

FIFTEENTH EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY CONFERENCE IN PERSPECTIVE OF ESC FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT

Review

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INTRODUCTION

The 15th European Society of Criminology (ESC) conference, “Criminology as *unitas multiplex*: Theoretical, epistemological and methodological developments”, was held in Porto (Portugal), on September 02 – 05, 2015. The conference was attended by more than 1200 participants – scientists, researchers, practitioners, students and other guests. Participants had an opportunity to hear and discuss more than 900 presentations within about 300 sessions.

Traditionally, ESC supports young criminologists to attend the annual conference. This year, ESC fellowship recipients were Ivona Shushak and Angelina Stanojska (FYRO Macedonia) and Srđan Vujovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina). In the pre-conference meeting professor Anna-Maria Getos welcomed the recipients of the ESC fellowship, provided all necessary technical information and clearly suggested useful activities during conference time. Bearing in mind my primary research interests, I planned to visit sessions dedicated to corruption and organized crime issues and sessions dedicated to juvenile offending and juvenile justice. Additionally, I planned to attend all plenary sessions and some sessions with especially interesting topics.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS ATTENDED

Plenary sessions

With the aim to emphasize a comprehensive approach to criminology, the first plenary session posed the question: Can Criminology become an *unitas multiplex*? Considering revolutions in science and the need for problem solving in society, Cândido da Agra made the general conclusion: “Yes, Criminology can and must become a *unitas multiplex*”. In the same light, the second session explained the link between biological and sociological sciences with the aim of showing the relevance of biosocial approaches in contemporary criminology. Richard Tremblay and John Paul Wright presented strong evidence to support these assumptions. In the third plenary session Jorge Quintas and Sveinung Sandberg discussed an applied criminology approach to consider drug policy. Finally, in the fourth session Katja Franko and Hans-Jörg Albrecht addressed global security challenges and called on the field of criminology to contribute an answer to the question of what a secure society should look like.

Sessions related to corruption, corporate crime and organized crime

I presented my research in the session “Tackling Corruption: Preventing and Sentencing”. The presentation described penal policy for corruption offences in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the same light, Eva Inzelt reported on penal policy in Hungary. According to both research presentations, penal policy in both countries is ineffective and share similar issues. After these presentations, Olena Shostko indicated recommendations for better penal policy and discussed new anti-corruption legislative initiatives in Ukraine. Finally, the session closed with the chairman’s presentation, from Prof. Kai Bussmann, who demonstrated the influence of cultural dimensions on exporting well established corporate organizational cultures.

In the session “Corporate and organized crime: Preventing and sentencing”, Anne Alvesalo-Kuusi and Liisa Lähteenmäki presented the turns of the law-making process and to investigate the socio-historical struggle between various interest groups. Marieke Kluin showed her PhD study related to enforcement of regulation by field-level inspectors while Jelle Jaspers explained corporate business cartels in the Netherlands. At the end of the session Peter Szmodics summarized corporate crime prevention through efficient management.

“Corruption and corporate crime” was the name of the session moderated by Sigrid Hiller. The session offered an in-depth approach to corruption prevention for companies, local governments and justice through the recent project “Risk Management of Corruption” (RiKo). Namely, this was shown in two presentations by Carolin Schneider and Daniela Trunk, as well as Sigrid Hiller and Daniela Trunk. Then, in the context of proactive and reactive sources, Aleksandra Jordanoska presented perspectives in corporate crime detection and Algimantas Cepas announced a project related to the genealogy of corruption in modern society.

Sessions related to juvenile delinquency

Welfare systems play one of the most important roles in tackling juvenile delinquency in modern societies. The conference session “Child welfare and delinquency” contained recent research in this field. With a focus on disadvantaged families Tessa Verhallen, demonstrated how labelling processes take place in practice by using a critical discourse analytical approach to social work and child protection practices. Diana Willems presented the results of a study about multiple offenders and the youth welfare system in Germany and indicated main challenges. In the same session Claire Fitzpatrick explained how various strategies of denial, including denial of responsibility and denial of the victim, offer a valuable lens through which to make sense of the treatment of those who have been in care of state welfare systems who are later involved in the justice system as either victims or offenders. At the end of the session, Elke Roevens showed qualitative research into the needs of victims of historical abuse in youth and educational institutions in Belgium.

The session “Juvenile delinquency: Risk factors and contexts” offered empirical results about secondary prevention of juvenile offending. Yaacov Reuven and Limor Yehuda presented the effects of family structure and the quality of child-parent relationships on juvenile and child delinquency among neglecting families. Those negative effects usually put children in significant risk which should be managed. In that direction Peter Wetzels and Katrin Brettfeld presented a diagnostic tool to identify juveniles at risk of serious delinquency as target groups for secondary prevention programs. With the same purpose, Alice Morgado and Maria Da Luz

Vale Dias conducted research with juveniles convicted for serious crimes.

The topic “Experience with imprisonment of young persons” was highlighted by German criminologists Alexandra Schwan, Holger Schmidt Verena Boxberg and Julian Knop. The research presented reported that criminal offences are not rare incidents in youth prisons. Explaining the influence of empathy and relationships with outside family and friends in youth prisons, presenters put attention on recommendations for prison management.

With an idea to base my doctoral dissertation on the results of International Self-Report Delinquency Study in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I attended four related sessions: (1) International self-report delinquency study Part 1: Theoretical and methodological expansions based on the second round, (2) International self-report delinquency study: Update and information (3) International self-report delinquency study: Country based findings and insights from the third round, and (4) International self-report delinquency study: Comparative and theoretical finding from the third round. Through all seventeen presentations it was possible to hear and discuss ISRD methodology, data from the third sweep as well as comparison of the results and their explanation.

Other selected sessions

At the session “International comparative data on crime and criminal justice statistics”, Markku Heiskanen and Anni Lietonen showed crime distribution (suspects, convicted and imprisoned persons) by gender. Starting with the fact that efficient data collection on youth crime and criminal justice is the first step for effective juvenile crime prevention, Claudia Campistol and Marcelo Aebi in their presentation considered the availability of juvenile justice statistics across Europe. It seems that researchers have so many challenges in data collection. Stefan Harrendorf noted most of these challenges and indicated improvements for the data collection methods of future waves. To make a representable image of crime Jörg-Martin Jehle in his presentation advocated for the need for a multi-level statistical approach, based on all stages of the criminal justice system data on recorded crimes: suspected, convicted and sentenced persons.

The session named “Methodological issues in criminal justice research”, pointed out really important questions for researchers. Johanne Yttri Dahl and Heidi Fischer Bjelland discussed the importance of using police register data for scientific research. Referring to similar sources, Georges Steffgen explained the effects of question order on the assessment of police performance. In terms of policy-making impact, Quentin Liger examined existing sources of quantitative data used at the European level to compare Member States and their jurisdictions.

IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION

No matter how experienced you are in criminological research, we should and we can learn more. ESC conference provided me with an opportunity to enhance my knowledge about my primary research interest areas: Corruption and organized crime, as well as juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice. It seems that corruption and organized crime have similar manifestations around Europe. Nevertheless, causes of these criminal behaviors are different as well as their frequency in different societies. On the other hand, frequency of juvenile offending is pretty close in every country in Europe, but causes and manifestations are not so similar.

The conference allowed me to update my knowledge in both fields, crime prevention and reactions to crime, along with the latest developments in criminological research through more than fifteen sessions. Speakers' conclusions indicate that criminal policy for corruption, organized crime and juvenile delinquency in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not adequate. The most significant issues lies in policy which is not based on evidence – on results and recommendations of scientific research. Efficient criminal policy must include requests of criminology as *unitas multiplex*.

Based on personal experience, I would strongly recommend that other criminologists participate in the ESC annual conference as a unique event in Europe. This opportunity offers so many important benefits such as making connections with other criminologists, acquiring new knowledge about the field, introducing the most recent research projects and results as well as ideas and trends, positioning yourself as an expert in your field, providing a great opportunity to network, improving your skills (e.g. language skills and presentation skills), exploring countries, etc. All of these describe my personal benefits from attending the 15th ESC conference. Earning benefits like these gets easier if you become member of ESC. In that way you will be more informed about ESC events, criminological networks as well as recent criminological ideas through Newsletters of ESC and European Journal of Criminology. Also, ESC membership may provide other benefits of financial natures such as lower registration free or ESC Fellowship. The last one provided me the chance to be part of the ESC's story in Porto.

About the author

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