

Call for chapter proposals: Religion, Crime and Law: a Critical Overview

Edited by Abby Day and Russell Sandberg

Most people in the world are religious with religion being a significant social force across societies. A few years ago, many sociologists and criminologists thought religion's influence was decreasing, but now people realise that religion has a continuing, and in some cases increasing, significance, both nationally and globally.

New questions are arising concerning the legal rights and responsibilities of religious actors, the shifting boundaries between public and private, the roles of those who police and enforce individual and collective rights and the type and quantity of religious laws and rules. What is meant by religious equality, and how does this impact on human rights and social justice? Do religious people have the 'right' to follow their religion's teaching if it affects the rights of other people, and who decides?

What is considered to be 'criminal' activity changes over time and place, as does the nature of law and other forms of regulation. Most literature on religion and crime speaks to the normative, taken-for-granted assumption that religious people are 'good'. Such assumptions ignore the way religion actually 'works' on the ground. Globally, terrorism, conflicts and war crimes are often driven by ethno-religious claims and aspirations. Those in positions of religious power and authority sometimes abuse their roles and their adherents. How does the law, and religion, construct certain behaviours as either deviant or permitted, and how is that changing and why?

The activity of such diverse arenas as sharia courts, secular courts and the United Nations further enrich the relationships between religion, crime and law and demonstrate how religion is regulated and represented.

This edited collection, to be published by Wiley, will address the large questions about how religion, often mediated by social and mainstream media, is informed by and affects crime and law. It will also showcase diverse case studies about religion on the margins.

The collection will be organised thematically, around critical issues and experiences. Studies will range from the micro, ethnographic to the large-scale quantitative. Content will span religions and beliefs, challenging and disrupting through difference the tendency to focus mainly on Christianity or the familiar topics of terrorism and blasphemy.

Taking a critical, interdisciplinary, intersectional approach, the collection emphasises the lived experience of people on ground level, shaped by different ethnicities, social classes, genders, sexualities, bodies and cultural contexts.

Using theories and case studies from the Global North and South, this collection aims to help students, teachers and researchers of sociology, law, criminology, media studies and anthropology to understand the critical relationships between religion, crime and law in a complex and changing world.

Each chapter will contain definitions of key terms, examples, suggested questions/activities, a bibliography and recommendations for further reading.

To express interest in contributing a chapter please send a 100-word abstract and short bio note by July 31 2024 to:

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