



ESIL Interest Group on International Criminal Justice

Annual Report 2021/2022

I. ACTIVITIES

1. Online Roundtable: *Interdisciplinarity and International Criminal Justice*

13 April 2022, 3.30-5.30pm (CET) via Zoom

The field of international criminal justice is situated at the confluence of multiple co-existing, competing and cross-fertilizing regimes. *Normatively*, the field is host to a plurality of actors and institutions, informed by diverse traditions, influenced by varied interpretative methodologies, and often in dialogue with other interrelated and overlapping domains including the fields of human rights and transitional justice. *Factually*, the field examines a plurality of mass atrocity situations, each distinct in terms of their location, participants, size and scope. And *analytically*, the field has been examined and scrutinized from a range of perspectives—spanning disciplines as diverse as law, criminology, anthropology, political science, sociology, psychology, history and philosophy—each seeking to understand particular dimensions of its origins, rationales, meanings and effects.

This online roundtable examined interdisciplinarity in the field of international criminal justice. Interdisciplinarity has been characterised as difficult, if not impossible, particularly if understood as a synthesis of two or more disciplines that produces a novel approach. In practice, interdisciplinary work often does little more than remain grounded in a particular discipline while dabbling in the theory and methods of another. The roundtable sought to put into conversation three scholars who had recently published monographs that engage with the practice of international criminal justice from different disciplinary perspectives: Oumar Ba (Assistant Professor of International Relations, Cornell University), Heidi Matthews (Assistant Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School), and Henry Redwood (Senior Lecturer in International Relations, London South Bank University). A video recording of the event is accessible [here](#).

2. Pre-Conference Workshop: IN/EX-clusiveness Through the Lens of International Criminal Justice | International Criminal Law and Transnational Advocacy: Problematising the International Penal Turn

Annual Conference of the European Society of International Law (ESIL) (Utrecht, 3 August 2022, 2-6pm CET)

In spite of its indisputable failings, the promise of international criminal justice persists as a key narrative for framing advocacy efforts in the face of seemingly new and emerging crises. We have seen this exemplified over the life cycle of its key institutions through the success of carceral feminist victories in centring sexual violence prosecutions. More recently, we also see this penal reflex in response to the systemic and existential threat posed by climate change. Whilst a wide array of regulatory tools have developed outside of international criminal law, this has not stopped calls for the crystallisation of ecocide as a crime. In an era of social media, the practices of online platforms operating in mass atrocity situations such as Myanmar have also begun to be scrutinised by recourse to the vocabulary of international criminal law. Similarly, campaigns for reparations for colonial wrongs are increasingly articulated through the frame of international crimes. For a field that had seen its legitimacy significantly undermined due to the International Criminal Court's alleged 'Africa



bias' and its paralysis over Syria, the Ukrainian conflict also seems to have injected renewed vigour into the project of internationalised penalty. Calls for international criminal prosecutions emerged as some of the clearest legal narratives in the initial days after Russia's invasion. The seduction of individuating aberrant authoritarianism through international criminal law can bring together a range of political actors through the simplified moral outrage that the criminal law consolidates.

At a time of renewed suspicion about the purchase and politics of the domestic penal state, the project of internationalised penalty has yet to see any sustained self-reflexivity over the possibilities as well as limitations of such advocacy avenues. In this workshop, we explored the dynamics of IN/EX-clusiveness produced by an ever-expanding regulatory register of activity and advocacy hinging on international criminal justice that may or may not renew the field. The workshop consisted on two panels with the following participants: Natalie Hodgson (Assistant Professor, School of Law, University of Nottingham), Olivia Nantermoz (PhD candidate, London School of Economics), Sophie Rigney (Senior Research Associate, University of New South Wales), Giovanna Frisso (Senior Lecturer, University of Lincoln), Sarah Zarmsky (PhD candidate, University of Essex), George Hill (Postgraduate Researcher & Leverhulme Scholar, EUI), Daniel Bertram (PhD Candidate, EUI). Barrie Sander (Assistant Professor, Leiden University – Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs) and Michelle Burgis-Kasthala (Senior Lecturer in Public International Law, University of Edinburgh) acted as discussants.

3. Further activities, currently under development, will be organized in 2022 and 2023.

II. GOVERNANCE

1. Current Members of the Coordinating Committee are:

- i. Diane Marie Amann, Regents' Professor of International Law, Emily & Ernest Woodruff Chair in International Law and Faculty Co-Director of the Dean Rusk International Law Center, University of Georgia School of Law
- ii. Michelle Burgis-Kasthala, Senior Lecturer in Public International Law, University of Edinburgh
- iii. Cheah Wui Ling, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore
- iv. Ginevra Le Moli, Assistant Professor, Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, Leiden University
- v. Letizia Lo Giacco, Assistant Professor, Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, Leiden University
- vi. Barrie Sander, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, Leiden University

During the first year of the IG's activities (2020/2021), Dr Ginevra Le Moli has acted as Chairperson and Dr. Letizia Lo Giacco as Co-Chairperson.

During the second year of activity of the Interest Group (2021/2022), Dr Barrie Sander acted as Chairperson and Dr Michelle Burgis-Kasthala as Co-Chairperson.

2. We set up a website (<https://esiligicj.com>) and a Twitter account (@esiligicj) with interesting IG-related and external events. We are proud to say that our Twitter presence has increased - we currently have 771 followers - and seems to have become a forum for international criminal justice enthusiasts to share information on relevant news, publications, etc.