

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

As we approach the end of the academic year there is much for us to celebrate for we have accomplished a great deal this year. Looking back, I am most proud of us for: (1) the quality and diversity of our seminar series; (2) the development of our communication infrastructure, especially the web page (thanks Beckett) and newsletter (thanks María); (3) setting up a research office which facilitates our work, and equally important, gives us a physical presence as we position ourselves to be a go-to Center for criminal justice research; (4) the quality of the crime and justice research being undertaken; and (5) the efforts put forth in seeking grants to support research related to our themes of "crime and community," "youth, crime and justice," and "criminal justice policy." These accomplishments have required a great deal of effort and cooperation, and I am grateful to all of you for your participation.

During the summer and next year, we will be able to build on this progress. We should meet this summer to plan our seminar series for next year (in the meantime, please forward me any suggestions that you have for university or national speakers), and to plan research activities. Regarding research, our primary challenges are in identifying sources of funds for interdisciplinary research, putting together research teams, and applying for such funds. Here, we should be "thinking large," and readying ourselves to take advantage of calls for proposals, even when they have short turnaround times. Thus, I request that you all begin to think about project ideas, and to keep your eyes open for opportunities. I very much look forward to working with you on our research agenda.

First up though is our final 2000-2001 seminar (George Tita's talk--see below). And, I wish everyone a successful end of the quarter.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

May Event:

Monday, May 21st. Dr. George Tita, assistant professor in the Department of Criminology, Law, and Society at University of California at Irvine, will be visiting OSU's School of Public Policy and Management and the CJRC on May 21st. He will give a talk from 10 to 11:30 am in 300B Fisher Hall. His talk is entitled, "From Boston to Boyle Heights: A 'Pulling Levers' Approach to Reducing Gun Violence", and will address the issue of reducing gun violence in Los Angeles.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice announces calls for papers for THREE special issues.

(1) Juvenile Justice and the New Millennium. The deadline for submissions is June 30, 2001. This special issue will explore research on juvenile justice and juvenile delinquency related issues. Manuscripts should be approximately 7 to 12 double-spaced typewritten pages (excluding tables, figures, and references).

Manuscripts must be sent to:

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(2) Social Capital, Crime, and Criminal Justice. The deadline for submission is August 15, 2001. Manuscripts must be typed, double-spaced, and not to exceed 20 pages in length. Four copies of the manuscript should be submitted, accompanied by an abstract of 100 words or less, and a brief biographical sketch of the author(s), indicating affiliation, research interests, and recent publications. Manuscripts should follow APA guidelines for citations, notes, and references. Please send manuscripts to the edition editor listed below. All manuscripts submitted to the journal for publication are peer-reviewed.

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(3) The Supreme Court and Criminal Justice. The deadline for submissions is June 1, 2002. This issue will explore recent Supreme Court decisions affecting the administration of criminal justice. Articles are invited on a variety of topics, including, but not limited to, recent search and seizure decisions, corrections law, administration of the death penalty, and the interpretation of federal statutes. Contributors can examine one case, or a series of cases. All article submissions will be subject to blind peer review. Persons interested in submitting an article should contact the special issue editor at the address below:

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The Midwestern Criminal Justice Association announces its 2001 Annual Meeting to take place on October 3-5, 2001 at the Best Western Inn of Chicago (Illinois). The theme is "Expanding the Frontiers of Criminal Justice." For more information please contact:

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The deadline for conference proposals is August 1, 2001.

FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Criminal Justice Research Center (CJRC) requests proposals relating to research on issues and problems related to its primary research foci: "Crime and Community," "Youth, Crime and Justice," and "Criminal Justice Policy." Consistent with our interest in fostering policy-relevant research in these areas, we are soliciting three types of proposals:

- (1) Summer Faculty Research Fellowships
- (2) Faculty Research Small Grants
- (3) Graduate/Professional Student Research Awards

The deadline for applications is 5:00 p.m., Friday, June 15, 2001. Please visit the following web page for further details about these funding opportunities:

http://cjrc.osu.edu/call_proposals.html

FEATURED FACULTY PARTICIPANT

Professor Christopher Browning
Professor of Sociology
The Ohio State University

Dr. Chris Browning is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago, where he also obtained his Master's degree. Chris earned his Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Brown University. This past year, Chris received a Faculty Research Small Grant funded by the CJRC to study the relationships among social networks, social cohesion, and urban crime.

Much of Chris' research is grounded in social disorganization theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of community social organization for controlling crime, and assumes that strong levels of community organization always contribute to reductions in crime. Examples of community social organization include networks among neighbors or kin, the supervision of residents and strangers, and residents' attachment to their neighborhood. Chris seeks to understand the causes, consequences, and dilemmas of community social organization for crime and other outcomes associated with crime. His work assesses the conditions under which community social organization reduces or facilitates neighborhood crime. For example, in one study, Chris investigates the influence of social networks on crime with a particular focus on whether these networks reduce or increase crime. To do so, he utilizes data from the Project of Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) Community Survey, a sample of 8,782 Chicago residents from 343 neighborhoods. He finds that dense social networks help reduce crime by generating neighborhood social capital that can be directed toward the informal social control of crime-- a finding that is consistent with social disorganization theory. However, his work also suggests that to the extent that criminals are integrated into dense neighborhood networks through kin and friendship ties, they may mobilize their network ties to facilitate continued criminal activity (e.g., through discouraging local residents from contacting the police). In this way, it is clear that the relationship between dense networks and crime is complex and not simply a matter of social networks always reducing neighborhood crime.

In a second recent project, Chris examines the impact that kin networks (ties among family members) have on collective efficacy, a type of community social organization, and subsequently, on crime. He argues that there are two ways that this relationship could unfold. On the one hand, kin networks (like other networks) may foster collective efficacy and, thereby, help reduce crime. But on the other

hand, kin networks may represent ties and obligations that are directed towards the family such that they are not oriented towards the collective goals of the neighborhood (e.g., controlling crime). If so, kin networks may not foster collective efficacy and thus would not contribute to reductions in crime. Also using the PHDCN Community Survey, findings from this study suggest that kin networks do not help reduce neighborhood crime because they do not promote the collective goals of the neighborhood and lead to collective efficacy. Collectively, these two projects suggest that social disorganization research should recognize that community social organization is not always beneficial to a community's well-being, but rather, in some instances, it may actually contribute to crime.

Another area of research for Chris is grounded in the life course literature and aims to understand the developmental antecedents of problem behavior. For example, Chris is interested in the effects of maltreatment (e.g., sexual abuse, neglect) on problem behavior and whether certain neighborhood contexts moderate or enhance the link between maltreatment and problem behavior.

Theoretically, Chris hopes to bridge his two research areas by integrating social disorganization and life course explanations of crime, allowing for individuals to be embedded within neighborhood contexts. Doing so will permit the study of individual-level outcomes like physical and mental health to be understood as outcomes of community conditions like neighborhood disadvantage.

When Chris is not busy conducting research or preparing for his classes, he enjoys spending time in his new home in the Columbus neighborhood of Old Towne East.

CREDITS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Thanks to all of you who sent your suggestions and announcements. We encourage you to keep us informed about any events that might be of interest to CJRC participants as well as any suggestions that you have for activities or programs. To contact the newsletter editor, please email María Vélez at velez.17@osu.edu or by phone at 247-6736. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please send María your email address.