

# Crimmigration in Europe

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Borders have seemed to be a relic from the past across Europe for some decades now, and, apart from law enforcement officials, few people have expressed doubts with respect to this new era. In his 2010 paper entitled ‘Towards a Common European Border Security Policy’, Georgiev forecast future challenges for border security within the European Union (EU). Chief among these was the prediction of an increase in illegal or irregular migration into European territories arising chiefly from regional conflicts and failing or failed states. He speculated that mounting unrest in areas such as the Middle East would be a significant cause of increased ‘unwanted’ migration. Furthermore, Georgiev commented: ‘given the current difficulties of some Member States to manage and prevent illegal migration flows, the gap in capabilities and resources for addressing the future challenges is worrying’ (2010: 265). The current wave of mass migration – the largest and most visible since the Second World War – has thrown the international community into disarray. On top of existing worries about transnational crime, terrorist threats and the sustainability of national welfare state arrangements, the impact of this modern exodus has been acutely felt across Europe. Both mainstream media and European leaders have characterized the situation as a ‘crisis’, a ‘state of emergency’ and even ‘Europe’s meltdown’ (Daley, 2015; Foster, 2015; Graham-Harrison et al., 2015; Traynor, 2015). It has further exposed serious weaknesses in the EU’s governance and institutions that echo experiences of the financial crisis. The current situation has highlighted the continued existence of ‘two Europes’, that is, a division between North-Western and South-Eastern Europe and a wide gap between European ideals and citizens’ perceptions and fears. The culmination of these reactions to modern-day mass migration has been in stark contrast to European laws and policies, especially the principle of free movement of persons. The Schengen Agreement and the Dublin III Regulation – both cornerstones of European

border security policy – have in effect been disregarded, and, struggling with the balance between security and mobility, Brussels was not in a position to stop it (Graham-Harrison et al., 2015; Traynor, 2015). Immigration has become thoroughly securitized at both a European and a national level and fundamental EU principles are now under debate.

Links between crime, security, migration and integration are far from new (Tonry, 1997), but since the ‘asylum crisis’ of the 1990s they have become more established, resulting in a series of policy and legislative reforms targeting migrants in member states. These developments, which are now rapidly accelerating, seem to fit into the broader trend for which scholars have coined the term *crimmigration*, the growing merger of crime control and immigration control (Guia et al., 2011). In this fairly recent and largely abstract crimmigration debate, there have been attempts to more thoroughly interconnect crime, security and migration at a theoretical and empirical level, with an eye for recent changes. Nevertheless, the debate remains very much focused on the United States. As far as Europe is concerned, the debate has usually focused on securitization at the level of political and policy discourses. In most instances the focus is on criminalization rather than on crime and concrete attempts to deal with it, which is unsatisfactory from the perspective of criminology as a discipline (Killias, 2011). In this special issue, by contrast, we take up the concept of crimmigration more concretely and examine its applicability, relevance and limitations for understanding the European context and individual European countries. Contributors examine the importance of national social and political contexts while analysing more general trends and issues in immigration and crime. By bringing together quantitative and qualitative empirical and theoretical contributions from a variety of European countries, in this special issue we want to focus on the question of whether the process of crimmigration is as visible on the European continent as it is in the United States and, if so, to what extent it has distinctive characteristics, drivers and outcomes. This is relevant not only from a criminological point of view, but also for further thinking about mobility within the EU.

## **This issue**

Without suggesting that this special issue is able to paint the full picture, the articles do demonstrate how crimmigration is clearly operating in Europe, changing policing practices and chipping away at solidarity within the EU. Yet, closer investigations into the particular dynamics and developments in Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece and Sweden – major migrant destination routes – show not only how migrants are subjected to crime control mechanisms, often because they are poor, other, ethnic minorities and perceived as risks, but also how migrants elude these mechanisms. The contributions point to gaps in the exclusionary logic of crimmigration to show how controls are sometimes mobilized to *include* migrants into the polity, sometimes to fill the needs of the labour market and at other times in recognition of their rights.

Moving from a global scale to the national and local levels, the contributors add new layers of nuance to this complex phenomenon, highlighting areas of convergence

but also divergence. Nancy Wonder's case study on Spain emphasizes how global pressures and the neoliberal economic agenda of the EU manifest at the local level, challenging the country's previous history of incorporating migrants into the polity. Maartje van der Woude and Joanne van der Leun's large-scale study of Dutch border policing introduce the 'grey areas' of crimmigration, where face-to-face interactions and officers' discretion play an integral role in the processes of inclusion and exclusion. Likewise, Giulia Fabini's in-depth look at policing in a northern Italian city shows how crimmigration functions as a sorting mechanism, a gendered and racialized hierarchy of both inclusion and exclusion, where female sex workers from Nigeria, for example, are subject to intensive controls whereas irregular female domestic workers and other day labourers are essentially incorporated into the labour market. Leonidas Cheliotis's examination of Greece argues that crimmigration is a type of 'punitive inclusion' for labour market purposes, sharing some of the same features as identified in the cases of Spain and Italy. As we move to the final contributions, we can see some divergences and variation in the processes of crimmigration. Jelmer Brouwer, Maartje van der Woude and Joanne van der Leun's quantitative discourse analysis of media representations of migrants in the Netherlands found that, in contrast to common perceptions, the media are not driving or popularizing the criminalization of migration but are more likely to be following politicians. Vanessa Barker's case study of the EU Roma in Sweden argues that welfare state dynamics provide much of the driving force behind Nordic border controls, where inclusionary tendencies have exclusionary effects, what she calls a form of 'benevolent violence'. By taking up these local and national contexts, we aim to raise new sets of questions about the practices and logics of crimmigration but also about the relations between crime and migration in the EU that we hope criminologists will take up in future research. There is work to be done for European criminologists.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the European Society of Criminology and the Law and Society Association, which provided us with the opportunity to organize an unprecedented number of sessions around these themes at their 2015 meetings in, respectively, Porto and Seattle. These meetings enabled us to discuss work in progress and to develop further plans. We are also indebted to all of the anonymous reviewers who agreed to peer review for this special issue. We were struck by how quickly reviewers responded to our requests and how insightfully they responded to each potential submission. We are grateful for their time and attention – the issue is the better for it.

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