

**COUNTERMAPPING STATE CRIME: A CULTURAL CRIMINOLOGICAL
EXPLORATION OF ARBITRARY CONSCRIPTION IN BOGOTÁ**

– Thesis summary –

By

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Summary

Context

The military service in Colombia is a civil duty according to Article 216 of the Political Constitution of 1991. Men over 18 years old are obliged to define their military situation when reaching age of majority, except for high school students who can register upon graduation –women can complete a voluntary military service, but there is no obligation by law. If eligible, they must serve in one of the public armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force or Police) or in the National Penitentiary Institute (INPEC) to obtain a first-class military ID card (*libreta militar*) upon completion. If ineligible, they must pay the compensation fee and any delay fines to obtain a second-class military ID. The Direction of Recruitment and Reserves of the Army centralises the recruitment process on behalf of all military forces and police. The recruitment process is regulated by law (Act 48 of 1993 with legal amendments, and the recently passed Act 1861 of 2017), and includes specific conscription procedures as well as grounds for postponement or exemption from service.

Arbitrary detentions for military conscription (ADMC) refer to recruitment operations that violate the due process and entail a violation of constitutional rights. Until 2015 the most common practice of arbitrary conscription used to be military street round-ups (*batidas militares*). Through these irregular street operations soldiers detained youths not holding a military ID card (*libreta militar*) and transported them –usually in military trucks– to recruitment cantonments or battalions for expedited incorporation and assignment to the field. Round-ups were also conducted in specific facilities frequently visited by youths, such as football stadiums, music festival venues, and Civil Registry Offices where youths apply for their citizenship ID card (*cédula*) after reaching the age of majority. Apart from round-ups in public space, ADMC may also occur ‘on site’: youths risk being detained and incorporated expeditiously when completing their registration or exams in military facilities. A new Recruitment Act explicitly states that ‘By no means will the public armed forces be allowed to conduct detentions or surprise operations to apprehend Colombians who have not registered for or completed the compulsory military service’ (Art. 4, para. 2). This legal change only reaffirms a prohibition already stipulated in Sentences C-789 of 2011 and T-455 of 2014 of the Constitutional Court, based in turn on Opinion No. 8/2008 of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions.

The phenomenon of arbitrary conscription occurs in peripheral rural areas and deprived urban neighbourhoods throughout Colombia. Nevertheless, I focus my empirical

work in Bogotá, the capital city that is both the economic centre and largest urban agglomeration.

Research questions

This thesis was elaborated before the passing of the new Recruitment Act in 2017. Before this legal change, military street round-ups were neither allowed nor formally prohibited by law. Therefore, my original interest was to understand the history, nature, conflicting discourses and social tensions around this phenomenon. This led me to four research questions. First, based on preliminary document reviews and exploratory discussions with social organisations in Bogotá, I found out that street round-ups were a long-standing phenomenon that has barely being recorded and scrutinised. This temporal dimension suggested that investigating its history could be crucial to understand the logics and legitimising discourses behind such coercive practices. My first research question surfaced: How do the particularities of colonialism and post-colonial state formation in Colombia relate to the origins and persistence of arbitrary conscription? (RQ1).

The news coverage on street round-ups, showing an unconventional military-police collaboration, revealed the ambivalence of arbitrary conscription. On the one hand, ADMC could be framed as a state-organised crime. To do so it was necessary to further understand the descriptive features (i.e. systematicity, victimisation patterns, spatial distribution, collusion of state agencies) and aetiology of ADMC. On the other hand, military round-ups could be studied as an informal policing practice, a tropical version of preventive detention running silently in Colombia. In this sense, ADMC would be another piece of the focused deterrence assemblage –articulated with hotspot policing and antisocial behaviour control– aimed at regulating and disciplining low-income youths from peripheral neighbourhoods labelled as ‘problem areas’. ADMC could thus embody the paradox of criminogenic security moving along a deviance-control continuum. These emerging ideas are summed up in my second research question: What are the characteristics, patterns, and functions of arbitrary conscription in Bogotá? (RQ2).

Although oppressive and widespread, arbitrary conscription has also found resistance. The growing popular discontent, media coverage, and denunciation efforts of social organisations resemble a process of criminalisation of state abuse. The dynamic process between normalisation of and resistance to arbitrary conscription can be studied through the interplay of state deviance, law, and culture. This triad serves as a framework to understand ways in which the legal framework affects arbitrary conscription (law – state deviance), military round-ups are accepted or rejected by communities (state deviance – culture), and legal stipulations coincide or diverge from societal values towards military

recruitment (law – culture). These interrogations are summarised in my third research question: In which ways is arbitrary conscription normalised, resisted and denied? (RQ3).

Finally, a spin-off to the third research question is a reflection about the role of my research project in such equilibrium of forces between normalisation, resistance and denial. This led to my final question: How does the mapping of arbitrary conscription under a participatory and action-oriented approach play a role in leveraging resistance efforts and making popular knowledge visible to construct a spatial narrative and a spatial programme of action? (RQ4).

Thesis structure

The structure of the thesis follows the outline presented in the research questions. Chapter 2 explains the methodology, starting with an epistemological reflection on participatory action research. I argue that this approach is appropriate for cultural criminological projects and, in particular, for exploring the concealed topic of arbitrary conscription. The chapter continues with an explanation of the research design, methods, and analytical strategies. Finally, I discuss issues of reflexivity, positionality and ethical dilemmas of implementing an action-oriented research project.

Chapter 3 provides a summarised reconstruction of the history of ADMC in the context of state formation in Colombia, addressing RQ1. I insist on uncovering the continuities of colonial institutions that enable the persistence of arbitrary conscription, which is a rather ancient practice that has survived over centuries. The meta-history of Colombia's statehood development and the micro-happenings of a teenager detained by soldiers during an ADMC in the South of Bogotá are interweaved in a web of meanings that I attempt to discover –if only partially– in this thesis.

The characteristics and functions of arbitrary conscription are explored in Chapter 4. Instead of a Manichean analysis, the cultural criminological perspective allows an understanding of ADMC as crime events and policing practices simultaneously. I first analyse arbitrary conscription through the lenses of state crime literature, showing how this phenomenon is by all criteria a state crime, even if routinised. Then, I suggest an explanatory framework of the motivations, enablers, constraints and controls of arbitrary conscription. From there, I transition to conceiving ADMC as an informal policing technique that serves the purposes of social control and disciplining of youths. These operations thus exemplify the ambivalent meaning of security policies when materialised in space, confirming my motivations for embarking upon doctoral research.

I explore the tensions between normalisation, resistance and denial of arbitrary conscription (RQ3) in Chapter 5. I start by describing the different narratives about military round-ups with the respective assigned labels that represent their normalisation, resistance or denial. Then, I explain the normalisation processes and cultural devices that allow this

practice to remain unsanctioned –and sometimes even accepted and welcome by some people in affected communities. This includes the role of media and other institutions in the ‘heroisation’ –or inverse criminal labelling– of state agents. Third, I explain the emergence of rejection practices and resistance projects against arbitrary conscription, framed in a political philosophy of autonomy. Lastly, I analyse the adaptive practices and discursive instruments of official denial employed by the government to repel resistance efforts.

Chapter 6 is an extended discussion on the role of this research project in the dynamics of arbitrary conscription (RQ4). Following the spirit of action research, I reflect on the way academic engagement with activist groups plays a role, albeit limited, in disrupting the normalisation-resistance-denial equilibrium. I present ‘countermapping crime’ as a strategy that results from combining crime mapping, spatial analysis, and ethnographic and qualitative methods in a participatory and emancipatory approach. Although the term ‘mapping’ might seem misleading at first, countermapping crime goes well beyond cartographic production and refers more broadly to spatial praxis based on the recovery and re-creation of popular wisdom.

Methodology

To conduct this project I adopt Participatory Action Research (PAR), an epistemological framework that situates research in a wider social context beyond the frontiers of academia. Theorists from the Third World introduced PAR in the late 1960s with an intentional purpose ascribed to empowerment of grassroots peoples and promotion of their own praxis to produce knowledge. I revise PAR foundations to frame my research following six fundamental principles: (i) the experiential nature of knowledge, or the conviction of knowing-by-doing (ii) the mutability of human condition, implying that the constitutive identity of humans is the autonomy to ‘become’, (iii) the dismantlement of the politics of Western scientism, including knowledge sharing hierarchies and disciplinary boundary-making; (iv) the commitment to strong objectivity, which brings into analysis culturally held assumptions, (v) the ‘conscientisation’ approach, which advocates for simultaneous reflection and action to understand reality, and (vi) the imperative of authentic commitment of the researcher to ‘knowing together’ with grassroots organisations and peoples, tearing down researcher-participant boundaries.

The adoption of PAR to conduct this project emerged from two motivations. First, a pragmatic necessity to investigate a concealed phenomenon: I needed to participate in the social struggle to collect and analyse data that would have been unavailable otherwise. Second, the ethics of collaboration with ACOOC (Collective Action of Conscientious Objectors), the main partner of this research, which works in non-hierarchical manner based on solidarity, transparency and mutual respect. Both, ethical and pragmatic motivations guided this research towards a collaborative action with social organisations, requiring

personal engagement to defend victims and a permanent learning from acting upon the phenomenon of arbitrary conscription.

The research model employed in this project corresponds to a mixed-methods *quan*⇒*QUAL* integrative design, with interactions of quantitative and qualitative methods during implementation. This approach is useful to address the double purpose of research questions, which inquire about description (the *how*, *when*, *where*, and *who*) and explanation (the *why*) of military round-ups and society's response to them. The 'quan' refers to the exploratory spatial data analysis performed during the preliminary stage of the project and continued during fieldwork in the form of participatory spatial data analysis, designed to gather data for descriptive purposes. The 'QUAL' refers to the interviews and participant observation conducted during fieldwork, designed to enrich description and ground explanation. The directionality (⇒) stands for the sequence used in the project, but the design is integrative as the spatial analysis was modified and expanded during fieldwork concomitantly with qualitative methods. Using a mixed-methods design, this thesis combines geovisualisation and participatory spatial data analysis with participant observation and in-depth interviews. Each of these methods is explained below.

Geovisualisation

Geovisualisation consists in exploring data graphically through maps to gain insight about a topic, using graphics to develop ideas not only to present them. In social sciences, this technique helps in identifying spatial patterns that emerge from underlying social processes. The preliminary research phase entailed the geocoding, mapping and geovisualisation of previously recorded ADMC cases in Bogotá provided by ACOOC. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) I overlaid this map with other geographic layers that included demographic, socio-economic, and crime data. This exercise informed fieldwork activities and served in particular to identify key ethnographic sites.

Participant observation

I conducted ethnographic activities in two ways. First, I situated my personal life in a shared location with the usual victims of ADMC and youth grassroots organisations. To do so, I moved to a neighbourhood frequently affected by this practice identified through the geovisualisation exercise. This enabled me to get a closer view to the urban context of ADMC, facilitated encounters with local residents that have been victimised, and improved my chances of witnessing ADMC in action. The second ethnographic field was my daily work under the aegis of ACOOC and other conscientious objection and anti-militarist collectives in Bogotá fighting against arbitrary conscription. I operated the emergency telephone line for reporting ADMC and provided immediate *in situ* support to victims and their families. This function in ACOOC ultimately proved instrumental for data collection

and systematisation and for deploying rapid response to ADMC, aimed at stopping the arbitrary conscription through nonviolent actions, mainly legal argumentation with military personnel.

Participatory spatial data analysis (PSDA)

This method incorporates geovisualisation but its particularity lies in the collective process of data gathering, analysis, and utilisation. We conducted PSDA jointly with ACOOC and other activists during my fieldwork. PSDA allowed us to harness the collective ability of social organisations and grassroots movements scattered across the city to report ADMC. To do so, we designed an online form to receive reports in real time in a decentralised manner. In this application we also introduced data collected through other means, such as the telephone emergency line, ACOOC's website, social networks and word of mouth, in order to compile data in a single dataset. This dynamic dataset served as raw material for geocoding, visualisation, and spatial analysis of ADMC. Beyond analysis, we used the resulting cartographies and spatial analysis for public dissemination, advocacy with state and international institutions, and youth training activities.

In-depth interviews

Interviews served as the most important instrument for collecting detailed data on lived experiences around ADMC, as well as related perceptions, reactions, and feelings. Maps produced in the preliminary phase served as graphic elicitation instruments. I used two types of interviews: semi-structured expert interviews and oral history interviews with victims and their relatives. First, in semi-structured expert interviews I dialogued with subjects who, because of their knowledge in the field, were able to provide insights on the nature and dynamics of ADMC in Bogotá. Experts included civil servants, human rights activists, politicians, and former army soldiers. I identified most of these experts through snowball sampling, cross-validating key informants advised by the interviewees.

Second, I conducted oral history interviews with young victims and/or their relatives using ADMC as a significant life experience. The sample frame for these interviews was defined through a purposive sampling with victims who suffered detentions before and/or during fieldwork. Victims were invariably young males between 18 and 25 years old from low-income socio-economic backgrounds. Two stratification criteria were nested into the selection procedure in order to obtain a diverse pool of experiences, using the advantage of the mixed-methods approach: (i) reaction to the detention (both victims reporting/requesting help and victims assuming street round-ups as normal practices); and (ii) locality of detention (quota indicator to interview victims from different areas of the city in proportions to the total number of cases reported in the past).

Analytic strategy. I used *situational analysis* as a guiding analytical approach. Situational analysis is based on the premise that the situation of the inquiry guides the research process: it becomes the fundamental unit of analysis and orients data generation, actions, and conceptualisation. This approach is thoroughly built on grounded theory, drawing substantially from its analytical process –coding, constant comparison, memoing, theory emergence– but emphasising the context of the research –inspired by symbolic interactionism, Foucauldian studies of discourse, and feminist epistemologies.

I used free-text coding to analyse qualitative data from interviews, fieldnotes and secondary source material. Following a grounded approach assisted by qualitative data management software I built code trees as they emerged from data. Major topics that comprised the start list were defined according to research questions, which helped in narrowing down the tagging process to the relevant aspects of this project. As code themes emerged, I looked for relevant literature to assist analysis and revise/refine the code tree, which changed continuously throughout the coding process. The resulting code tree is broadly represented in the structure of the analytical chapters, with their sections and subsections. Together with research partners we developed relational maps around a variety of aspects of arbitrary conscription: its characteristics and typology, stakeholders in its execution or resistance, historic milestones that shaped the present struggle, its immediate and mediate causes, and the nonviolent resistance lines of action. Using selected elements of visual grounded theory, I also explored the varying interpretations stemming from map readings.

Main findings

This thesis explores the phenomenon of arbitrary conscription as a long-standing form of irregular recruitment carried out by Colombian military forces. Arbitrary conscription is not a new phenomenon driven by neoliberalism or global securitisation. Instead, I found that it is a lingering colonial heritage that has endured and coexisted with republican institutions and a democratic juridical framework. As such, arbitrary conscription embodies structures and dynamics of oppression in Global South countries rooted in colonial projects. The building of Colombian nationhood on the basis of military victories has laid the grounds for the preponderance of military forces in shaping the political arena, occupying spaces that are otherwise reserved for civilians. Military forces have long been shielded from social and criminal sanctions to violence against the conationals they have sworn to protect. This has resulted from their pivotal role in the fight against successive ‘internal enemies’ and their judicial halo of protection granted after independence and civil wars.

The ancient nature of arbitrary conscription makes it a noteworthy topic of research with a historical focus. The perpetuation of the *serfdom core* of colonial institutions partly explains the normalisation of this practice, its victimisation patterns and its discursive

legitimation tools explained in previous chapters. The racist spatial settlement structure imposed by the colonial regime is over, but it set the basis for the accentuated residential segregation that facilitates class-based targeting of arbitrary conscription victims, reflected in the spatial distribution of military round-ups. Coerced labour arrangements such as the *mita* (labour exploitation mechanism by which indigenous peoples paid a tribute in kind to the Spanish kingdom through their workforce, usually to work in mines) are over, but the kingdom's order to *compel* workers to serve the Crown as a tribute in kind was transformed into the government's order to *compel* working-class youths into compulsory non-remunerated military service. Arguments for vassalage instruction preached by Catholic priests during the imminent advent of indigenous and popular insurrection are still used today as a pretext for military conscription, plagued with remnants of religious iconographies. This finding suggests the importance of conducting criminological research with a southern approach, looking at specific forms of crime and punishment in the South and their linkages with colonial history.

The particular trajectory of Colombian statehood sheds light on the rationale of arbitrary conscription as a concomitant state crime and policing practice. Despite being a pervasive phenomenon that produces great harms and human suffering, arbitrary conscription has received little attention from criminologists, criminal lawyers, and conflict specialists in Colombia. I thus aimed at uncovering such normalised practice, explaining how it meets by all standards the definition of mundane or routinised state crimes: (i) arbitrary conscription responds to politically defined organisational goals of completing recruitment quotas by all necessary means; (ii) recruitment soldiers and civil personnel deliberately ignore the legal framework and constitutional jurisprudence; (iii) a complicity network enables this irregular practice, comprising both the implicit acquiescence of superiors who do not take preventive or punishment action against offenders, as well as collusion of state agencies such as the Police and the Public Ministry who participate by omission or commission, (iv) spatial-temporal distribution patterns of military round-ups reveal their systematicity, and (v) victimisation is dramatically skewed, almost exclusively affecting the working class and the most vulnerable groups of society. To support those claims, this thesis provides sound empirical evidence gathered through the documentation of cases, analysis of spatial-temporal patterns, collection of in-depth oral histories, and direct observation in streets and military cantonments. It also offers an aetiological framework to understand the factors that trigger, facilitate, curb, and constrain this criminal activity.

I also analysed arbitrary conscription as an informal pre-emptive policing technique, designed to discipline and indoctrinate the working class and cope with the fabricated 'youth problem' through violent repression. This productive function –in Foucauldian terms– is connected to progressive urban militarisation and intermingling security discourses and practices. Contemporary militarisation trends –including the expansion of security services

to multinational extractive companies, former President Uribe's counter-terrorism Democratic Security policy, and U.S. military assistance packages— add pressure to enlarge the military workforce. Militarist discursive devices such as the army heroisation propaganda serve to glorify the military forces and delegitimise denunciations by human rights activists. Securitisation complements the cemented militarist history, normalising the involvement of the military in regulating urban public order. I argue that arbitrary conscription is a *tacit extensive military policing practice*. The performance and language of military round-ups is infused with references to policing activities. And the military service operates as a correctional bootcamp where secluded youths are subjects of disciplining and political-economic indoctrination: learning not to question the righteousness of the state, obeying the authority of superiors' orders, and preparing for a labouring life of limited social mobility.

Arbitrary conscription is a dynamic phenomenon constantly reconfigured by competing forces and narratives of normalisation, resistance and denial. First, a salient characteristic of arbitrary conscription is the way it is normalised and incorporated into the social imaginary of potential victims. Many of them do not question the arbitrariness of detentions and expedite military enlistment. Their criticisms, if emergent, focus on aggravating circumstances that surround those practices such as physical violence, public humiliation, and non-observance of evidence for service exemption or postponement. In this thesis I argue that normalisation is buttressed on entrenched militarist values in society related to a patriarchal conception of authority and the heroisation of militarist solutions to conflicts. Those values are intermingled with the progressive actuarial management of security policies and the aforementioned discourse of the 'youth problem' that serve to transit to justification and acceptance. This explains the *securitised acquiescence* of arbitrary conscription whereby the victimised population not only observes such practice as natural, but also welcomes it as a positive state response to deal with the fear of crime whenever targeted at 'potentially dangerous' youngsters.

Normalisation is not reducible to quiet and eager acceptance. Distancing from the critical pessimism that regards state control as an inescapable and ubiquitous expression of diffuse power, this thesis emphasises the significance of ordinary insubordination and nonviolent resistance. Everyday gestures of insubordination have appeared since the inception of instructed vassalage and remain today in the form of individual and spontaneous refusal. A repertoire of lies, evasion techniques in public space, escape from military facilities, and self-incapacitation techniques to obtain ineligibility classification reveal widespread popular discontent, but also adaptation to foreseeable threats of entering adulthood. Yet, as shown in this thesis, reactive gestures are only one element of resistance against arbitrary conscription.

The work of conscientious objectors and anti-militarist collectives in Bogotá is a timely reminder of the struggles against violent expressions of sovereign power that is far

from being replaced by biopolitical governmentality. This case study also served to theorise resistance as a project of autonomy. Such a concept of resistance entails the continuous reflection about institutions that govern human life, together with revolutionary praxis to transform those institutions. In this respect, nonviolent resistance pursued by conscientious objectors and anti-militarist organisations detaches from mere gestures of opposition/rejection and from total revolution. Instead, it is a multi-phased transformative project with a gamut of strategies that span from cultural positioning to subaltern lawfare, including direct action to stop and denounce military round-ups. This less romanticised view of resistance admits the contradiction of playing within the institutional framework –i.e. establishing partnerships with state agencies or using legal instruments for rights protection– and recognises the manifold challenges of collective action.

Resistance and growing public awareness trigger different forms of official reaction. On the one hand, arbitrary conscription is continuously recreated at the technical and operational levels. Spatial, temporal, mechanical and tactical displacements –all but the target, which remains the same– reflect continuous criminal refinement in order to conduct the operations in a more clandestine manner. On the other hand, governmental reaction is thoroughly discursive. A shifting and often erratic discourse of denial includes plain lies such as the misdefinition of *remisos* or the miscalculation of habeas corpus sentences, the use of euphemisms i.e. *compelaciones* to justify the practice, the reduction of the problem to isolated cases of individual misconduct, and blaming the victims for not completing voluntary registration. State agents do not always deny the practice. Occasionally policy makers and soldiers acknowledge wrongdoing, but use techniques of neutralisation to deflect responsibility or justify their actions on the bases of patriotism, security needs, or moral preservation. Political leaders dodge criticisms to preserve troops' morale; senior military offices perform law-abidance but inconsequential dramatic gestures; mid-level officers capitalise on diluted responsibility to negate their agency in wrongdoings; and executing rank-and-file soldiers regard themselves as moral crusaders to save youngsters and their families from street vices. This thesis shows that denial and neutralisation advocates make strategic use of entrenched militaristic values in society to portray arbitrary conscription as negligible or, if noticeable, beneficial for society.

An innovation of this project is the use of countermapping as a method to analyse crimes of the powerful in action-oriented participatory research projects. Countermapping crime is anchored in both local engagement and power counterbalance. This approach attempts to create bridges between environmental criminology and critical criminology strands, suggesting a re-appropriation of maps and spatial analysis from a critical perspective, recognising them as discursive texts but exploiting their internal and external power. Countermapping crime is based on the conceptual expansion of crime to include concealed social harms, the utilisation of qualitative and participatory GIS to conduct data

collection and analysis, and the use of socio-cultural theoretical frameworks that complement opportunity theories to conduct refined and culturally-informed spatial analysis. Importantly, countermapping crime is much more than a cartographic exercise followed by desk-analysis. It entails the participatory creation of spatial narratives that contest official discourses, the execution of spatial practices of place claiming that follow-up on place naming, and the critical assessment and interpretation of visual readings of maps. I have also shown that each of the innovations of countermapping crime comes with new challenges such as boomerang effects, or new constraints such as its reliance on social mobilisation dynamics that are beyond individual or organisational jurisdiction.

Several crosscutting issues connect findings across analytical chapters. The pillars of phenomenology and experiential philosophy operate as connecting threads between the action-oriented research approach, the substantive definition of resistance, and the spirit of countermapping crime. Both PAR and countermapping crime are based on standpoint epistemologies as a way of achieving strong objectivity, acknowledging that cultural assumptions and existing power relations need to be incorporated into the analysis of social phenomena. Three features offer unique possibilities to leverage knowledge in pursuit of strong objectivity: (i) the repositioning of the researcher as a participant in the social world – inverting the traditional academic notion of ‘research participants’ –, (ii) the inclusion of the research within the resistance struggle, and (iii) the role of social agents as research partners. At the same time such an approach creates new ethical dilemmas and operational challenges that have required reflexivity and special considerations for ensuring confidentiality and protection from harms.

Throughout this thesis gender emerges as a crucial dimension of analysis that intersects with class and organisational hierarchies. In a militarist-patriarchal society the military service functions as a gender differentiation mechanism. It defines the role of women as the undervalued rearguard of the war enterprise, which is the honourable men-led state making endeavour. The roots of male-only military service are not found in men’s physicality or risk-taking behaviour –women have historically performed physically demanding and risky jobs too– but on the conception of such service as a prerequisite for accessing citizenship rights that were plainly denied to women. Violence inflicted on arbitrarily conscripted youths reasserts the type of masculinity favoured by the patriarchal culture in the military. In a similar way a common theme of humiliation is the attribution of allegedly unworthy and despicable feminine traits. The belief in a paternalistic natural authority is reflected in the military’s self-attributed role of protecting by punishing: the excuse that idle youths would become real men in the army and prevent them from becoming delinquents is espoused as justification for legal transgressions, violent treatment, and emotional humiliation.

Finally, by focusing on victimisation and harms, this research project demonstrates that cultural criminology is neither a sanctuary of deviance nor a left-idealist programme. It takes crime seriously, without reducing it to situational factors, rational choices or class-based economic relations. Furthermore, the attention it gives to power relations and cultural norms enables a dialogue with post-colonial theories that may help to redress the historic bias of criminology towards Western problems and locations. This thesis is a step in that direction.