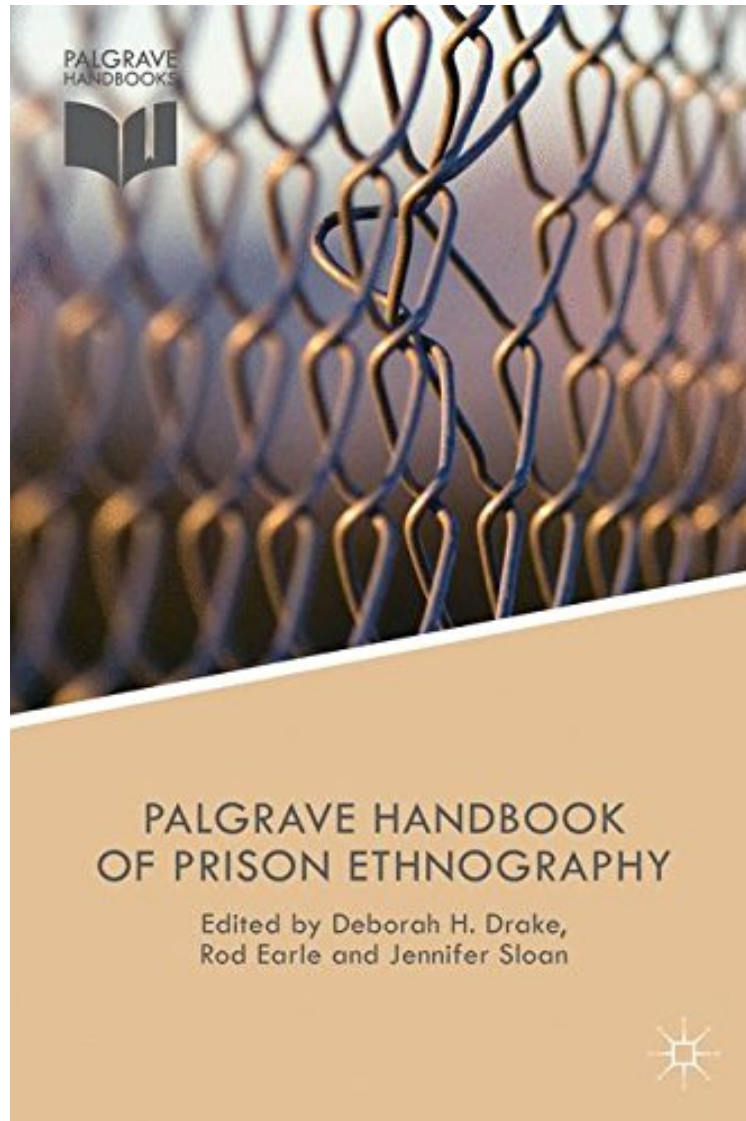


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The Palgrave Handbook of Prison Ethnography (Palgrave Studies in Prisons and Penology)

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The Palgrave Handbook of Prison Ethnography provides an expansive overview of the challenges presented by qualitative, and particularly ethnographic, enquiry. The chapters reflect upon the means by which ethnographers aim to gain understanding, make sense of what they learn and the way they represent their finished work. The Handbook offers urgent insights relevant to current trends in the growth of imprisonment worldwide. In an era of mass incarceration, human-centric ethnography provides an important counter to quantitative analysis and the audit culture on which prisons are frequently judged.

"Undertaking ethnographic observation in prisons troubles its practitioners. Ethnography as a research practice always presents profound challenges; in prisons the ambivalences and embarrassments, the divided loyalties, the fascinations and the tedium, can be demanding and chastening indeed. To their great credit the editors of this beautifully conceived and executed volume neither shy away from these problems nor merely indulge in them. Instead they and their contributors take a measured and reflective look at the problems that prison ethnography raises, including those it cannot resolve. Cumulatively, these essays tell us why it matters that the ethnographic study of places of confinement never be eclipsed and why in the end it will not be. In the future everyone who contemplates doing such work will want to reckon with this book and will have reason to be grateful for its lessons" - Richard Sparks, Professor of Criminology and Head of School of Law, University of Edinburgh, UK "This Handbook offers a rich, honest, challenging and fascinating overview of prison ethnographies in over 10 countries. It discusses important theoretical issues and methodological dilemmas inherent in conducting qualitative, and more particularly ethnographic, inquiry in prisons, while providing at the same time an authoritative account of prison conditions around the world. By looking not only at how ethnography enhances understanding of the prison, but also how prison ethnographies contribute to our understanding of the ethnographic enterprise, it will be an invaluable source for students, practitioners and researchers both within and beyond criminological and prison studies." Sonja Snacken, Professor of Criminology, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
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