Immigration and Crime

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Course Description

Immigration and crime have a long tradition of being inextricably connected, not only in the public mind, but also among policymakers. Though the question whether there is a nexus between immigration and crime is discussed widely, a clear answer has yet to be found. Whether speaking of an immigration and crime nexus means that immigrants are thought to be more criminal before they migrate (i.e., criminal members of the sending society tend to migrate more often than non criminal members), turn to a criminal lifestyle after settling in the new country (i.e., due to social, political, and/or economical exclusion), or become criminal through the process of immigration itself (hence, immigration causes immigrants or non immigrants or even both to engage in crime) seems unclear. The fact is that members of some disadvantaged minority groups in every Western country are disproportionately likely to be arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for violent, property, and drug crimes. However, not all disadvantaged immigrant groups have higher crime rates than the native born. In fact, most have lower crime rates and recent research findings show that immigration may even contribute to a decrease of the overall crime rate.

Though specifics vary from country to country, Western societies in particular repeatedly state concerns about immigration and crime. Public opinion has frequently linked trends in immigration to social problems in the country, and has been especially concerned about a possible relationship between rising numbers of immigrants and levels of crime and violence. In the public mind, the post 9/11 period has illuminated immigration and religion in the context of terrorism. As a result, many countries have begun to control immigration in the name of safeguarding their nations against terrorism. At the same time, religious profiling and discrimination – especially against Muslim immigrants – seem to be increasing. This course will explore whether the public perception that immigration increases crime (and terrorism) is actually true. We will analyze the links between immigration and crime by looking at and comparing the experiences of North America and Europe. The course will not only explore if and why immigrants commit more or less crime, but will also look at how criminal law and criminality have become increasingly affected by notions of citizenship in a period of globalization and mass mobility. The course will look at undocumented migrants (illegal immigration) and the control of borders as well as trends in punishment of foreigners (particularly in Europe) and their deportation. Finally, we also consider immigrants as victims of crime in various countries.

Course Schedule

Introduction to the course

- Sampson, Robert (2006): 'Open Doors Don't Invite Criminals: Is Increased Immigration Behind the Drop of Crime?' The New York Times. (March 11) A27.
- Mears, Daniel (2002): 'Immigration and Crime: What's the connection?', in: Federal Sentencing Reporter 14(5) Criminal Justice Periodicals: 284-288.
- Giese R. (2011) 'Arrival of the Fittest: Canada's Crime Rate is Dropping as Immigration Increases. Is there a connection?' in The Walrus June 2011 Edition.

The International-Crime Nexus: theoretical background

- Merton, Robert (1938): 'Social structure and anomie', in: American Sociological Review 3: 672- 682.
- Shaw, Clifford & McKay, Henry (2006): 'Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas', in: Cullen, Francis & Agnew, Robert: Criminological Theory – Past to Present. Los Angeles: Roxbury: 95-101.
- Wortley S. (2009). Introduction. 'The Immigration-Crime Connection: Competing Theoretical Perspectives' in International Migration and Integration. 349-358.

Crime and Immigration: The US

- Lee, Matthew and Ramiro Martinez (2009): 'Immigration Reduces Crime: An Emerging Scholarly Consensus.' Sociology of Crime, Law, and Deviance 13: 3-16.
- Rumbaut, Ruben & Walter Ewing (2007) The Myth of Immigrant Criminality and the Paradox of Assimilation. Washington, DC: Immigration Policy Centre.
- Brooks, David (2006): 'Immigrants to be Proud Of.' New York Times. March 30, 2006.
- Jamie Winders (forthcoming): 'Criminalizing Settlement: The Politics of Immigration in the American South', in: Sandra Bucerius and Michael Tonry: The Oxford Handbook on Race, Ethnicity, Immigration and Crime. New York: Oxford University Press.

Crime and Immigration: Canada

- Hagan, John, Ron Levi and Ronit Dinovitzer. 2008. "The Symbolic Violence of the Crime- Immigrant Nexus: Migrant Mythologies in the Americas" (policy essay). Criminology & Public Policy 7:95-112
- Troper, Harold: 'To Farms or Cities: A Historical Tension between Canada and its Immigrants', in: Reitz, Jeffrey (Ed.): Host Societies and the Reception of Immigrants. San Diego: Regents of the University of California: 509-532.

Crime and Immigration: Northern Europe

- Engbersen, Godfried, Arjen Leerkes and Erik Snel (forthcoming): 'Ethnicity, migration and crime in the Netherlands.' In: Sandra Bucerius and Michael Tonry: The Oxford Handbook on Race, Ethnicity, Immigration and Crime. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Koopmans, Ruud (1999): 'Germany and Its Immigrants: An Ambivalent Relationship' Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 25 (4): 627-647.
- Hargreaves, Alec G. "A deviant construction: the French media and the 'Banlieues'." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 22.4 (1996): 607-618.

The Second Generation Effect

- Tonry, Michael (1997): 'Ethnicity, crime and immigration'. In: Crime and Justice, 21: 1-29.
- Berardi, Luca and Bucerius, Sandra (forthcoming): 'Generational differences in crime rates among immigrants'. In: Sandra Bucerius and Michael Tonry: The Oxford Handbook on Race, Ethnicity, Immigration and Crime. New York: Oxford University Press.

Co-offending and Migration: Gangs and Organised Crime

- Antonopoulos, Georgios A. "'Are the 'others' coming?': Evidence on 'alien conspiracy' from three illegal markets in Greece." Crime, law and social Change 52.5 (2009): 475-493.
- Decker, Scott H., Frank Van Gemert, and David C. Pyrooz. "Gangs, migration, and crime: the changing landscape in Europe and the USA." Journal of International Migration and Integration/Revue de l'integration et de la migration internationale 10.4 (2009): 393-408.
- Smith Jr., Dwight C. "Mafia, the Prototypical Alien Conspiracy." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 423 (Jan. 1976): 75-88.

Borders and Illegal immigration

- Melossi D. 2012. 'The Processes of Criminalization of Migrants and the Borders of 'Fortress Europe' in Pickering S. (ed) Borders and Crime: Pre-crime, Mobility and Serious Harm in an Age of Globalization. London: Palgrave. 17-30.
- Heyman JM 2012. 'Constructing a Virtual Wall: Race and Citizenship in US-Mexico Border Policing' in Inda JX and Dowling J (ed) . Stanford: Stanford University Press. 99-115

Citizenship and Punishment

- Aharonson, E. & Ramsay, P. 2010. Citizenship and criminalization in contemporary perspective: Introduction. New Criminal Law Review, 13, 181-189.
- Wacquant, L. 2006. Penalization, Depoliticization, Racialization: On the Over-incarceration of Immigrants in the European Union. In: Armstrong, S. & McAra, L. (eds.) Perspectives on Punishment New York: OUP.
- Lacey, N. 2008. The Prisoners' Dilemma. Political Economy and Punishment in Contemporary Democracies, New York, CUP. (pp 144-169)

Deportation

- Bosworth, M. 2011. Deportation, detention and foreign-national prisoners in England and Wales. Citizenship Studies, 15, 583-595.
- Chan, W. 2005. 'Crime, deportation and the regulation of immigrants in Canada.' Crime, Law & Social Change, 44, 153-80.

Crimes against Migrants and the War on Terror

- Hendricks, Nicole et al. (2007): 'Beyond the Numbers: Hate Crimes and Cultural Trauma within Arab American Immigrant Communities', International Review of Victimology, 14: 95-113.
- Watts, Meredith (2001): 'Aggressive Youth Cultures and Hate Crime: Skinheads and Xenophobic Youth in Germany', American Behavioral Scientist 45: 600-615.