

Editors' Introduction to Vol. 7, Issue 3

Welcome to Volume 7, Issue 3 of the *International Journal of Rural Criminology*. It is an extra issue necessitated by the volume of articles published in the special issues on rural policing (volume 7, issue 1 and issue 2).

This issue contains five scholarly articles, one research note and a book review. The first article from Madison Charman and Christopher O'Connor considers the impacts of gender on boomtown economies – those places in Canada and the United States which see rapid economic growth brought about by extractive industries but which are more often than not accompanied by social disjuncture. The late Rick Ruddell's extensive work on what she referred to as the dark side of boomtowns has set the stage for a raft of future research examining an array of various impacts, and this article from Charman and O'Connor sheds light specifically on the challenges faced by women in these settings. The authors helpfully identify further gaps for future research.

Also incredibly impactful was the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought with it a wide array of economic and social harms, and people living in rural, and often socially if not geographically isolated places, were particularly vulnerable to the insidiousness of exploitative behaviours. Lorena Molar examines the impacts of such on a specific group of people, migrant seasonal workers in German agriculture, who are difficult to reach and thus more easily victimised. Adopting routine activity approach theory, she sifts through news articles and Facebook posts, and combined with interview data, unpacks a litany of issues, notably centred around fraud, which resulted in undesirable impacts on an easily exploited group – these people who she describes as 'trapped within borders'.

Fraudulent behavior is not limited to people themselves per se, but the agricultural outputs from farms such as food can be subject to fraudulent behavior and unethical misrepresentation. Jade Lindley, Hannah Bongiovanni and Dominique Eastwood outline the issues and impacts of food fraud and the issues which arise from non-compliance with laws and regulations. There are, though, certain crime preventative measures being adopted to combat fraudulent behaviour, such as improved labelling of certified, ethically produced food.

The next two articles focus on issues of prisons. The first, from Dae-Young Kim, provides an extensive review of the literature pertaining to prison-based economic development and the effects of prison siting on local economies and communities. The economic lure of prison siting has been great for many rural communities since the 1980s in the United States, being seen as a source of employment and a deviation from a heavy emphasis on agriculture which has become more and more mechanised over recent decades. Kim's article, in effect, provides a welcome synthesis of what is known about prison-based economic development, and should serve as a lightning rod for further research into this phenomenon in contexts outside of the United States.



The second prison focused article in this issue similarly provides a scoping of existing literature, with a focus on women incarcerated in prisons in the rural South of the United States. Susan Dewey, Brittany VandeBerg, Ariane Prohaska and Lauren Yearout, though, do more than just assess extant literature. Indeed, they identify four key themes which emerge from the literature produced from a wide array of disciplinary perspectives, and add a rural criminological overlay which thus offers unique insights. In their concluding thoughts, this team poses a series of questions which ought to serve as prompts for both reflection and action by rural scholars and policy-makers alike.

As many readers will be all too well aware, rural crime research in the field is not without its challenges. Offering their own first-hand experience of rural field research, Rashi Shukla and Melissa Inglis chart their journey – yes, both literally and figuratively – as they gathered data across rural Oklahoma in the United States. This research note provides a useful roadmap (pun intended) from the preparation needed for field visits in the first instance to the actual gathering of data – indeed, offering seven key observations as to how to craft a successful field work program.

The very final entry in this issue is a book review. Nicholas Mills provides his consideration of Reid and Valasik's *Alt Right Gangs: A Hazy Shade of White*. Although the book itself does not set out to be specifically centred on 'the rural', Mills notes that it does provide useful insights into groups often associated with rural locales in the United States.

Between now and the usual September issue (which will be Volume 8, Issue 1), many readers will have attended or be preparing to attend and present at a variety of conferences. Held in Florence between 6 and 9 September 2023 will be the next European Society of Criminology conference. A reminder to readers that there is a Rural Crime working Group of this Society – for which the IJRC is the journal is the official outlet – convened by Dr Kreseda Smith and Dr Artur Pytlarz. More on this group can be found at <https://www.esc-eurocrim.org/index.php/activities/working-groups/77-working-group-on-rural-criminology> - and we know that both Kreseda and Artur would relish membership enquiries and suggestions for panels and papers for the conference.

Following closely, and also in Europe, will be the biennial conference of the International Conference Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe. Its theme is "United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – Rural and Urban Safety and Security Perspectives". Held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the programme committee is chaired by Gorazd Meško, University of Maribor, former president of the European Society of Criminology and now a prominent rural scholar. The 2021 conference, which was scheduled to focus on rural security issues, was disrupted, as were many other events, by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2023 meeting promises to be bigger and better than ever, given its combined rural and urban perspective. The trip from Florence to Ljubljana by plane is short, but by Eurorail is about five or so hours, and would certainly offer a ground-level perspective, although

perhaps slightly fleeting, of northern Italy and of Slovenia itself. More details and instructions for submitting papers and attending can be found at <https://www.fvv.um.si/conf2023/about/>

Good reading and good travels!

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