

Los Ñetas in search of asceticism? Law and rules in criminal societies



MARTIN LAMOTTE

Belonging to the gang Los Ñetas, it is in part observing a certain number of rules which are transcribed in the *Liderato*, the book of the Ñetas. These rules are accompanied of trials procedure, the *mesas disciplinarias*, and of sanctions for those transgressing them. Yet, while Ñetas have developed a complex legal order to resolve internal conflicts, trials are little used. Is the Ñetas rules little applied, or little effective? What is the nature of these rules? Can we speak of Ñetas Law? And what is its role, if it is not used in cases of conflict? This point of departure will be the occasion to expose a multi-sited ethnography carried out over four years within the Ñetas. I will come back on the history of the Ñetas, a gang from Puerto Rico who settled in the United States, Ecuador and Spain, as well as on their internal transformation and the transformation of belonging and using the city. By displacing the point of analysis on the Law within criminal societies, I will show how the work of interpreting these rules allows the Ñetas to develop practices of self-improvement.

*Martin Lamotte is a French anthropologist at the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), affiliated to the EHESS. He is the co-editor of the journal *Monde Commun*, a french anthropological journal (<https://mondecommun.hypotheses.org/>). His research focuses on gangs and their link to social movements, figures of social bandits and other forms of leadership and authority within criminal societies.*

TUESDAY, May 28th, 12:30 - 1:20pm
Building 50, 51A

ANTHROPOLOGY BROWN BAG FORUM