

## Editor's Introduction to Volume 8, Issue 1

Welcome to Volume 8, Issue 1 of the *International Journal of Rural Criminology*. This issue includes five articles, one research note, and two book reviews representing work from the United States, England, Ireland, Australia, and Kenya.

The first two articles in this issue share similarities in focus: both examine challenges in rural America that result from unemployment or economic structures. Abraham Benavides, Brooke Nodeland, Chandra Donnell Carey, and Wei-Mo Tu provide an overview of the compounded challenges to obtaining stable housing and employment in rural communities for justice-involved people re-entering society. They go on to discuss example programs and recommend potential solutions based on evidence that champions multi-agency collaborative approaches.

Focusing more on the front end of the justice process, Sarah R. Bostrom, Ryan Randa, and Wyatt Brown examine the impact of economic structures and unemployment on property crime and robbery in rural America. Using data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and General Social Survey (GSS) between 1993 and 2005, they found a positive relationship between unemployment rates and acquisitive crime rates in the rural United States. Bostrom and colleagues further contextualize their findings and discuss the applicability of macro-level economic theories to rural communities.

In the third article in this issue, we look east across the Atlantic where Karen Bullock and Jon Garland examine policing in rural England. Specifically, they empirically examine factors that influence the processes and practices of crime prevention and police investigation in the English countryside. Through interviews with 24 officers across six rural teams, Bullock and Garland identify four broad themes that speak to the law enforcement perspective on crime reporting and prioritization, as well as the challenges and barriers to policing rural spaces.

The fourth article moves away from an explicit focus on system actors and offending behavior, and instead examines compliance with the law. Emmanuel K. Bunei, Elaine Barclay, and Bernice Kotey interviewed over 150 farmers in rural Kenya about their decisions to comply with agri-food safety regulations. They found that deterrence factors such as the risk of detection and penalty, provision of education and information to farmers, and regulation legitimacy (e.g., farmers' perception of laws as clear, understandable, and relevant) are all significant to agri-food safety compliance. The researchers ground the results in rational choice theory and emphasize the significance of carefully constructed and meaningfully distributed laws to increase compliance among the farming population.

In the fifth and final article, Clay Darcy takes a deep dive into the history of rural crime in 1940's Ireland. Through content analysis of a volume of hand-recorded crimes from



a police agency, Darcy documents crime types and explores the impact of war, poverty, rationing, and religion on crime in three World War II-era Irish villages. The historical account provides the backdrop to ongoing research and describes the role fulfilled by both the State and Catholic Church in enforcing social order in these small communities.

Turning to this issue's research note, Kyle Mulrooney and Alistair Harkness provide a practical evaluation of a technological tool which can be used to prevent, interrupt, and reduce livestock theft. The Ceres Tag is a smart tag that can be affixed to an animal's ear, allowing the farmer to access health, welfare, and location information about their animals. Through assessment of a mock theft event and subsequent law enforcement response in New South Wales, Australia, Mulrooney and Harkness found that the tool allowed for timely reporting, tracking, and recovery of the stolen livestock as well as provided substantial evidence of the crime. The researchers' findings speak to the broader issue of crime prevention in rural economies.

Finally, two reviews in this issue highlight important rural criminological literature in the twenty-first century. Joseph F. Donnermeyer provides his "baker's dozen" list of significant books in the field written over the past couple of decades. Inclusion in his list hinges on a book's advancement of rural criminological scholarship, emphasizing their application of theory, international focus, or their status as a "first" in some capacity. On Donnermeyer's list, you will find the book at the center of this issue's final review; *Woman Abuse in Rural Places*.

The final review stems from an "Author Meets Critic" event held at the American Society of Criminology's 2022 annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. Critics Vanessa Garcia, Deena A. Isom, Jessica René Peterson, and Ralph A. Weisheit offer thoughtful critiques of Walter DeKeseredy's book, highlighting both its strengths and weaknesses in exploring the topic of gendered violence in rural settings. The piece concludes with DeKeseredy's response to the key critiques raised throughout the review.

The year 2024 will bring two usual issues in March and September, followed by a special issue in December. Abstracts for the special issue titled, *Rural Victimization: Trauma-Informed Approach Through a Global Lens* are due by 11 December 2023. If readers have topics in mind for their own special issues, they can learn more about how to submit them on our website at: <https://ruralcriminology.org/index.php/IJRC/about>.

As always, we encourage readers to spread the word about the IJRC to all those in their networks who are doing work in the space of rural justice. Our field is continually growing, evidenced in part by the recent panels on rural crime and justice at the European Society of Criminology and the International Conference of Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe. To keep up with this work and our publications, follow us on Twitter (@IJRuralCrim) and LinkedIn.

Two of the three Editors – Joe Donnermeyer and Jessica Peterson – will be in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the American Society of Criminology in November 2023. Come say hello as we are always happy to chat about the journal and all things rural criminology!

Happy reading!

*Joseph F. Donnermeyer, Alistair Harkness, and Jessica René Peterson*  
**Editors of the International Journal of Rural Criminology**