Welcome to our newest and first edition of Rurality, Crime, and Society in 2023!

In this issue, we share some important messages and updates from the Centre for Rural Criminology and the International Society for the Study of Rural Crime, the ASC division and the ESC working group as well as research articles, upcoming publications, announcements, events, and conferences in 2023!

We believe that the contribution of researchers like you is crucial in engaging in rural-focused research. We invite you to share your work with us and our readers and be part of our mission to promote excellence in rural research.

We welcome all types of research articles, including original research papers, review articles, case studies, events, announcements, upcoming publications, graduate student profiles, and accomplishments to share.

We appreciate your support and look forward to working with you. Please check out all our Issues from here: https://ruralitycrimeandsociety.org/category/issues/
Message from the Editors

BY ZIWEI QI AND ARTUR PYTLARZ

We hope this message finds you well. As the editorial team of this newsletter, we wanted to take a moment to express our gratitude for your continued support and readership.

Our team strives to bring you the most informative, engaging, and relevant content possible. From news and trends in rural criminology to publications, upcoming conferences, scholarly research, "Call for Submissions" and celebrations for awards and recognition, we aim to provide a diverse range of articles to cater to your interests and needs.

We also want to remind you that your feedback is highly appreciated. Whether it's to suggest topics for future Issues or to provide constructive criticism, we welcome your input to help us improve our newsletter and better serve you.

As we move forward, we remain committed to delivering high-quality content that informs, inspires, and educates. Thank you for being a part of our community, and we look forward to continuing this journey with you.

Best regards,

Ziwei and Artur
About the Editors

DR. ZIWEI QI

Dr. Ziwei Qi is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas, USA. Her research incorporates elements of social entrepreneurship and political advocacy to inform progressive policies that emphasize economic empowerment through education and technology.

In the most recent years, she has been working with other researchers to establish and develop academic-community collaborations through service learning, research, and assessment, and to create educational opportunities and policy recommendations to enhance the well-being of rural communities.

Besides work, she loves to run and enjoy the outdoors with her two Great Pyrenees-Ellie Mae and Tofu.
About the Editors

DR. ARTUR PYTLARZ

Dr Artur Pytlarz has recently finished his PhD in criminology at the School of Languages, Law and Social Sciences at the Technological University Dublin. His project Crime, Risk and Resilience in the countryside: Governing rural security was funded by the Irish Research Council as part of the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship scheme. Artur also holds an MA in Sociology from Wroclaw University in Poland and an MA in Criminology from the Dublin Institute of Technology.

His research interest focuses on governing security, security networks and how safety is built around information flows in the Irish countryside. He is also interested in the consequences of rapid social changes associated with the transition towards late modernity such as globalisation, individualisation, exclusion/inclusion, and its impact on rural resilience.

Besides work, he is a busy father of two kids and enjoys scuba diving, board gaming and homemade sushi.
**Vale Professor Rick Ruddell**

In early January 2023, the criminological community lost a dear friend – Rick Ruddell, the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Chair in Police Studies in the Department of Justice at the University of Regina. Rick Ruddell’s scholarship focused on issues important to Saskatchewan but generalizable to a much larger criminological audience, including the impacts of resource-based booms on rural communities, community perceptions of law enforcement, policing rural and remote communities, including Indigenous communities.

Rick received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Saskatchewan (1982), a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Regina (1987), and received his Masters of Criminal Justice at New Mexico State University (1997) and a PhD. from the University of Missouri-St. Louis in Criminology and Criminal Justice (2003).

For many years (1984-2001), Rick was a front-line supervisor in the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing for the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada, and Director of Operational Research for Public Safety, Canada in 2009-2010. In between, he was an assistant professor of Political Science (Criminal Justice Program) at California State University, Chico (2002-2006) and then an associate professor there in 2006. In 2007 he moved to Eastern Kentucky University where he was an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice until taking up the Law Foundation position in 2010.

Rick was a highly productive scholar, publishing over 130 articles, technical reports, and encyclopedia entries, plus authored and edited 13 books. He is one of the pioneers in the development of rural criminology, especially his influential books on Oil, Gas, and Crime: The Dark Side of the Boom (Palgrave Macmillan) and Policing Rural Canada (de Sitter Publications). Other significant books include Criminal Justice (Oxford University Press) and Contemporary Corrections: A Critical Thinking Approach (Routledge).
There was no better colleague and academic partner than Rick Ruddell. He was an enthusiastic participant in recent internationally-based, collective efforts to build up the scholarly infrastructure of rural criminology through online participation in roundtables for the International Society for the Study of Rural Crime, and contributions to the Encyclopedia of Rural Crime (Bristol University Press, 2022). He was a founding member of the International Society for the Study of Rural Crime (ISSRC) and served on its executive committee.

Rick was a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for this journal, which is co-sponsored by ISSRC, the Working Group on Rural Crime for the European Society of Criminology, and the American Society of Criminology’s Division of Rural Criminology. Rick cheerily and promptly would provide sound and helpful blind peer reviews. Authors of articles published will not know whether he contributed to improving their publication, but he certainly did. On one occasion in late 2022, when asked if he could oblige yet again, his only condition was the shouting of a beer when one of the editors might next be in Saskatchewan.

Nicholas ‘Nick’ Jones, Professor of Justice Studies at the University of Regina, offers this perspective of his time working alongside Rick:

I consider myself very fortunate to have had the immense pleasure of working ‘down the hallway’ from Rick at the University of Regina for 12 years. When Rick first applied to the position in our department, I was in awe of the impressive volume of work he had amassed in his career to that point. What I didn’t know at that time was what a wonderful colleague and friend I was going to have the opportunity to work with on a daily basis.

His unmatched intellectual curiosity was contagious to the faculty and students he came into contact with. He was a gentle soul, with a brilliant mind. He was always willing to lend a hand, providing unsurpassed guidance and expertise. Despite his academic impressive academic body of work, Rick was one of the most humble individuals I have encountered. I will miss working with him, but more than anything, I will miss seeing him around the department and our frequent conversations over wings and beer.

Rick was, indeed, very charitable with his time. He was always available for media commentary – just before his passing, for instance, he was quoted extensively in the Canadian press speaking of the need to take longer-term views of homicide statistics. And he was known to host “ask me anything” sessions on Reddit, a classic example of how he would adeptly bridge the divide between academia and the wider community.

Rick leaves an impressive legacy, as both a scholar and a person – in particular in the field of rural criminology, in which he is easily considered a pioneer especially with his research into rural boom and bust economies. Above all else, Rick was a terrific person and a fabulous mentor to many. In the Aussie vernacular, Rick was a bloody good bloke.

Vale Rick Ruddell.

Joseph F. Donnermeyer, on behalf of the rural criminology community
MESSAGE FROM THE CENTRE FOR RURAL CRIMINOLOGY

The Centre for Rural Criminology continues to move forward in leaps and bounds, with an array of projects underway.

RURAL CRIME AND THE LAW PHOTO COMPETITION

As we reported in Volume 3, Issue 2, the Rural Crime Photo Competition has concluded. Below are the winning entries – you can see the top 10 best images by following this link:

Rural Crime and Law Photo Competition Gallery - University of New England (UNE)

The four winning images are provided below.
1st Prize and Tertiary Award
"Counting Sheep" by Miranda McGufficke
2nd Prize and Secondary School Award
"Under Investigation" by Lachlan McGilvray
3rd Prize
"Dumped and Forgotten" by Sharon Perry

People's Choice Award
"Dedication to Duty" by Andrew McLean
CENTRE’S MULTIMEDIA

Be sure to take the time to visit the Centre’s YouTube channel for lots of new content, particularly some exiting new content from Joseph Loades who is a student researcher with the Centre who provides some short and snappy topic overviews: https://www.youtube.com/@centreforruralcriminology3214

We have a few more exciting vodcasts and ‘research snapshots’ planned for 2023, but we are always looking for more contributions. If you have a topic you would like to discuss and record, get in touch with the Centre at rucrim@une.edu.au.

BOOKS ON THE GO!

Secretary of the Centre, Jenny Wise, is nearing completion of a sole-authored manuscript published by Bristol University Press in 2024 that focuses on dark tourism in rural Australia. It will be a unique contribution – a tour de force – which will open eyes to a very much under-researched area of scholarship.

Kyle Mulrooney and Alistair Harkness are very busy working on a manuscript on farm crime which will contain cutting edge and original research (to be published by Bristol in 2024)

Vania Ceccato and Alistair Harkness are working with teams of researchers from 18 countries who have each conducted surveys in rural places around the world – this will culminate in an edited collection for Routledge in 2024. See more about the project here: Rural perspectives on crime and justice | KTH

Jessica Peterson, Karen Bullock, Kyle Mulrooney, David Baker and Alistair Harkness have just commenced work on an exciting and innovative book project for Bristol on rural policing – more on this in the next newsletter!

Although not a rural themed and focussed book, Marg Camilleri and Alistair Harkness have just produced an edited collection with Palgrave on the courts in Australia: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-19063-6
IN THE NEWS

The Co-directors, Kyle Mulrooney and Alistair Harkness, were published in The Conversation in February 2023 discussing the role of new technologies in tackling livestock theft. See their article on pages 14 and 15.

A new tool has been launched by Neighbourhood Watch in Victoria, Australia, with the aim of helping farmers identify risks on their farms and importantly consider various crime prevention measures: https://www.sheepcentral.com/new-farm-crime-tool-launched-in-victoria/#.ZAaSAEBFtfQ.twitter

MOVING FORWARD

The Centre has some exciting plans in the works for 2023! Keep an eye out on Twitter @rucrim and we encourage those interested in the study of crime in rural spaces to reach out and get in touch with us directly rucrim@une.edu.au

It is with sadness that we say au revoir to Dr Tariro Mutongwizo as a member of the Centre for Rural Criminology team - but I am sure you will join with us in wishing her every best wish and success in her next endeavours.

In friendship

Kyle Mulrooney (Co-Director)
Alistair Harkness (Co-Director)
Jenny Wise (Secretary)
AS LIVESTOCK THEFT BECOMES A GROWING PROBLEM IN RURAL AUSTRALIA, NEW TECHNOLOGIES OFFER HOPE

By Kyle Mulrooney and Alistair Harkness


Published: February 22, 2023 1.54pm AEDT

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Last week, it was reported that 700 sheep with an estimated value of $140,000, including nearly 200 valuable merino ewes, were stolen from a Victorian property in a highly sophisticated rural crime operation. Such large-scale rural theft is increasingly common.

Rural crime is not isolated to certain states. Rather, stock theft is an Australian problem. Evidence from these large-scale thefts shows that offenders use “corridors” across state borders to move stolen rural property and livestock great distances.

Surveys conducted in Victoria and New South Wales found 70% and 80% of farmers had experienced some type of farm crime in their lifetime, and experienced this victimisation repeatedly.

While farmers experience a variety of crimes, including trespass and illegal shooting on their properties, acquisitive crime – stock theft in particular – is one of the most common crimes faced by farmers.

The impact of “farm crime” is significant. Not only is the farming sector important to the Australian economy, but such crimes can have devastating financial, psychological and physical impacts on farmers, rural landowners and communities.

Why does it happen?

The high rates of theft in farming communities can be explained by unique geographic and cultural factors influencing the incidence and response to crime.

Let’s consider geography in more detail. Rational choice theory suggests offenders make decisions to commit crimes by weighing the risks and rewards. The goal of crime prevention then is to increase risks and lower rewards.

In a busy city, for example, crime prevention might include tools such as locks, motion lights or CCTV, while the many people going about their business may deter criminals simply by being present.

The presence of formal guardians, such as the police or security guards, may serve to deter crime too. The urban environment can also be designed and built in such a way as to discourage crime by limiting hiding places, exit points and escape routes.
The rural environment flips all of this on its head. It is often not possible to implement traditional crime prevention tools given the vast amount of wide-open space, nor are locks or gates always practical on a busy working farm.

The low population density means there are very few “eyes in the paddock” to witness and deter crime. A formal police presence is even more sparse, with slower response times than in urban areas.

The environment itself is also less conducive to crime prevention through environmental design due to limited and spread-out infrastructure combined with a myriad of access points.

When we add all of this together, the risk-reward calculation for committing crimes such as stock theft in rural areas is often very favourable to offenders.

What can we do about it?

Innovations in policing and agricultural technology appear to offer some promising progress to combat farm crime.

The NSW Police have a dedicated Rural Crime Prevention Team. It’s comprised of officers with cultural and practical knowledge of rural industry and the necessary training, skills and expertise to deal with farm crime. This team has deployed innovative techniques to fight rural crime, and their efforts have contributed to increases in satisfaction with the police and, most importantly, in the reporting of rural crime by farmers.

Despite this, police are still operating in an environment that presents serious difficulties in preventing, investigating and clearing farm crime.

There are two key issues at work. The first is that farmers may check on stock only intermittently, and so be unaware of a theft for some time. The second is difficulty in tracking and identifying stolen stock.

New technology offers some solutions here. The Centre for Rural Criminology (UNE) staged a mock theft of livestock, with a live police intervention, to evaluate the ability of a smart animal ear tag to combat stock theft. The results were very promising.

Using the movement and location data provided by the tag, the farmers were alerted to the stock theft within minutes of the thieves entering the paddock. This enabled a rapid and effective response and recovery by the police. Another new technology applies facial recognition to stock by drawing on small variations in the shape and patterns of a their muzzle, which are as distinct as a human fingerprint.

Farmers are able to capture photos of livestock using a smartphone or tablet, then upload this to an AI-powered cloud platform to identify animals. Ideally, law enforcement could use this image recognition technology to identify stolen cattle and return them to their owners.

The theft of stock is a serious and growing problem in Australia. Large-scale and sophisticated thefts are being reported with increasing frequency and farmers, rural communities and the Australian economy suffer from this. Dedicated policing efforts in combination with new agricultural technologies may increase the risks of committing farm crimes and turn the tables on the offenders.
The International Society for the Study of Rural Crime’s (ISSRC) Executive Committee met in January and solidified the 2023 Committee roles:

**President** - Kyle Mulrooney  
**Vice President** - Bridget Harris  
**Secretary** - Jessica Peterson  
**Treasurer and Public Officer** - Alistair Harkness  
**Archivist/Librarian** - Joe Donnermeyer  
**Social Media Coordinator** - Kreseda Smith  
**Award Program Coordinators** - Bridget Harris, Danielle Stoneberg, Joe Donnermeyer  
**Roundtables/Public Events Coordinator** - Artur Pytlarz  
**Marketing and Recruitment Coordinators** - Jessica Peterson, Joe Donnermeyer  
**Website Maintenance** - Alistair Harkness, Kyle Mulrooney  
**Mentoring Program Coordinators** - Bridget Harris, Danielle Stoneberg  
**Practitioner Representative/Practice Engagement** - Cameron Whiteside  
**Student Representative/Student Engagement** - Danielle Stoneberg  
**Regional Coordinators** - Danielle Watson (assisted by Willie Clack, Artur Pytlarz, Kreseda Smith)

The ISSRC Executive Committee also discussed plans and goals for the year. The Committee established the following priorities:

1. **Further implement the mentoring program and host related events**

2. **Organization growth and recruitment**  
   a. Student role – Danielle to work on student recruitment  
   b. Practitioner role – Cameron to work on practitioner recruitment  
   c. Update marketing materials for the ISSRC (including practitioner-focused and student-focused materials) for recruitment/increasing awareness of the ISSRC – Jessica and Joe

3. **Roundtables/events** – increase types of events and variety in topics

4. **Awards program**

5. **Website overhaul** (to support growth and modernize)

Executive Committee members have created a more robust annual meeting schedule and more accountability efforts to ensure progress. They will meet again in April where they plan to solidify changes to the ISSRC Awards Program and discuss progress on the other priorities established in the January meeting.

As you may know, the ISSRC is dedicated to supporting research and collaboration in the field of rural crime and society. However, we wanted to remind our members that we also organize and promote events related to rural crime and society, such as conferences, workshops, and educational opportunities for scholars, practitioners, and other stakeholders.
One of our recent successes has been our regular Zoom roundtables, which have hosted leading police practitioners from around the world to discuss rural policing. The transcripts of these panels were published in the latest edition of the International Journal of Rural Criminology.

The Society is also committed to supporting post-graduate and early career researchers in the field of rural crime. This year, we will establish an ISSRC mentorship program to match post-graduate students and early career researchers with leading scholars and practitioners. We also plan to expand our award program to recognize excellence among scholars, students, and practitioners.

At the core of our mission is the production and sharing of evidence-based information that can enhance the well-being of rural communities. By promoting research and scholarship related to rural crime and society, we aim to increase awareness of the unique challenges and opportunities in rural areas around the world.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the ISSRC. We look forward to continuing our work together.

As always, please reach out to us at admin@issrc.net for more information, event suggestions, or questions about how you can get involved.

Kyle J.D. Mulrooney, President ISSRC
Jessica Rene’ Peterson, Secretary ISSRC

Website: issrc.net
Twitter: @RuCrimSociety
Instagram: @rural.criminology
Featured Research

We are super excited to feature recent research in rural criminology on the pages which follow:

- Dr. Robert Smith introduces a qualitative approach to studying rural criminal enterprise.

- Paige Bromley discusses domestic violence services in rural UK.

- Dr. Emilia Jurgielewicz-Delegacz discusses her rural research in Poland.
Adopting viable qualitative methodologies for researching rural criminal enterprise: A note on issues and concerns

BY DR ROBERT SMITH
EMAIL: R.SMITH-A@HOTMAIL.COM

This note outlines some productive research methodologies used by the author to conduct research into rural criminal enterprise. Rural criminal entrepreneurship and food-fraud in the agri-supply chain are niche topics, both in the fields of entrepreneurship scholarship and rural sociology but also because it is difficult to recruit respondents to interview using more traditional methodologies such as in-depth interviews and focus groups albeit both methodologies are useful for interviewing practitioners e.g., police officers, farmers, animal health officials etc. The discussion is based on the author’s extensive experience in publishing on the topics.

The qualitative methodologies highlighted include 1) Documentary Research 2) Close Reading Methodology; 3) Narrative Inquiry; 4) Retrospective Ethnography; and 5) Auto-ethnographic expositions. These methodologies come with a warning as their robustness is often called into question and not all supervisors, or examiners approve of their use. Consequentially, doctoral students should consult their supervisors before utilising them. In this note the author discusses how he and colleagues have used the methodologies to good effect to publish prodigiously on the subject. The basics of the methodologies are outlined illustrated by appropriate examples selected from a published corpus of studies. The attached appendix presents a list of publications and details of the methodologies used to gather the data.

The methodologies in brief

This section identifies and discusses key issues surrounding the use of different types of documents and our ability to use them as reliable sources of evidence on the social world; and to make the methodology more accessible to researchers. Documentary Research: When one first hears the term ‘Documentary Research’ (Scott, 2014) one often associates it with library research and dry and dusty scholarship. This is misleading because it is an exciting, vibrant and easy to use methodology because gaining access to subjects to conduct qualitative face-to-face interviews is time consuming and in many areas of study problematic. However, gaining access to the printed word in an information age is easy and reading is an integral part of the doctoral scholarship process. As documentary research derives its data from novels, biographies, newspaper articles, websites and company documents, it is a natural methodology to learn.
As documentary research derives its data from novels, biographies, newspaper articles, websites and company documents, it is a natural methodology to learn. Moreover, it involves the use of texts and documents as source materials: government publications, certificates, census publications, film and video, paintings, personal photographs, diaries, manifestos, speeches, media reports and innumerable other written, visual and pictorial sources in paper, electronic, or other 'hard copy' form (Scott, 2011/2014). As a methodology it is underused albeit many scholars use it possibly without fully realising its potential. The work of Mogalakwe (2006) is a readable introductory text for students and novice researchers because it explains the mechanics of the methodology and the articles by Platt (1981) highlight specific problems to be faced and overcome by researchers using the method. However, there is no substitute for trying it out yourself by doing it. Seldom do textbooks devote attention to ‘Qualitative Document Analysis’ (Wesley, 2010). Indeed, according to Wesley most researchers have at some time incorporated elements of textual interpretation as evidence in their research despite methodologically misunderstanding its basics. As a consequence, few academics perform documentary research with the same level of understanding and sophistication as when applying other methods.

Wesley set out a series of guidelines for the rigorous, qualitative study, concluding that, whether approaching their work from a quantitative or qualitative perspective, researchers must adhere to similar disciplinary standards if their findings are to be considered trustworthy contributions. Goodman and Kruger (1988) refer to documentary research as ‘Histography’, advocating a stage model of authenticate – analyse – evaluate – interpret.

**Conducting documentary research:** In the social sciences, history and sociology documentary research is widely used and accepted. Indeed, Scott (2011) argues that along with surveys and ethnography, documentary research is one of the three major types of social research, being arguably the most widely used of the three. He stresses that it has been the principal method for leading sociologists. However, in many of the sub-disciplines of Management Studies such research is considered as being subjective and overly qualitative and thus unempirical. Other qualitative data analyses techniques include discourse analysis; grounded theory and interpretative phenomenological analysis - all of which rely on content / thematic analysis.
Advantages of Documentary Research: See table 1:

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<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>The methodology permits one to access a diverse sample of material.</th>
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<td>Invisibility of the researcher</td>
<td>A common feature of documentary material is that it is ‘uncontaminated’ by the preconceptions, personal values and opinions of the researcher at the point of their production, since it is produced for purposes other than research (Murray &amp; Sixsmith, 2002). It is apparent that the invisibility of the researcher at the site of production reduces the dangers of distorting data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitive topics</td>
<td>Documentary research allows one to access and develop an understanding of highly sensitive personal experiences, thoughts and feelings.</td>
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Disadvantages of Documentary Research: It is often criticised as “armchair interpretation” and “armchair theorization” (Wesley, 2010). For quantitative researchers if a case is unverifiable, it is essentially useless. Cohen (1974: 5) suggests that the findings of most qualitative analyses tend to be “conjectural, non-verifiable, non-cumulative, ‘meanings’… arrived at by sheer intuition and individual guesswork”. All forms of documentary analysis are limited by a range of problems associated with the creation and use of documents as data sources in research (May, 1992). According to Murray and Sixsmith (2002) one must consider several factors as listed in table 2:

| Selective deposit | All documents are constructed for particular purposes using selected information and can contain author bias. They are useful because they are not contaminated by the researcher’s aims and objectives being a selective deposit of information that can be biased in certain ways (Scott, 1990). |
| Distance and reality | All documents are distant from the reality they reflect (Shipman, 1992). One must consider that they may have undergone a number of iterations, translations and interpretations before being presented and may contain mistakes and misinterpretations. Such artifacts are difficult to detect. |
| Researcher selectivity | The process of selecting and analysing documentary evidence can be compromised when researchers pinpoint only data that support their own ideas, models and theories while discarding data to the contrary (Shipman, 1992). This is known as the academic sins of ‘Contextomy’ or ‘data mining’ for quotes which support one’s arguments. |
| Authenticity | Establishing the authenticity of documents is a common problem in all varieties of documentary research. One must ask who produced the document, when and for what purpose. This brings the notions of authenticity into play. Platt (1981) posited a number of techniques for evaluating document authenticity but the main point to bear in mind is the notion of inconsistency. For example, look for differences in writing style and lack of consistency in the author’s overall account can alert researchers to the possibility that different people have been involved in creating a document. If one encounters different versions of the ‘same’ document, it may point to inauthenticity. Also beware of spoof documents. Is it a Word file or a PDF? Like Wikipedia, word documents can be changed or altered maliciously. Consider Fake News and opinionated Social Media output. |
| Language and culture | Bear in mind that researchers and social groups often develop their own terms and forms of language and expression that can act as a cohesive force within the group. It may be necessary to learn their language and conventions. |
There are also ethical dilemmas to consider, making it necessary to take cognisance of 1) Accessing voices; 2) Consent; 3) Privacy; 4) Anonymity; 5) Interpretation; 6) Ownership of the material; and 7) Copyright. Wesley (2010) argues that one must provide reasonable access to their raw materials not just as a courtesy but to protect against charges of inauthenticity, imprecision, or partiality. It is also crucial to the advancement of knowledge by detailing the painstaking process thus preventing others from having to do the same. It is recommended that all documents be placed in the public domain. Issues of validity and reliability are central to good research irrespective of its type. It is essential to ensure that one’s findings accurately represent the concepts under examination. Reliability = the consistency of a particular measurement.

Qualitative researchers rely on their ability to present a clear description, offer a convincing analysis, and make a strong argument for their interpretation to establish the value of their conclusions. One must also stipulate that one’s interpretation is merely one of many possible interpretations to build trust with peers. In particular, one must protect the authenticity – or “truth value” – of their research. Ask oneself if it is a genuine interpretation of reality, or an accurate reading of a particular (set of) document(s). One must embrace the subjectivity of interpretations and to remain objective and impartial one must balance “confirmability” of findings with conclusions drawn from the evidence-at-hand, as opposed to the predispositions of the researcher. One must ensure that inferences drawn are traceable to data contained in the documents. The methodology places a burden on the reader of the study to assess its trustworthiness and one must explicate the process and provide access to data, to ensure that findings are verifiable. One must consider the following concerns – see table 3:
To recap, one must apply the same rigour as in any other methodology particularly in relation to issues of trustworthiness. For contemporary developments in documentary research please read Scott (2014), Bohnsack et al (2018) and Tight (2019).

Close Reading Methodology: Close Reading (Amernic & Craig, 2006) is related to and can be used in conjunction with documentary methodologies. Their book contextualises the methods in a management context and in particular introduces the methodological aspect of close reading which helps us overcome some of the obstacles identified by Scott and Platt. The close reading methodology does not adhere to any rigid formula and varies from text to text. It uses 5 textual analysis strategies – namely 1) Dismantling dichotomies to expose false distinctions; 2) Examine Silences (What is not Said is often illuminating);

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<th>Table 3 – Additional Concerns.</th>
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<td><strong>Triangulation</strong> - One must “quantize” one’s findings (count how many times a theme crops up). It is also good practice to consult the authors of texts analysed, to see if one’s interpretations match their original motives or intent. If there is a disagreement report it. It is common in QDA to have disagreement.</td>
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<td><strong>Intense Exposure and Thick Description</strong> - QDA requires immersion in one’s texts and produce detailed accounts of findings. This is known as the open-coding stage where a test sample is completed, followed by an ‘axial-coding’ stage where all documents are tagged, and codes built. One must initiate a ‘Selective Coding’ looking for mis-coded passages and atypical examples. This three-stage process ensures that results are considered trustworthy and convincing. One must strike a balance between evidence and analysis. It is good practice to include at least three pieces of corroborating evidence per interpretation.</td>
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<td><strong>Audit Trails</strong> - QDA requires us to provide detailed accounts, “not only of their findings, but of the process by which they reached their conclusions” (Platt, 2006b:116). Such analysis must be explicit in identifying and defending the various decisions made throughout the research process. Compiling an audit trail is an ongoing process and is separate from a post-hoc report provided to reviewers. Keep detailed records of the data gathering, analysis, and reporting stages. Ironically, in this chronicling process, one is keeping a memo or a journal reporting on the document analysed. Be careful how one reports atypical evidence. Beware of studies which are too tidy or the arguments too circular. Remember, qualitative document analysts need not “prove” the “truth” of their interpretations beyond all doubt (Wesley, 2010). One need not prove probability but plausibility. One must systematically weigh the evidence available for and against alternative inferences. A sound inference must explicate 1) The favored inference and the content ‘evidence’ for it; 2) Alternative explanations of that content ‘evidence’; 3) Other content ‘evidence’ which may support alternative inferences; and 4) Reasons for considering one inferential hypothesis more plausible than others. A clear audit trail boosts the credibility of the analysis (Hollliday, 2007: 167-181). Nevertheless, Wesley (2010) stresses that there is no need to feel pressure when developing interpretations, to “prove” their reading is the only accurate one. It is good practice to report evidence that places reasonable bounds on their findings.</td>
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3) Fill voids by highlighting disruptions and contradictions when things do not make sense; 4) Decipher taboos by focusing on alien elements; and 5) Interpret metaphors as a rich source of meaning. Close reading need not be exhaustive nor objective but must embed high level critical reflection. Amernic and Craig concentrate on 3 levels of analysis – namely, 1) Ideology; 2) Rhetoric; and 3) Metaphor. However, you can use whatever levels of analysis identified as relevent. It is necessary to triangulate and to incorporate three readings from different but mutually reinforcing perspectives = Multiple Readings. Close readings uncover sources of hyper-textuality and are a distinctive form of analysis/writing. It is a researcher friendly method open to individual interpretation and is fun to do. It may prove difficult to get your article through a journal review process and published because it is a stylised form of analytical writing which may not appeal to some reviewers. The resultant text may result in a commentary on the analysis which is intuitive and subjective and can come across as conjecture or opinion. The writings of Amernic and Craig (2004/2006) are ideal templates for how to write and present an analysis. It is important to demonstrate how the analysis emerged from the data to avoid it being merely observational. You cannot simply mimic the writings of others and expect to achieve results but none of these drawbacks are a reason not to experiment or use the method to corroborate and compliment other research methodologies. For a deeper understanding see the works of Paul and Elder (2014), Greenham (2018), and Brummett (2018).

Narrative Inquiry: Narrative Inquiry became a huge part of the research stream because of its flexibility and because it complements documentary methodologies. It is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 20). See also Clandinin and Connelly (2004) and Clandinin (2013) for further details. It is valuable because it educates the researcher in techniques practiced in investigative journalism and allows one to immerse oneself into the documentary evidence leading to a process of immersion (Borkan, 1999; Ellingson, 2009; Kleinman & Copp, 1993) and the development of high-level knowledge on a subject.
Narrative Inquiry: Narrative Inquiry became a huge part of the research stream because of its flexibility and because it complements documentary methodologies. It is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 20). See also Clandinin and Connelly (2004) and Clandinin (2013) for further details. It is valuable because it educates the researcher in techniques practiced in investigative journalism and allows one to immerse oneself into the documentary evidence leading to a process of immersion (Borkan, 1999; Ellingson, 2009; Kleinman & Copp, 1993) and the development of high-level knowledge on a subject.

There are several stages which culminate in authenticating the data and writing up the story using narrative inquiry techniques (Clandinin & Huber, in press) and in particular Story-Based Narrative Inquiry (Hunter et al., 2014). The dual processes of immersion and crystallization (Borkan, 1999) occurs over time until all the received vignettes and data fit into a pattern which helps us make sense of documented evidence. In writing up the case stories, narrative inquiry techniques enable one to think ‘narratively’ about experience through inquiry following a recursive, reflexive process of moving from field to narrate a living story from field data to interim and final research texts. It is good training in data collection, analysis and getting facts right. One must - 1) Develop a hypothesis, inquiry strategy and data verification process; 2) Map the subject domain and carry out source mapping to identify human sources; 3) Consolidate and organise potential inquiries; 4) turn this process into contacts; 5) Write up the story; and 6) Check all facts before publishing.

Retrospective and auto-ethnographic exposition: There is often a fine line between them both as they involve self-expression and writing about lived experience. Retrospective Ethnography: There is no common method of conducting retrospective ethnography but an acknowledged expert in the field worthy of consulting is Tony Watson (see Watson, 2012). Another key text explaining the method in practice is Melhuus et al (2010). As a research methodology, retrospective ethnography is widely used by Sociologists, Historians and Anthropologists. Indeed, according to Tilly (2007) it is a distinctive way of thinking about historico-sociological relationships because it is an analysis conducted after the event.
As a methodology it requires an ability to reconstruct actors’ dispositions from the historical record and from lived memory. Kornblum (2004) argues that both retrospective and historical ethnography allow one to re-explore specific events and for Hannabuss (2000) retrospective ethnography offers unique insights into behaviours and beliefs and meaning in the organisations, situations and peoples studied. Thus, the researchers own experience and the reflective elements of autobiography and autoethnography share similarities, but retrospective ethnography trumps autobiography and autoethnography because the focus is not on the researcher per se, but on the lived experience, recording social history as it happened. Memories formed within the researcher’s mind become the data for later reconstruction. Retrospective ethnography and its variant form ‘Reflexive Ethnography’, draw on memories to reconstruct social texture (Bryman, 2008).

In many ways, retrospective ethnography is unplanned research. It has its problems. Indeed, Benyon (2008) argues that it often contains resounding silences, because the ethnographer is often not at liberty to discuss and divulge everything learned during the ethnographic experience. This raises issues of ethics as one has to take the veracity of the ethnography on face value. This can be problematic because readers must guard against false memories, researcher bias and nostalgia. Furthermore, Benyon also identifies problems moving between the autobiographical to the authorial selves and retrospective ethnography often focuses on the deviant and the deniable (Carrasco, 2008) making it ideal for investigating criminality.

**Autoethnographic exposition:** Auto-Ethnography (Muncey, 2010; Chang, 2016) has proven to be a very useful methodology for writing up insider knowledge and experience and entails placing the self at the centre of the work and writing in the first-person voice. There are different types of auto-ethnography including critical ethnography (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014) and interpretive auto-ethnography (Denzin, 2013). Muncie (2010) argues that much auto-ethnographic experience in research goes unlabeled and stresses that this was the case in her early research when she wrote about her experiences as a practicing nurse. This author also found this to be case and wrote up experiences as case study research (see Smith, 2004). Auto-ethnography has its place, but it is of limited value unless one has insider experience into the topic under study.
Drawing tentative conclusions and moving forward

Having discussed various methodologies, it is time to consider the possibilities for building upon the research stream. Other interesting methodologies include ‘Netnography’ (Kozinets, 2013) and ‘Quantitative Narrative Analysis’ (Franzosi, 2009) both of which have the potential to add additionality to the core documentary techniques underpinning the stream which has generated a data base of 500 case studies of rogue farmers featured in the media and press for a variety of industry related crimes. This opens up the possibility of utilising quantitative data which tells a story with quantitative and empirical rigour. This is an exciting possibility. It is hoped that this note will inspire others to utilise the methodologies outlined. In a note it is impossible to cover all the specific details of the methodologies and it is advisable to conduct further readings.
References


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Domain Abuse Support Services in Rural UK: An Exploration of Practices during the Shadow Pandemic

BY DR PAIGE BROMLEY, PHD STUDENT
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This paper will give an overview of my PhD research looking at experiences of domestic abuse in rural areas in England, and how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted domestic abuse service provision. Firstly, domestic abuse will be defined, before going into a review of the literature that looks specifically at how rurality impacts domestic abuse, and how Covid-19 has impacted domestic abuse and service provision. This research uses the rural and the Covid-19 pandemic as an important context where the impact on domestic abuse and service provision in rural areas needs further investigation. A brief overview of the theoretical framework will be provided, before outlining the methodological choices that have been made for this research. Finally, details of the intended impacts will be given.

Introduction

Most research on domestic abuse comes from urban areas (Morley et al, 2021), however there is an important body of research from countries such as America, Australia and Canada which considers the rural/remote context as an important mediator of the experience of domestic abuse. However, this research tradition has not taken hold in England in the same way. There are a few notable exceptions to this (e.g. NRCRN, 2019; Barlow et al, 2022) yet there are still gaps in knowledge and many opportunities to offer contributions. The findings from the international literature are important, but differences in how rurality is understood, defined, and experienced in different places might impact the applicability of the findings to England (Shannon et al, 2006; Barlow et al, 2022).

Defining domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can take many forms such as physical, sexual, economic, and psychological and happens between family members, intimate partners, or ex-intimate partners, if they are above the age of 16 (legislation.gov.uk). An important feature of the UK definition is the inclusion of coercive control which was made a specific offence in 2015 and is defined in Section 76 of the Serious Crimes Act and includes behaviour such as isolation, intimidation, humiliation, and deprivation with the intention of subordination and fear (Anderton, 2020).

Whilst both men and women can be victims of interpersonal violence, there are differences in the motivation, impacts and consequence of the violence used by men compared to the violence used by women. Women are more likely to experience repeat violence and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed, for example (Hamberger and Larson, 2015). Men are also more likely to be motivated by making their partner fearful and to use coercive controlling behaviours (Stark, 2007; Hester 2013). This led Stark (2010) to argue that men’s use of violence against women, and women’s experience of violence perpetrated by men is situated within the wider context of gender inequality. Domestic abuse is therefore a gendered crime. The consequences of domestic abuse are vast and can have severe and
Several systematic reviews have found that domestic abuse rates increased as a result of restrictions brought in by governments across the world to try and stop the spread of the virus (Kourt et al, 2021; Lausi et al, 2021; Piquero et al, 2021; Theil et al, 2022). Despite methodological limitations, including only using data from official sources such as police recorded data, not speaking directly to victim-survivors, and having limitations based on which countries or groups of people were included in the studies, the findings largely consistently find that domestic abuse increased during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Domestic abuse and the rurality**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes data on domestic abuse which is based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime. The most recent publication (March 2021-March 2022) found that prevalence rates of domestic abuse were similar for all adults (5%), and across rural (5.2%) and urban locations (4.9%) (ONS, 2022). Despite this, the international and domestic literature highlights that rural victim-survivors may face more challenges relating to where they live compared with those who live in urban areas (Youngson et al, 2021). Although similarities can be found in research conducted in different locations, this is not to suggest that there is such a thing as a singular rural. The degree to which these challenges are problematic may vary from rural location to rural location, however there are characteristics of rural space, both physical and cultural, that cut across the specifics of rural spaces and impact the experiences of victim-survivors, albeit to different extents in different geographical contexts (Farhall, 2020).

Rural isolation is a key challenge for victim-survivors, and something that can easily be exploited by perpetrators. Public transport is often lacking, as can be phone signal and internet access (NRCN, 2019). Additionally, services are often further away and access to these can be difficult if someone does not have easy access to a car or has to pay for a taxi (Johnson, 1997; Loxton et al, 2003; Murty et al 2003; Logan et al, 2005b; Peek-Asa et al, 2011; NRCN, 2019; Barlow et al, 2022). Perpetrators can take advantage of geographical isolation and use this to isolate their victims from their social networks and make it harder for them to maintain relationships with friends and family (ibid). Whilst isolation is a key issue, rural communities are often close-knit, meaning that victim-survivors are rarely afforded confidentiality in places where ‘everyone knows everyone’s business’ (ibid). Perpetrators know that they can use the lack of confidentiality to their advantage and use the threat that they will find out where a victim-survivor has been or what they have been doing to make them fearful of trying to get support (Little, 2016; NRCN, 2019; Eastman, 2016).

Research has shown that victim-survivors in rural settings are likely to experience more severe and more frequent abuse than those in urban locations (Johnson et al, 1997; Kershner et al, 1998; Murty et al, 2003; Logan et al 2003; Logan et al 2005; Peek-Asa et al 2011; Little, 2016; NRCN, 2019). Recent research conducted in the UK found that victim-survivors in rural areas experience abuse on average for 25% longer than those in urban areas (NRCN, 2019). Furthermore, coordination between agencies (a key part of the response to domestic abuse) in rural areas can be challenging due to the general lack of services, lack of specialist knowledge (Mantler et al, 2017) or lack of knowledge of how best to respond to the specific issues and concerns within their community (Wendt et al, 2010; Wuerch et al 2019).

**Domestic abuse and Covid-19**

Several systematic reviews have found that domestic abuse rates increased as a result of restrictions brought in by governments across the world to try and stop the spread of the virus (Kourt et al, 2021; Lausi et al, 2021; Piquero et al, 2021; Theil et al, 2022). Despite methodological limitations, including only using data from official sources such as police recorded data, not speaking directly to victim-survivors, and having limitations based on which countries or groups of people were included in the studies, the findings largely consistently find that domestic abuse increased during the Covid-19 pandemic.
To ensure that they could continue to run safely and in line with restrictions, domestic abuse services had to make changes to the ways in which they were delivering their support to victim-survivors. The move to remote delivery was one of the biggest challenges that domestic abuse services had to face when lockdown restrictions came into place. Cortis et al (2021) found that 93% of domestic abuse service participants who took part in their research based in Australia had changed the way that they were working with victim-survivors and 91% changed where their staff were working. Unsurprisingly, many of the adaptations that services had to make involved the removal of face to face and the move to remote delivery, and staff working from home. These changes had both positive impacts, such as making services more accessible to some or reducing wait lists (Richardson-Foster et al, 2022), as well as negative impacts, such as increased implementation costs or challenges protecting service users’ privacy and confidentiality (Baffsky et al, 2022; Richardson-Foster et al, 2022). As well as having to make adaptations, services faced other challenges such as changes to their demand and cases becoming more complex than normal (Carrington et al, 2020; Pfitzner et al, 2020; Cortis et al, 2021; Anitha et al, 2022; Haag et al 2022; Petersson et al, 2022; Thiara et al 2022). In some cases, this resulted in staff feeling over worked and burnt out (ibid)

However, little is known about how rural services in were impacted and there is contention within the literature that considers how domestic abuse services move to mostly remote support has impacted those in rural areas. Not much research has been done to consider this, but some of the research that does exists suggests that the move to remote service provision has helped to overcome some of the barriers that victim-survivors living in rural areas might face regarding physically accessing services (such as not having to travel as far, or rely on public transport), whilst some suggest that it has posed challenges (such as existing issues around poor internet connection, or the digital divide) (Dragiewicz et al, 2019; Carrington et al, 2020; Cortis et al, 2021; Richardson-Foster et al, 2022).

Additionally, most of the research presented above was carried out with domestic abuse practitioners which is understandable given the challenges of conducting face to face research during the pandemic, however interviewing victim-survivors directly allows for a more detailed account of their perspective and experience to be captured. Much of this research was also conducted in the early stages of the pandemic, meaning there is now an opportunity to ask services to look back and reflect on their experiences, as well as speak directly with victim-survivors, within the rural context.

**Intersectionality**

It is evident that living in a rural area brings challenges for victim-survivors that they might not face if they lived in a town or city. This has led Sandberg (2013) to suggest that rurality should be considered in intersectional theorising on domestic abuse. Originally conceptualized to consider race, class and gender, Sandberg extends the theory of intersectionality to include place and argues that rural/urban geography has been a blind spot in feminist intersectional theorising. She argues that the interconnections between gender and rural geography, and the impacts that this has on the lives of victim-survivors, can be studied in a similar way to the interconnections between race and gender. She argues that rural victims face ‘specific conditions and problems’ (pg 353) that cannot be generalised from research on urban areas. However, it is important to distinguish between ‘vectors of difference’
and ‘vectors of discrimination’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Whilst living in a rural area brings challenges, different to those for urban areas, this is a source of difference, rather than a source of discrimination. Nonetheless these experiences are worthy of further exploration.

Methodology

This research aims to build on what we already know and expand the knowledge base by exploring the experiences of domestic abuse services and service users who live in rural locations across England. For this research, both victim-survivors and professionals will be invited to take part and will make up two separate phases of data collection. Both phases use qualitative methods. Phase 1 consists of semi-structured interviews with those who work in domestic abuse services, and phase 2 will consist of creative collage making workshops combined with semi structured interviews with domestic abuse service users. At the time of writing, phase one is largely complete, with phase two looking to take place later this year.

Phase 1

My professional background is in the domestic abuse sector, both as a front-line practitioner, and as a researcher. During this time, I have built connections with services, practitioners, and other researchers, as well as developed an understanding about how domestic abuse services are commissioned and how they operate. This aided my initial thinking about recruitment, and my pre-existing network was helpful in opening up avenues for the call for participants to be shared. The status as an ‘insider’ is commonly talked about as researchers being part of certain groups (religions, races, or sexualities for example) and how this can impact the research process (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2013). However, in this case, my status as an insider helped to facilitate recruitment. I decided to first focus on speaking with practitioners about their experiences, to build relationships that would hopefully help with recruitment of victim-survivors (Women’s Aid, 2020).

I kept my definition of ‘rural’ open to encourage participation from as many services as possible, and to maintain consistency with how I’m arguing rural is defined and who gets to define it. If a service considered themselves to work in a rural area, or if I found information online that suggested a service might work with a large number of rural people, then I considered them to fit my criteria. I had participants from a range of rural areas, including services that work specifically in rural areas, to those who work more widely. At the time of writing, 14 online interviews with domestic abuse practitioners were conducted. Analysis of this data will be conducted using thematic analysis, using the methods outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2022) as a guideline. Common themes will be generated across the dataset, but at this early stage, issues seem to be around the risks of living in a rural area as well as both negative implications of the Covid pandemic and more optimistic learning that services are taking forward.

Phase 2

For phase two (domestic abuse service users), I have chosen to combine semi-structured interviewing with creative workshops. Epistemologically, arts-based research methods can communicate meaning in different, but complimentary ways, to traditional research methods, such as qualitative interviewing. (Barone and Eisner, 2012, cited in Leavy, 2018) and are becoming more common in research on domestic abuse.
There are strengths and limitations to the use of creative methods in comparison to just interviewing. The main benefit of using arts-based methods is the opportunity to gather deeper meaning from participants than might be possible with a standard question and answer style interview. This has been detailed as an outcome by Harman et al (2020) who argue that their use of visual art workshops allowed them to achieve ‘something deeper than interviews involving words alone’ (pg. 33). Similarly, Rainford et al (2020) state that participants were given the opportunity to consider why they had made certain choices, and what those choices meant, resulting in richer data.

However, there are also limitations to the use of creative methods. The main critique identified in the literature is that asking someone to be creative can be intimidating (Pain, 2012; Brooks et al, 2020; Rainford, 2020). Research participants can feel self-conscious about their artistic ability, and this can make them cautious about taking part, or impact what they create. However, by choosing collage as my main method I hope that this will be less intimidating than asking a participant to draw, for example, as the abstract nature of the medium will hopefully appear less daunting and will accommodate a range of artistic abilities (Butler-Kisber, 2010). For those who still feel that this is beyond their capabilities, I will have the option of interview only participation.

Impact

Whilst dissemination in academia is likely to happen through presentation at conferences and through publications, as part of my debrief form, I asked each of my practitioner participants how they would most prefer to have the findings shared with them. The intention is to write a research brief which will summarise the main findings and can be shared with participants (and more widely if they wish) as well as host a series of online webinars either for singular organisations, or for groups depending on the size. This will give participants the chance to access the findings without worrying about journal access, as well as give them the opportunity to ask questions and to give feedback, and to make suggestions for future research. I have made some strong connections throughout this research process, relationships that I hope to cultivate throughout my hopefully long career as a rural domestic abuse researcher.

As has already been highlighted, whilst there is some important researching looking at domestic abuse in rural areas in England, the evidence base is still limited and there are gaps in our understanding, and opportunities for the utilization of different methods. This research will add to what is already known about rural domestic abuse in the UK and help to answer questions about how Covid-19 has impacted rural domestic abuse services specifically, with the added benefit of being able to ask services to look back and reflect on their experiences. Furthermore, the use of creative methods in domestic abuse research is increasing, and this research presents an opportunity to add to the growing literature.

Beyond academia, this research has the intention of sharing best practice and highlighting the challenges associated with delivering domestic abuse services in rural areas. I hope that by bringing knowledge to the forefront and sharing experiences, practitioners will be able learn from the findings to develop existing practice. Additionally, it will provide evidence to those with decision making power, in policy and commissioning that rural areas need to be considered specifically, and not overlooked.

Finally, I hope that this research will help to improve the lives of victim-survivors who live in rural areas. For those who will take part I hope that they will find this beneficial for themselves and be able to take something positive from it. And more widely, I hope that by sharing the experiences of those who live in rural areas, their experiences will be less hidden than they are currently, and a light will be shined on rural domestic abuse.
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RURAL CRIME IN POLAND

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Since October 2022, I have been conducting a research project on rural crime in Poland. Below is a brief description of my research. If you are interested in cooperation, such as writing a research paper (we can compare our countries) or want to share your experience with me about conducting research in rural areas, feel free to contact me.

Description of the problem to be solved: The Polish countryside is changing and Poland’s accession to the EU has contributed to the acceleration of structural changes in rural areas resulting in beneficial transformations in agriculture. Farm owners invest and grow, but they also want to enlarge their farms, replace their equipment, and upgrade their technology. Now farmers use machines worth many millions of zlotys to run their farms. Although the Polish countryside is changing and evolving with technology, these changes are not evenly distributed. The contemporary image of rural areas is still influenced by the weight of historical events that took place a hundred years ago. The country is still divided into the more developed western Poland and the less developed eastern Poland. Rural areas experience an influx of urban populations seeking peaceful and quiet places to live, who do not always want to adapt to the rural lifestyle. Unfortunately, the whole process is also accompanied by anti-social and criminal behavior, which takes various forms.

The aim of the research will be to diagnose the phenomenon of rural crime, to determine its scale, changes, and structure, and to determine the causes of criminal behavior taking place in rural areas. Furthermore, the planned research will provide a better understanding of rural residents’ attitudes toward crime prevention. In order to complement and verify the information on rural crime obtained from the residents of rural areas and to discover other points of view, interviews will be conducted with police officers.

Research questions: 1. What types of crimes do inhabitants of rural areas in Poland face most often? 2. What is the scale and range of the dark figure of crimes committed in rural areas? 3. What are the etiological determinants of crimes committed in rural areas? 4. What are the unique characteristics of crimes committed in rural areas? 5. How has rural crime changed over the years? 6. What are the opinions of inhabitants of rural areas about social control in rural areas? 7. What is the role of informal social control in rural areas?
General research plan

1. Analysis of existing material

1.1. Analysis of literature: An analysis of the national literature in the field of social sciences – mainly sociological literature related to the sociology of rural areas, life, and culture – will be carried out in order to understand the characteristics of these areas. This will be followed by an analysis of foreign literature in the field of rural criminology and sociology, in order to provide a research background for the data analyzed on the project.

1.2. Analysis of statistical data: The analysis will be performed on statistical data provided by the National Police Headquarters, which collects data on the locations of recorded crimes (including a breakdown into urban and rural areas). This stage of the research process will make it possible to compare the scales of selected criminal phenomena committed in rural areas in Poland and in other countries.

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Diagnostic survey: Diagnostic surveys will enable the collection of rural residents’ views on rural crime, including information on the most common rural crimes, the level of crime not reported to law enforcement bodies, the level of fear of crime, and the opinions concerning the work of the police in rural areas. The survey will comprise the following stages: (1) methodological design of the survey; (2) selection of the entity responsible for the technical implementation of the research; (3) methodological consultation of the questions with the entity selected in accordance with item 2.2; (4) performance of a diagnostic survey on a representative nationwide sample of rural residents (N=1,000) by the entity selected in accordance with item 2.2.

3. Individual in-depth interviews: Statistical data that uses the “laws of large numbers” and the results of the diagnostic survey will be correlated and verified by means of another research method: direct interview. Consequently, the following will be conducted: (1) individual in-depth interviews with inhabitants of rural areas and (2) individual in-depth interviews with police officers serving at police stations and posts in rural areas.
New and Forthcoming Books

We are excited to share a series of forthcoming publications centred on rural crime and victimisation.

Out now!


Forthcoming

- *Gender-based Violence and Rurality in the 21st Century*, edited by Ziwei Qi, April N. Terry and Tamara J. Lynn (Bristol University Press, 2023)
- *Farm Crime*, by Kyle Mulrooney and Alistair Harkness (Bristol University Press, 2024)
- *Rural Criminology in Global Perspective*, edited by Matt Bowden and Gorazd Mesko (Bristol University Press, 2024)
- *Dark Tourism and Rural Crime*, by Jenny Wise (Bristol University Press, 2024)
With two waves of data (interview, focus group discussion, and survey) on identities and social networks of relation possessed by around 600 formerly and currently incarcerated people in the United States, we show that family identities and networks are crucial to the start and end of a criminal career. Community is also important to a criminal career in urban and rural America for sociocultural reasons. Specifically, urban and rural areas, due to their various population sizes, poverty levels, cultural leanings, and other social dimensions demonstrate different social interaction patterns that impact criminal identity and thus behavior.

Gender by race groups (i.e. white male, white female, minority male, and minority female) often resort to crime related to the characteristics of their personal/family networks, which are influenced by communities at different levels, for similar and different reasons. Family is also vital to the desistance of criminal behavior and converting of people with criminal records to contributing community members. This study of criminal identity approached with social network analysis concepts and measures provides needed theoretical and empirical support and innovation to the study of criminal behavior proposed by social learning theory.
Access to Justice in Rural Communities

Daniel Newman and Faith Gordon

We are writing about our new edited collection, Access to Justice in Rural Communities: Global Perspectives. This will be published in May by Hart Publishers. In recent issues of Rurality, Crime and Society, we have read with interest the essays detailing the growing concern with rurality in criminology. Our book looks to capture global leading scholarship on the rural in legal studies and promote wider engagement in the field of law. The book is a passion project for us and close to our hearts. We both come from rural areas and have long felt a lack of representation of rural contexts and issues, in the law school – both as students and as educators. The legal academy is tacitly urban in its focus, with rurality most noticeable by its absence.

There is a rural justice gap. The truths of rural life encompass a diversity that is often ignored in stereotyped images of life outside of towns and cities. In his foreword to our book, Professor Russell Hogg sets out how idealised conceptions of the rural, work to obfuscate the problems that can be uncovered on closer inspection. The lived reality of struggle and suffering can be lost in imagined romanticised versions of rural life, because there is no one rural and no fixed rural experience. As Assistant Professor Michelle Statz highlights in her afterword, any meaningful understanding of rural access to justice would and should recognise the diversity of rurality. Engagement with the variety of rural places can help redress the absence of the rural from mainstream legal studies – and this means the voices of those that experience some manner of injustice are missing from our conceptions of law.

It is in the field of access to justice research that rurality is most obviously being brought into the legal cannon. Access to justice is gaining increasing attention in law. The origins of modern concerns around access to justice can be traced to the Italian jurist Mauro Cappelletti. He saw that access to justice went hand-in-hand with the emergence of social rights across the twentieth century. By this line, effective access to justice was the most basic requirement of a system that claimed to guarantee legal rights.

It was Cappelletti who directed a ground-breaking research project on access to justice in the 1970s, which led to the germinal four-volume series, Access to Justice. In the last decade, we have seen the launch of the Global Access to Justice Project, an international network of scholars drawn from all over the globe with a shared interest in looking to tackle the lack of access for many. Last year saw the first academic book series on access to justice – Perspectives on Law and Access to Justice – from Bristol University Press - as a home to bring together often disparate scholarship across different fields of law. As part of this increasing attention on access to justice, there has been a slow but perceptible growth in rural access to justice scholarship. This scholarship is unevenly distributed with, for example, a burgeoning network in the United States and a limited take up in the United Kingdom. But there are examples from all over the world. And we have had the privilege of engaging with some of them during our journey of editing this collection on rural access to justice.
Access to Justice in Rural Communities: Global Perspectives, examines access to justice in rural areas in internationally comparable contexts. The collection looks at the fundamental questions for people’s lives raised by the issue of access to justice as well as the rule of law. It highlights a range of social, geographic and cultural issues which impact the way rural communities experience the justice system throughout the world. It features chapters on Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, Kenya, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Syria, Turkey, the USA and Wales. Authors look at how people experience the institutions of justice in rural areas and how this rural experience can differ to an urban experience. They consider what impact changes in policy had on the justice system in rural areas; whether and how rural and urban areas been affected in different ways by government action. There is also a focus on what impact the law has on people’s lives in rural areas and what rural communities would like to be better understood about their experience of the justice system.

For us, a key impact resulting from the lack of focus by the legal academy on rurality, is that it means the negative experiences of those brought into justice systems are frequently ignored. Our book covers the harms that can be encountered, such as the ways in which justice systems specifically marginalise Indigenous or racialized groups in rural areas, the shortage of rural lawyers as graduates as they feel compelled to leave their homes and are often called to practice in urban areas, and the lack of infrastructure to seek or receive help across a range of problems outside towns and cities.

To pick out just one theme for fuller attention here, in the collection we often encounter the emerging role that is played by technology. The growing use of remote communications is becoming a rural access to justice issue. With the increasing shift to the virtual for advice provision and hearings, especially evident since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing costs and benefits for rural peoples. There is the potential to reach out to rural areas and be more inclusive; those who were excluded from centralised institutions of justice can now take a fuller part. However, there are both people and places for whom the expertise, connectivity and expense of remote access simply works to further omit or isolate those who were already disregarded, as the assumption of remote access overlooks their specific needs.

These are just some of the topics that emerge as we try to question, explore and understand how bringing the rural into focus can better inform our knowledge about who the law works for and who it works against. Ours is the first book in law to consider rural access to justice as a focus like this. But we hope it won’t be the last and that it will inspire other legal scholars to follow the threads outlined by the collection’s authors or to pursue their own paths. It has been illuminating for us to engage with the range of global scholarship, expertise, insights and passion, that the collection’s authors have brought to the book project. It is time for the legal academy to take heed of the lesson – namely what a focus on rural access to justice can teach about the limitations of legal studies that assumes an urban experience and ignores the rural. We hope the insights in this collection will push to inform and inspire change.
Research in Rural Crime

Series Editors: Alistair Harkness, University of New England in New South Wales, Australia and Matt Bowden, Technological University Dublin, Ireland

Myths about peaceful, crime-free areas beyond the cityscape persist, but in fact rural crime is multi-faceted, raising new policy predicaments about policing and security governance. Filling a gap in the discipline, the Research in Rural Crime series, provides an outlet for original, cutting-edge research in this emergent criminological subfield.

NEW IN THE SERIES

Gender-based Violence and Rurality in the 21st Century
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Gender-based Violence and Rurality in the 21st Century
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May 2023

This edited collection provides an innovative analysis of patterns of gender-based violence (GBV) in rural communities in addition to GBV education and prevention. It concludes with best practices to positively affect the lives of survivors.

Rural Transformations and Rural Crime
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Rural Transformations and Rural Crime
International Critical Perspectives in Rural Criminology
Edited by Matt Bowden and Alistair Harkness
HB £85.00 ISBN 9781529217759
EPUB £29.99 ISBN 9781529217766
Jul 2022

In this first book in the Research in Rural Crime series, experts in rural criminology draw from theories of modernity, feminism, climate change, left realism and globalisation in a thought-provoking collection of essays.

Find out more at bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/research-in-rural-crime
We welcome monograph-length titles that present pioneering interdisciplinarity and comparative rural criminological perspectives. Titles will be theoretically and conceptually driven, empirical or adopting mixed-methods approaches, and topics will focus on regional, rural and remote parts of the globe that are often overlooked in criminological works.

Contact us

If you would like to submit a proposal, or discuss ideas, then please contact the Series Editors:

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Matt Bowden
matt.bowden@TUDublin.ie

Becky Taylor
rebekah.taylor@bristol.ac.uk

Forthcoming titles

Farm Crime
By Kyle Mulrooney and Alistair Harkness
HB ISBN 9781529221923 May 2024

Rural Criminology in Global Perspective
Edited by Matt Bowden and Gorazd Meško
HB ISBN 9781529234039 Oct 2024
Conferences

1 – An international student conference

In the northern hemisphere Spring of 2022, the fifth international student conference on local safety and security – rural perspectives was organised online (https://www.fvv.um.si/psvls/5-student-conference.html) by the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Slovenian and the Faculty of Law, University of Montenegro. The next (the sixth) student conference will be held in April 2023 in Podgorica, Montenegro. A lead topic will be about crime prevention and provision of security in rural and urban settings.

See also links to the previous conferences (ppt presentations are available in the links below):

2022 - fifth
https://www.fvv.um.si/psvls/5-student-conference.html

2021 - fourth
https://www.fvv.um.si/psvls/4-student-conference.html

2019 - third

2018 - second
https://www.ucg.ac.me/objava/blog/1263/objava/19889-odrzana-ii-internacionalna-studentska-konferencija

2017 - first
https://www.ucg.ac.me/objava/blog/1265/objava/902
Conferences

About the Conference

The Biennial International Conference Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe addresses contemporary challenges in the field of criminal justice and security by encouraging the exchange of the latest views, concepts, and research findings from criminal justice and security studies among scientist, researchers, and practitioners from all over the globe. The aim of the conference is to highlight new ideas, theories, methods, and findings in a wide range of research and applied areas relating to policing, criminology, security issues, and social control issues. Conference strives for joint collaboration of different stakeholders in developing knowledge and experience that contribute to more secure and safe societies.

Aim

The primary aim of the 14th biennial Conference is sharing the latest views, concepts, and research findings from criminal justice studies on rural safety, security and, criminology among scientists, researchers, and practitioners from around the world. The conference will highlight new ideas, theories, methods, and findings in a wide range of research and applied areas relating to rural and urban issues in relation to the UN SDGs. Speakers will share their insights and viewpoints on the challenges and opportunities facing security provisions in rural and urban communities in light of the UN SDGs.

Organised by the University of Maribor in Slovenia, this event is co-sponsored by ISSRC, the ASC Division of Rural Criminology and the ESC Working Group on Rural Criminology
Message from the ESC European Rural Criminology Working Group

2023 marks the third year since the Working Group on Rural Criminology (ERC) has been established. During that time, we worked on expanding the network of rural researchers from Europe and beyond.

At the moment our regular mailing list has around 40 members and it is expanding through our activity on Twitter and other channels of communication and presence at major conferences.

The rural session we hosted at the ESC conference in Malaga in 2022 had 4 panels and 15 papers and brought together a wide spectrum of researchers from around the world.

In this year's call for abstracts, we are looking for papers addressing two different but complementary topics, more details on the next page.

I hope to see you in Florence this September.

Kind Regards

Artur Pytlarz, co-chair

HTTPS://EUROCRIM2023.COM/
European Rural Criminology Working Group Call for Abstracts

Deadline: 15th April 2023

The leading theme of this year’s conference is the Renaissance. The Renaissance meant the cultural and scientific “rebirth” following the Middle Ages and opened up a new way to understand the world. Therefore this year, Artur and I are calling for abstracts under two different but complementary topics:

1. The Renaissance of Rural Criminology

How is rural criminology presented in a post-pandemic world? What are the factors that influence crime in the rural space in 2023? Has there been a criminogenic shift in the rural space?

Rural criminology continues to be overshadowed by hot-spot policing, volume crime resourcing, and serious organised crime policing, which continue to be seen as an urban phenomenon. But is this really the case? Do these policing approaches have a place in the rural space, or is rural still in need of its own focus? Can those paradigms created in the urban space work in the rural? Regardless of the crime type, or the way that rural crime is defined, as researchers we recognise the ever changing dynamic of rural criminality. What does your research tell us about modern rural criminology? How can we input into policing policy and practice? What does the shape of rural criminology look like in 2023. This is your opportunity to tell this community about your work to help us all inform our practitioner networks.

2. Beyond modernity, beyond crime. Further paths for rural criminology

Together with the transformation towards late modernity, criminology itself shifted its focus. From crime, offender and the criminal act, it moved toward harm, risk and security. Instead of solving the problems caused by committed crimes, it becomes clear that more efficient and cost-effective is to prevent the crime from happening in the first place. Scholars suggest the operation of the Criminal Justice System moved from the post-crime to pre-crime mode which should be understood as a change of focus of contemporary policing on risk, safety and governing security.

The above themes, while widely discussed in urban/mainstream criminology somehow gather less attention in rural criminology. Hence this call is to attract and give a voice to researchers focused on, for example, Anthropocene, green criminology, risk, flows, security, and surveillance or Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory and recognition of the role of non-human actors in crime control. Therefore this theme is an invitation to researchers, who might not consider themselves rural researchers, yet their voices would add to the discussion and expand the field of rural criminology.

Abstracts for individual papers are welcome, as well as proposals for pre-arranged panels. If the latter, please liaise with Artur and I to work up appropriate themes. When submitting your abstract, you will need to identify the Unit and Subtopic to ensure your submission reaches us. Rural Criminology sits under Unit 3: Crime Correlates! You will then be able to submit individual paper abstracts, poster abstracts, author meets critics, pre-arranged, and roundtable panels. The link to submit abstracts is: https://eurocrim2023.com/abstracts/. We look forward to reading your abstracts, and to seeing old friends and new in Florence.

Please do share this call to colleagues interested in rural criminology or other researchers that can bring new perspectives to rural criminology. We would love to see abstracts from all, and also add them to our growing mailing list to share knowledge, experiences, and a drink or two!! Any question, please feel free to contact either Artur or I.

Ci vediamo a Firenze!!

Dr Kreseda Smith, kresedasmith@harper-adams.ac.uk; Dr Artur Pytlarz, artur.a.pytlarz@tudublin.ie
Message from the ASC Division of Rural Criminology

The Division of Rural Criminology looks to 2023 as a year of both sustainability and growth. The annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology is scheduled for November 15-18 at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown. The city center of Philadelphia is very walkable city, with many nearby historical sites, pubs and museums. In particular, Reading Terminal Market is only a few steps away from the Marriott, and features a huge variety of food offerings, including Cajun, Chinese, Indian, Irish, Pennsylvania Dutch and Thai foods, among many others.

This year’s ASC annual meeting attendance is expected to return to pre-Covid levels, including dozens of rural-focused and rural-urban comparative papers and roundtables. DRC will be holding elections this year, with a new slate of officers installed at its business meeting in November. Currently, the Awards Committee is tasked with identifying the next winner of the Ralph Weisheit Lifetime Achievement Award and discussing the development of a second award that will also celebrate outstanding rural scholarship.

For more information, go to https://asc41.com and from there, explore information about the annual meeting and the various divisions, including DRC.

Kind Regards

Joseph F. Donnermeyer, President
Call for proposals for Special Issues

In addition to ongoing regular issues, the IJRC is planning to publish a special themed issue each year.

We are open to any imaginative proposals, which could be – but not limited to:

- theoretical, empirical or a combination of both
- qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods or a combination of all
- themed around geographic locations – broadly (e.g. Asia; the South Pacific) or specifically (e.g. South Africa; boom towns; tourist locations)
- with a focus on:
  - particular demographics (e.g. hobby farmers, tourists)
  - victims (e.g. people with disabilities)
  - offenders (e.g. farmers as offenders)
  - criminal justice institutions and processes (e.g. police; courts; corrections; access to justice)
  - certain crime types (e.g. burglary; elder abuse; alcohol and other drugs)
  - rural criminology itself (e.g. teaching; research methods)
  - and so on

https://ruralcriminology.org  @IJRuralCrim
Submission information:

- Proposals should seek to incorporate a variety of ‘voices’ and perspectives, such as by including practitioners, early career researchers and higher degree students
- Special issue editors will be provided with substantial support – and mentoring as required – as they bring their issue together through the various stages from conception, to peer-review, copy editing and production

Special issues are normally edited by one or two editors for a special issue: please consult with the IJRC editors about additional special issue editors

Proposals should contain the following:

- abstract for the special issue of 500 words which articulates the theme
- brief biography and CV for special issue editors
- indication of the anticipated number of articles, research notes and note from the field which might be contained in the special issue
- anticipated/preferred timeline – e.g. when, ideally, you might release the call for papers, collect abstracts/manuscripts, and a suggested month and year
- for publication (turnaround from agreement on a special issue to its publication will be in the order of 12-18 months)

For more information and to submit a proposal, email Joseph F. Donnermeyer at donnermeyer.1@gmail.com

https://ruralcriminology.org @IJRuralCrim
USEFUL WEBSITES

The International Society for the Study of Rural Crime

Web: https://issrc.net/
Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/@issrcinc.7684
Twitter: @RuCrimSociety

The Centre for Rural Criminology at the University of New England

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/@centreforruralcriminology3214
Twitter: @RuCrim

The American Society of Criminology - Division of Rural Criminology

Web: https://divisionofruralcriminology.org/

The European Society of Criminology Rural Crime Working Group

Web: https://www.esc-eurocrim.org/index.php/activities/working-groups/77-working-group-on-rural-criminology

The International Journal of Rural Criminology

Web: https://ruralcriminology.org
Twitter: @IJRuralCrim