



Criminal Justice Research Center News



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Featured Article: An Interview with Brad Bushman

From the Director's Desk



Hi, everyone. Spring semester 2014 has been busy thus far, and we are eager about the plans we have in store for the remainder of the term!

We kicked off our speaking events this semester with a presentation

on January 9th by Assistant Professor of Social Work at OSU, Dr. René Olate. His presentation was entitled "Evidence-based Community Interventions for Tackling the Problems of Youth Gang Violence and Delinquency in Central America." Dr. Olate informed the audience about his survey data on gang-affiliated youths in El Salvador, and compared that data to previous findings from youths in Boston. He demonstrated that we need to find more viable solutions for addressing gang-related violence, including helping the youth involved by increasing their educational and employment opportunities. On January 17th, we co-sponsored a presentation with the OSU Department of Sociology by Dr. Andrew Papachristos, Associate Professor of Sociology at Yale. His talk was entitled "Connected in Crime: Using Network Analysis to Understand America's Violence Epidemic," wherein he explored the phenomenon of firearms violence through a social networks lens. Please see Alaina's excellent articles on both events in this issue. Lastly, we hosted OSU Professor of Psychology and Communication, Dr. Brad Bushman, on February 6th. His presentation, "Blood, Gore, and Video Games: Effects of Violent Content on Players," explored his own research and the work of others regarding both negative and prosocial aspects of video games, including the measurable increase in aggression among players of violent video games. Please see Amanda's feature article on her talk with Brad Bushman.

We look forward to hosting Dr. Evelyn Patterson, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt, on March 6th. Dr. Patterson will use a life-course

perspective to explore incarceration, parole, and exoneration in altering one's position in the social strata. We are also excitedly planning for our signature yearly event, the Walter C. Reckless-Simon Dinitz Memorial Lecture, which takes place on April 11th. This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the lecture series, and we couldn't be more pleased to have Political Scientist Dr. Marie Gottschalk (University of Pennsylvania) as our keynote speaker. Dr. Gottschalk will explore avenues to effective change of the carceral state.

We are pleased to report the placement of three new interns in our CJRC Undergraduate Internship Program. Sadé Lindsay is working on a firearms research project with me and Sociology Ph.D. candidate Trent Steidley, and Javier Ibarra and John Kronander have both been placed at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Bureau of Research and Evaluation.

Last but not least, the applications deadline for our Crime and Justice Summer Research Institute was on February 14th, and I am pleased to report that we have the largest applicant pool since the inception of the program!

Happy reading!

--- Dana

Table of Contents:

<i>Upcoming Events:</i>	
Evelyn Patterson.....	2
Reckless-Dinitz Lecture.....	3
<i>CJRC Highlight on Speakers:</i>	
René Olate.....	4
Andy Papachristos.....	5
<i>What Center Participants Are Doing.....</i>	
<i>Opportunities, Calls for Papers, and Conferences.....</i>	7
<i>Featured Article:</i>	
An Interview with Brad Bushman	8

Upcoming Events



Evelyn Patterson, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University

“Questioning the Existence of Freedom”

**Thursday, March 6, 2014
217 Journalism
12:00 pm – 1:20 pm**

Abstract

Countless scholars since Alexis de Toqueville (*Democracy in America*, published in 1835) have observed the great contradictions between the ideals of freedom and equality upon which the American ethos rests and the realities of the limits the nation sets on people’s freedoms. Such limits contribute to broader inequalities of American society. Persons not physically bound by *de jure* social control, there are less formalized, less visible structural factors that restrict social and economic mobility. For modern social scientists concerned with social inequality, these less visible barriers are as important to identify and study as the physical prisons that currently house over two million Americans. Despite advances in civil rights, the current state of corrections continues to illustrate the incredible momentum of past and current injustice. The current paper uses the life-course perspective to assess the duration one can expect to live in various life-states: free and never incarcerated, incarcerated, paroled, and freed (unconditionally free but previously incarcerated) for various social strata. While the duration in each life-state and the probabilities of transitioning to and from each life-state are of primary interest, I also focus on the dimensions within the life-state of free, and the likelihood of leaving the life-state for different populations. Groups experience different

versions of freedom; that is, America has both physical and symbolic prisons that prevent the collective advancement of people. This paper is part of a larger scholarly agenda in which I confront such dilemmas and interrogate if and how freedom can ever exist for all, even in the absence of incarceration.

About the Speaker

Evelyn J. Patterson has been an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University since 2010. She is an Affiliated Faculty member at the Centers for Medicine, Health and Society and Society for the Study of Democratic Institutions, and a Health Policy Associate at the Center for Health Policy at Meharry Medical College. Dr. Patterson is also a Faculty Affiliate of the Racial Democracy, Crime and Justice Network (RDCJN) at CJRC. Her research and teaching interests include correctional populations, health and mortality, mathematical demography and statistics. Dr. Patterson received her Ph.D. in Criminology and Demography from University of Pennsylvania in 2007. Her research has been published in *Demography*, *American Journal of Public Health*, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, *Prison Legal News*, *Corrections Compendium*, and *International Migration Review*. In 2013, Dr. Patterson received the prestigious 2013-2014 Woodrow Wilson Foundation Career Enhancement Fellowship for Junior Faculty, with only twenty such awards being given nationally each year. She is currently furthering her monograph on the demography of incarceration as well as working on her research regarding the school-to-prison pipeline, health disparities, and the effect of the mass incarceration on health and social outcomes.

The 25th Annual Walter C. Reckless-Simon Dinitz Memorial Lecture



Featuring Marie Gottschalk, Professor of Political Science at University of Pennsylvania

“Bring It On: The Future of Penal Reform, the Carceral State, and American Politics”

Friday, April 11, 2014

The Barrister Club

25 W. 11th Avenue, Columbus OH 43201

Doors open at 3:00 pm

Lecture begins at 3:30 pm

Reception to follow

Abstract

The carceral state is deeply entangled in the political, economic, and social fabric of the United States. But in plotting a way out, we must guard against succumbing to “dystopian despair.” We need to resist the belief that the only way to raze the carceral state is to tackle the “root causes” of crime—massive unemployment, massive poverty, and unconscionable levels of social and economic inequality stratified by race and ethnicity. Ameliorating the deeper structural problems that foster such high levels of inequality in U.S. society is an admirable goal. If the aim is to slash the country’s extraordinary incarceration rate and undo its harmful collateral consequences over the next few years, the “root causes” approach to progressive penal reform is shortsighted. Designating structural problems as the centerpiece of any plan to dismantle the carceral state conflates two problems that are actually quite distinct—the problem of mass incarceration and the problem of crime.

Marie Gottschalk is a professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. She specializes in American politics, with a focus on public policy, including criminal justice, health policy, the development of the welfare state, and business-labor relations.

She is the author of, among other works, *The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, 2006), which won the 2007 Ellis W. Hawley Prize from the Organization of American Historians, and *The Shadow Welfare State: Labor, Business, and the Politics of Health Care in the United States* (Cornell, 2000). She is completing a new book, *Caught: Race, Neoliberalism, and the Future of the Carceral State and American Politics*, which examines the political possibilities for significantly reducing the incarceration rate in light of mounting budgetary and other pressures.

She is a former editor and journalist and was a university lecturer for two years in the People’s Republic of China. In 2001-02 she was a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York, and in 2009 she was named a Distinguished Lecturer in Japan by the Fulbright Program. She served on the American Academy of Arts and Sciences national task force on mass incarceration and is currently a member of the National Academy of Sciences Committee on the Causes and Consequences of High Rates of Incarceration. She has a B.A. in history from Cornell University, an M.P.A. from Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from Yale University.

A Discussion with René Olate

By Alaina Clark, CJRC Undergraduate Intern



Dr. Olate during his presentation at CJRC on January 9, 2014

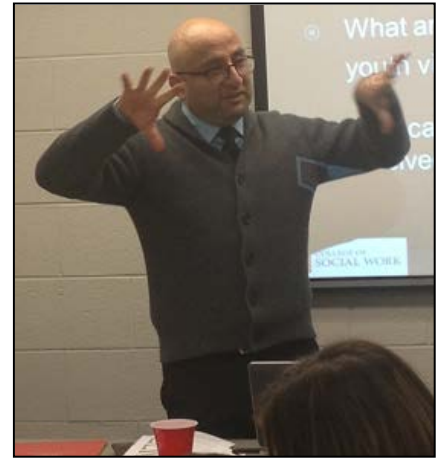
Dr. René Olate's unique background and deep-seated interest in social issues sets him apart from other scholars in his field. The Ohio State Social Work professor explains the roots of his career: "I became interested in social sciences because I lived social science. I wanted to be part of the transformation of my society." Dr. Olate's devotion to social science and social work is grounded in his experience living under the extremely repressive Chilean dictatorship of Augusto

Pinochet. Despite facing harsh oppression, Dr. Olate has prevailed in the field of social work and has produced impressive research on violent crime in Central America.

The three most violent counties in Central America -- El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras -- have an average of sixty-three homicides per one-hundred thousand individuals. While many scholars would attribute this high murder rate to a host of social factors such as poverty and disorganization, Dr. Olate focuses on transnational youth groups as key players in Central America's violent trend. His research focuses on primary risk factors (e.g., age, level of self-control, exposure to violence) that affect marginalized youth gang members in Central America. Dr. Olate's project, "High Risk and Gang-Involved Youth in El Salvador (HRGIY)," uses survey data to identify risk factors for violent crime. The data was collected from adolescents and young adults living in various communities of the San Salvador Metropolitan Area. Dr. Olate performed a comparative analysis between the data gathered in Central America to risk-factor data in Boston. This analysis ultimately led to the conclusion that youth gang groups are not the primary cause of extreme violent crime rates; rather, the youth gangs are only a symptom of greater social issues.

Dr. Olate argues that law enforcement needs to abandon the "black and white" crime control perspective which represses marginalized youth with strict mass incarceration policies.

Mano Dura (iron fist) policies have proven to be hugely ineffective in reducing the violent crime rate in Central America. Instead of continuing to pursue an ineffective and useless strategy, Dr. Olate contends law enforcement



officials need to shift their focus to the "gray areas" of crime prevention. "The gray area" encompasses community-based interventions based on "fostering alternatives and expanding real opportunities" for marginalized youth.

Dr. Olate's conclusion about the ineffectiveness of mass incarceration is a part of a growing consensus among criminology scholars. Last semester, CJRC welcomed David Kennedy who works with at-risk youth in Boston. Like Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Olate's research provides hope that an effective alternative approach will be implemented to reduce violent crime and ultimately save lives.

After his intriguing presentation at CJRC on January 9th regarding his research, I was given the opportunity to speak with Dr. Olate about his work. I was immediately struck by his strong sense of gratitude. For Dr. Olate, having the opportunity to access the "human side" of a violent and marginalized gang member was "a powerful level of experience." Dr. Olate emphasized, "It is not easy for most people to have access to a gang. It is a privilege to be there and to understand more about them."

In closing, Dr. Olate expresses "an absolutely genuine concern" for understanding violence in Central America. Despite clear evidence against strict law enforcement strategies, the ineffective methods are still being implemented. This paradox has led Dr. Olate to ask the tough but necessary question: "Are we really trying to solve the [violent crime] problem?"

A Discussion with Andy Papachristos

By Alaina Clark, CJRC Undergraduate Intern

The OSU Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice Research Center welcomed Dr. Andy Papachristos on January 17th for the second CJRC seminar of the Spring Semester. His intriguing lecture highlighted the study of gun victimization using a social network approach.

Dr. Papachristos' criminological interest is rooted in his experience growing up in Chicago during the height of the Crack Era. Following in the footsteps of his parents (who were community organizers and business owners), he worked as a street outreach worker and started a nonprofit organization to facilitate peace between gang members. Ultimately, Dr. Papachristos believed he would pursue a career as a police officer; however, several undergraduate classes in criminology and sociology at Loyola University of Chicago inspired him to pursue a Ph.D.

Dr. Papachristos received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and is currently an associate professor at Yale University. Much of Dr. Papachristos' research is dedicated to explaining the spread of violent crime using social networks. The concentration of crime within social networks can be studied by mapping out the connections between offenders. Dr. Papachristos' social network approach "allows you to measure interactions...in ways that help to detect patterns and [to determine] how such patterns influence behavior."

Dr. Papachristos' social network study is based on six years of data on gunshot victimization and arrests in Chicago. The patterns of connections between offenders show that an individual's chances of becoming victimized by gun violence increase as his or her connections to high-risk associates also increase. Simply put, individuals who spend time with delinquent groups are more likely to be victimized by gun violence. Dr. Papachristos compares gun victimization to the spread of a blood borne pathogen. Like a blood borne pathogen, gun violence requires certain interactions and frequent exposure to risk leads to high rates of victimization.

The results show that a fifty percent increase in an individual's number of high-risk associates (i.e. delinquent buddies) corresponds with a seventy-seven percent increase in his or her probability of being victimized by gun violence.

The correlation is maintained on a smaller scale: a one percent increase in the individuals' number of high-risk associates leads to a one percent increase in the odds of being shot.

Dr. Papachristos' research on the concentration of gunshot victimization in social networks can have important implications for crime prevention. He says, "The biggest implication is toward more focused violence intervention and prevention efforts. That is, the 'here-and-now' type of efforts on those most at risk of being a victim, or those most directly sitting in networks saturated by violence." Specifically, Dr. Papachristos believes that law enforcement should concentrate less on broad crime prevention strategies such as stop-and-frisk strategies. Rather, law enforcement should direct its attention to the interactions between offenders. He hopes that "public safety and public health officials start to engage in this sort of focused approach."



Dr. Andrew Papachristos

In sum, Dr. Papachristos' social network approach demonstrates a high concentration of victimization in certain social groups. His research reveals a strong correlation between an individual's number of high-risk associates and the chances of falling victim to gun violence. Besides providing important implications for violence prevention, Dr. Papachristos' research has given weight to the age-old phrase, "choose your friends wisely."

What Center Participants are Doing



Ashley Bailes (CJRC Undergraduate Intern – Wrongful Conviction Project, Office of the Ohio Public Defender), an OSU junior majoring in Sociology and minoring in Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies with a pre-law

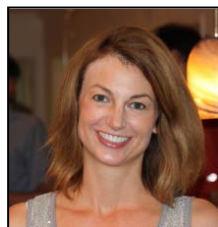
concentration, was officially hired as a paid College Intern at the Wrongful Conviction Project. This is significant in that such a position has historically only been given to students already in law school. According to Wrongful Conviction Project Director Joe Bodenhamer, Ashley was hired "due to her resume, excellent track record and admittance into five law schools already." While she is not decided on where she will attend, Ashley has been accepted at Ohio State University Mortiz College of Law, University of Wisconsin Law School, William & Mary Law School, Notre Dame Law School, and University of Minnesota Law School, which has offered her a full scholarship.

Eileen Bjornstrom (Ph.D. alumna in Sociology, OSU; Assistant Professor of Sociology – University of Missouri) has a forthcoming article in *Environment and Behavior*, co-authored with Margaret L. Ralston: "Neighborhood Built Environment, Perceived Danger, and Perceived Social Cohesion." doi:10.1177/0013916513503833. The article is currently available online.



Rachel Durso (Ph.D. candidate in Sociology – OSU) has accepted a tenure-track job offer as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland. She will begin her appointment there in Autumn 2014.

Dana Haynie (Professor of Sociology; Director of CJRC – OSU) has been selected as one of two Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) Joan N. Huber Faculty Fellows for 2014. Each year SBS awards up to three fellowships to full professors nominated by department chairs and school directors and chosen by the Dean and Associate Dean of SBS. The fellowships



recognize first-rate scholarship in the social and behavioral sciences, awarding the recipient a stipend to partially fund their research over a three-year period. The program is supported from endowment funds in honor of Joan Huber, Professor Emerita of Sociology and former Dean of SBS.



Charis Kubrin (Racial Democracy, Crime and Justice Network member; Associate Professor of Criminology, Law & Society – UC Irvine) co-authored (with Erik Nielson) an op-ed piece, "[Rap Lyrics on Trial](#)," in *The New York Times* on January 14th. The essay examined the question of whether rap lyrics should be used in court as evidence of a crime.

David Maimon (Ph.D. alumnus in Sociology, OSU; Assistant Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice – University of Maryland) recently published his first paper from his larger research project on cyber-crime. The paper, co-authored with Mariel Alper, Bertrand Sobesto and Michael Cukier, is entitled "Restrictive Deterrent Effect of a Warning Banner in an Attached Computer System," and appears in the most recent issue of *Criminology*, 52(1), 33-59. In addition, David is a Co-principal Investigator on a \$309,000, three-year grant awarded from the Israeli Ministry of Science, Technology and Space to study cybercrime in Israel.



Michael Maltz (Professor Emeritus of Criminal Justice, University of Illinois-Chicago; Former CJRC Research Scientist – OSU) is currently serving on the National Research Council (NRC) Panel on Modernizing the Nation's Crime Statistics, organized by the

Committee on National Statistics of the National Academy of Sciences

James L. Moore III (Director, Todd Bell Resource Center; Associate Professor of Physical Activity and Educational Services – OSU) received the Outstanding Men's Program Award from the ACPA Standing Committee on Men and Masculinities. This award is granted to university-based programs that have had a positive impact on men's development.





Anthony Peguero (2007 CJRC Summer Research Institute Participant; Racial Democracy, Crime and Justice Network member; Assistant Professor of Sociology – Virginia Tech University) was given the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) Juvenile Justice Section’s Tory J. Caeti Outstanding

Young Scholar Award. The Caeti award recognizes the contributions of young scholars to the field of juvenile justice.

San Antonio, Texas on January 17th. Her paper was entitled “Development and Validation of a Measure of Positive Youth Development,” and was co-authored by A. Lopez, D. Brisson, S. Luchuga-Pena and J. Jenson.



Hui Zheng (Assistant Professor of Sociology – OSU)’s research was featured in *The Wall Street Journal’s Market Watch* on February 14th in an article entitled “[Why Marriage Won’t Cut Your Medical Bills.](#)”

Elizabeth Petraglia (Ph.D. student in Statistics – OSU) won an \$800 travel award to attend the Joint Statistical Meetings of the American Statistics Association, being held in Boston this August, where she will present her research, “Combining Two Sources of Crime Data to Improve County-level Estimation.” Ms. Petraglia’s advisor is fellow CJRC affiliate Dr. Elizabeth Stasny.



Opportunities, Calls for Papers, and Conferences

Societies is seeking submissions for a special issue, “Parenting, Aggressive Behavior in Children, and Our Violent World.” Good parenting has been seen by many as the cornerstone of a healthy society. As part of the social contract, parents are expected to raise their children to comply with norms of ethical behavior to promote the common good. In some cases, parental neglect, abuse, rejection, poor role modeling, mental illness, and the like are thought to cause physical aggression in children which is associated with more serious violent behavior in youth. This special issue of *Societies* is dedicated to the role of parenting in the social problem of violent crime. We invite a broad range of contributions related to parents or parenting and aggressive behavior in children, parenting and violent behavior in juveniles, relevant theory, including papers which might question the importance of parenting or relate it to other social problems such as mental health, neighborhood deterioration, or alcohol and drug abuse. Manuscripts should be submitted through the online manuscript submission and editorial system at <http://www.mdpi.com/user/manuscripts/upload/>. **The deadline for paper submissions is May 31, 2014.**



David Ramey (Ph.D. candidate in Sociology – OSU) has accepted a tenure-track job offer as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Pennsylvania State University. He will begin his appointment there in Autumn 2014.

Terrell Strayhorn (Associate Professor of Higher Education – OSU) has this recent publication to report: Strayhorn, T. L., & Johnson, R. M. (2013). “Investigating the College Adjustment and Transition Experiences of Formerly Incarcerated Black Male Collegians at Predominantly White Institutions. *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, 2(1), 73-98.



Jamie Yoder (Assistant Professor of Social Work – OSU) has an article in the February 2014 issue of *Community Mental Health Journal* 50(2), p. 135-144. The article, entitled “Explaining Homeless Youths’ Criminal Justice Interactions: Childhood Trauma or Surviving Life on the

Streets?,” was co-authored with Kimberly Bender, Sanna Thompson, Kristin Ferguson, and Badiah Haffejee. Dr. Yoder also presented at the 2014 Society for Social Work and Research Conference in

The Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice is currently soliciting manuscripts for a special issue on offender decision-making, with primary consideration given to submissions that feature original, empirical work employing a multiple methods or mixed methods format. Manuscripts considered for this special issue may focus on a variety of topics, including (but not limited to); (a) the motivation to engage in offending, (b) planning and strategizing criminal actions, (c) enactment of offenses, (d) moderators and mediators of the

decision to offend, (e) offender decision-making based policy recommendations for deterring or preventing criminality. The special issue is especially welcoming of interdisciplinary perspective on these topics, and all forms of crime are welcome subjects of discourse for the special issue. All submitted manuscripts will be peer reviewed. An abstract of approximately 100 words must accompany the manuscript. Manuscripts must be 30 pages or less, double-spaced, including the abstract, references, and all figures and tables.

Manuscripts should be received no later than December 1, 2014. Please send two electronic copies of the manuscript one complete version (with a cover page containing the author's name, title, institutional affiliation with complete address, email and phone contact information; acknowledgments; research grant information), and one blind copy with all identifying information removed to facilitate blind peer review, to Volkan Topalli (ytopalli@gsu.edu). Please include "Special Issue of JCCJ" in the subject line. Manuscripts should be in MS Word format and conform to the formatting style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.).

The Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice invites submissions for a special issue devoted to full or partial tests of Unnever and Gabbidon's (2011) race-centered theory of African American offending, which is presented in their book, *A Theory of African American Theory: Race, Racism, and Crime*. Manuscripts considering the impact of racial discrimination, racial stereotypes, racial socialization, racial identity, and coping skills on offending are especially welcome. Also, welcomed are how these factors interact with gender and place to cause African American offending. All manuscripts will be peer reviewed. An abstract of approximately 100 words and a brief biographical sketch that includes the author's current affiliation, research interest(s), and recent publications must accompany the manuscript. Manuscripts must be 30 pages or less, double-spaced, including the abstract, biographical sketch, references, and all figures and tables. **Manuscripts should be received no later than January 1, 2015.** Please send two electronic copies of the manuscript one complete version (with a cover page containing the author's name, title, institutional affiliation with complete address, email and phone contact information; acknowledgments; research grant numbers; and the date, location, and conference at which the manuscript may have been presented, if any), and one blind copy with all identifying information removed to facilitate blind peer review to Dr. Shaun L. Gabbidon (slg13@psu.edu) or Dr. James Unnever (unnever@sar.usf.edu). Manuscripts should be in MS Word format and conform to the formatting style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.).

~Featured Article~

An Interview with Brad Bushman

By Amanda Kennedy



On February 6th, Dr. Brad Bushman gave a presentation to a full audience at CJRC. He is an expert in media studies, with an educational background in Psychology. Due to Brad's expertise in these two often related areas, he holds a joint faculty position as Professor of Communication and Psychology at OSU, and was also appointed the Margaret Hall and Robert Randall Rinehart Chair of Mass Communication. He is also a Professor of Communication Science at the VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In the past few years, his steadily prolific research agenda has centered on the psychological repercussions of our hyper-engagement with digital media. Specifically, Brad is interested in the ways in which playing video games with violent content creates an unsettling effect on the thoughts and behaviors of individuals.

In his discussion, Brad identified several areas of altered behavior that are influenced by violent game playing. For one, violent video games such as the "Call of Duty" or "Grand Theft Auto" series have a tendency to invoke angry feelings or aggressive thoughts in players. Interestingly, these feelings are intensified when players interface with larger, three-dimensional screens. "After all, violent behavior is repeatedly rewarded in these games through points and visual effects. If you kill a character, you'll hear a verbal affirmation from the game like 'Nice shot!,'" Brad said.

Gamers also experience an increased arousal state while engaged in play. As a measure, Brad and his colleagues monitored cardiac coherence in their participants. Cardiac coherence occurs when breathing is regulated and the heart has an even, wave-like rhythm, indicating calmness. While regular gamers often claim that violent video games are an effective stress reliever, Brad and his fellow researchers found quite the opposite to be true.



Dr. Bushman during his presentation at CJRC on February 6, 2014

Players demonstrated decreased states of cardiac coherence, therefore indicating that their engagement in play actually spiked their stress levels.

Brad's research further revealed that violent video games increase players' outward aggression towards others. In an experiment Brad and his colleagues conducted in the Netherlands, 14-year-old boys were assigned to play

either violent games or non-violent games, such as "Tony Hawk's Pro Skater." The participants were asked to blast their unknown, on-line opponents with grating, loud noises after gameplay. The boys were informed that these noises could actually cause permanent hearing damage if played loudly enough, although this was of course a fictional detail. Findings showed that the players engaged in violent games were much more likely to inflict the "hearing damage" levels of noise than the neutral game players on people they didn't even know, especially if they identified with the violent characters in the game. "People are much more likely to behave aggressively when they identify with violent characters," Brad said. Engagement in violent video games also makes players less likely to demonstrate helping or concern when exposed to potentially dangerous conflict between people. In an experiment at OSU, NBC News Dateline hired actors to stage a fictional, heated argument, which was then played as if it were occurring outside of the testing room where participants were present. Those players who had engaged in violent video games were 450 percent less likely to interpret the conflict as being serious than those playing non-violent games.

In concluding his presentation, Brad discussed the cognitive dissonance and fallacious reasoning employed by fans of violent video games. "I get a lot of fan mail," he said facetiously, as he receives numerous emails from avid gamers who angrily deny the findings of his research. Part of the problem lies in the ubiquitous presence of violence in U.S. media, with a lack of clear concern or regulation coming from a non-biased entity. "European countries have their governments assign ratings to media. Conversely, the United States has a complex, confusing media rating system that's determined by the very industry profiting from these games," Brad stated. He believes that more intentional and neutral rating systems as well as forms of media which can be more easily controlled by parents are two possible solutions in addressing this issue.

After his lecture, I had a chance to interview Brad about his research, as well as what initially sparked his interest in media studies. He began as an engineering major in the honors program at Weber State University in Utah. Early on in his undergraduate career, Brad took an honors course in human aggression. "It literally changed my entire career. I read through stacks of journal articles and thought, 'Oh man, now that's what I want to do!'" He pursued his academic passion as a graduate student at the University of Missouri, where he received Master's Degrees in Statistics and Psychology, as well as a Ph.D. in Psychology. His first major research project on violence in the media was his master's thesis, which was published in *the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. "We looked at how violent media content increased anger and aggressive thoughts in people, and it was actually one of the first studies to tackle the topic."

When graduate school ended, Brad became a Psychology Professor at Iowa State where he remained for 13 years. In 2003, he joined the faculty in the Department of Communication Studies and Psychology at University of Michigan. This brought a learning curve, as he began teaching his first courses in Communication and found his interdisciplinary place as both a researcher and a professor. "There were a lot of theories of communication that I didn't know about. I am still learning all the time, and will continue to do so," he said. Ohio State recruited Brad from Michigan in 2010, and President Gordon Gee called him on several occasions to influence him to come here. It must have worked.

While Brad is at OSU during the academic year, he has the valuable research opportunity to serve as a faculty member with VU University in the Netherlands each summer. "I gave an invited talk in Amsterdam, and the chair of Communications there asked me to go there for sabbatical. I thought it would be a great learning and living opportunity for me as well as my family, so we arranged a contract." His work in Europe has allowed him to add an internationally comparative aspect to his research. Besides his work with Dutch faculty, Brad has done collaborative work with other researchers in Spain, Germany, Poland, Italy, Belgium, Romania, Turkey, and France. "It's been wonderful to work in Europe. For instance, the Netherlands is so pro-science. Parents here are more skeptical about having their kids participate in scientific studies. Parents there easily agree to have their children in our studies, because they know that science is the key to our future."

Brad's work has gained national attention. He was a member of President Obama's committee on gun violence, and was a Co-Chair of the National Science Foundation's advisory committee on youth violence. He also recently testified before Congress on the issue of youth violence. This month, he and his colleagues submitted a grant proposal to study the link between gun violence in the mass media and individual attitudes towards firearms. Brad's research on violence and media studies continues to expand in scope, and he hopes to pursue further work on how violence affects youth. "We don't let kids drink beer, or smoke, or have sex, or play with guns when they are underage in this country. If we regulate these activities, why would we let our youth consume massive amounts of age-inappropriate violent media? We need more research on gun violence in particular, because it's really what distinguishes America from every other developed nation in the world."

Thanks to Dr. Brad Bushman, Dr. René Olate and Dr. Andrew Papachristos for sharing their valuable time and insights during interviews for our articles, and to all of you who sent 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 [Amanda Kennedy](#). If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please send Amanda your e-mail address.
