

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE POWER OF THINGS

Understanding relationships
between objects and crime

ONLINE CONFERENCE AND EDITED VOLUME

For this digital conference and edited
volume we invite contributions that take
an "object-focused" approach to
understanding crime and crime
prevention.

ORGANISERS

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Abstract submission deadline:
16 Nov 2020

Outlines of papers by: 1 Mar 2021
Conference date: 25 Mar 2021
Book chapters due: 5 Jul 2021

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For this digital conference and edited volume we invite contributions that take an “object-focused” approach to understanding aspects of crime and crime prevention. The goal of this conference is to bring discussion of the roles, influences, and power of things into the criminological mainstream.

The discipline of criminology has not ignored the material world. However, studies of the role that discrete ‘objects’ play in crime have largely been restricted to analyses of ‘hot’ objects in the practical field of situational crime prevention. These analyses may provide policy options for target hardening of commonly-stolen goods like mobile phones, but they are deficient in their capacity to engage with the sophisticated socially constructed meanings and cultural/economic uses of objects.

With this conference, we hope to move our discussion of objects beyond functional analyses, towards considering how the meaningful relationships between people and things shape engagement with criminal activity, response to crime, and the experience of criminal justice. Definitions of all of these terms are necessarily broad to encourage a diverse and creative response to this call.

We are hoping to attract contributions that consider a wide bouquet of “objects” and “things” as they relate to crime, including but not limited to surveillance technologies, guns, cars, computer/IT systems/AI, fossils, orchids, fake medication, precious stones and minerals, buildings, facial reconstructions, photographs, art, and likely many things we have not even considered. We encourage contributions that consider theoretical issues in this area as well as contributions that discuss research methodologies or present empirical case studies.

This web conference is hosted by the European Research Council-funded “Trafficking Transformations” project, which studies the roles of human-object relationships in criminal networks involving antiquities, collectable wildlife, and fossils.