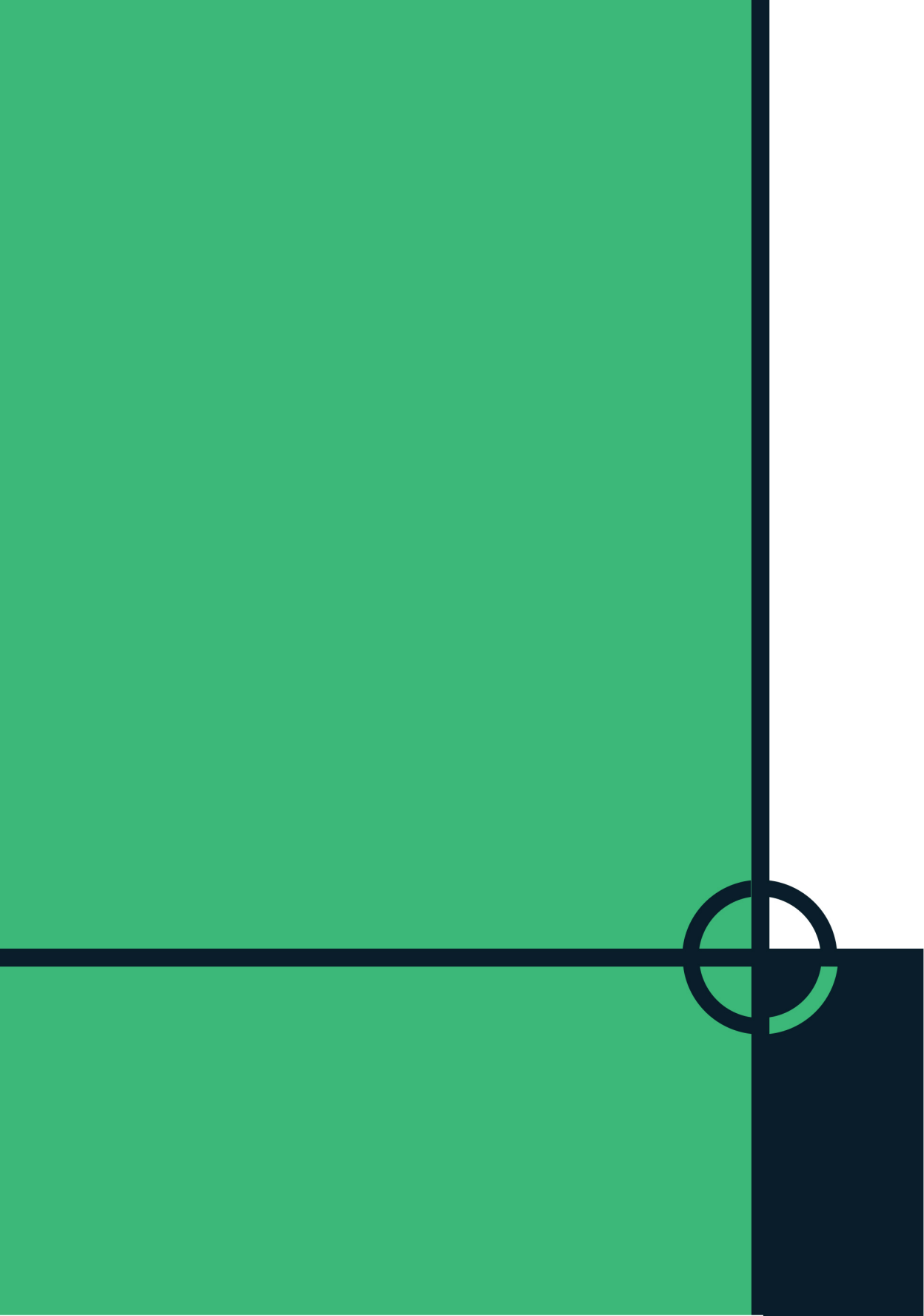
The paper is based on the findings of previous research in the field of plural policing, human, private and national security, as well as security and safety in local communities. Various research methods were used – from surveys, interviews, focus groups and case studies. Findings suggest the following idea: From the end of the 20th century on, states began to change and adapt their security concepts and security sectors to be as "human-friendly" as possible, in other words, to better serve people's needs in local communities. In practice, this meant that powers and responsibilities in the field of security were increasingly transferred from the state to regions, municipalities, and even companies, making security sectors more and more decentralised, pluralised, and privatised. Even traditional security organisations, such as the police and the armed forces, were forced to change. Responding to the complex security challenges such as terrorism, mass illegal migrations, and COVID-19, they changed in the direction of multi-functionality, which sometimes blurred their powers and responsibilities. The aforementioned processes, therefore, once again bring to the fore the question of the effectiveness of the security sector on the one hand, and the accountability of policymakers and security actors on the other.

Keywords: security, pluralisation, privatisation, effectiveness, accountability



Plenary Session III.
Criminal Justice
Research, Policymaking
and Practice





Bridging the Gap between Police Science and Police Practice: Police Leaders' Perspective

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Today, policing is shaped by a changing security environment, new security threats, increasing demands of various stakeholders, and the development of tense police-community relations. These circumstances demand flexibility from police organisations, new policing strategies and tactics that guarantee efficiency and public approval. The changes in the operation and organisation of the police agencies should be based on an evidence-based approach to policing, incorporating the operationalisation of police science in practice. However, the level of implementation and operationalisation of scientific knowledge into operational and organisational changes within police agencies depends on numerous factors, including the level of understanding and acceptance of police research by police leaders. This paper aims to determine the views of police leaders on police science and evidence-based policing, as well as their willingness to accept scientific knowledge and the degree to which it can be implemented. Based on a survey of Croatian police leaders at various hierarchical levels, this paper examines the factors related to police leaders' decision-making, their receptivity to empirical research, and their resistance toward evidence-based policing. The research seeks to advance the scientific understanding of the (un)readiness of police leaders to integrate the results of scientific research into police practice.

Keywords: police science, police leaders, professional experience, evidence-based policing, receptivity to research

Different Stakeholders in Assessing the Performance, Efficiency, and Quality of Police Organizations

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Generally, approaches to evaluating police activities can be divided into traditional and modern categories. Traditional approaches focus on reactive work and prioritise efficiency, cost considerations, and reliance on quantitative indicators. In contrast, modern approaches build on traditional ones but align with contemporary strategies and directions in policing. They emphasise preventive activities, problem-solving, innovation, relationships with stakeholders and the public, and meeting expectations. A systematic literature review can help identify best practices tested in the evaluation systems of foreign police organisations. The following key factors have been identified: 1) the selection of indicators is critically essential; 2) it is advisable to avoid time-consuming and costly measurement and control of all available items or data; 3) establishing a stable, systematic, and long-term evaluation framework is crucial; 4) incorporating in-depth, qualitative approaches to measurement and evaluation is necessary. Additionally, it is important to include 5) internal public opinion, employee views, and organisational climate and 6) to create a systematic, standardised, and transparent overview of the collected data and the resulting target values. Lastly, it is essential to determine 7) who is suitable and competent to conduct the evaluations and how to ensure the evaluators' independence, professionalism, and impartiality.

Keywords: police, efficiency, performance, quality, stakeholders

A Comparative Approach to Policing During the COVID-19 Pandemic: On Experiences and Lessons Learned

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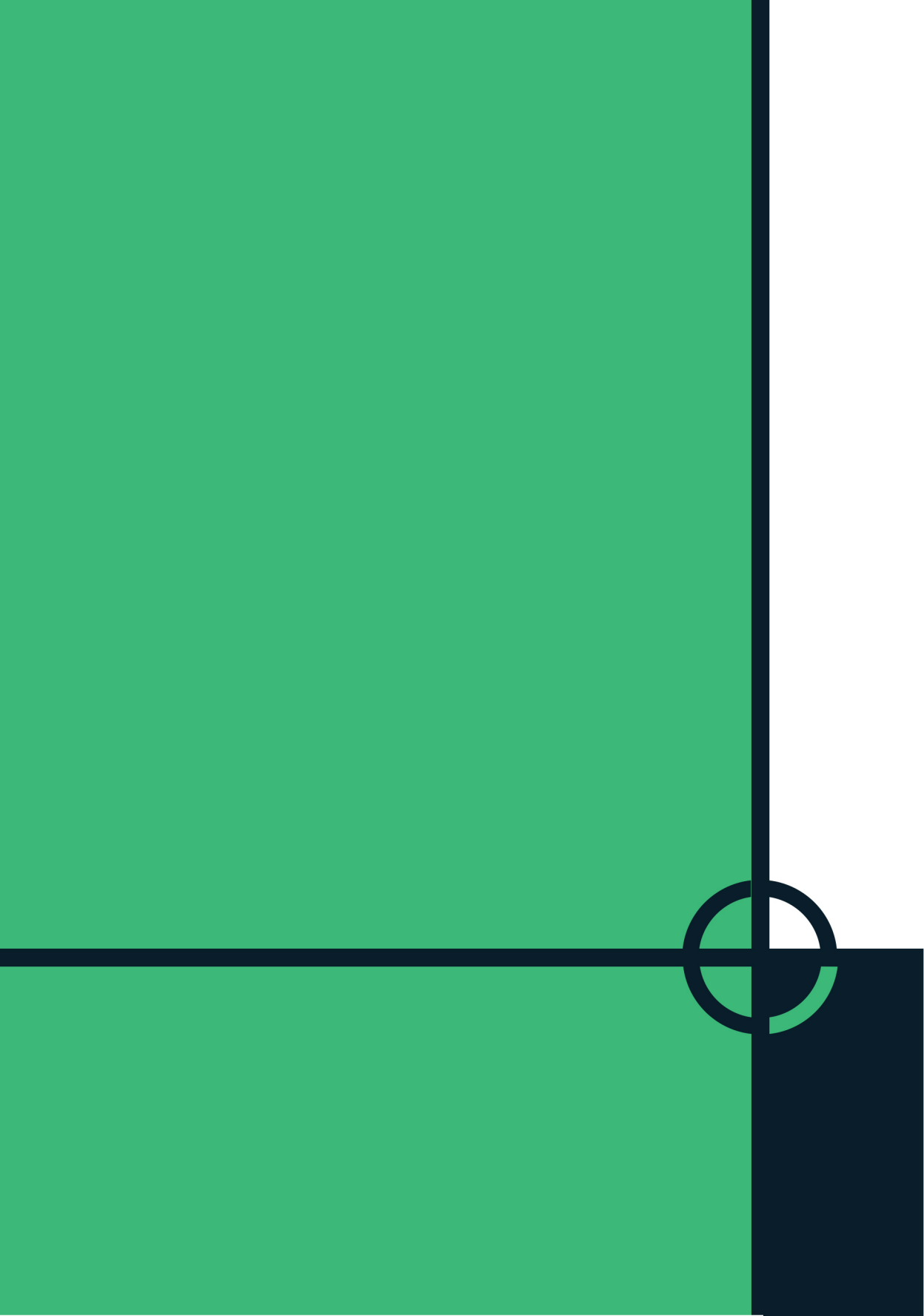
The police worldwide were in a crisis mode when the COVID-19 pandemic started. On the one hand, to protect their employees, police administrators had to limit police officers' contact internally, within the police agency, and externally, with the community. On the other hand, to keep providing police services to the community, police administrators had to put police officers in contact with the community. In response, police agencies across the world have transformed their internal organisations and external operations. This presentation pursues a comparative approach to explore the homogeneity of police officers' lived experiences during the pandemic. Based on the surveys of and interviews with police officers from the UK and the USA, this presentation explores police officers' perceptions about the operational and organisational changes brought on by the pandemic. It continues with the analysis of police officers' assessments of work difficulty and police officer stress. Finally, the presentation discusses police officers' recommendations regarding what police agencies should learn from the experience of policing during the COVID-19 pandemic to prepare them to deal with future emergencies in a more effective and successful way.

Keywords: policing, COVID-19 pandemic, patrol, investigation, stress



Plenary Session IV. Cyber Criminology and Cyber Security





The Cybercrime Ecosystem: The Challenges of New Pathways into Cybercrime

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Drawing upon longstanding research into cybercrime and drawing upon a case study of ransomware, this talk will explore the new challenges that are being presented to society, its legislature and law enforcement by the evolution of new pathways into cybercrime. New pathways that have arisen from a cybercrime 'business' ecosystem, which has evolved to enable offenders to commit cybercrime. The first part will outline the new technological developments that have facilitated the ecosystem, and the second part will describe the range of new skill sets that are now offered to offenders (for a fee). The third part will outline the implications of these new pathways for preventing, policing, investigating, and prosecuting cybercrime.

Keywords: cybercrime, ecosystem, challenges, case study, offenders

Advanced Cybersecurity: The Interaction in the Future Digital Society, Digital Inclusion, and Cyber Resilience

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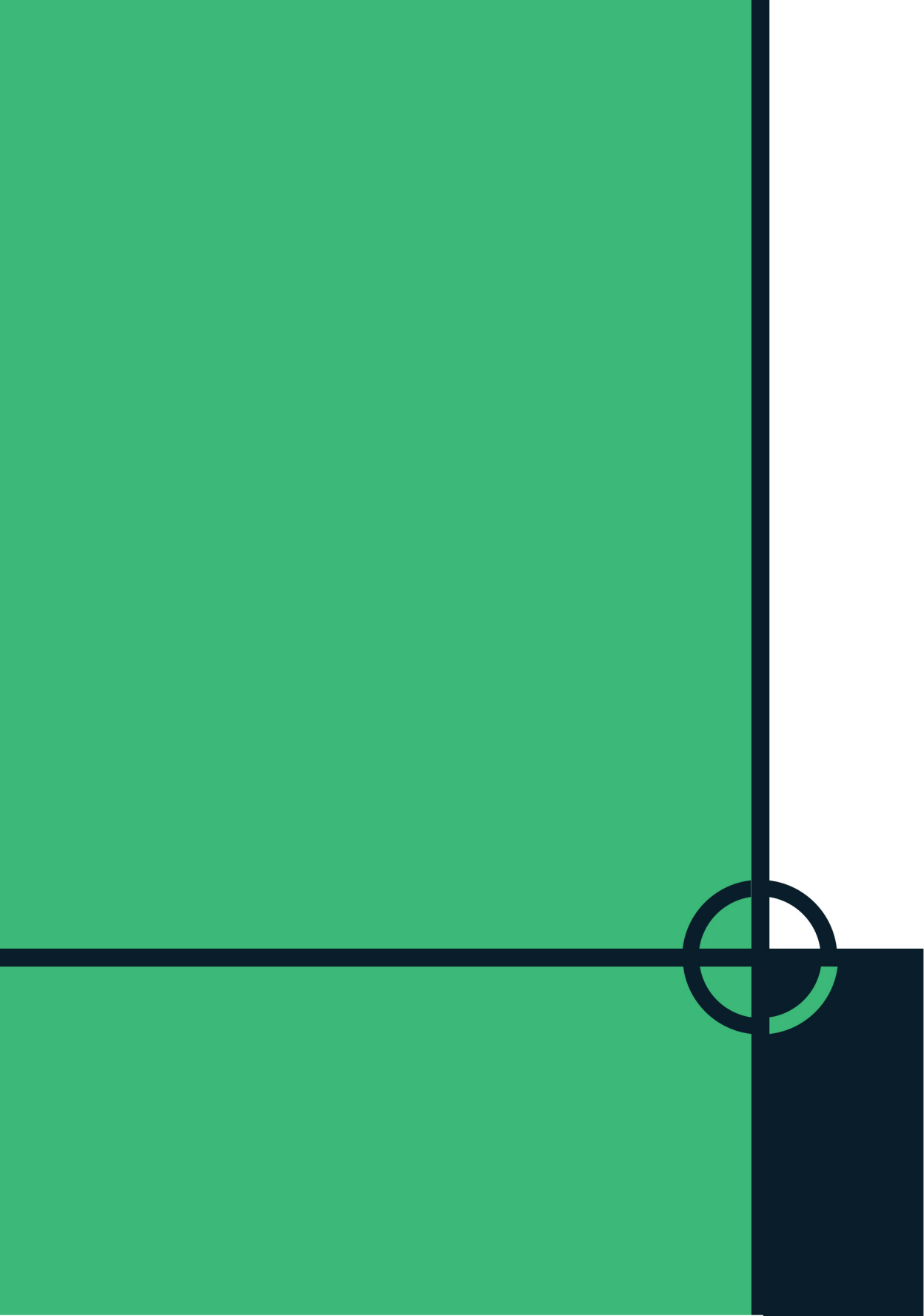
A critical analysis of cybersecurity in the future digital society, focusing on the intricate relationship between digital inclusion and cyber resilience, is presented. Challenges and opportunities posed by increasing digital integration, emphasising the need to ensure security and stability in cyberspace, are given. The discussion covers developing advanced security protocols and cyber resilience strategies that ensure equitable access to digital technologies while maintaining high protection against cyber threats.

Keywords: cybersecurity, digital inclusion, cyber resilience, digital society, cyber threats



Plenary Session V.
Criminal Investigation –
The Central Theme
of Policing?





The Role and Reliability of Forensic Techniques in Criminal Investigation

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Forensic methods can be very useful in evidence procedures, as their results can have a major impact on establishing facts. In this paper, the author explores the most common forensic techniques (fingerprints, biological traces, weapons, handwriting, etc.) and the status of their validity in the evidentiary process. The author presents key points in their development over the years, and the changes that have influenced on assessment of their validity (legal admissibility). Some of the well-known forensic techniques have been used for centuries, but they have been re-verified only recently. The paper also delivers the error rates of certain forensic methods and their share in wrongful convictions. In addition, the author conducts a survey on a sample of police officers and students in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The questionnaire relates to the accuracy and necessity of forensic methods in criminal proceedings, and the occurrence and types of errors in certain phases of collecting or analysing. The results of the research will enable comparison with the results of similar research in other countries, and it will show whether there are any peculiarities, i.e. whether respondents overestimate the reliability or underestimate the error rate.

Keywords: criminalistics, forensic methods, reliability, error rate, admissibility

Criminal Investigation in the Digital Age – Gathering and Handling Electronic Evidence

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Several reports indicate that 90% of criminal cases involve a digital element, with electronic evidence increasingly present in both criminal investigations and proceedings. During both the pre-trial and trial stages, the acquisition and handling of electronic evidence follow distinct phases. This paper focuses on the pre-trial criminal investigation, which can be divided into several (sub)phases, including the collection, preservation, and analysis of electronic evidence. These phases consist of further steps that collectively lead to the preparation of electronic material by law enforcement agencies to be used as evidence in court. At each stage, investigators face the challenge of verifying the source and maintaining the chain of custody to ensure the evidence's reliability and to meet the legal standards for admissibility. The presumption of innocence, along with various procedural rights and safeguards, plays a significant – though distinct – role in ensuring a fair and just trial. Finally, investigators also encounter challenges related to the cross-border exchange of electronic (and other) evidence, mutual legal assistance, and the recognition of foreign evidence by domestic courts.

Keywords: criminal investigation, electronic evidence, chain of custody, procedural rights, cross-border exchange

Criminal Investigation in Slovenia: Challenges, Best Practices and Emerging Threats

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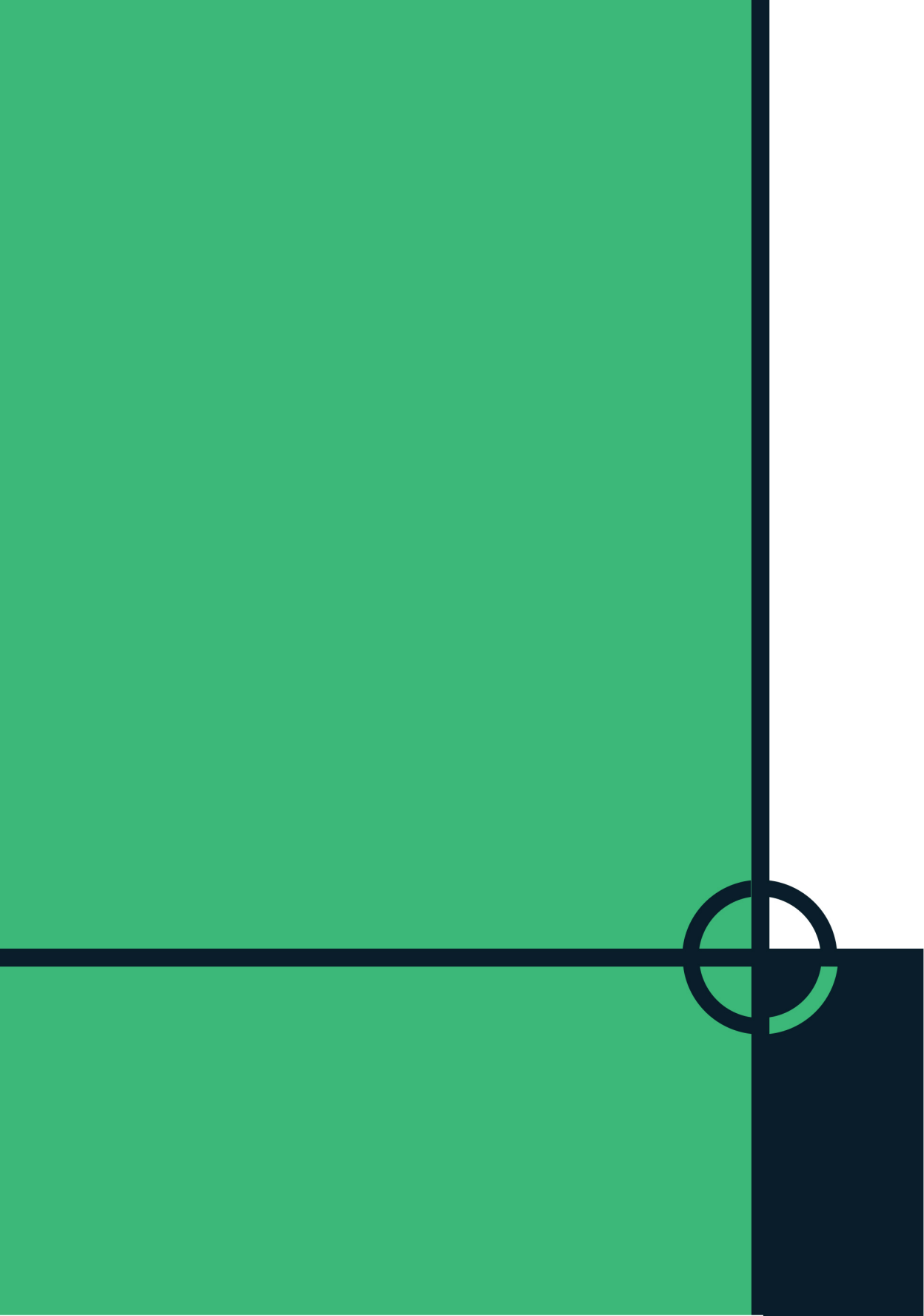
In the post-COVID-19 times, crime rates in Slovenia have returned to levels similar to those before the pandemic. In 2023, the number of reported crimes has increased across all crime categories: general, economic, organised, and juvenile. The police are facing challenges due to advanced communication technologies, which allow perpetrators to maintain anonymity, use encrypted communication, easily connect internationally, and exert control over their victims. Online fraud has also increased, leading the police to take proactive measures to raise awareness among potential victims. In their prevention efforts, the police have also focused on addressing other crimes, particularly peer violence. Future challenges will encompass all types of crime, especially organised crime and cybercrime, necessitating cooperation between institutions and countries, specialised knowledge and expertise of investigators, and digital support for police work. The presentation will highlight the challenges, best practices, and emerging threats that will require more attention in Slovenia in the future.

Keywords: criminal investigation, challenges, best practices, emerging threats, Slovenia



Plenary Session VI.
Green Criminology and
Protection of the
Environment I.





Crimes that Affect the Environment and Security

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Crimes that affect the environment impact all facets of security. Using the United Nations Development Programme's Human Security Framework (2022) that includes social imbalances (health challenges: food security, physical integrity, economic security, violent conflict, and inequalities) and planetary imbalances (climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution), this presentation provides evidence of how forest crime and minerals crime threaten the security of the people and the environment in which they take place.

Keywords: environment, environmental crime, United Nations, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, green criminology

CRIMEATE: A Tri-continental Study Mapping the Climate-Crime Nexus in Rural India, Brazil, and South Africa

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This study explores the connection between climate change and crime in rural areas of India, South Africa, and Brazil. The research highlights how climate disasters such as cyclones, droughts, and floods lead to the disruption of rural livelihoods and local social structures. This, in turn, makes marginalized communities more vulnerable to exploitation, including human trafficking, gendered violence, and opportunistic organized crime. The initial phase of the study focused on the Sundarbans delta in West Bengal, India. Researchers triangulated data from lived experiences of survivors, institutional records from police and anti-human trafficking units, and meteorological and disaster impact reports documenting displacement and rural livelihood loss. This data was used to create the CRIMEATE tool, a diagnostic framework based on three key indicators: Disaster Intensity, Displacement, and Breakdown of Guardianship. While currently validated in the Indian context, the tool is recommended for use in other rural, ecologically vulnerable regions of Brazil and South Africa. These countries share similar challenges of environmental degradation and under-resourced justice systems. The study concludes by proposing a Quintuple Helix approach, which involves government, academia, civil society, industry, and environmental groups working together. The goal is to create proactive, climate-resilient crime prevention systems specifically for rural populations.

Keywords: climate change, rural criminology, CRIMEATE, tricontinental, ecological justice

Green Criminology Goes Rural – Have Environmental Crimes and Harms in Rural Communities Been Ignored in the Past?

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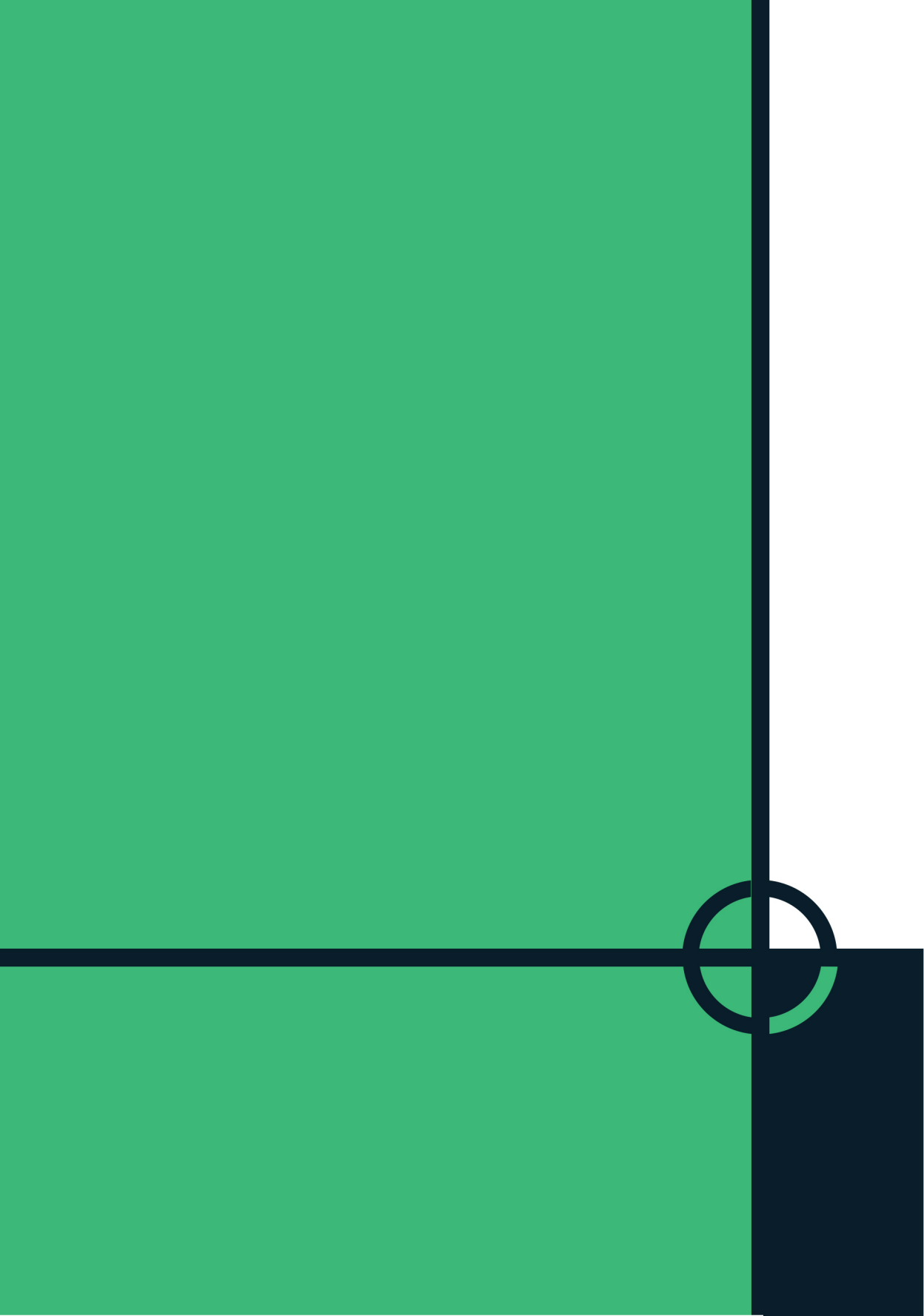
More than half a century has passed since green criminology as a science that studies environmental crimes and harms emerged. During this time, there has been a lot of progress in and changes in this field. One of the last decade's innovations is the development of rural criminology. This new branch of criminology moves criminological studies from an urban to a rural environment. In doing so, it turned out that smaller concentrations of residents, closer interpersonal relationships, a higher level of help between neighbours, and strengthened informal social control characterise rural areas. Because people are interconnected and dependent on each other, some incidents (i.e., crimes) are never reported to the competent authorities, so (environmental) crime and (environmental) victimisation in rural communities have been neglected in criminological research for many years. The presentation discusses the issue and consequences of the green criminology 'ignorance' of environmental issues in rural communities. Furthermore, the fact that many past criminological studies in the countryside could be placed in the field of rural criminology and the overlap or complement between rural and green criminology is emphasised. Finally, the presentation discusses possible positive aspects of intertwining green and rural criminology for the future.

Keywords: green criminology, environmental crime, environmental harm, rural environment, rural criminology



Plenary Session VII.
Green Criminology and
Protection of the
Environment II.





Greening Justice: Ecojustice and Remedying Environmental Harm

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Environmental harm manifests itself in various ways, from the direct harms of capitalist activity (e.g., industrial pollution), indirect or unintentional harms caused by accidents and upset incidents, and the exploitation of non-human nature. How to address and achieve redress for environmental harms is a potentially contentious issue. The reliance on criminal law mechanisms to deal with environmental harms is potentially flawed, given the reality that much environmental harm is caused by ostensibly legal activity. Dealing effectively with contemporary environmental problems arguably requires a new, hybrid approach to justice and regulatory responses. Ecojustice refers to both the notion of applying concepts of justice to the environment and non-human nature (including animals), and to the linking of environmental concerns to social justice issues. This includes considering how justice and regulatory systems deal with the impact of environmental degradation on vulnerable groups and how best to regulate polluting industries and corporate environmental harm. With a focus on corporate environmental harms and the behaviour of multinational corporations (MNCs), this presentation argues for an effective ecojustice approach based on remedying environmental harms and considering the needs of the environment and non-human nature rather than continued reliance on the punitive approach of the criminal law.

Keywords: ecojustice, ecocide, green criminology, environmental harm, environmental crime

Regulating Plastic Rivers: A Study of Microplastic Pollution and Regulatory Deficits in India's Freshwater Systems

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Microplastic pollution in Indian rivers represents a key, under-examined environmental issue with significant public health consequences. Current legislations like the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act (1974) and the Environment (Protection) Act (1986) do not have provisions addressing microplastic pollution specifically. This research aims to evaluate how scientific knowledge of microplastic behaviour can contribute to shaping the stringent and supportive regulatory systems for India's freshwater ecosystems. The research uses the applied policy research methods to investigate how scientific knowledge of microplastic breakdown can be used to shape more effective and responsive environmental regulation. The study employs a mixed methodology. The first involves a policy review of a systematic nature that examines Indian river pollution policies, government reports, and monitoring systems to establish gaps in institutions. The second involves the use of interdisciplinary Indo-European collaborations that utilise laboratory experiments and machine learning to simulate emissions from ageing microplastics under different environmental conditions. Third, the research performs comparative policy analysis against the precautionary governance framework of the EU. The research points to regulatory blind spots in existing pollution legislation, the necessity of pollutant-based monitoring frameworks, and the utility of integrating new environmental science into governance arrangements to frame adaptive, evidence-driven policies.

Keywords: microplastic pollution, freshwater governance, environmental risk, green criminology, India

Impact of Organized Environmental Criminal Groups on the Safety of Slovenia

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Slovenia is usually and often described as a green pearl in the middle of Europe. If we conduct in-depth research, we will find that this description is only partially true. Even Slovenia has its problems with sustainability, pollution and waste dumping. Past experiences of the police in investigations related to organised environmental criminal groups show a phenomenon of illegal shipments and dumping of wastes that is already well known in other countries of the European Union countries. As detected by Europol the police forces around the European Union are confirming that the characteristics of organised crime are changing. Organised crime is not decreasing, it is increasing. This paper aims to present the extent of environmental crime detected by the Slovenian police. In the paper, we also identified risk areas and the level of risk that environmental crime poses for national security.

Keywords: organised criminal groups, environmental crimes, pollution, nature protection through criminal law, national security

Green Criminology and Peacetime Activities of the Slovenian Armed Forces

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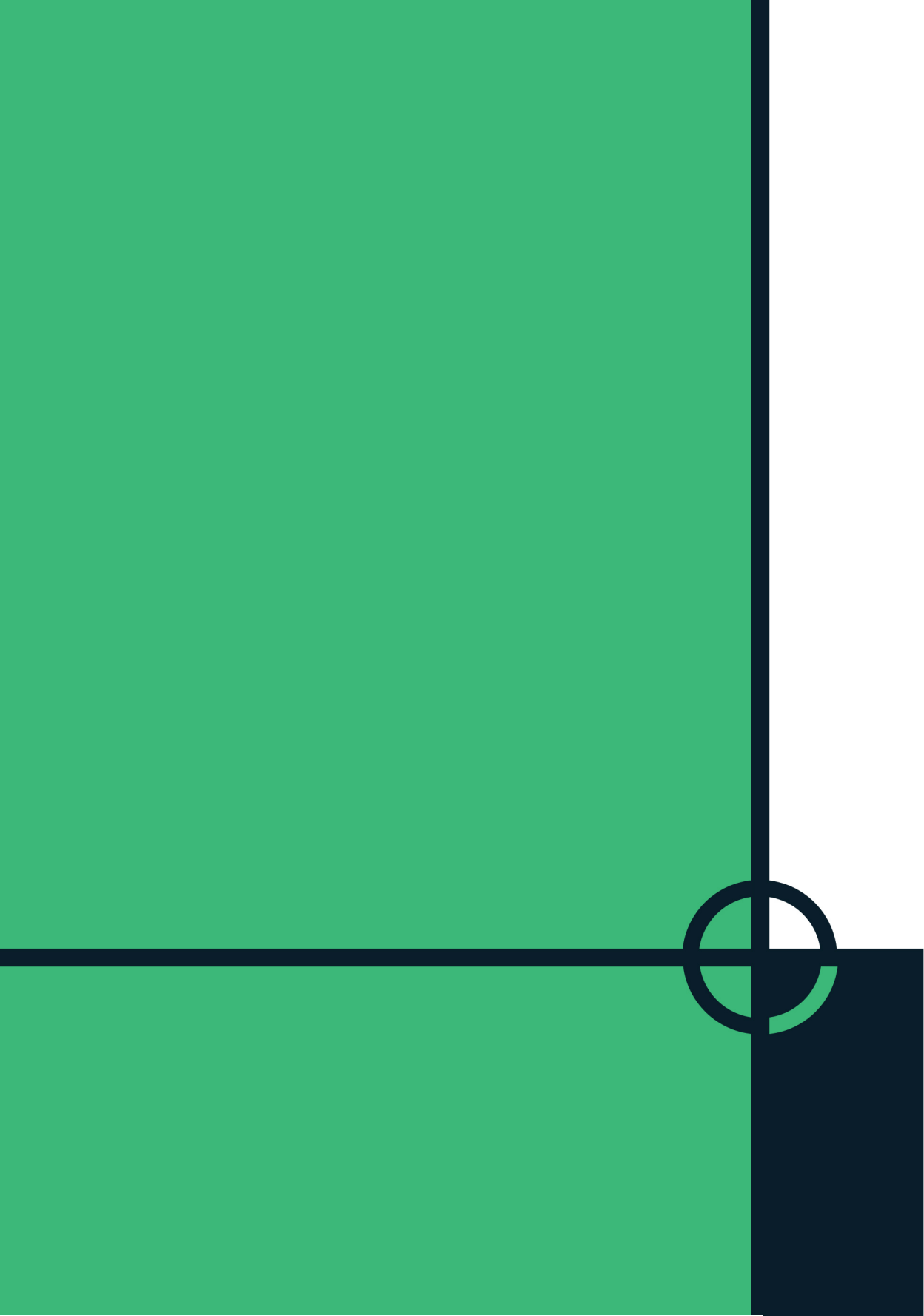
The negative impact of peacetime activities of the armed forces has become widely known and confirmed in numerous studies. In addition to their defense role, the armed forces are polluters, consumers of resources, and producers of emissions. The paper's purpose is to present the peacetime activities of the Slovenian Armed Forces and their effects on the environment from a green criminology perspective. From the overview of the domestic studies of the peacetime activities of the armed forces and their possible negative impact on the environment, a division of various forms of armed forces' peacetime operations, which cause endangerment and destruction of the environment, is created. The authors discuss possible solutions based on the preliminary survey results conducted as part of the Target research programme, Environmental and Natural Disaster Risks in the Areas of Operation of the Slovenian Army.

Keywords: armed forces, peacetime activities, environment endangerment, environment destruction, green criminology



Plenary Session VIII.
Comparative
Criminology in Europe





An Overview of Research on Legitimacy and Self-legitimacy in Slovenian Police and Prisons

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Research on legitimacy in Slovenian criminal justice began in 2005. The initial theoretical work was swiftly followed by empirical testing in 2009, focusing on the applicability of Western models to study legitimacy within Slovenia's former socialist cultural context. Over the past 20 years, empirical research has expanded significantly, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative studies. These studies primarily relied on representative samples of Slovenian residents, police officers, prisoners, and prison staff. Researchers conducted comprehensive mixed-methods, comparative, and longitudinal studies. They explored various aspects of legitimacy, including its dual nature, stability (or lack thereof), self-legitimacy, antecedents, and differences in perception among different actors in the criminal justice system. Additionally, new models were developed to better fit the Slovenian cultural environment. Notably, these studies revealed important correlations between perceived legitimacy and self-legitimacy, as well as their impact on individual behaviour (such as willingness to use force, pro-organisational behaviour, and support for community policing). Overall, Slovenian research on legitimacy has significantly enriched our understanding of this concept, especially by testing theoretical assumptions in a non-Western cultural context.

Keywords: legitimacy, self-legitimacy, police, prisons, Slovenia

European Comparative Criminology: Bridging Insights between Western and Central/Eastern Regions

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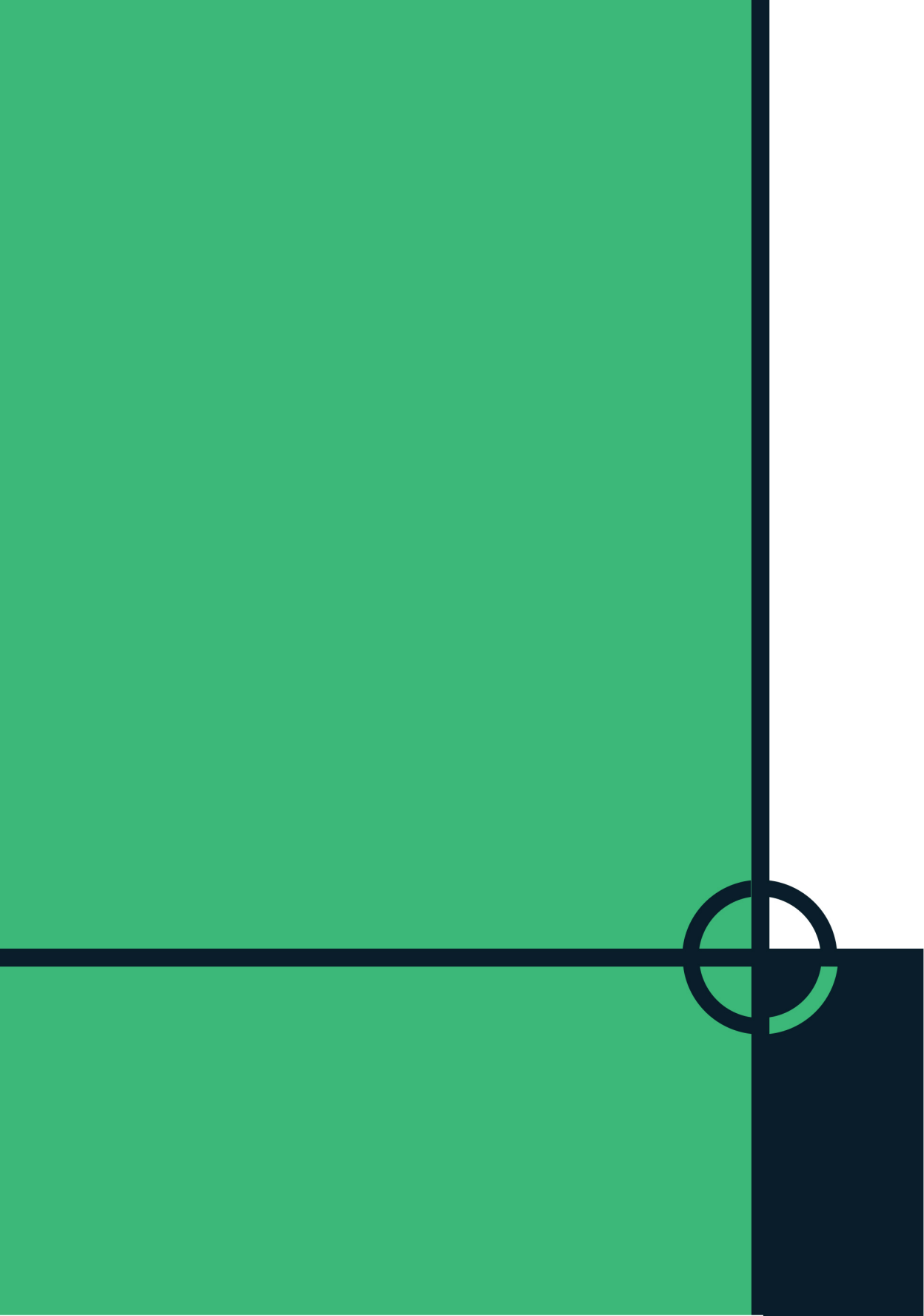
In the evolving landscape of criminology in Europe, comparative research is essential for understanding the complex dynamics of crime and societal responses across diverse jurisdictions. This presentation underscores the importance of methodological rigour and the careful interpretation of cross-national data, particularly when comparing regions such as Western Europe with Central and Eastern Europe. While comparative criminology offers invaluable insights, it also presents significant challenges, especially in the standardisation of crime definitions, data collection methods, and the varying economic and socio-political contexts across these regions. The presentation highlights disparities in crime recording practices and the influence of differing legal frameworks on the data collected, as well as their implications for criminal policies. The contrasts between Western and Central/Eastern Europe are particularly significant, as these regions exhibit distinct historical, cultural, and institutional influences that shape their approaches to crime and justice.

Keywords: comparative criminology, cross-national research, methodology, crime recording disparities, Eastern/Central and Western Europe



Panels

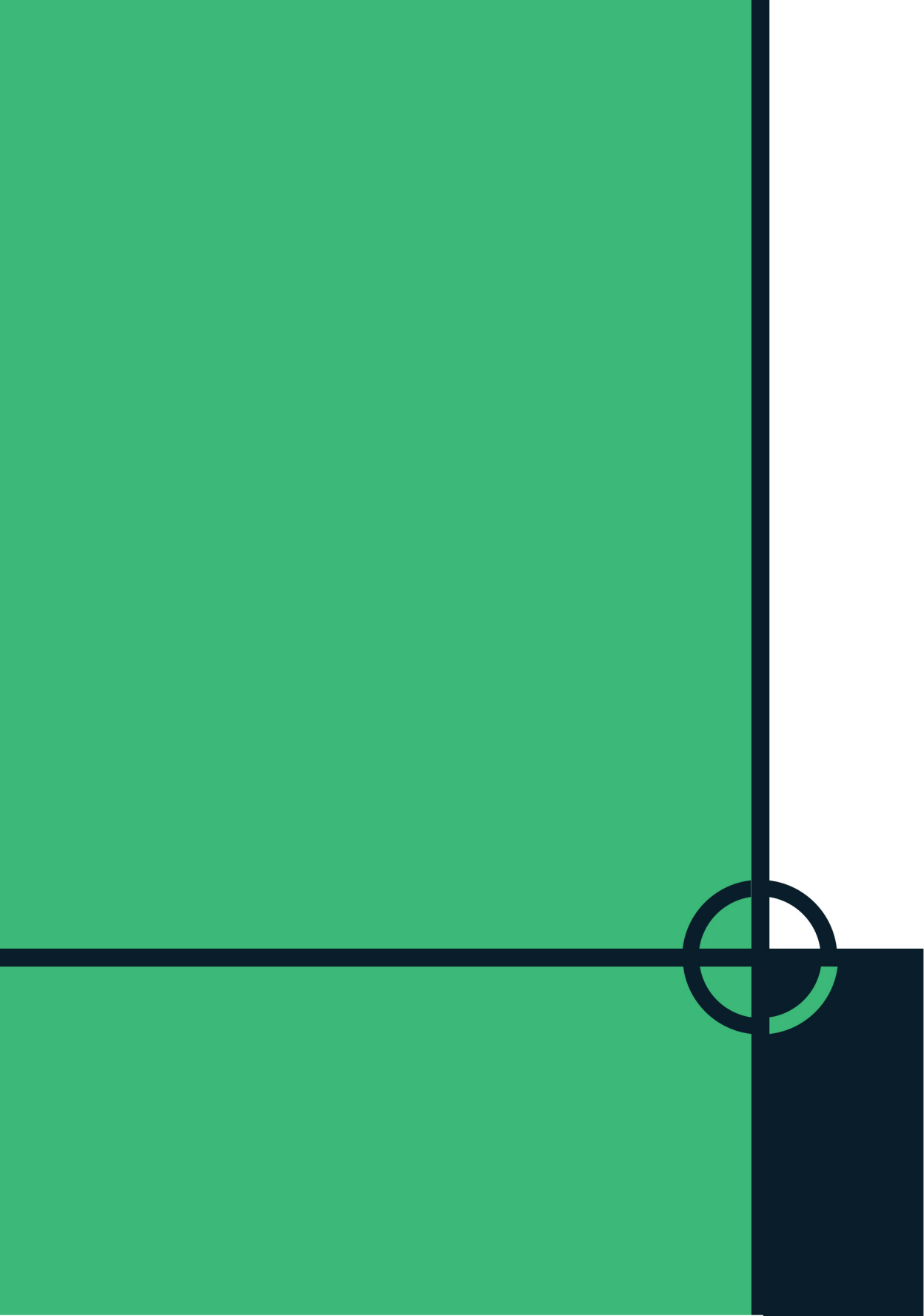






Panels I.
Legal Perspectives
of Criminal Justice
and Security





Implementation of GDPR in Slovenian Higher Education

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The article examines the differences and similarities in the perceptions of teaching and non-teaching staff at three Slovenian public universities regarding the state of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) implementation in Slovenian higher education. The analysis takes into account the delayed adoption of the national data protection act (ZVOP-2) until late 2022, the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and insights from the universities' data protection officers (DPO). In May 2022, a quantitative study was conducted using a questionnaire distributed to teaching and non-teaching staff at the University of Ljubljana, the University of Maribor, and the University of Primorska. The survey covered key GDPR areas, and additional structured interviews were conducted with each university's DPO. Findings reveal that the pandemic and legislative delay negatively affected GDPR implementation. Significant differences were observed between staff groups, particularly regarding understanding of legal bases, data breach procedures, and responsibility allocation in personal data processing. The study highlights the urgent need to improve sector-specific guidance, clarify legal bases, and raise awareness among stakeholders in higher education. The results offer valuable input for shaping national policy and institutional practices and support the development of good practices for GDPR implementation in the broader European higher education context.

Keywords: data protection, GDPR, COVID-19, Slovenia, higher education

Dusk of Lay Judges in Czech Criminal Proceedings?

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This article analyses the role of lay judges in Czech criminal proceedings, with particular emphasis on the advantages and disadvantages of their participation in the adjudication of criminal cases. First, it outlines the legal status and position of lay judges within the Czech judicial system, focusing on the requirements of Article 6 of the ECHR concerning the composition of adjudicating bodies, including those incorporating lay elements. The second part of the article traces the evolution of the Czech legal regulation of lay judges over the past decades, culminating in an assessment of the most recent amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure (2025), which substantially limited their role in criminal trials. Subsequently, the article critically evaluates the most frequently discussed issues relating to the involvement of lay judges, addressing legal, practical, and economic aspects. These include concerns about impartiality and independence, the democratizing potential of lay participation, the extent of procedural rights (e.g., participation in final decision-making), equality of voting rights with professional judges, lack of legal knowledge, procedural delays, and administrative and financial burdens. Finally, a comparative perspective is offered through reference to selected foreign jurisdictions that allow for lay participation in criminal adjudication, aiming to contextualise the article.

Keywords: lay judge, judicial power, judicial independence, criminal proceedings, hearing and decision of the case

Confiscation of Unexplained Wealth – Necessity or Threat?

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According to Art. 16 of Directive (EU) 2024/1260 on asset recovery and confiscation, EU member states have an obligation to transpose into their national legislation measures which shall enable confiscation of unexplained wealth linked to criminal conduct by November 2026. This measure poses undisputably a very important, yet also controversial step in the development of the fight against proceedings of crimes at the harmonised EU level. Its novelty rests in the fact that there is no need to link the confiscated property neither directly or indirectly to a particular crime, subjected only to the inability of its owner to prove its legal origin; its controversy in the fact that the relevant instrument is required to be a criminal measure by its nature, casting doubts over its compatibility with certain procedural principles. While some EU member states have already known similar concepts, for others, this will pose a small but significant legal revolution. This paper provides a complex analysis of this new measure, introduces its background and goals, explains its legal and criminological configurations, presents its discutable points and identifies possible theoretical and practical problems and thoroughly contemplates their solutions.

Keywords: Directive 2024/1260, unexplained wealth, proceeds of crimes, confiscation, principle of criminal procedure

Transition of Petty Crimes into Misdemeanours Against Public Order

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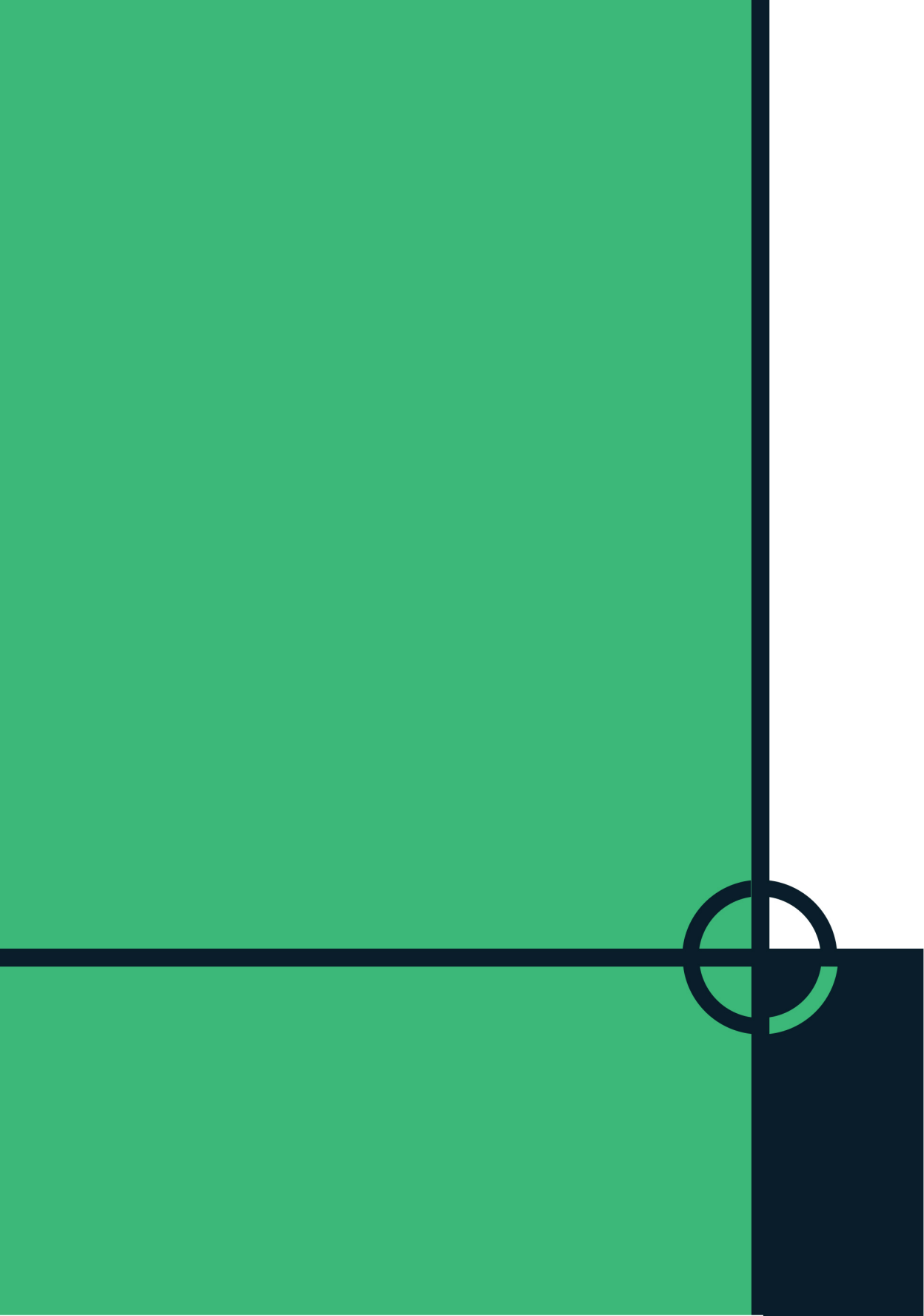
Today, to prosecute petty crimes, it is always necessary to activate the entire repressive apparatus of the state, i.e. including the police, the public prosecutor's office and the criminal court. Only a criminal judge with a verdict can convict a petty thief or a petty swindler and punish them. The police carry out solely administrative work, fill out forms with an inventory of criminal conduct, and pass it on to the public prosecutor, who (in the vast majority of cases) stops the proceedings by dismissing police complaints for un-economical reasons. These cases do not even reach a judge because their handling of the economic significance is completely un-economical. The current conception is that the work of the state authorities is a significant administrative obstacle. This paper, through a comparative study, establishes a new categorical apparatus around the transition of petty crimes into misdemeanours. Today, petty criminal offences are primarily subject to the regulation of property crime law. In the future, they may also be regulated by a special misdemeanour law regulating public order and peace. The definitions of terms newly designed in this article would be helpful for many readers in further study or research.

Keywords: misdemeanours, law and order, human rights, petty crimes, comparative study of petty crimes



Panels II.
Deviance, Delinquency,
Crime and Crime
Prevention I.





Different Faces of Victimization of Asian Migrant Workers in Croatia

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Since Croatia's accession to the European Union in 2013, the country has experienced a significant outflow of domestic labour to Western Europe, leading to acute labour shortages. In response, Croatian employers have increasingly relied on foreign labour, primarily from Asian countries such as Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. Between 2015 and 2025, nearly 100,000 foreign workers from Asia relocated to Croatia to fill these gaps. The recruitment of these workers—largely facilitated through private employment agencies—has spanned a wide array of economic sectors, including construction, tourism and hospitality, manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture. This rapid labour market shift has also introduced complex challenges for both the local population and the foreign workers. Scholarly research addressing foreign workers' lived experiences, especially in terms of victimization, remains limited. This study aims to map the contours of victimization experienced by Asian foreign workers in Croatia through a systematic review of existing literature. Using targeted keywords related to victimization, we searched across academic databases and online news sources for publications and reports released between 2020 and 2025. Our findings reveal a marked disparity: while there was an extensive media coverage, there was relatively modest scholarly activity and output.

Keywords: victimization, Asian workers, work migrants, systematic review, Croatia

Modus Operandi of Serial Killers: A Criminal Psychology Perspective

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The aim of this presentation is to present and analyse the modus operandi of selected serial killers from the perspective of criminal psychology. The paper focuses on how personality traits – particularly psychopathic traits – influence the planning, execution, and concealment of crimes. Based on case studies of well-known serial offenders, the presentation will discuss patterns of behaviour, relationships with victims, motives, and the variability of criminal behaviours. The role of psychopathy as a factor influencing brutality, cold calculation, and lack of empathy in offenders will also be addressed. The presentation will also explore the use of psychological knowledge in understanding the motives of perpetrators, their criminal profiling, and the risk of recidivism. The analysis is based on scientific literature, the latest research, court reports, and psychological documentation. I am convinced that this is an extremely important topic. The findings provide a detailed analysis of the modus operandi of serial killers from the perspective of criminal psychology, and utilise both diverse scientific theories and case studies that enable a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind criminal behaviour.

Keywords: serial killers, psychopathy, modus operandi, criminal psychology, case analysis

Mobile Apps as Tools for Preventing Sexual Violence in Nightlife

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Recently, the prevention of sexual violence has become a critical concern in the context of urban nightlife. Despite various prevention strategies, sexual violence in nightlife settings remains a significant challenge, prompting a reassessment of existing approaches and the exploration of new solutions. The widespread use of smartphones presents an opportunity to explore mobile apps as a potential tool for preventing sexual violence during nightlife activities. A systematic literature review across four major databases identified only six articles specifically addressing mobile apps for preventing sexual violence. In contrast, an online search revealed various apps focused on general violence prevention. Notably, those targeting sexual violence tend to concentrate on intimate partner relationships, offering limited applicability to nightlife contexts. While a step in the right direction, these apps do not address the issue comprehensively. Drawing on the review of mobile apps, we propose that an effective mobile app to prevent sexual violence in nightlife should include key features such as tools for planning safer nights out, real-time alert functions, and easy-to-use incident reporting mechanisms. Furthermore, collected data could inform nightlife service improvements, support urban safety planning, and guide targeted prevention measures. This approach could bridge gaps and enhance nightlife safety.

Keywords: sexual violence, nightlife safety, prevention, mobile apps, urban environment



Measuring Elder Abuse in Slovenia: Insights from Caregivers' Perspectives

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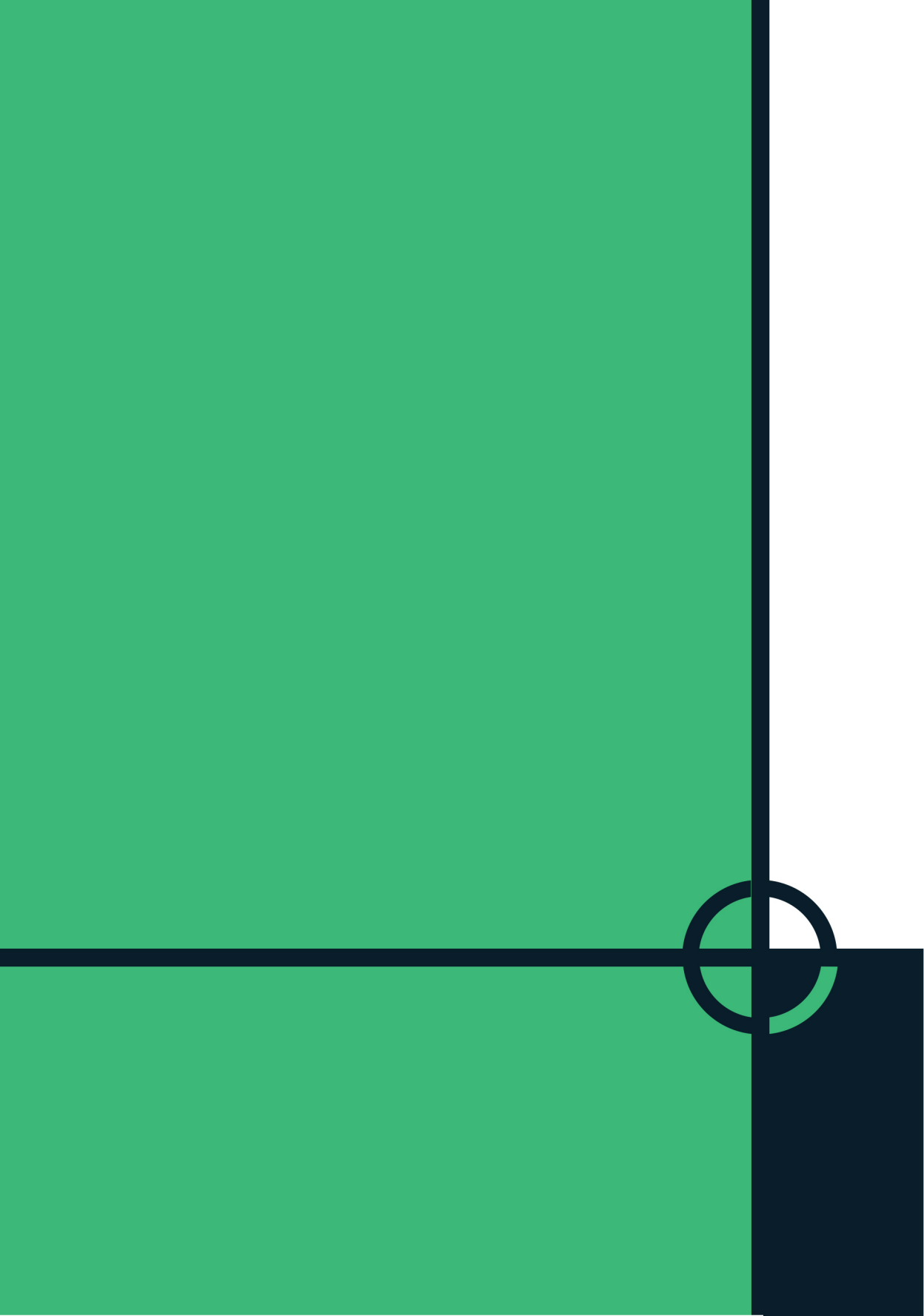
Elder abuse is a multifaceted and underexplored issue, especially from the perspective of those working closest with older adults. This study examines the prevalence and characteristics of elder abuse in Slovenia, focusing on the insights of formal caregivers – nursing home staff, home care providers, and community nurses. As part of the national project Safe and Solidary Future for All, the research uses a detailed, multidimensional questionnaire to capture caregivers' observations and experiences over the past 12 months. The tool assesses five primary forms of abuse—psychological, physical, sexual, economic, and neglect—and includes questions on perpetrator characteristics, reporting behaviour, perceived barriers to reporting, and situational risk factors. Additionally, it measures caregiver well-being, such as emotional exhaustion and burnout. The questionnaire was distributed across various care settings in Slovenia, and responses were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential methods in SPSS. This study emphasises the critical role of caregivers in identifying and responding to elder abuse. It provides evidence-based recommendations for enhancing support systems, training, and policy improvements to protect older adults in institutional and home settings.

Keywords: elder abuse, prevalence, risk factors, formal caregivers, Slovenia



Panels III.
Deviance, Delinquency,
Crime and Crime
Prevention II.





Integrity and Independence of Criminal Justice in Western Balkans

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Integrity and independence of criminal justice institutions in the Western Balkans as one of the most important blocks in the fight against corruption and organised crime. The study explored the most significant political and institutional/organisational factors reducing the levels of integrity and independence in four criminal justice institutions: police, public prosecution, judiciary and anti-corruption agencies. It was carried out at the six national levels (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) as well as on the regional level, analysing common issues and suggesting recommendations. It was carried out following a specific methodology for each sector by 24 national and 9 regional experts. It identified political interference through different modes and at different levels; lack of institutional/organisational independence and insufficient levels of professional values as the most impeding issues. Culture of Integrity was identified as the most salient remedy to be pursued by criminal justice professionals and institutions against organised corruption and crime.

Keywords: independence, integrity, justice, corruption, culture

Hand Car Washes as Locations of Modern Slavery in England

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Hand car washes (HCW) in England pose significant problems concerning labour market compliance (e.g. non-payment of minimum wage). However, some of these HCW locations operate as fronts for drug distribution by organised crime groups and are the location for incidents of modern slavery and human trafficking. This paper draws on HCW location data developed by the author and modern slavery data from the Clewer Safe Hand Car Wash app to present a spatial analysis of the significant contextual factors that shape the distribution of HCWs engaging in modern slavery across neighbourhoods in England. Such HCWs are more likely to be found near other vehicle-related businesses, and where individuals who are more likely to seek employment in the informal economy are to be found. The results of this binary logistic regression analysis have then been utilised to construct a predictive map that identifies the likelihood of finding modern slavery-practising HCWs across all neighbourhoods in England. This predictive map was successfully used by the National Crime Agency and other enforcement agencies during Operation Aidant in June 2022 to target their interventions at specific HCW locations across England and to rescue individuals from modern slavery.

Keywords: modern slavery, hand car washes, spatial analysis, predictive modelling, enforcement

Drawing Conclusions Using the iSquare Protocol to Examine Public Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders

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Public attitudes towards sex offenders are influenced by societal stereotypes and emotional responses, yet traditional surveys often fail to capture the complexity of these views. This study used the iSquare visual methodology with 50 adults in Southeast Queensland, Australia, to access tacit knowledge and implicit biases. The unique aspect of drawing as a methodology lies in its ability to reveal subconscious associations and emotions that participants may struggle to express verbally. Participants were asked to draw a 'sex offender,' and their images were analysed thematically. Most participants (78%) depicted male offenders, frequently reinforcing stereotypes such as 'stranger danger'. Notably, 33% included a child victim in their drawings, despite no prompt, indicating a strong association between sex offending and child victims in public perception. The iSquare technique proved valuable in revealing implicit attitudes and misconceptions that may remain hidden in verbal and written surveys, offering a richer understanding of public sentiment. These findings highlight the persistence of negative, stereotype-driven views and the limited accuracy of public knowledge about sex offenders. Future research should expand sampling to include cross-cultural and targeted groups, such as policymakers or victims, to further explore how attitudes differ across contexts and inform more nuanced risk management strategies.

Keywords: sex offenders, visual methodology, public attitude, emotions, iSquare

Attitudes Towards Intimate Partner Violence: Gender and Environmental Differences in Slovenia

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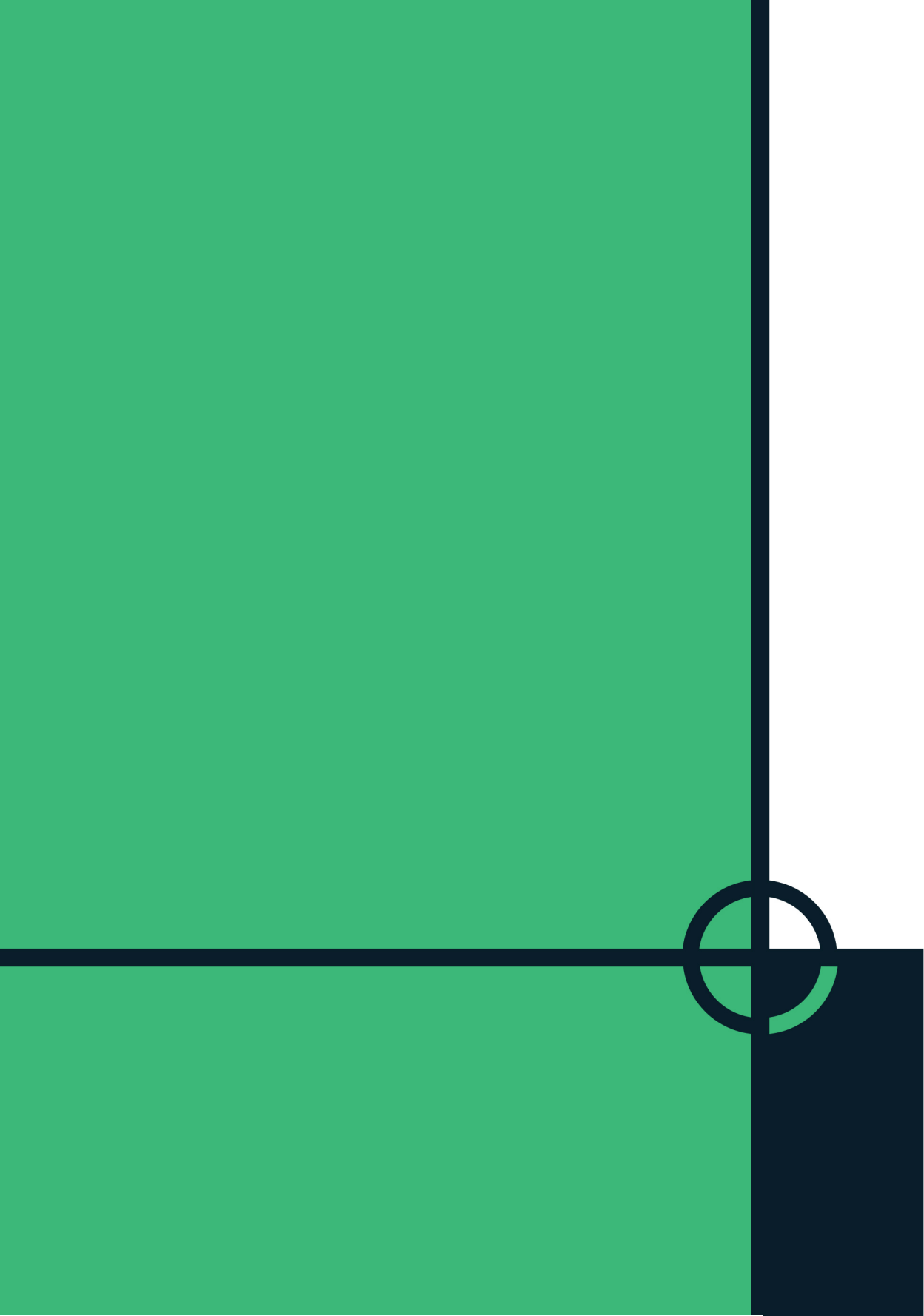
Attitudes toward intimate partner violence (IPV) are one of the key predictive factors of its occurrence. They differ across cultures, genders, environmental settings (urban/rural), and levels of education. In general, the rate of tolerance for IPV is higher in Asian and African countries, among men, and in rural areas, where the level of education is typically lower. In this study, we conducted an online survey in August 2023 to assess attitudes toward IPV. The sample included 613 Slovenian residents aged 18 to 65. The findings reveal a generally low tolerance for physical and psychological IPV in Slovenia, aligning with previous studies conducted in other European countries. However, significant differences were observed based on gender and environmental setting—men and rural residents exhibited slightly higher tolerance for IPV compared to women and urban residents. Slovenian society demonstrates a relatively high level of awareness of IPV. Nevertheless, additional efforts by local media and non-governmental organisations are needed to further enhance awareness, particularly in rural areas where tolerance for IPV remains somewhat higher. These findings underscore the importance of continuous education and prevention programs to promote equality and safety in intimate relationships.

Keywords: violence, intimate partner violence, attitudes, physical violence, psychological violence



Panels IV.
Security, Private and
Corporate Security





Evaluation of the Local Challenges in Predicting Large-Scale Security Events

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Local communities face complex challenges when predicting and managing large-scale security events. These challenges emerge from the interaction between general systemic factors, such as fragmented policies and resource limitations, and local-specific factors, including demographic, geographic, and administrative constraints. While general challenges are always present, local factors shape and modify how these systemic risks manifest in specific contexts. To systematically capture and quantify these challenges, we propose the Risk Assessment Challenges Index (RACI), a composite index developed through a structured multi-stage process combining qualitative insights with a formalised mathematical model. Drawing from expert interviews and thematic analysis, we identified key challenge dimensions, which were operationalised into questionnaire items and validated through established psychometric methods. Each municipality's responses are transformed into a numerical index score. The approach uses weighted aggregation across six categories, incorporating mechanisms for handling missing data and preserving robustness. This approach enables the creation of challenge heatmaps for any country, highlighting municipalities that face the greatest obstacles and are most in need of support in predicting and managing large-scale security events.

Keywords: risk assessment, municipalities, large-scale security events, risk management, natural disaster

The Future of Private Security in Slovenia: What the Science Says?

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The paper presents findings of the Target Research Project (V5-2285) on further development of private security, co-financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency and the Ministry of the Interior. The presentation evaluates existing legislation in private security in Slovenia and proposes amendments related to competencies, conditions for performing and ceasing private security, professional training, duties and measures of security guards, assessment of legality and professionalism, and the obligation to organise security services. Medium-term and long-term risks in private security are also identified. Findings suggest that existing private security regulation in Slovenia is still quite appropriate, and that further development of private security should be based on new private security strategy that will cover topics like legal definition of private security, state interests and goals in private security, systemic regulation, the role of professional interest associations, public-private partnerships in protecting critical infrastructure, education, training, improvement and motivation of private security personnel, control mechanisms over private security etc. Only then changes of existing private security regulation are meaningful. Methods used include literature review, survey, interviews, focus group, case studies, comparative method, compilation, and synthesis.

Keywords: private security, development, strategy, regulation, supervision

Training Active Shooter Response in Non-US Jurisdictions: Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Active shooter response training has been an important part of law enforcement training in the USA since 2000, following the active shooter event at Columbine High School in 1999. While the original mission of ALERRT (Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training) was to train law enforcement officers, the program quickly expanded across a variety of first responder disciplines and institutions in the USA, as well as abroad. Stemming from the increase of mass-shooting / mass-casualty events in Europe, the need for an active-shooter response training has been exponential. In November of 2024, an active-shooter, train-the-trainer, session was organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina; it was the first such training program in Europe and an encounter of two entirely different approaches to policing, incident command, and emergency response: a formalized, procedural, directed, and data-driven (US) and fragmented, post-conflict, post-socialist and traditional system (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Whereas Bosnian-Herzegovinian basic policing methods are in line with the U.S. law-enforcement tactics, the active-shooter response, first-aid, and incident-command approaches were considerably different. The adaptation of manuals to the local language, extended training sessions, and adapting tactics to the local temperament were challenging, but the outcome was ultimately successful.

Keywords: active shooter, training, ALERRT, Bosnia and Herzegovina, law enforcement, training

Providing Active Shooter Response Training to Civilians and Educational Institutions

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A spate of mass-shooting/active-attack events that have occurred in public schools in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina have left the authorities and administrators scrambling to adopt new strategies and procedures to curb such incidents. Texas State University ALERRT (Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training), created in 2002 in the aftermath of the active shooter event at Columbine High School in 1999, quickly expanded across the variety of agencies and institutions in the USA, and was also adapted for the training of civilians via the CRASE (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events) program. Recent introduction of the ALERRT program and subsequent training of certified trainers has also enabled the possibility of teaching CRASE program within the local educational institutions, the majority of which are woefully underequipped and undertrained to address such emergencies. Both ALERRT and CRASE type training in the region are adapted to include enhanced first-aid/casualty evacuation modules, situational awareness, first response, incident command and communication strategies. A particularly welcome outcome of the program acceptance and implementation is the building of trust and co-dependency among the educational institutions, law enforcement, and emergency medical care facilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: active shooter, CRASE, Bosnia and Herzegovina, training, emergency response

Cross-Sectoral Cooperation Approach as a Crisis Management Solution

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Security is a fundamental asset which must also be safeguarded accordingly. Threats such as terrorism, viruses, or natural disasters pose serious security risks. While institutions such as the police and the military have a key role to play in ensuring security, they are not the only ones responsible for this job. Security issues require a cross-sectoral approach that involves the cooperation of various sectors. The “One Health” approach emphasises the connection between safety issues related to the health of the environment, animals, and people. Epidemics are just one of the crises that can affect our society, which is why corporate security, dealing with ensuring security in organisations, is also crucial. In times of crisis, it is extremely important to have an established security plan that includes crisis management. During the crisis, cross-sectoral cooperation between managers, lawyers, consultants, and other experts is essential. Both the “One Health” approach and corporate security advocate cross-sectoral action, which is why we firmly believe that a global and cross-sectoral approach is the key to successfully resolving crises.

Keywords: security, cross-sectoral cooperation, One Health, crisis, global approach

The Recurrent Ritualisation of Surveillance in India: Anatomising the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022

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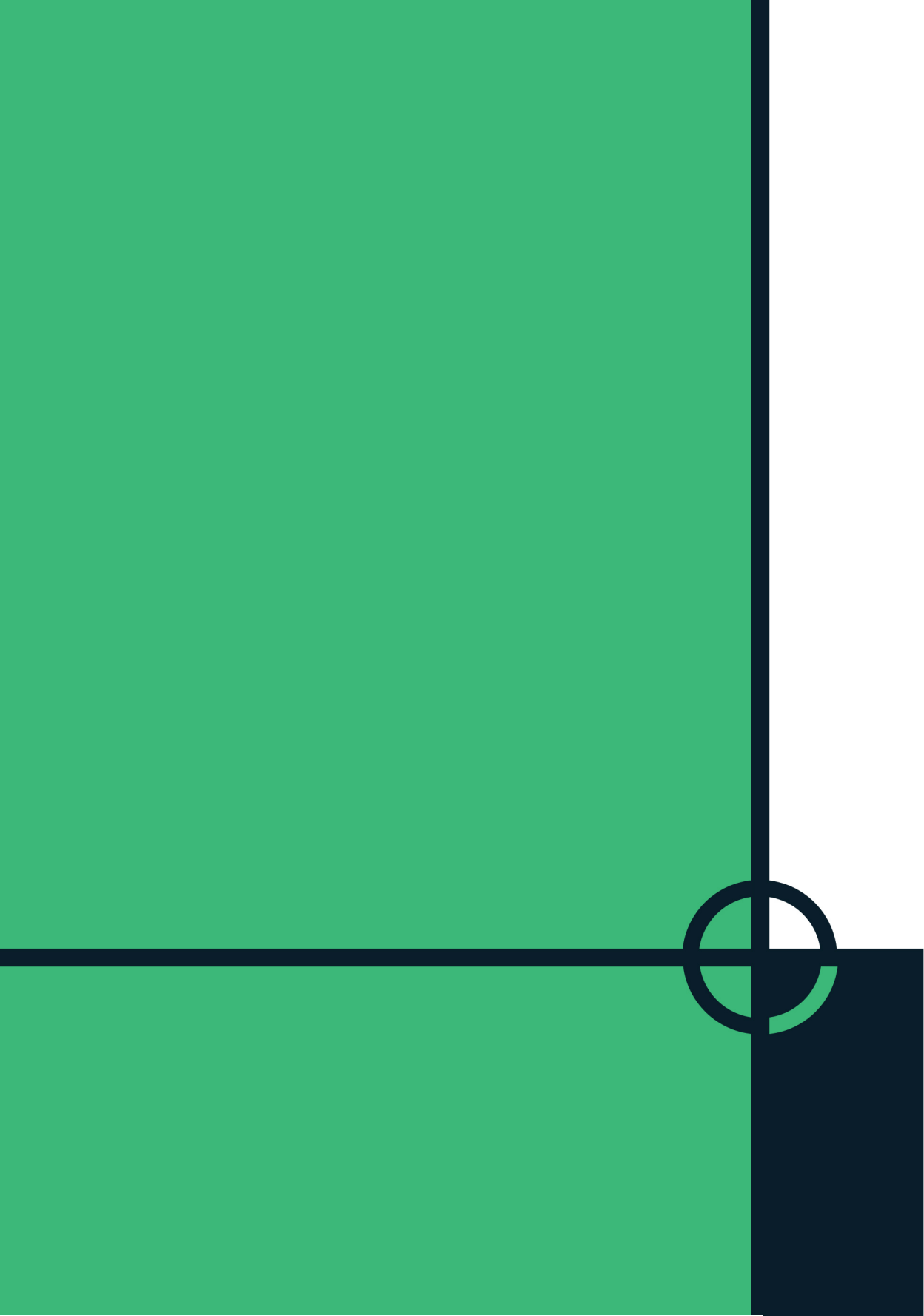
In an era of eroding due process and expanding state surveillance, India reflects a global trend where national security rhetoric is routinely invoked to justify intrusions into fundamental rights. The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 exemplifies this trajectory, authorising the compulsory collection of biometric and behavioural data from a wide spectrum of individuals, including detainees and suspects, while permitting indefinite retention in centralised databases. These sweeping powers, marked by vague thresholds and weak safeguards, undermine core criminal law principles such as proportionality, presumption of innocence, and the right against self-incrimination. This paper critically examines the growing normalisation of surveillance in India, situating it within the broader context of democratic decline and digital governance. With the advent of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, which nominally promises data minimisation and consent-based processing, the contradictions become stark. The DPDP Act grants the state broad exemptions, especially for law enforcement and national security, creating a paradox where privacy protections are structurally weakened. By placing the two Acts in conversation, this paper argues that India's legal framework fosters a ritualised and legally sanitised regime of surveillance that threatens to make constitutional guarantees increasingly illusory.

Keywords: criminal procedure, surveillance, data protection, biometrics, national security



Panels V. Prisons and Penal Sanctions





The Roles of Offenders in THB in Greece: Prison Insights

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This study explores interviews with female and male offenders accused of trafficking in human beings (THB) in Greece. Offenders were involved in transporting illegal immigrants across borders, while some were accused of sexual exploitation. The research highlights the difficulty of extracting information from offenders, particularly when they claim innocence, and incorporates findings of the interviews conducted with THB experts from various institutions. Ethical considerations and a flexible, nonjudgmental interview approach were prioritised to facilitate open communication.

Keywords: THB, Greece, prison, offenders, gender

Improving Prison Quality of Life Through Security Staff-Prisoner Relations

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The concept of quality of life in prisons, which encompasses both material and immaterial aspects, is grounded in philosophical and socio-psychological categories such as well-being, trust, dignity, identity, and autonomy. Each of these dimensions is analysed and measured within the context of prisons and their environments. Prison life, with its unique characteristics, is part of a broader cultural context, which presents an additional challenge for research focused on assessing and improving the quality of life in prisons, to enhance treatment of prisoners. This paper explores the relationship between prison staff and prisoners as a key interpersonal dynamic in prison life, with particular emphasis on the development of trust. The method involves a comparison and critical analysis of the results of various studies on this topic, including interviews with prison staff as part of the PrisonLIFE project in Serbia (2024). The research aims to identify common experiences in the perception of the staff-prisoner relationship across different prisons, cultural contexts, and even linguistic practices. The findings contribute to theoretical discussions on prison management and interpersonal dynamics and have practical implications for developing cross-cultural standards that enhance prison life and inmate well-being in diverse cultural and linguistic settings.

Keywords: quality of prison life, well-being, social prison climate, prisoners, prison staff

Institutional Factors and Support in Prison Security Climate in Serbia

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This study, part of the PrisonLIFE research project (Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, No. 7750249), explored how institutional factors and perceived support predict security-related indicators of the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) framework among 525 male prisoners in Serbia. Participants, with a mean age of 40 years ($SD=10.18$), were serving sentences averaging 16 years and 10 months. A series of standard multiple regression analyses was conducted with prison regime (closed/semi-open), extended daytime cell lockdown, number of disciplinary measures, and perceived support from treatment staff, security staff, and prisoners as predictors of five MQPL-based security-related outcomes. Prison regime ($\beta=.21-.27$) and support from security staff ($\beta=.18-.27$) consistently predicted all MQPL security-related outcomes, with ranges reflecting results across five regression models. Semi-open regimes and greater perceived support from security staff were associated with more favourable perceptions of adaptation, safety, and institutional order. Extended cell confinement negatively impacted adaptation ($\beta=-.21$) and safety ($\beta=-.21$). Support from prisoners ($\beta=.13-.15$ across models) and treatment staff ($\beta=.10-.11$ across models) contributed positively to several models. Findings highlight how institutional setting and support shape prisoners' perception of prison climate, offering unique insights from a Southeast European context.

Keywords: prison climate, security, MQPL framework, Serbia, perceived support

Prison and Probation: Media Narratives in the Croatian Context

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It is a fact that most people have no direct contact or experience with crime and criminal sanctions. Therefore, media portrayals of criminal sanctions play an important role in shaping public perceptions of punishment, societal safety and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. This paper focuses on a comparative analysis of the media portrayal of prison sentences and probation in Croatia. While prison sentence is often presented in the media as a symbol of “real” punishment, probation is mentioned much less frequently and is often presented without further explanation of its purpose. The aim of the study is to analyse the prevailing media narratives, the tone of reporting and the differences in the visibility and interpretation of prison sentence and probation in the Croatian media. A qualitative content analysis of articles published in leading Croatian online media between 2020 and 2024 was conducted. The analysis focuses on the thematic framework, language, frequency of mentions and social context. The results should provide a better understanding of how the media shape public perceptions of prison sentences and probation, and open up space for a discussion on the visibility and acceptance of different forms of sanctions in Croatian society.

Keywords: sanctions, prison sentence, probation, media, Croatia

A Comprehensive Review of Legitimacy Studies in the Prison Environment

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Recently, attempts were made to combine the accumulated knowledge of legitimacy studies into the integrated theory of legitimacy. While such efforts are commendable, they usually encounter much criticism that it is too soon to frame the complex nature of legitimacy. Research has shown that there is no unity regarding the theoretical basics or methodology applied in legitimacy studies, while comparative studies expose differences between social contexts. In the study, a comprehensive review of research focusing on legitimacy and self-legitimacy in the prison context has been conducted. The overall aim is to identify relevant findings of research that can be used as pieces of a mosaic that represent the complex nature of legitimacy theory. A comprehensive analysis of previous studies exposed the complex and dialogical nature of legitimacy and self-legitimacy and their antecedents in the prison environment, which in several aspects differ from the findings of predominant studies focusing on police legitimacy. Also, challenges related to the lack of comparative and longitudinal studies were identified that should be addressed in the future.

Keywords: legitimacy, self-legitimacy, relations, prisoners, prison staff

Existing Problems and New Challenges for the Croatian Prison System

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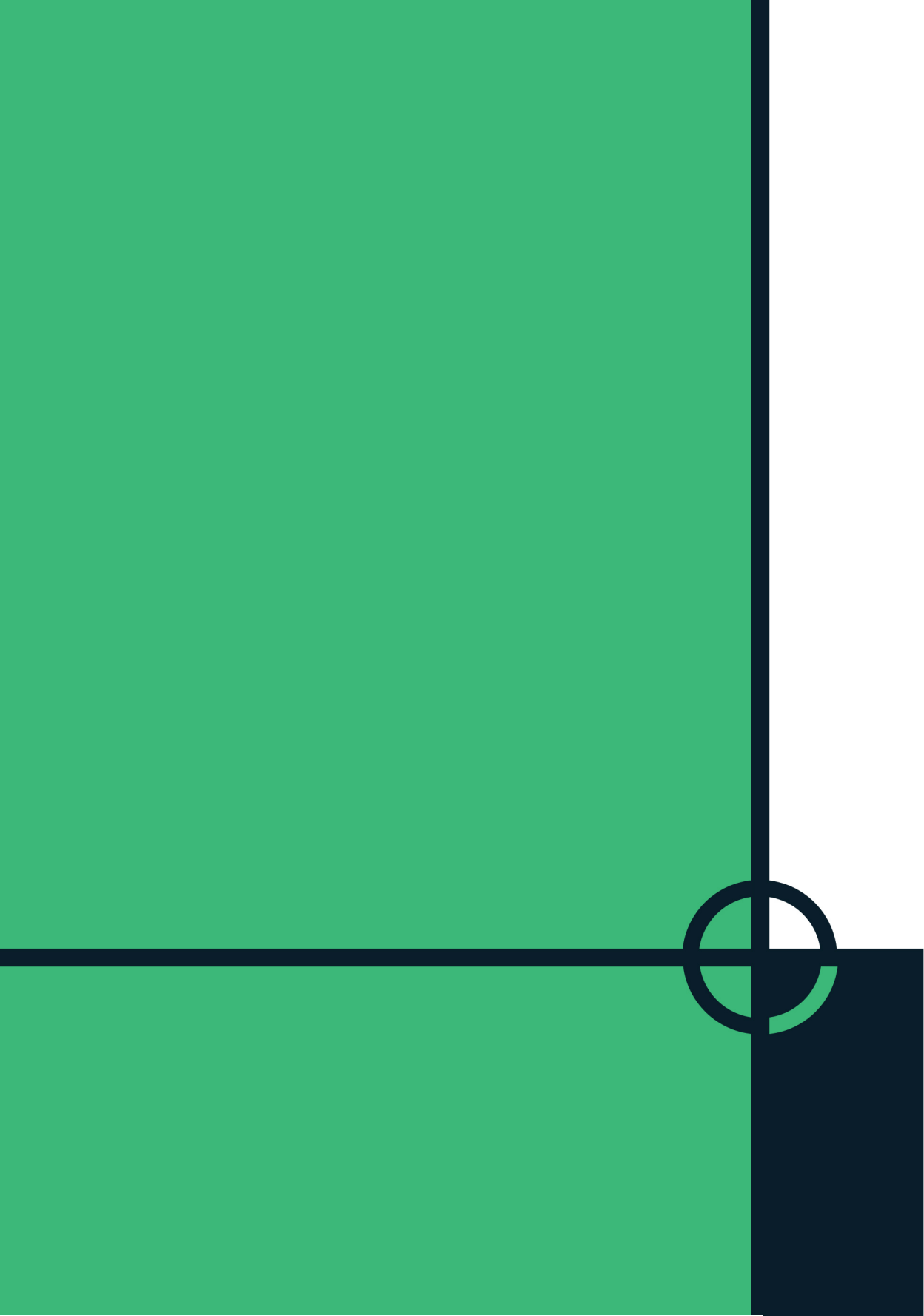
Overcrowding and inadequate detention conditions have been encumbering the prison system of the Republic of Croatia for over two decades now. Despite some efforts made to reduce the number of prisoners and improve prison conditions, negative trends have been observed again in recent years. One of the main causes of such trends is the continued increase in the number of pre-trial detainees. This, in turn, is a reflection, among other things, of the increase in migration-related offences, specifically the criminal offence of illegal entry, movement and residence in the Republic of Croatia. Consequently, the number of foreign nationals in the prison system is increasing. In addition, the prison system faces a security risk stemming from the insufficient number of prison officers in relation to the number of prisoners. The paper will provide a theoretical, normative and empirical analysis of the key factors that represent not only an increased security risk for the prison system but also cause violations of the fundamental rights of persons deprived of their liberty. These violations (Art. 3 ECHR) have been established in ECtHR judgments against Croatia, and in recent years, there has been a particularly high incidence of such violations.

Keywords: overcrowding, pre-trial detention, security risk, violations of fundamental rights, foreign prisoners



Panels VI.
Deviance, Criminology
of Place & Cyber
Criminology





Data First Project: Linked Administrative Justice Data Research Opportunities and Policy Insights

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Data First is a pioneering Ministry of Justice (England and Wales, United Kingdom) data-linking programme, funded by ADR UK (Administrative Data Research UK), that deduplicates, deidentifies, links and creates research ready administrative datasets from across the justice system and with other government departments to provide powerful new insights on justice system users, their pathways and outcomes across a range of public services. This presentation overviews the role of ADR UK, the Data First available for research datasets to date, the data access process and requirements, resources available to researchers, and opportunities for research and policy evidence. Selected key findings from ADR UK-funded Data First research are also overviewed, as well as related policy impact to date.

Keywords: justice administrative data, justice outcomes, defendants' profile, young prolific offenders, education and offending

Behind Closed Gates: Thefts and Burglaries in Polish Rural Communities

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Property crime remains a persistent threat to the security of rural communities in Poland, despite the widespread perception of the countryside as a low-crime area. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining a Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) survey of 1,006 rural residents with focus group interviews (FGI) conducted with experts working in village settings (police officers, social workers, firefighters and others). The FGIs were designed to complement and elucidate the quantitative findings by shedding light on the motivations behind underreporting and the social norms that discourage formal complaints. Survey results indicate that although official statistics suggest relatively low incidence rates, many victims refrain from reporting theft and burglary, due to geographical isolation and limited law enforcement presence. Preventive strategies employed by rural households, local authorities and the police are also examined. The integration of quantitative survey data with rich qualitative insights provides a nuanced understanding of rural property crime and informs the development of context-sensitive prevention policies aimed at strengthening the security and resilience of the Polish countryside.

Keywords: rural property crime, mixed-methods research, underreporting, crime prevention, rural criminology

Scam Cities: Criminal Hubs in Transnational Cybercrime Networks

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This research explores the phenomenon of “Scam Cities”, urban or semi-urban areas where criminal networks operate large-scale online fraud schemes, often exploiting trafficked workers or migrants in forced labour conditions. These cities, typically disguised as call centres, crypto platforms or gambling hubs, merge cybercrime, human trafficking and transnational organised crime. Despite increasing journalistic attention, the phenomenon remains largely absent from academic legal and criminological literature, warranting further investigation into its complex intersections of crime and exploitation. The analysis will focus on three key dimensions: 1) the criminal *modus operandi*, including the internal organization of scam cities and the types of fraud deployed; 2) the strategies used to recruit victims, often through deceptive job offers and the trafficking routes involved; and 3) the legal classification of these practices within international criminal law, particularly in relation to cybercrime, human trafficking and transnational organized crime, as well as the enforcement challenges they present. The research will also draw on qualitative data, including interviews with victims who have managed to escape from scam cities. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to global efforts to dismantle these criminal networks, improve international legal cooperation and create stronger deterrence against large-scale cyber fraud.

Keywords: scam cities, digital slavery, transnational organised crime, criminal investigation, cybercrime

Judicial Conviction and Electronic Criminal Evidence Framework: A Comparative Analysis of Indonesia and the Netherlands

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The digitalisation of criminal justice presents profound epistemic and procedural challenges, particularly where electronic evidence frameworks remain underdeveloped. Indonesia faces critical gaps in assessing and integrating electronic evidence while upholding the pursuit of “material truth.” In contrast, the Netherlands has adopted a forward-looking approach, embedding electronic evidence within a structured legal framework that balances investigative imperatives with fundamental rights. This article employs a comparative legal methodology to distil transferable insights from the Dutch jurisdiction, interrogating the mechanisms through which its Code of Criminal Procedure reconciles evidentiary integrity with due process. Although often perceived as doctrinally complex, the Dutch model provides a jurisprudential foundation for addressing evidentiary challenges in the digital era. The analysis demonstrates how legal principles governing digital forensics, judicial reasoning, and human rights in the Netherlands can inform Indonesia’s evolving framework. This research advances a broader theoretical inquiry into the future of electronic evidence in criminal adjudication.

Keywords: judicial conviction, digital era, electronic criminal evidence, material truth, criminal justice system

To the Moon and Back. A Critical Space Criminological Perspective on Serbo-Chinese Collaboration in Lunar Missions

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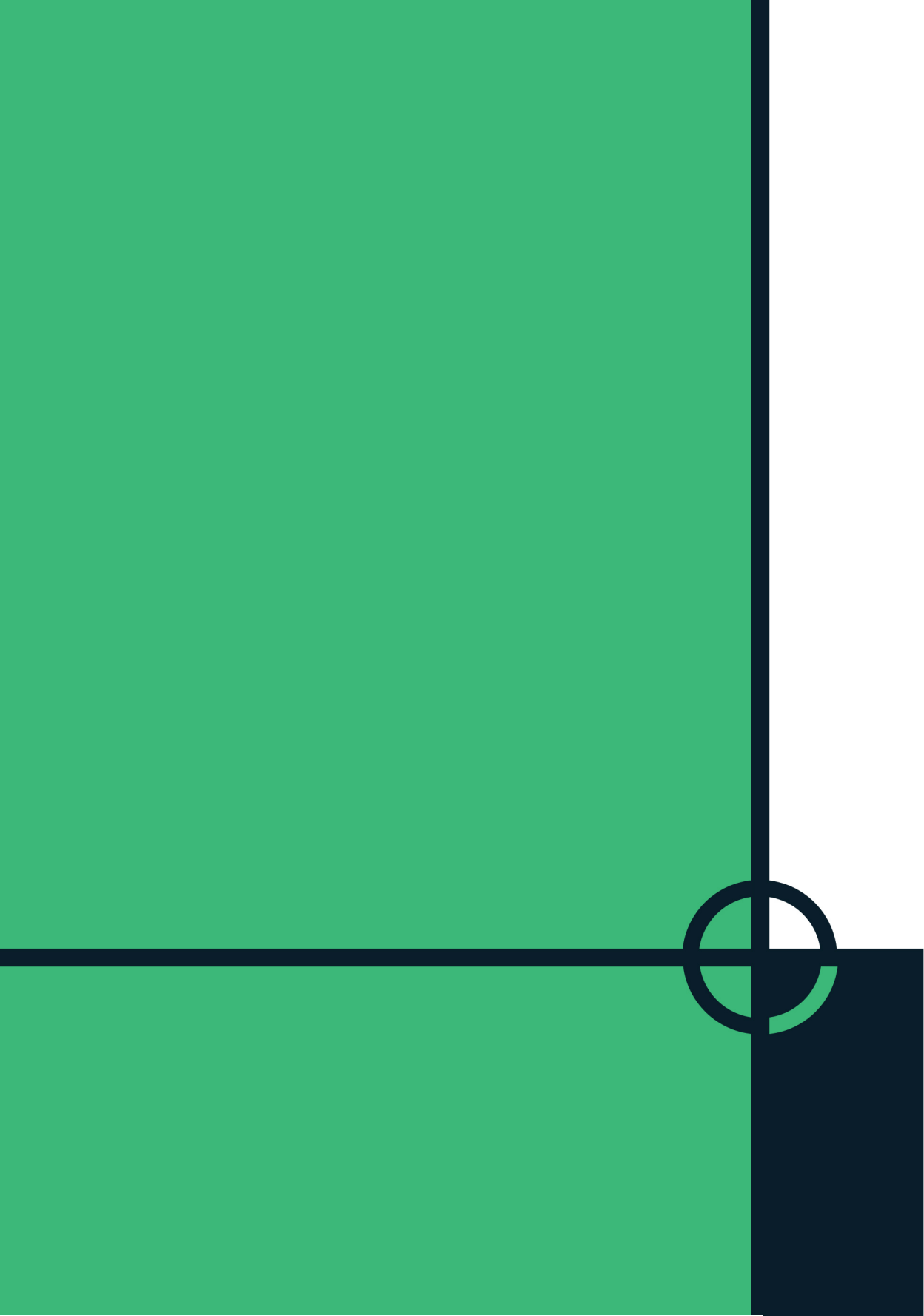
China seeks a permanent presence in Europe by taking control of key European transport hubs, including strengthening its collaboration with Serbia. It is a major economic partner for Serbia, whereas Serbia views China as key to its foreign policy. Hence, they have a comprehensive strategic partnership in international forums, supported by strong political ties. Serbia also expanded its defence ties with China (e.g. deploying the FK-3 air defence system). While Serbia views this as military modernisation, other European nations are concerned about the impact on Serbia's EU integration prospects. Moreover, Serbia and China have advanced cooperation in space technology and defence. They have agreed to focus their space research on satellite systems for agriculture, telecommunications, environmental monitoring, and geolocation. Also, Serbia joined the International Lunar Research Station program in 2024, contributing to a China-Russia-led, permanent lunar base. This paper explores how China's investment in space cooperation with Serbia aims to solidify its presence in Europe. It will consider from a geopolitical-criminological perspective power dynamics, Astropolitics and policing in (and via) outer space (back on earth). Moreover, it will address how such a critical space criminology – at a cosmic level – ties into the regional, as situated in Balkan criminological debates.

Keywords: critical space criminology, power, Chino-Serbian geopolitics, Astropolitics, Balkan criminolog



Panels VII.
Deviance, Delinquency,
Crime and Crime
Prevention III.





Violence Against Parents by Adult Children

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Violence against parents by adult children is one-off, multiple, or continuous behaviour of an adult child that causes parents to feel threatened, intimidated, controlled, or attacked. The paper discusses violence against parents by adult children in Slovenia. The analysis of these cases shows that such violence encompasses physical, psychological, and economic violence and neglect. Victims are primarily mothers, while alleged offenders are mainly sons. They often perpetrate violence in domestic settings and due to personal or property motives. As a result, victims experience fear, sadness, and shame and take measures to ensure their safety. This contribution presents a starting point for further research focusing on criminal investigation aspects. It also highlights the importance of a multi-agency response when detecting, dealing with, and providing support in such cases.

Keywords: violence against parents by adult children, elder abuse, parents, adult children, forms of violence

Gender, Violence & Social Stress: England & Wales, 1977–2020

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This paper presents findings from a longitudinal study of homicide in England and Wales (E&W), tracing gendered patterns and social drivers of lethal violence from 1977 to 2020. Although homicide rates in E&W peaked later than in other industrialised countries, they have shown both long-term declines and periodic short-term surges. Drawing on the Homicide Index, alongside national economic and criminal justice data, we examine how demographic shifts, drug market dynamics, and austerity have shaped homicide trends. Our analysis reveals persistent reductions in male-on-female homicide, largely within domestic contexts, and episodic spikes in male-on-male violence, often linked to gang and acquaintance killings. We show that the socio-political context—especially broad economic stress, evolving gender norms, and criminal justice responses—has differentially affected homicide trends by gender. These findings highlight the importance of linking structural change with patterns of violence over time and raise questions about policy responses to gendered harms in a stressed society.

Keywords: homicide, gender, violence, economic stress, structural change

Juvenile Delinquency's Risk Factors in the Post COVID-19 Times

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The post-COVID era has several challenges, out of which it is particularly important to focus on the risks that contribute toward trends, rates, aetiology and phenomenology of child delinquency. The consequences have been particularly present among children in economically disadvantaged households, children from vulnerable groups, and children with disabilities. Limited social interaction during lockdowns hindered the development of social skills of the young generation, as well. The emergence of new forms of online violence, exposure to harmful content, online manipulation, catfishing, grooming, as well as the production of video materials using artificial intelligence, has greatly increased the risks for children, both for them as perpetrators of illegal actions and as victims. The insufficient digital literacy of parents, but also teachers and professional services in schools, has contributed to new forms of risk factors for delinquency. All these aspects in the context of technological development and social media activities should be the focus of attention and be researched and analysed in more detail. Mental health problems, increased anxiety and depression shall also be taken into consideration regarding a lack of access to mental health resources.

Keywords: risk factors, juveniles, cyber risks, child delinquency, victims

Asking for Help in an Online Community

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According to the EU Agency of Fundamental Rights, one in three women reports experiencing some form of violence since the age of 15, where intimate partner violence prevails. For these women, one possible way of reaching out is by seeking online social support. Such support can offer help in terms of formal services (e.g., shelters) or by contacting formal institutions (e.g., police). The objective of our study was to explore the needs that the women turning to online support communities express – according to the type of violence they experience. We retrieved posts from the first online support group for women in Slovenia. We performed a content analysis of a randomly selected sample of starting posts. The results show that the women differ in their needs according to the type of violence they describe. Although they most frequently sought informational support, those recounting sexual violence more often asked for emotional support or were looking for emotional release. Posts recounting violent experiences were more likely to bring more support than short posts directly asking for help. The results suggest that not only asking for help but also how the help is sought plays an important role in receiving such help.

Keywords: social support, online support group, violence, victims, women

Patterns of Victimization Among Rural and Urban Juveniles

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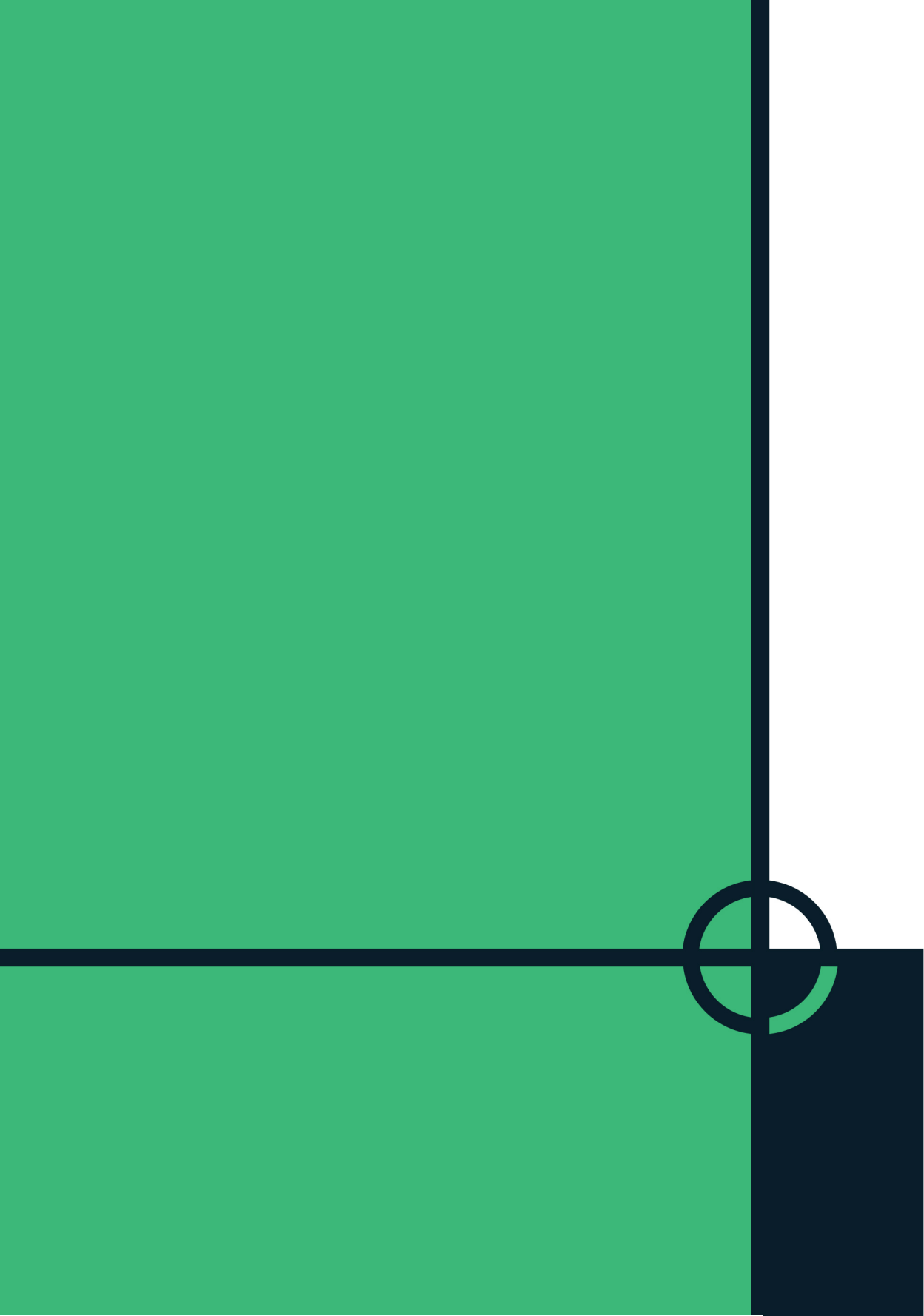
This study examines the differing patterns of victimization experienced by juveniles in rural and urban settings. Drawing on data from the International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISR4D), as part of the Research Programme Security and Safety in Local Communities – Comparison Between Rural and Urban Settings, the research explores how different environments influence the type, frequency, and context of victimization among youth. Key variables and risk factors such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, exposure to delinquency and delinquent friends, as well as family and school factors, are analysed to understand their role in shaping victimization experiences. The findings reveal significant disparities between rural and urban juveniles, with implications for policy development, prevention strategies, and targeted interventions. The study highlights the need for place-based approaches in addressing juvenile victimization across diverse communities.

Keywords: juvenile victimization, ISR4D, safety and security in local communities, rural, urban, Slovenia



Panels VIII.
Legal and Criminal
Justice Perspectives
on Criminal Justice
and Security





Confidentiality vs. Transparency in Criminal Procedure: Croatia's New Disclosure Offence in a European Context

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This paper explores the controversial introduction of a new criminal offence in Croatia - Unauthorised disclosure of investigative or evidentiary actions - which penalises various types of leaks from police, prosecutors, defence counsel, and others with up to three years of imprisonment. The government justifies the reform as a means to protect the presumption of innocence and ensure trials unfold in court, not in the media. However, legal scholars and practitioners have voiced strong concerns. Critics argue that the provision may suppress legitimate public interest disclosures and silence journalistic or institutional scrutiny. In response, this paper highlights deeper issues within Croatia's criminal justice system, such as institutional silence and the strategic use of secrecy to avoid accountability. It is argued that the real threat lies not in leaks themselves, but in a lack of transparency and institutional responsibility within prosecutorial and police bodies.

Keywords: criminal justice, secrecy, transparency, unauthorised disclosure, presumption of innocence

Transparency in Police Investigations: Comparative Models and ECtHR Practice

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This paper examines the principle of transparency in the context of police investigations, focusing on its legal boundaries, democratic significance, and practical challenges. While investigative secrecy is essential for protecting the integrity of proceedings, premature or excessive concealment can conflict with broader public interest, media freedom, and the rights of the defence. Drawing on comparative legal models, primarily from Germany, Austria and Slovenia, this paper explores how different systems regulate access to investigative information and balance it against individual rights and institutional accountability. Among the jurisdictions examined, the Croatian legal framework is considered in light of recent legislative changes and prosecutorial practices that have raised concerns about the expanding use of secrecy and the criminalisation of unauthorised disclosures. Drawing on the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the paper outlines key standards under Articles 6 (right to a fair trial) and 10 (freedom of expression), and assesses their implications for national rules on transparency in police investigations.

Keywords: transparency, police investigations, secrecy, institutional accountability, public interest

Criminal Law Responses to Environmental Offences in the Republic of Serbia

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The article provides a critical analysis of the criminal law framework for addressing environmental crime in Serbia, with a particular focus on its conceptualisation within the national criminal legislation. The first section examines how environmental crime is defined in Serbian law, offering comparative insights from selected jurisdictions and exploring doctrinal interpretations of the concept. Furthermore, it analyses the interaction between criminal law and misdemeanour law responses to environmental offences, identifying key gaps and deficiencies in the current legal framework, and proposes improvements to enhance its effectiveness. In the second part, the article shifts focus to judicial practice, analysing how the Serbian criminal justice system has dealt with environmental crime in recent years. It specifically delves into two landmark cases that have transcended legal discourse to become politically charged issues: the proposed exploitation of the Jadar Valley lithium deposit by the Rio Tinto Corporation, and the mining activities of the Chinese company Zijin. These cases illustrate the intersection of environmental concerns, corporate interests, and national politics, shedding light on the challenges faced by the criminal justice system in addressing environmental crime within this complex socio-political landscape.

Keywords: environment, offence, crime, criminal law, Republic of Serbia

Environmental Crime of the Armed Forces in the Republic of Slovenia

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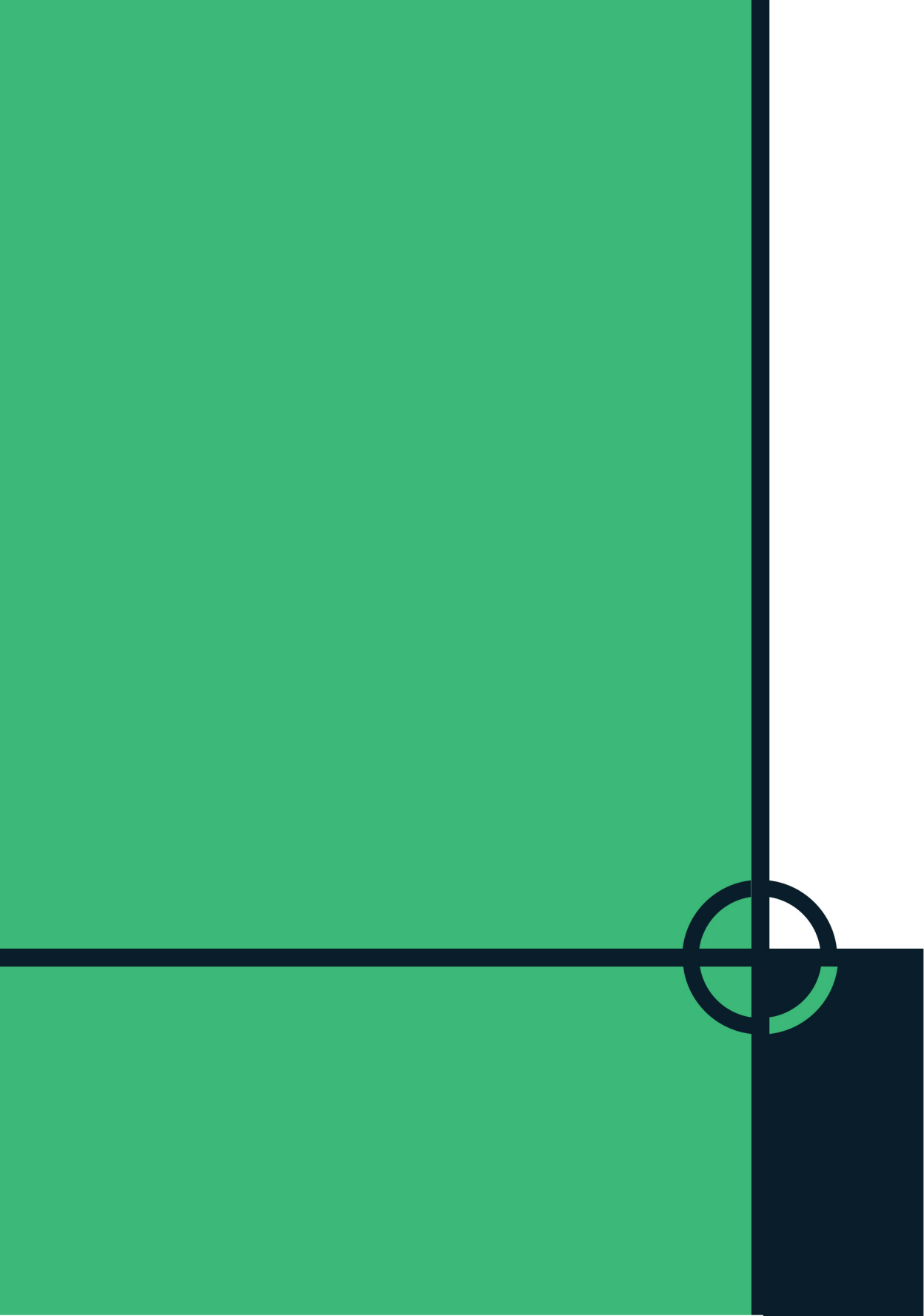
Green criminology does not comprehensively explain environmental crimes committed by armed forces. We define and conceptualise the environmental crime of the armed forces using theoretical foundations from environmental sociology, military sociology, and green criminology. Compiled cases are analysed using open coding to aggregate contextual characteristics of the environmental crime of the armed forces. We interpret the data using an ideal-type qualitative method. The environmental crime of the armed forces is generated under the influence of political, geographical, and economic contextual factors. Environmental crimes of the armed forces in the Republic of Slovenia are primarily reflected in the political (44%) and geographical (32%) dimensions. Given the intensity, on the political dimension, we identify some problematic (49%) (court proceedings, opposition, presence of foreign armed forces, etc.) contextual features of the environmental crime of the armed forces, while on the geographical dimension (85%) (geomorphological characteristics of the soil, presence of nature reserves, proximity to populated areas, etc.). Although the Slovenian Armed Forces are an environmentally responsible (exemplary) institution, in the case of the Republic of Slovenia, there are political and geographical factors that influence the detection threshold of environmental crime of the armed forces to be considered by political decision-makers.

Keywords: military, armed forces, green criminology, environmental crime, environmental harm



Panels IX.
Policing, Criminal
Investigation and
Victim/Witness Protection





Criminal Intelligence: Insights from U.S. and Implications for Slovenia

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Criminal intelligence has become a key strategic approach in addressing various security threats, from minor offences to organised crime and terrorism. However, the extent, scope, and effectiveness of its integration into national law enforcement systems vary considerably across countries. Among them, the United States stands out for its systematic and institutionalised application of criminal intelligence within policing structures. This paper presents selected findings from a pilot ethnographic study conducted during a four-month Fulbright Visiting Scholar residency at the School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, an institution internationally recognised for its focus on criminal intelligence education and research. The study aimed to explore U.S. approaches to criminal intelligence and assess their applicability to the Slovenian context. While both environments face similar challenges, such as limited public and professional understanding of criminal intelligence and an overreliance on informants and covert sources, the approaches applied in the U.S. to address these issues offer promising solutions. These include improving public acceptance through de-stigmatising intelligence practices, promoting institutional transparency, and broadening recruitment beyond traditional police academies. The findings offer valuable guidance for enhancing the development of criminal intelligence in Slovenia and beyond, particularly through stronger ties between academia, practitioners, and policy-making bodies.

Keywords: criminal intelligence, criminal justice education, United States, law enforcement, institutional transparency

Procedural Protection of Witnesses of Rape in War Crimes

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Protecting witness identities is legally mandated and essential for ensuring truthful testimony in cases of rape in war crimes. Despite existing safeguards, identity disclosures still occur. This paper analyses legal provisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, identifies causes of breaches, including negligence, lack of awareness, and media oversight, and examines their impact. Technological advancements have significantly improved judicial proceedings, but challenges remain, particularly regarding reliability, security, and evolving legal frameworks to address new threats. By comparing domestic practices with European virtual justice systems, this paper explores strategies to strengthen witness protection. Ultimately, it highlights the crucial role of procedural safeguards in ensuring justice and enhancing virtual judicial processes.

Keywords: witness protection, rape in war crimes, procedural measures, judicial process, virtual justice

Crime, Policing, and Voter Turnout in Chicago's 2023 and 2019 Mayoral Elections

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Politicians and pundits commonly tout campaigning on crime and policing as an effective strategy for winning elections. Yet, scholars have only recently started examining the contributions of both variables to voting. The available research shows that scholars disagree, however, about whether crime and policing, independently or jointly, increase or decrease voter turnout and whether race or ethnicity conditions these relationships. We examine these issues with a spatial analysis of voter turnout in the 2023 and 2019 mayoral elections in Chicago. Spatial Maximum Likelihood Cross Sections Regression (with spatial weighting matrices to accommodate multiple spatial autoregressive disturbances) was applied. At the electoral precinct level, turnout is negatively associated with violent and property crime and with police stops. In contrast, it is positively associated with police misbehaviour complaints. These relationships are independent of spatial error, spatial lags, and common predictors of voter turnout. We also find that crime and policing jointly influence turnout, and that several of the crime and policing relationships interact with the percentage of Black and Hispanic residents. Crime and policing are central to understanding voter turnout, but these relationships are more complicated than is commonly assumed.

Keywords: voter turnout, crime, policing, race, spatial analysis

Revisiting Investigation: Nuances of Preliminary Inquiry under Indian Criminal Procedure

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The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), India's new procedural criminal code replacing the colonial-era Criminal Procedure Code, 1973, introduces a formal provision for "preliminary inquiry" under Section 173(3). This paper interrogates whether this reform reintroduces the very ambiguities that the Indian Supreme Court aimed to curtail in *Lalita Kumari v. Govt. of UP* (2014), which held FIR registration mandatory upon disclosure of a cognizable offence. By codifying a discretionary, pre-FIR screening mechanism, limited to offences punishable with 3 to 7 years of imprisonment, the BNSS arguably shifts power back to the police, allowing them to delay or deny registration based on their assessment of a *prima facie* case. This paper traces the conceptual and doctrinal evolution of preliminary inquiry in India, critically examines the implications of this new provision, and assesses the risk it poses to due process, especially for vulnerable complainants. Drawing comparative lessons from procedural safeguards within the EU, such as oversight mechanisms, judicial authorisation of police discretion, and rights-based thresholds for investigation, this paper highlights both the promise and perils of institutionalising preliminary inquiries. It ultimately argues that without clear legislative guidance and judicial oversight, the BNSS may compromise access to justice in the name of efficiency.

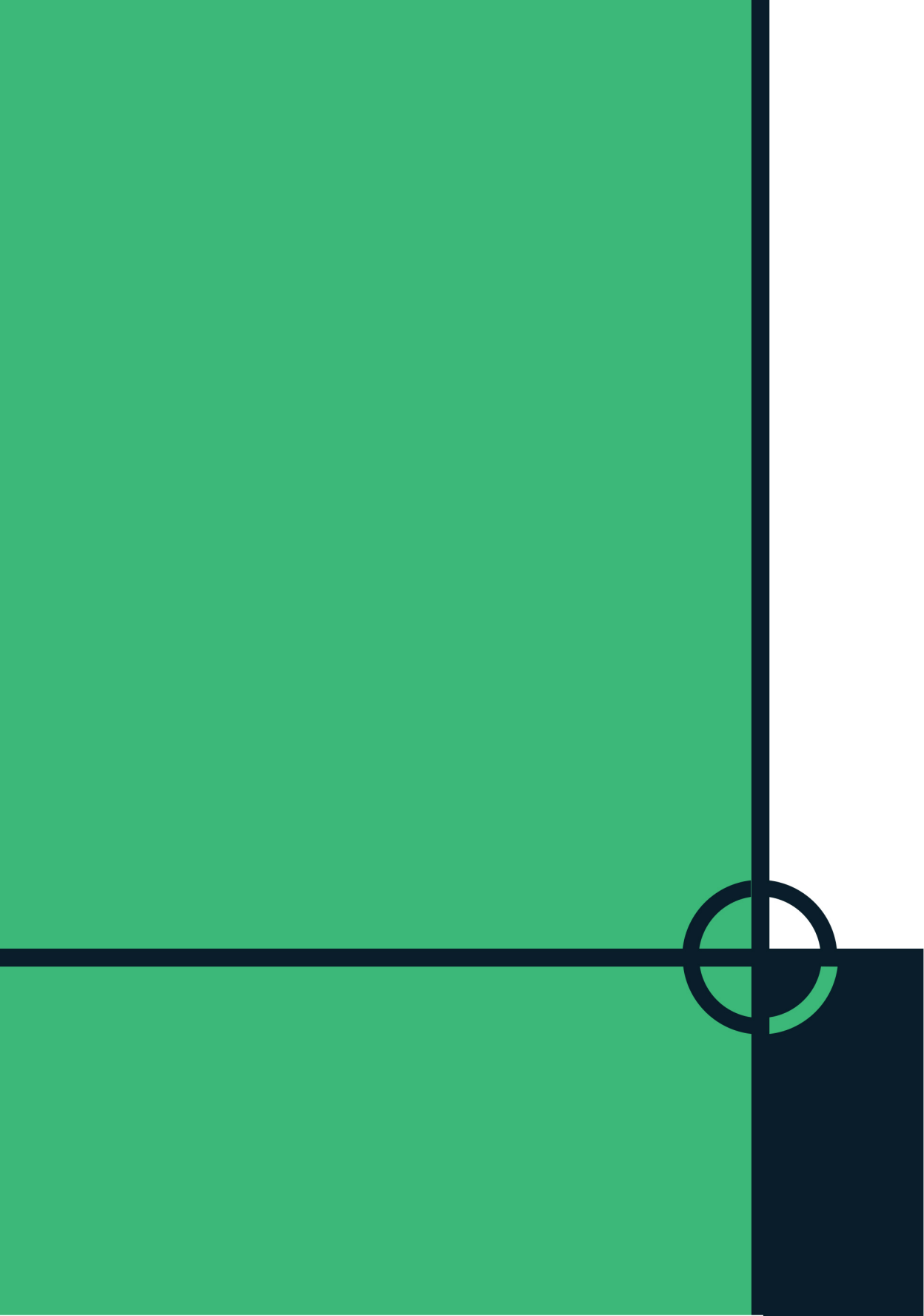
Keywords: criminal procedure, India, policing, investigation, police powers



Final Plenary

Between Science,
Policy and Practice





The Rift between Science and Policy and How to Overcome It

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Science's impact on public policy (and more particularly the impact of the social sciences) has generally been time-lagged via the "classroom and wait" model. We have indeed advanced historically, one death at a time. The challenge before us as criminologists is to enhance our present-tense public policy impact. As Abraham Lincoln noted in this context so many years ago, public sentiment is everything. I believe that science, communicated clearly, strategically, and pragmatically, can have a more salient and significant present-tense influence on public sentiment and subsequently upon policy than it has in the past. We can overcome the heretofore persistent and vexing science to policy implementation rift, and it will be to the betterment of our world.

Keywords: science, policy, social sciences, criminology, public sentiment

Comparative, Translational and Public Criminology

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This paper explores the intersection of various criminological perspectives, including comparative, translational, applied, and public criminology. The relationship among these approaches may prompt critical reflection. A persistent tension between theory and practice is evident in the recurring question posed by practitioners: “Which criminology or criminological research is most suitable or effective for our work?” This question is challenging, as it defies a brief or definitive answer. Responses tend to be more elaborate than anticipated, reflecting the complexity of legal norms, the multifaceted causes of crime, and the diverse responses to it. These complexities span multiple levels of analysis – individual, group, and societal – and encompass a wide range of theoretical perspectives, such as bio-sociological, psychological, sociological, mainstream, administrative, critical, radical, feminist, green, comparative, translational, theoretical, applied, and public criminology, among others. Victimology and penology (including penal policy) are sometimes regarded as independent disciplines, and at other times as closely related fields within the broader criminological domain. Given criminology’s inherently multi- and interdisciplinary nature, policy and practice debates – especially in public and quasi-professional contexts – often reflect either oversimplified or overly complex interpretations.

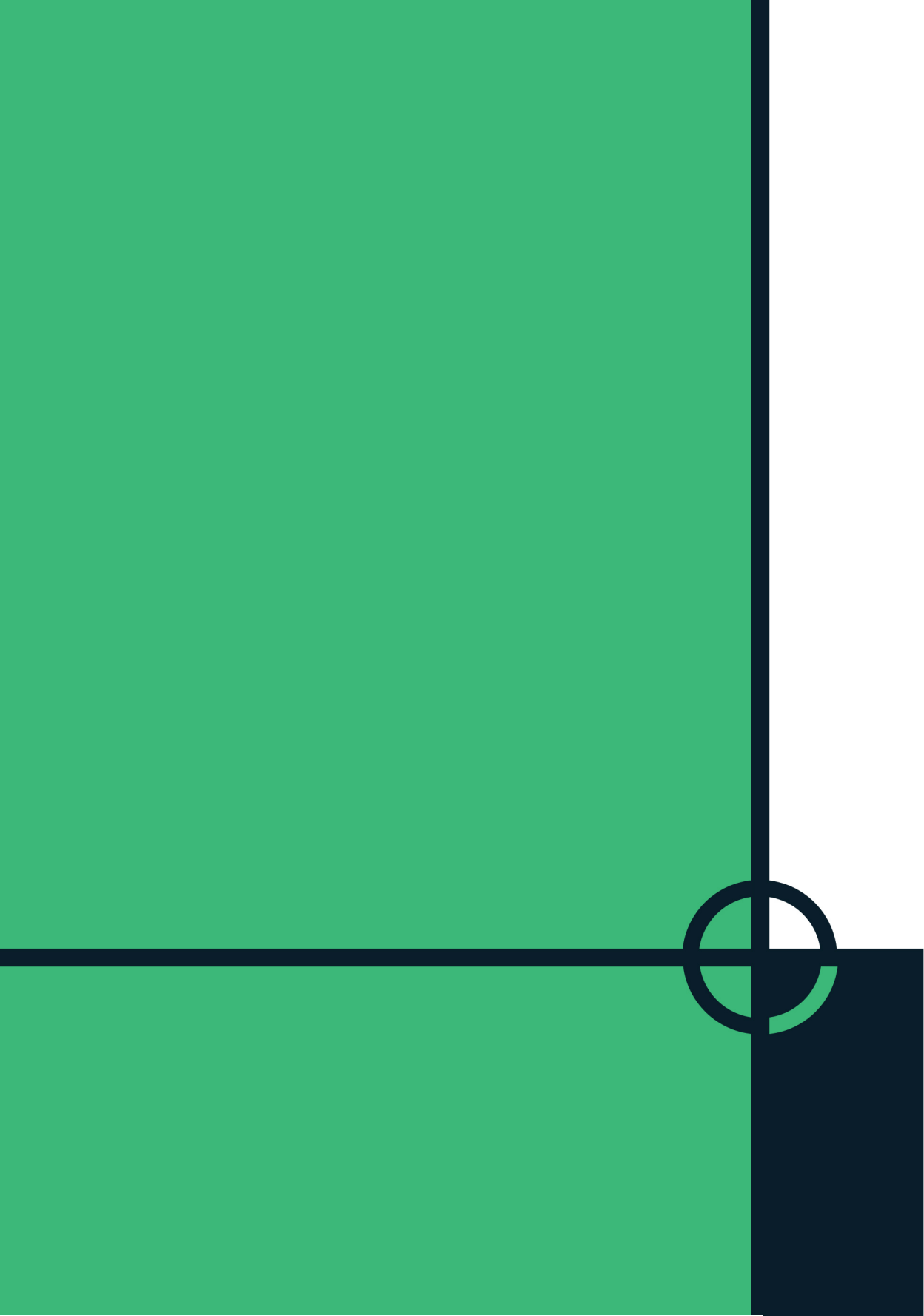
Keywords: criminology, comparative, translational, applied, public



Roundtable

Future of the Criminal
Justice and Security
Studies, Policy Making
and Practice in Central
and Eastern Europe





List of Participants

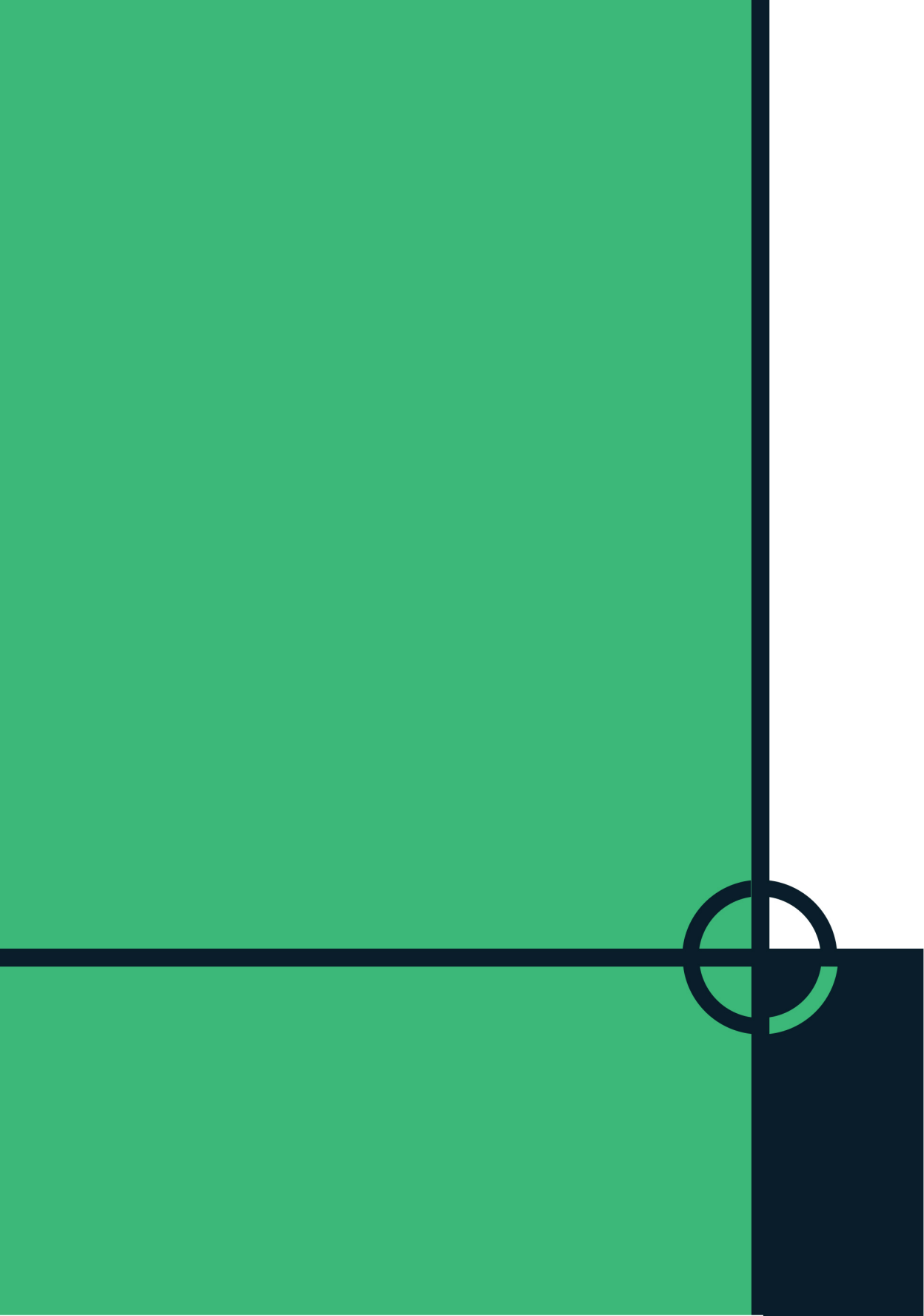
Marcelo F. Aebi (University of Lausanne), Ameenul Abdullah KS (Karunya University), Dimitris Androulakis (Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA)), Christiana Aposkiti (Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA)), Alexandros Arfaras (Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA)), Valerio Baćak (Rutgers University), Subhajit Basu (University of Leeds), Igor Bernik (University of Maribor), J. Pete Blair (Texas State University), Krunoslav Borovec (Ministry of the Interior, Police Academy), Matt Bowden (Technological University Dublin), Andrew Brown (DTCare), Aleš Bučar Ručman (University of Maribor), Tinkara Bulovec (University of Maribor), Irena Cajner Mraović (University of Zagreb), David Čep (Masaryk University), Miha Dvojmoč (University of Maribor), Marija Đuzel (University of Split), Katja Eman (University of Maribor), Matej Enci (University of Maribor), Vanja Erčulj (University of Maribor), Yarin Eski (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Chris Eskridge (University of Nebraska), John A. Eterno (Molloy University), Stephen Farall (University of Nottingham), Benjamin Flander (University of Maribor), Benjamin Franca (Ministry of the Interior, Police), Danijela Frangež (University of Maribor), Sandi Gec (University of Ljubljana), Teodora Gojković (Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research), Alen Golobič (University of Maribor), Sasha Goodwin (British University Vietnam (BUV)), Emily Gray (University of Warwick), Silvo Grčar (University of Maribor), Rok Hacin (University of Maribor), Ineke Haen Marshall (Northeastern University), John Hagan (Northwestern University), Debarati Halder (Parul University), Daniel Herda (Merrimack College), James Hunter (Nottingham Trent University), Mitja Jager (Ministry of the Interior, Police), Emilia Jurgielewicz-Delegacz (University of Bialystok), Adnan Jusufspahić (Police), Zdravko Kačič (University of Maribor), Zoran Kanduč (Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law Ljubljana), Željko Karas (University of Applied Sciences in Criminal Investigation and Public Security), Monika Klun (University of Maribor), Iza Kokoravec Povh (University of Maribor), Valentina Kubale Dvojmoč (University of Ljubljana), Vildana Kubat (University of

Mostar), Sanja Kutnjak Ivković (Michigan State University), Dejan Lavbič (University of Ljubljana), Gordana Lažetić (University Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje), Sara Lilli (Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies and IMT School for Advanced Studies), Branko Lobnikar (University of Maribor), Geert Luteijn (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Freideriki Makri (Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA)), Konina Mandal (O.P. Jindal Global University), Marica Marinović Golubić (University of Zagreb), Igor Martinović (University of Rijeka), Bill McCarthy (Rutgers University), Tine Mesarič (University of Maribor), Gorazd Meško (University of Maribor), Anže Mihelič (University of Maribor), Milena Milićević (Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research), Richa Mishra (Parul University), Maja Modic (University of Maribor), Elena Mujoska Trpevska (University Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje), Angus Nurse (Anglia Ruskin University), Zala Osterc (University of Maribor), Paweł Ożga (University of the National Education Commission), Iva Parenta (University of Rijeka), Gal Pastirk (Science and Research Centre Koper), Olivera Pavićević (Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research), Kristina Pavli (University of Maribor), Dejan Pavlović (New University), Tinkara Pavšič Mrevlje (University of Maribor), Ivan Perkov (University of Zagreb), Martina Pleško (University of Zagreb), Teja Primc (University of Maribor), Andreja Primec (University of Maribor), Kaja Prislan Mihelič (University of Maribor), Jan Provazník (Masaryk University), Josip Rastko Močnik (Singidunum University), Anton Hendrik Samudra (University of Leeds), Mirzo Selimić (Center for Business Studies), Beulah Shekhar (Karunya University), Nidhi Singh (Parul University), Kiti Skočir (University of Maribor), Boštjan Slak (University of Maribor), Amer Smailbegović (DTCare Sarajevo), Andrej Sotlar (University of Maribor), Aleksandar Stevanović (Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research), Uroš Svete (Government Information Security Office), Mojca Tancer Verboten (University of Maribor), Bojan Tičar (University of Maribor), Bernarda Tominc (University of Maribor), Andromachi Tseloni (Nottingham Trent University), Anastasios Valvis (Centre for Security Studies (KEMEA)), Ioannis Vlassis (Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime), David Wall (University of Leeds), Tanya Wyatt (United Nations), Maria Vittoria Zucca (Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies and IMT School for Advanced Studies), & Uglješa Ugi Zvekić (Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime).



Conference Program





Programme of the 15th Biennial International Conference Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe: New Risks, Crime, Policing, Courts, Prisons and Security in the Post-COVID-19 Times – Challenges and Opportunities

Time: 8–10 September 2025

Conference venue: City hotel, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Day 1, Monday, 8 September 2025

09.00–09.15 Opening of the Conference and Welcome Addresses

Chair: Katja Eman

Igor Bernik, Dean of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor

Dean Korošak, Vice-rector for Science and research, University of Maribor

09.15–09.20 Award Presentation

Igor Bernik and Gorazd Meško

**09.20–09.40 On the Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe Conference –
15 International Biennial Conferences Held So Far (1996–2025)**

On the Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe Conferences

Gorazd Meško

09.40–10.30 Plenary Session I. – Living in a Fast-Changing World Full of Uncertainties

Chair: Rok Hacin

Abrupt Changes and Long-Term Transformations

Josip Rastko Močnik

Unpacking the Security Discourse and Perceptions of Threats in Western Societies

Aleš Bučar Ručman

Discussant: Zoran Kanduč

10.30–10.50 Break (A group photo)**10.50–11.35 Plenary Session II. – Comparative Criminology, Criminal Justice and Security Studies**

Chair: Katja Eman

Security Fields Pre- and Post-COVID-19: Some Conceptual, Empirical and Practical Challenges

Matt Bowden

The Changing Security Sector – Decentralised, Pluralised and Privatised but Still Effective and Accountable?

Andrej Sotlar

11.35–12.45 Lunch Break**12.45–14.05 Plenary Session III. – Criminal Justice Research, Policymaking and Practice**

Chair: Katja Eman

Bridging the Gap between Police Science and Police Practice: Police Leaders' Perspective

Krunoslav Borovec, Sanja Kutnjak Ivković

Different Stakeholders in Assessing the Performance, Efficiency, and Quality of Police Organizations

Branko Lobnikar

A Comparative Approach to Policing During the COVID-19 Pandemic: On Experiences and Lessons Learned

Sanja Kutnjak Ivković

Discussant: John A. Eterno

14.05–14.20 Break**14.20–15.20 Plenary Session IV. – Cyber Criminology and Cyber Security**

Chair: Anže Mihelič

The Cybercrime Ecosystem: The Challenges of New Pathways into Cybercrime

David Wall

Advanced Cybersecurity: The Interaction in the Future Digital Society, Digital Inclusion, and Cyber Resilience

Igor Bernik

Discussant: Uroš Svetec

15.20–15.35 Break

15.35–16.55 Plenary Session V. – Criminal Investigation – The Central Theme of Policing?

Chair: Danijela Frangež

The Role and Reliability of Forensic Techniques in Criminal Investigation

Željko Karas

Criminal Investigation in the Digital Age – Gathering and Handling Electronic Evidence

Benjamin Flander

Criminal Investigation in Slovenia: Challenges, Best Practices and Emerging Threats

Danijela Frangež

Discussant: Mitja Jager

16.55–17.05 Break

17.05–18.05 Plenary Session VI. – Green Criminology and Protection of the Environment I.

Chair: Katja Eman

Crimes that Affect the Environment and Security

Tanya Wyatt

CRIMEATE: A Tri-continental Study Mapping the Climate-Crime Nexus in Rural India, Brazil, and South Africa

Beulah Shekhar, Ameenul Abdullah KS

Green Criminology Goes Rural – Have Environmental Crimes and Harms in Rural Communities Been Ignored in the Past?

Katja Eman

18.05–19.00 Denver, Colorado, ACJS 2025: Through the Eyes of Criminal Justice and Security Students

Matej Enci, Alen Golobič, Tine Mesarič, Kiti Skočir

19.15–21.30 Reception hosted by Dean Igor Bernik

Day 2, Tuesday, 9 September 2025

09.00–10.30 Plenary Session VII. – Green Criminology and Protection of the Environment II.

Chair: Katja Eman

Greening Justice: Ecojustice and Remediating Environmental Harm

Angus Nurse

Regulating Plastic Rivers: A Study of Microplastic Pollution and Regulatory Deficits in India's Freshwater Systems

Richa Mishra, Debarati Halder, Nidhi Singh

Impact of Organized Environmental Criminal Groups on the Safety of Slovenia

Benjamin Franca

Green Criminology and Peacetime Activities of the Slovenian Armed Forces

Katja Eman, Gorazd Meško

10.30–10.35 Break

10.35–11.15 Plenary session VIII. – Comparative Criminology in Europe

Chair: John A. Eterno

European Comparative Criminology: Bridging Insights between Western and Central/Eastern Regions

Marcelo F. Aebi

An Overview of Research on Legitimacy and Self-legitimacy in Slovenian Police and Prisons

Rok Hacin

11.15–11.30 Break

11.30–12.35 Panels I.–III.

Panel I. – Legal Perspectives of Criminal Justice and Security

Chair: Bojan Tičar

Implementation of GDPR in Slovenian Higher Education

Mojca Tancer Verboten, Kristina Pavli, Miha Dvojmoč

Dusk of Lay Judges in Czech Criminal Proceedings?

David Čep

Confiscation of Unexplained Wealth – Necessity or Threat?

Jan Provazník

Transition of Petty Crimes into Misdemeanours Against Public Order

Bojan Tičar, Gal Pastirk, Andreja Primec

Panel II. – Deviance, Delinquency, Crime and Crime Prevention I.

Chair: Branko Lobnikar

Different Faces of Victimization of Asian Migrant Workers in Croatia

Sanja Kutnjak Ivković, Valerio Baćak, Irena Cajner Mraović, Krunoslav Borovec, Marica Marinović Golubić, Ivan Perkov

Modus Operandi of Serial Killers: A Criminal Psychology Perspectives

Paweł Ożga

Mobile Apps as Tools for Preventing Sexual Violence in Nightlife

Tinkara Bulovec, Katja Eman

Measuring Elder Abuse in Slovenia: Insights from Caregivers' Perspectives

Teja Primc, Branko Lobnikar, Kaja Prislan Mihelič

Panel III. – Deviance, Delinquency, Crime and Crime Prevention II.

Chair: Vanja Erčulj

Integrity and Independence of Criminal Justice in Western Balkans

Uglješa Ugi Zvekić, Ioannis Vlassis

Hand Car Washes as Locations of Modern Slavery in England

James Hunter

Drawing Conclusions Using the iSquare Protocol to Examine Public Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders

Sasha Goodwin

Attitudes Towards Intimate Partner Violence: Gender and Environmental Differences in Slovenia

Vanja Erčulj

12.35–14.00 Lunch Break

14.00–15.30 Panels IV.–VI.

Panel IV. – Security, Private and Corporate Security

Chair: Anže Mihelič

Evaluation of the Local Challenges in Predicting Large-Scale Security Events

Anže Mihelič, Dejan Lavbič, Sandi Gec

The Future of Private Security in Slovenia: What the Science Says?

Andrej Sotlar, Miha Dvojmoč, Maja Modic, Bernarda Tominc

Training Active Shooter Response in Non-US Jurisdictions: Bosnia and Herzegovina

J. Pete Blair, Amer Smailbegović, Andrew Brown

Providing Active Shooter Response Training to Civilians and Educational Institutions

Amer Smailbegović, J. Pete Blair, Mirzo Selimić

Cross-Sectoral Cooperation Approach as a Crisis Management Solution

Dejan Pavlović, Valentina Kubale Dvojmoč, Miha Dvojmoč

The Recurrent Ritualisation of Surveillance in India: Anatomising the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022

Konina Mandal

Panel V. – Prisons and Penal Sanctions

Chair: Rok Hacin

The Roles of Offenders in THB in Greece: Prison Insights

Christiana Aposkiti, Alexandros Arfaras, Freideriki Makri, Dimitris Androulakis, Anastasios Valvis

Improving Prison Quality of Life Through Security Staff-Prisoner Relations

Teodora Gojković, Olivera Pavićević

Institutional Factors and Support in Prison Security Climate in Serbia

Milena Milićević

Prison and Probation: Media Narratives in the Croatian Context

Martina Pleško

A Comprehensive Review of Legitimacy Studies in the Prison Environment

Zala Osterc, Gorazd Meško, Rok Hacin

Existing Problems and New Challenges for the Croatian Prison System

Marija Đuzel

Panel VI. – Deviance, Criminology of Place & Cyber Criminology

Chair: Yarin Eski

Data First Project: Linked Administrative Justice Data Research Opportunities and Policy Insights

Andromachi Tseloni

Behind Closed Gates: Thefts and Burglaries in Polish Rural Communities

Emilia Jurgielewicz-Delegacz

Scam Cities: Criminal Hubs in Transnational Cybercrime Networks

Sara Lilli, Maria Vittoria Zucca

Judicial Conviction and Electronic Criminal Evidence Framework: A Comparative Analysis of Indonesia and the Netherlands

Anton Hendrik Samudra, Subhajit Basu

To the Moon and Back. A Critical Space Criminological Perspective on Serbo-Chinese Collaboration in Lunar Missions

Yarin Eski, Geert Luteijn

15.45–18.30 A City Tour – Crime Mapping of Ljubljana – “Crime” Hot Spots (A Criminological Experience in the City)**Day 3, Wednesday, 10 September 2025****10.00–11.30 Panels VII.–IX.****Panel VII. – Deviance, Delinquency, Crime, Crime Prevention III.**

Chair: Iza Kokoravec Povh

Violence Against Parents by Adult Children

Monika Klun, Aleš Bučar Ručman, Danijela Frangež

Gender, Violence & Social Stress: England & Wales, 1977–2020

Emily Gray, Stephen Farall, Andromachi Tseloni

Juvenile Delinquency's Risk Factors in the Post COVID-19 Times

Gordana Lažetić, Elena Mujoska Trpevska

Asking for Help in an Online Community

Tinkara Pavšič Mrevlje, Vanja Erčulj

Patterns of Victimization Among Rural and Urban Juveniles

Iza Kokoravec Povh, Ineke Haen Marshall, Gorazd Meško

Panel VIII. – Legal and Criminal Justice Perspectives on Criminal Justice and Security

Chair: Silvo Grčar

Confidentiality vs. Transparency in Criminal Procedure: Croatia's New Disclosure Offence in a European Context

Igor Martinović

Transparency in Police Investigations: Comparative Models and ECtHR Practice

Iva Parenta

Criminal Law Responses to Environmental Offences in the Republic of Serbia

Aleksandar Stevanović

Environmental Crime of the Armed Forces in the Republic of Slovenia

Silvo Grčar, Andrej Sotlar, Katja Eman

Panel IX. – Policing, Criminal Investigation and Victim/Witness Protection

Chair: Boštjan Slak

Criminal Intelligence: Insights from U.S. and Implications for Slovenia

Boštjan Slak

Procedural Protection of Witnesses of Rape in War Crimes

Adnan Jusufspahić, Vildana Kubat

Crime, Policing, and Voter Turnout in Chicago's 2023 and 2019 Mayoral Elections

Bill McCarthy, John Hagan, Daniel Herda

Revisiting Investigation: Nuances of Preliminary Inquiry under Indian Criminal Procedure

Konina Mandal

11.30–11.45 Break**11.45–12.30 Final Plenary – Between Science, Policy and Practice**

Chair: John A. Eterno

The Rift between Science and Policy and How to Overcome It

Chris Eskridge

Comparative, Translational and Public Criminology

Gorazd Meško, John A. Eterno

12.30–13.45 Roundtable – Future of the Criminal Justice and Security Studies, Policy Making and Practice in Central and Eastern Europe

Chair: Gorazd Meško

Participants: Marcelo F. Aebi, Igor Bernik, John A. Eterno, Danijela Frangež, Richa Mishra

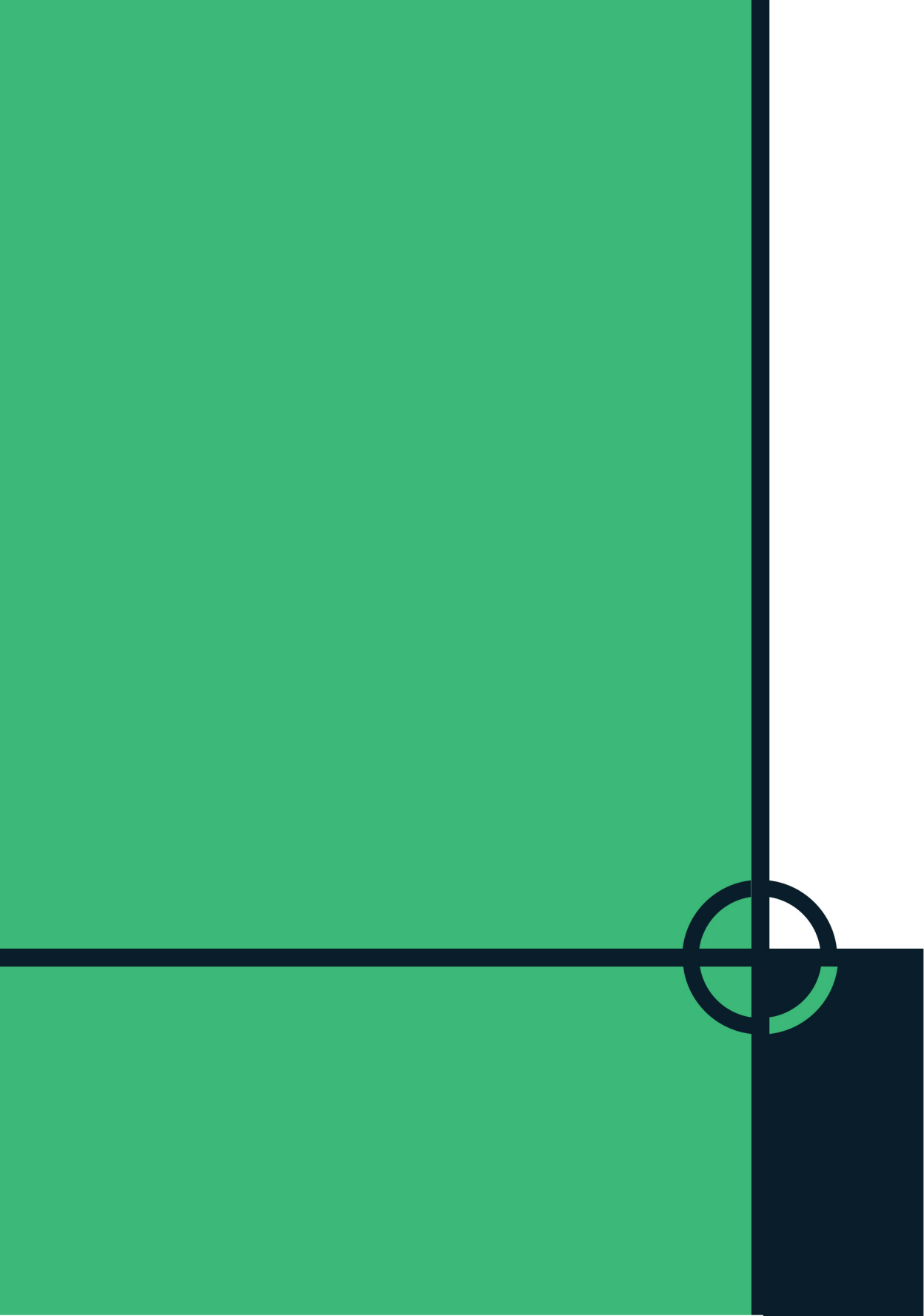
13.45–14.00 Closing of the conference

Gorazd Meško and Katja Eman



Plenary Speakers







Ameenul Abdullah KS

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Ameenul Abdullah K S is a UGC Junior Research Fellow in Criminology, currently pursuing his PhD at Karunya Institute of Technology & Sciences, Coimbatore, focusing on the climate change & crime nexus in BRICS nations. He holds a master's in criminology with a specialisation in Forensic Psychology from NICFS, NFSU, New Delhi, and a Bachelor's in Forensic Science Honours from Jain University. Formerly an Assistant Professor at Nehru Arts and Science College, he has actively contributed to both academic and policy platforms. Ameenul has represented India at prestigious global events such as the 7th BRICS International School in Moscow, the World Youth Festival in Sochi, and the BRICS Youth Innovation Summit in South Africa. He has presented research at international conferences, including the Women in Corrections Conference (Bangkok), Stockholm Criminology Symposium, and is invited to the upcoming American Society of Criminology Conference in Washington, USA. His work on drug trafficking in BRICS earned him the Best Paper Award at the BRICS International Symposium. With expertise in organised crime, human trafficking, juvenile justice, and forensic psychology, Ameenul is a rising voice in global criminology, committed to advancing justice through research, policy, and international collaboration.

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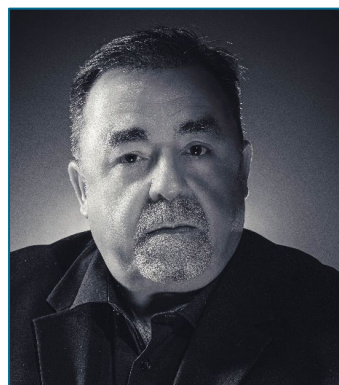
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Igor Bernik, Ph.D., is a Professor of Security Sciences at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Slovenia. His research areas include information systems, cybersecurity, and the increasing demands for cybersecurity awareness. He is the (co-)author of several scientific books and articles published by reputable publishers and journals.

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Krunoslav Borovec is a police officer in charge of the preparation and implementation of research projects at the Police Academy in Zagreb, Croatia. He received his Ph.D. in prevention science at the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, University of Zagreb. Throughout his 30-year-long police career, he obtained many different leading positions within the police system, including the Dean of the Police College, Advisor to the Minister of the Interior, Assistant Director General, and Head of the Police Directorate. He was a member of the Community policing implementation Expert team. He has authored numerous scholarly publications in the field of policing, and his scientific interest and research work are related to community policing, crime prevention, public perception and confidence in the police, police integrity, legitimacy, and diversity.

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Matt Bowden leads the Culture & Society Research Hub at Technological University Dublin, Ireland, and is a senior lecturer in sociology at the School of Social Sciences, Law & Education. His research interests include rural crime, the study of security fields, and security in the context of the Anthropocene epoch. He is co-founder of the Bristol University Press book series on Research in Rural Crime and a member of the international editorial board of the International Journal of Rural Criminology. He has also been a key contributor to the growing interest in applying the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu in security studies and in criminology more generally.

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Aleš Bučar Ručman, Ph.D., associate professor of sociology at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor. His research is focused on various forms of deviance and violence, (in)formal social control mechanisms, and social solidarity. He reflects on these issues mainly through the analysis of relations between power holders and marginalised groups (e.g., immigrants and people with disabilities). Currently, he is the head of the international Erasmus+ project entitled With knowledge against bullying, which aims to gain insight into the bullying situation in Slovenia and Croatia and develop culturally specific and efficient evidence-based anti-bullying prevention and early intervention programs.

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Katja Eman, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Criminology at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor. Her research interests include criminology (especially green and rural criminology), victimology, penology, crime prevention, and crime mapping. She has co-authored publications on crime and criminal justice, including crime victims in general and victims of environmental crime, as part of her studies in the field of green criminology. In the past decade, she participated in different national and European research projects: Safety and Security in Local Communities: Comparison of Rural and Urban Environments (2019-2024), Water Crimes in Europe (2016-2017), and the project SHINE on sexual harassment in nightlife city areas (2020-2023). She is currently a lead researcher in the national project Risks due to natural and environmental disasters in the areas of the Slovenian Army operation (2023-2025).

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Chris Eskridge currently serves as a Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska. He took his Ph.D. in public administration from Ohio State University in 1978. Prior to his appointment to the faculty at the University of Nebraska in that same year, he worked in the Economic Crime Unit of the Utah Attorney General's Office, as a Legislative Aide in the Utah House of Representatives, and as an Investigator in the Utah County Attorney's Office. He also worked in the area of private security and university security and served as the Assistant to the President of the Lincoln Foundation. He served as the Executive Director of the American Society of Criminology for many years.



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John A. Eterno, Ph.D. is Professor, Director of Graduate Studies in Criminal Justice, and a retired NYPD Captain. He has penned numerous books, chapters, articles and editorials on various criminal justice topics. His research has appeared on the front page of The New York Times. He has published various op-eds in The New York Times, The Atlantic, and The Guardian. Among his books is *The Crime Numbers Game: Management by Manipulation*. He is the author of many peer reviewed articles such as 'Police Manipulations of Crime Reporting: Insiders' Revelations' in *Justice Quarterly* and 'Forcible Stops: Police and Citizens Speak Out' in *Public Administration Review*.

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Benjamin Franca is the Head of the Property Crime Division at the Criminal Police Directorate of the General Police Directorate. He has 27 years of experience within the police. During his service in the police, he graduated from the Faculty of Maritime Studies, earning the title of Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering. He began his career as a police officer and continued his work in the criminal police, where he gained experience in the fields of forensic crime scene investigation, investigation of violent and sexual offences, property crime, and environmental crime. Within the police, he is the initiator of a systemic approach to the investigation of environmental crimes. His work is primarily focused on operational activities in the field of investigation of transboundary property and environmental crimes. He is actively involved in several Europol and EU-funded projects in the area of environmental crime.

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Danijela Frangež, Ph.D., is an associate professor of criminology and the head of the Chair of Criminal Investigation at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor. Her research focuses on criminal investigation, different forms of violence, and trafficking in human beings.



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Rok Hacin, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Criminology at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor. His research focuses on the legitimacy of criminal justice, police and policing, crime mapping, penal policy, and crime and penal statistics. He has published numerous scientific articles in national and international scientific journals such as the *European Journal of Criminology*, *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *Policing* and *Revija za kriminalistiko in kriminologijo*, as well as a scientific monograph and chapters in national and international monographs published by renowned publishers, such as Routledge, Springer. He was a lead researcher in a project entitled “Research in the field of professional competencies of prison workers and relations in prisons” (2021-2022).

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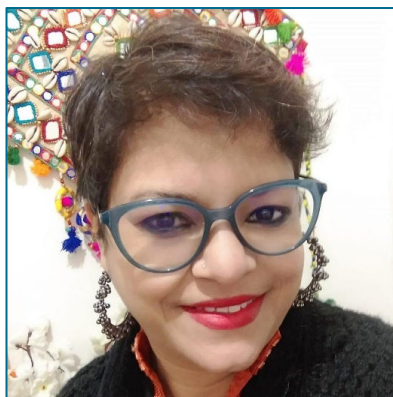
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His research interests include criminal investigation and evidence in a criminal procedure. His recent publications include papers on undercover police activities and a textbook on criminal investigation. He is an editor of the Police and Security Journal and the Vice Dean for research, quality and international cooperation. He published works on various aspects of criminal investigation, such as the share of certain types of evidence in criminal investigation, the relationship between material and personal sources, factors that contribute to the effectiveness of criminal investigation, and the like. He is currently editing a collection of papers on the history of the police in Croatia.

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Sanja Kutnjak Ivković, Ph.D., S.J.D., is a Professor at the School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University. She holds a doctorate in criminology and a doctorate in law. She currently serves as a Co-Editor of *Policing: An International Journal*. Professor Kutnjak Ivković has served as Chair of the American Society of Criminology International Division, as Vice Chair and Chair of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences International Section, and is a co-founder and Co-Chair of the Law and Society Association Collaborative Research Network on Lay Participation.

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Branko Lobnikar, Ph.D., earned his doctorate in human resource management from the University of Maribor. He is a full professor of security studies at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security. As a collaborator with international organizations and the Slovenian police, he has contributed to training security experts abroad. He was appointed State Secretary twice, at the Ministry of Public Administration (2010) and the Ministry of the Interior (2022). His research focuses on strengthening integrity in security institutions, preventing radicalization and extreme violence, addressing domestic violence and elder abuse, and exploring smart policing initiatives.

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Gorazd Meško, Ph.D., is a Professor of Criminology at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Slovenia. His research interests are crime prevention, safety and security in local communities, legitimacy of criminal justice and victims of crime, and especially the development of rural criminology in Europe. He is the author of criminological articles covering comparative criminology, rural criminology, environmental crimes, feelings of safety/fear of crime, policing, and crime prevention. His recently (co)edited books include *Rural Criminology in Global Perspective: State of the Art on the World's Continents* (in print, 2025) - *The UN Sustainable Development Goals and Provision of Security, Responses to Crime and Security Threats, and Fair Criminal Justice Systems* (2024), *Mapping Victimological Landscape in the Balkans* (2020), *Water, Governance and Crime Issues* (2020), *Trust and Legitimacy in Criminal Justice: European Perspectives* (2015), *Handbook on Policing in Central and Eastern Europe* (2013), and *Understanding and Managing Threats to the Environments in Southeastern Europe* (2011). He has been the Ambassador of the British Society of Criminology since 2015. He has contributed to the development of criminology research and university programmes in the region of SE Europe and beyond. He is a lead editor of a scientific book on 50 years of the University of Maribor (2025).

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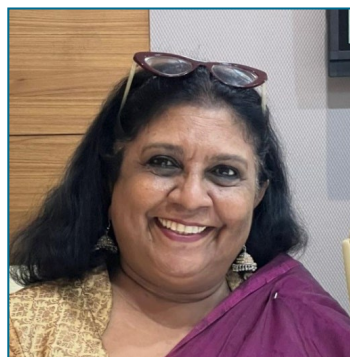
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CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: NEW RISKS, CRIME, POLICING, COURTS, PRISONS AND SECURITY IN THE POST-COVID-19 TIMES – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES, BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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