



## **Criminological Encounters in a time of social distancing**

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It has been a challenging year and a half for the entire world, and also for the editorial team of Criminological Encounters. For this reason, we want to start this preface with the expression of heartfelt thankfulness to all the reviewers who have, in these difficult circumstances, found the time to assess new submissions and offer advice to their authors. Without this totally free and voluntary labour our (or any) journal would cease to exist.

With this, we also want to stress that Criminological Encounters is a not-for-profit initiative, led by a passionate editorial team who contribute to the journal's progress in their spare time, because they believe the dissemination of research results, often funded by public authorities and, therefore, by citizens, should not be controlled by big publishing companies and stored behind paywalls. Reviewers, contributors and members of the editorial team are not only putting in their time, they become a part of a community of people who believe in the democratisation of knowledge. For that same reason, Criminological Encounters is radically open-access. That is also why it offers a platform to scholars from anywhere on the globe and to contributors with a non-academic background.

It is comforting to see that we are not alone in this endeavour. Criminological Encounters is now a member of the Criminology Open Association of Diamond Outlets (COADO; [www.coado.org](http://www.coado.org)), a network led by Criminology Open initiative ([www.criminologyopen.com](http://www.criminologyopen.com)) and which assembles journals which, like ours, are free to read and publish in.

To take this story one step further, the editorial team has decided that from now on authors and reviewers are given the option of engaging in open rather than double-blind review. In practice, this means that, if both author and reviewer agree to their identity being revealed to the other, the review process becomes an open and constructive dialogue between colleagues wanting to produce the best possible paper. Open review has the additional value of giving credit to the work undertaken by reviewers. The editorial team would like to open a new section in the journal called “commentary”, a space where reviews of published papers are given an audience. Ideally, commentaries are in turn the object of new discussions between authors, all published openly in the journal’s new section.

Criminological Encounters, volume 4, issue 1, consists of 19 contributions, in two thematic sections. The first is a special issue on “Criminology in Latin America”, with 6 full articles, 2 interviews, 2 book reviews and 1 art intervention, guest edited by Matías Bailone, Ana Mária Carinhonha and Cléber da Silva Lopez. The second is a forum, consisting of five short papers on “Digital Technologies in Community Policing”, guest-edited by Lior Volinz and Lucas Melgaço. It is with great pride that we can present this rich collection, after such a challenging time. Enjoy the read!

**Mattias De Backer** is a postdoctoral researcher at KU Leuven and the Université de Liège. He holds a Master's in Philosophy (UGent), a Master's in Urban Studies (VUB), and a PhD in Criminology (VUB). He has worked in the fields of social and cultural geography and criminology, on topics such as public space, urban youth, social control and territory, migration and diversity, participatory and creative research methodologies and post-structuralist philosophy. With Lucas Melgaço, Mattias is editor-in-chief of the open-access journal *Criminological Encounters*. He has published the edited collection "Order and Conflict in Public Space" with Routledge (2016) and the book "Radicalisering: donkere spiegel van een kwetsbare samenleving" with Academia Press (2020).

**Lucas Melgaço** is Associate Professor in the Department of Criminology at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). His main scientific interests are in the domains of urban criminology, surveillance, policing, public order, social movements and protests, and the relationships between information and communication technologies, space and security. He has also worked on translating and introducing the theories of the Brazilian geographer Milton Santos to the English-speaking community. Lucas is co-editor of the books "Protests in the Information Age: Social Movements, Digital Practices and Surveillance" (Routledge, 2018), "Milton Santos: A Pioneer in Critical Geography from the Global South" (Springer, 2017) and "Order and Conflict in Public Space" (Routledge, 2016). He is the editor-in-chief of *Criminological Encounters*.

How to cite this article (APA- 7th ed.): De Backer, M., & Melgaço, L. (2021). Criminological Encounters in a time of social distancing . *Criminological Encounters*, 4(1), 5-7. doi:10.26395/CE21040101



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