

Call for Chapters: Open Access Handbook of the Anthropology of Crime and Criminalisation

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, global knowledge exchange on crime and crime prevention has exploded. In the wake of significant events such as those on 9/11/2001, various (non-)governmental institutions were created and mobilised and have contributed significantly to global (in)security discourses and practices, justifying an array of international and domestic policies, interventions, and invasions.

With this call for chapters, we invite interested scholars to contribute to the first open-access handbook of the Anthropology of Crime and Criminalisation. A renowned international publisher will be contacted to oversee the publication of the handbook. This handbook will include original, state-of-the-art contributions to the field, including reflections from the EASA "[Anthropology of Crime and Criminalisation](#)" ([AnthroCrime](#)) network.

This handbook starts from the premise that the social sciences have played a substantial role in creating and reproducing normative categorizations related to criminality. As the industrial revolution unfolded, Cesare Beccaria (1764) established Western criminal justice and criminal law, unleashing "crime talks" - primarily among white men - about supposed criminals and how to deal with them. The racialised and gendered explanations of the "criminal anthropology" proposed by Cesare Lombroso (1876) profoundly altered the power/knowledge nexus by offering "scientific" explanations of crime that served as justifications for numerous public policies around the world. Meanwhile, formal police institutions developed amid colonial power struggles and rapid urbanisation, and anthropologists were forced to choose between the need to conduct research in specific territories and the ambiguous demands of their governments. In the 20th century, a growing interest in the "dark side" of humanity sedimented in new scientific disciplines such as psychology, which infused social scientific theory with derogatory and stigmatising interpretations of deviant behaviour, while novels, such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965), highlighted the emergence of this popular fascination in the arts.

This handbook starts by recognising that while socio-cultural anthropology has also been implicated in normative projects in the past, yet has also produced a number of critical approaches that pave the way for the future. Postmodernist, critical, and feminist thinking - amongst others - provide critical insights into power, emphasising embodied behaviours in relation to socio-legal and economic conditions. Novel ethnographies about people who are squeezed between power and powerlessness have explored ontological and epistemological issues, and have challenged the notion that crime mainly occurs among certain - pre-identified - groups of people.

Groundbreaking scholars who founded the Anthropology of Crime and Criminalisation (Parnell & Kane 2003; Schneider & Schneider 2008) demonstrated the relevance of ethnography to other disciplines, particularly criminology, by

analysing crime as a process embedded within power structures (criminalisation) and as empirical phenomena (crime).

Objective

Building on critical anthropological interventions and the relatively recent debates in the Anthropology of Crime and Criminalisation, this handbook aims to offer fresh conceptual, theoretical, and methodological frameworks that help us examine the nexus of crime, knowledge and power. We aim to decolonize the study of crime and (de)criminalisation without repeating what sister disciplines have already discussed and without demeaning those who have paved the way from Beccaria to Lombroso and Foucault (to name a few). This handbook of the Anthropology of Crime and Criminalisation provides a comprehensive overview of the study of crime and criminalisation within anthropology yet also offers novel (comparative) ways to approach, study and analyse phenomena related to crime.

Recommended Topics

We strongly encourage contributions from European anthropologists and other countries, institutions, and disciplines engaged in the critical study of crime and (de)criminalization. As part of this handbook, we envision short contributions (4000-5000 words) covering the following general sections but potentially also going beyond them. Please feel free to propose entries that may combine these topics or expand the topics by suggesting novel directions:

1. Crime and Structural Conditions

In this section, we aim to gather contributions that deal with crime and criminalisation processes related to structural conditions such as socio-economic deprivation and abundance in the context of gender, age, race, religious and political beliefs, and globalisation. We seek to broaden our understanding of phenomena that are influenced by similar structural conditions but occur in very different socio-economic environments. By understanding wealth as a constructed continuum rather than a ladder that should be climbed, we aim to navigate the thin line between everyday crime and institutionalised crime and criminalisation.

2. Crime as an Enterprise and Financial Activity

The purpose of this section is to discuss crimes associated with enterprise building and management, as well as everyday life and crime within a financial and entrepreneurial context, to provide critical perspectives on the role of the financial economy in the (de)construction of crime. Through the financial sector and, more generally, through the (business) economy, it is possible to explore criminal(isation) practices, ideologies, and activities from a cross-cutting perspective. Rather than focusing solely on formalised settings, such as banks and offices, we encourage submissions that examine these processes in in-formalised financial and entrepreneurial institutions of all sizes and settings, including the digital world. We

also welcome contributions that examine the complex relationship between finance, business activity, crime and criminalisation.

3. Crime, Policing & Justice

In this section, we examine how crime and criminalisation are being formulated, controlled, reformed, prosecuted, and punished in the present day. As a result of contemporary securitisation processes, criminal justice models have shifted from punitive to preventive, while state and supranational authority has sometimes been globalised and fragmented within a multitude of state and parastatal, formal and informal social groups. Contributions will examine the processes of policing and justice, as well as the perspectives and theories of anthropologists within these fields and their contribution in these settings, including national, international and indigenous, formal and informal criminal justice systems.

4. Crime and Emotion

Cultural criminologists have particularly highlighted the importance of thrills, adrenaline, and other emotions sought through transgression. Instead of providing a merely neuropsychological explanation, this provided an understanding of the social construction of emotions and how cultures and societies handle them. Emotions are gendered, racialised, and classed in discourse, popular culture, and practice. In this section, we intend to examine the intricate relationship between emotions, the body, law, and social norms in particular times and places and different socio-economic and cultural segments of society. What role do emotions play in developing crime and (de)criminalisation processes? Whose emotions?

5. Methods

As anthropologists are bound by various social, legal, bodily, and ethical jurisdictions throughout their careers, they are ideally placed to present a critical perspective on what constitutes transgression, where, and under what circumstances. For example, it is already vital to examine how ethnographers may conduct research without crossing (too many) jurisdictional boundaries. In this section, anthropologists can share their experiences and thoughts regarding crime and criminalisation in terms of ethics, ethnographic (im)possibilities, methodological innovations, and epistemological and ontological challenges. We also encourage meaningful contributions for the individual and stimulate thinking about establishing a community of scholars capable of meeting the many difficulties surrounding fieldwork, especially concerning crime and criminalisation in various parts of the globe today.

Submission procedure (please see contact details below):

The review of chapter proposals will begin immediately and continue until November 30, 2023. While the final length of each chapter will be 4000-5000 words, we request that proposals do not exceed 2750 words, including:

- An abstract (max. 250 words).

- An overview of your proposed chapter (max 2500 words).
- Personal information (name, email address, institution, rank/position/title, short biography).

Publisher

We are currently discussing with international European academic publishers with high-indexed titles (such as UCL Press). It is anticipated that this handbook will be published in 2024/2025.

Editors and contacts

Martijn Oosterbaan is a professor of Anthropology of Religion and Security at Utrecht University. He studied Cultural Anthropology and obtained his PhD at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). He held a postdoc position at the University of Groningen before becoming an Associate Professor at Utrecht University. His research focuses on urban and religious transformations, security, and the role of mass media and popular culture in Brazil and Europe. He has published on these topics, including religion, media, security, and the city in Brazil and Europe. He is a co-founder and current co-chair of the EASA AnthroCrime network.

Davide Casciano is a Research Fellow at UCL Anthropology. He earned a PhD in Social Anthropology at the Sapienza University of Rome, and he was an Adjunct Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Bologna, where he taught a course on the anthropology of crime and criminalization. He has been a PostDoc at the University of Bologna, within the LUXCORE project, and a visiting researcher at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. His research focuses on religious movements, crime, private security, corruption, and Information and Communication Technologies in Africa. He is a co-founder and current co-chair of the EASA AnthroCrime network.

Lene Swetzer is a research assistant at the CCDP and a PhD candidate at the Graduate Institute's Anthropology and Sociology (ANSO) Department. Her research focuses on the links between mobility, space and urban relations in the Strait of Gibraltar, Spain. Lene has a background in Cultural Anthropology and holds a BSc in Anthropology and a MA in Criminology from Utrecht University in the Netherlands. She is a co-founder and current co-chair of the EASA AnthroCrime network.

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