

Call for Papers

Approaching Perpetrators: Ethical, Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

For the
American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting
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Deadline: April 1, 2013, to meet the AAA's April 15th deadline

Organizers: Erin Jessee and Tal Nitsán
Liu Institute for Global Issues, The University of British Columbia

Discussant: Jeffrey Sluka, Massey University, New Zealand

In recent years, anthropologists have contributed much to public and academic understandings of state violence and related mass atrocities, as evidenced by the growing anthropological discourses on virtual war, political violence, genocide, and transitional justice. Yet most anthropologists focus on the perspectives of victims and survivors of these atrocities, leaving the subject of perpetrators relatively unexplored. This panel seeks to address this gap in the literature by bringing together anthropologists whose fieldwork draws upon the narratives and experiences of perpetrators, broadly defined.

We invite papers that take a nuanced look at the social, cultural, economic, political and historical processes through which civilians, soldiers, and government officials become perpetrators of state violence and related mass atrocities, and in the aftermath, the politics of memory and history that often influence the myriad ways that transitioning communities respond to their actions. Possible questions for consideration include: What might ethnographic research among perpetrators look like in different settings? What are some of the particular ethical and methodological challenges of conducting ethnographic research among perpetrators? And to what end? Can engaging with perpetrators enhance our understanding of state violence and related mass atrocities?

Those interested in submitting a paper should send an abstract (maximum 250 words) outlining their proposed contribution, along with their full contact and affiliation details to Erin Jessee (erinjessee@gmail.com) no later than April 1, 2013.