



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

WORKSHOP: INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE ON/ AND FILM

London School of Economics

Centre for International Studies and the LSE Department of Law
12 - 13 September 2016

Proposals are invited for contributions to an interdisciplinary workshop.

AIMS AND SCOPE

Our starting point is that film — in the broadest sense of fiction, documentary, media reportage, and audiovisual court transmissions — is key to the scholarship and practice of international criminal justice.

Films can be figured as ‘telling stories’ of international criminal justice, but at the same time international criminal trials serve as venues for ‘telling stories’ about crimes, guilt, victimisation, including by relaying or narrating the past through images. Films increasingly serve as evidence in war crimes trials or as background information, as if reproducing ‘the historical context.’ Film materials of crimes or international criminal justice also broadly used by the mass media (and in some cases produced by it). Films may be instruments for ‘re-education’ or propaganda, as in the policy of the ‘visible justice’ of the Allies at and after Nuremberg, or in the outreach and education programs of today’s international criminal courts and tribunals. They may appear as political tools, such as in NGO campaigns or state advocacy, or even become accessory instruments of crime, inciting violence. Films can be used to render crimes or institutional practices more sensible and concrete, or to explain ‘what happened’, whilst they may equally advocate or impose a particular view on alleged crimes and responsibilities, obscuring others. Films are also increasingly part of teaching international criminal law, humanitarian law and international relations, and their past.

The workshop is a creative effort to analyse and make sense of disparate ways in which film and international criminal justice relate to each other with different logics, such as in aesthetic, truth, political and legal relations. The workshop is exploratory—we invite participants from a variety of disciplines, backgrounds and practices, with a view to

developing more research over time. Potential themes or directions of analysis may include, for example:

- **Genres of film on international criminal justice:** Fiction, documentary, mixtures of the two? Activism, propaganda, therapy, tragedy, melodrama, parody? How and why do fiction films use ‘real’ images and documentaries? How do different genres of film stand the charge of commodification?
- **Film and histories:** The workshop aims to consider the way histories of international crimes, criminals and their trials and punishments are written through film. What are the dominant images in these films and the codes that the narratives rely upon? What are the tropes of picturing the past?
- **Functions of films** and the questions on their ‘veracity’: is a picture really worth a thousand words? How to deal with the dilemma of the ‘eyewitness’ and ‘truth’, whether it be historical or judicial truth? Are films ‘illustrating’ real crimes and real criminals, in order to confirm their veracity? What role do ‘reenactments’ and new representations (as for example in films by Rithy Panh and Joshua Oppenheimer) play?
- **Agendas and ideologies in films on international criminal justice:** what kind of patterns can be identified between humanitarianism, empathy, caring for ‘suffering strangers’, educative tales of universal justice, and fear, entertainment, up to the ‘pornography of pain’? Does international criminal justice provide a particularly fertile ground for visual means of communication? Why is violence pictured so spectacularly—or is the aim simply to represent it ‘realistically’? Are films gendered and how? Who are the good guys?
- **Dominant images versus absent or obscure images:** some national or regional histories, trials, individual actors have entered the current international criminal justice canon and beyond, featuring in the often-explored archives of reference, up to a point to becoming a ‘clichéography’. Other regions or entire continents have ‘their’ fragments of international criminal justice unknown or filed under a uniform label of ‘show trials’. Why? Can this be ‘corrected’ and how? What are the hierarchies of violence, suffering, ‘crime’ engendered by dominant images and narratives?
- **Teaching international criminal justice with film:** How can films be used in teaching international criminal justice? What kind of films, to teach what?
- **Filmmakers and the political economy of filming ‘atrocities’ and ‘justice’:** we are seeing a new breed of filmmaker—victims, perpetrators and bystanders who film events, on light material, today on their mobile phones. Famous examples include the Serbian paramilitary group Scorpions, Abu Ghraib, or ISIS. What are the effects of the identity of the filmmaker on the perceived veracity of the film? Is the act of filmmaking—and the economy of filmmaking, given that clips can command high prices on the news market—changing the behavior of those engaged in conflict or in international criminal justice?

THE WORKSHOP

The Workshop will be held in the London School of Economics over a day and a half, September 12-13, 2016.

We invite experts, academics and film-makers, to create an event of rich multidisciplinary exchange. The workshop will feature panels, a film showing and a workshop dinner. Each panel will consist of two or three main speakers and a doctoral student or junior faculty member as an assigned first discussant. We anticipate that most workshop presentations will include film extracts or images.

A selection of the workshop papers will be published as a special section in a highly-ranked law journal. Early versions of the papers may also be published as part of the LSE Centre for International Studies Working Paper series.

In addition, the workshop is intended to generate an interdisciplinary network of interested academics and expose and develop themes for future collaborative research by invitees.

PROPOSALS

Proposals for contributions (in the form of academic papers for the most part, though we would welcome contributions in other media, particularly film) should take the form of an abstract of 500 words and contain a filmography, where applicable. They should be accompanied by a 1 page CV and sent by email to the three organisers (below) by 15 March 2016. PhD and junior faculty applications are particularly encouraged.

ORGANISERS

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