



Criminal Justice Research Center News



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Volume 15, Issue 4

November/December 2014

Featured Article: An Interview with Hollie Nyseth Brehm

From the Director's Desk



Hi, everyone. We are pleased to have wrapped up a busy fall semester at CJRC. Over the course of the term, we had the privilege of hearing from some excellent speakers who visited our center. In September, Racial Democracy, Crime and Justice

Network affiliate Dr. Charis Kubrin (University of California-Irvine) spoke about the use of rap lyrics as admissible evidence in criminal trials. October brought us a visit from Dr. Adam Jones (University of British Columbia-Okanagan), an expert in genocide research. Adam discussed how gender is a crucial factor in examining genocide, and how men and women are targeted in differing ways when these tragedies come to a head. Please see articles from our intern, Annie Curie, on both of these wonderful talks. Our own Professor of Sociology, Dr. Chris Browning, also spoke at CJRC in October, presenting his current Columbus study on adolescents' negotiations of space and activity in their neighborhoods over time.

We have a great spring lineup starting on January 29th, 2015, when Dr. Richard Rosenfeld (University of Missouri-St. Louis) will discuss the larger social implications of the recent events in Ferguson, Missouri following the killing of Michael Brown (see below for more information). We will also have an Institute for Excellence in Justice seminar on February 19th featuring Provost Todd Clear (Rutgers University-Newark), who will be accompanied by panelists Steve Van Dine of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and Dr. Townsend Price-Spratlen from OSU's Department of Sociology. In March we will welcome Law Professor Dr. Brenda V. Smith (American University), and our Reckless-Dinitz Memorial Lecture in April will feature Law Professor Samuel Gross

(University of Michigan). We hope to see you at these upcoming engagements, and will share more information with you as it becomes available.

I'm also pleased to announce a robust year for the 2015 CJRC Faculty Seed Grants. The awards went to Paul Bellair (Sociology), Simone Drake (African American and African Studies), Jodi Ford (Nursing), Kate Calder (Statistics), Chris Browning (Sociology), Margaret Newell (History), and Jamie Yoder (Social Work).

Congratulations to these well-deserved recipients. We are glad to sponsor their important research, and we look forward to the progress of their emerging projects.

Our internship program recently saw the creation of four new positions with the Ohio Public Defender in their Expert Witness Testimony Working Group. Amanda is currently interviewing candidates for these positions.

Lastly, I want to remind everyone that our application deadline for our July 2015 Crime and Justice Summer Research Institute is fast approaching (see more information below). Please have all materials in by February 13, 2015.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

--- Dana

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Upcoming Event:



Richard Rosenfeld

Founders Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Missouri-St. Louis

“Ferguson in Context”

Thursday, January 29, 2015

12:00 p.m. to 1:20 p.m.

217 Journalism Building - OSU Campus

Abstract

The killing of Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri, could not have been predicted. Police shootings of unarmed suspects are rare events. But neither was Michael Brown’s killing a random occurrence. With the benefit of hindsight it is clear that conditions in Ferguson – and in thousands of other similar communities across the country – were ripe for an encounter between a police officer and a citizen to turn deadly. And given the fragmented and exploitative structure of governance in St. Louis County, which disproportionately harms disadvantaged African-Americans, the community upheaval following Michael Brown’s killing is not surprising.

The Speaker

Richard Rosenfeld is Founders Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri – St. Louis. His research focuses on crime trends and crime control policy. Dr. Rosenfeld is a Fellow and past President of the American Society of Criminology. He serves on the Science Advisory Board of the Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice, and he is the principal investigator of the St. Louis Public Safety Partnership.

What Center Participants are Doing



Audrey Begun (Associate Professor, Social Work – OSU) has a new publication: “Looking Out From the Inside: Incarcerated Women’s Perceived Barriers to Treatment of Substance Use.” The article was coauthored with S.J. Rose, T.P. LeBel and D. Fuhrmann and appears in the

Journal of Offender Rehabilitation (Vol. 54, No. 4).

Hollie Nyseth Brehm (Assistant Professor, Sociology – OSU)

received an ASA Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline Award for her project “Rwanda’s Gacaca Courts” this fall. She was also recently asked by the CIA to join the Political Instability Task Force, a small team of scholars that consults with the CIA and other government agencies regarding political instability and violence around the world. They are particularly interested in forecasting models for genocide and other forms of mass violence. In addition, Hollie has two recent publications to report: Nyseth Brehm, Hollie, Christopher Uggen, and Jean-Damascene Gasanabo. 2014. “Justice, Genocide, and Rwanda’s Gacaca Courts.” *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 30(3): 333-352; and Zacher, Megan, Hollie Nyseth Brehm, and Joachim Savelsberg. 2014. “NGOs, IOs, and the ICC: Diagnosing and Framing Darfur.” *Sociological Forum* 29(1): 29-51. **Finally, Hollie is coordinating American Sociological Association’s Roundtables for the Law, Crime, and Deviance section. If you are interested in submitting a proposal, please contact Hollie at brehm.84@osu.edu. Proposals are due by January 7th, 2015.**



Brad Bushman (Professor of Communication and Psychology, Margaret Hall and Robert Randal Rinehart Chair of Mass Communication – OSU) gave a TEDx Talk in Columbus on November 7th, 2014. The talk, entitled “[Aggression Often Starts when Self-control Stops](#),” addresses how playing violent video games and physiological hunger both increase aggressive tendencies.

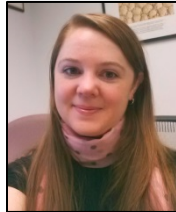
when Self-control Stops,” addresses how playing violent video games and physiological hunger both increase aggressive tendencies.

Prejudicial or Valuable Evidence? A Look into the Work of Rap Expert Charis Kubrin

by Annie Curie, CJRC Undergraduate Intern



Eileen Bjornstrom (2009 Ph.D. alumna, Sociology – OSU; Assistant Professor, Sociology – University of



Missouri) and Danielle Kuhl (2007 Ph.D. alumna, Sociology – OSU; Associate Professor, Sociology – Bowling Green State University) co-authored the recent publication, “A Different Look at the Epidemiological Paradox: Self-rated Health, Perceived Social Cohesion, and Neighborhood Immigrant Context.” The article appears in *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 120, pp. 118-125.



Sharon Davies (Professor of Law, Moritz College of Law – OSU) was awarded a 2015 YWCA Women of Achievement Award which honors outstanding female leaders in central Ohio.

Ryan King (Associate Professor, Sociology – OSU) co-authored an essay (along with Brian D. Johnson, Cassia Spohn, and Besiki Kutateladze) entitled “[Understanding Guilty Pleas: The National Science Foundation’s Research Coordination Network](#)” that appears in the November/December 2014 issue of *The Criminologist*.



James L. Moore III (Professor, Education and Human Ecology – OSU) is currently a visiting minority scholar at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research for the 2014-2015 academic year. The program’s goal is to increase the visibility of minority scholars’ research and make their work in education more visible at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Terrell Strayhorn (Professor, Educational Studies – OSU) presented “Connecting Student Support to Sense of Belonging for All Students” at the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators in Columbus on November 14th.



A common tenet in legally-themed television shows such as “Law and Order” is how ardently one must avoid the use of circumstantial evidence in a trial. But what happens when that evidence is comprised of rap lyrics written by the defendant? Should the judge and the jury consider such writings art or evidence? And if it is evidence, is it circumstantial or probative? These questions and more were answered by guest lecturer Dr. Charis Kubrin on September 25, 2014, when she paid a visit to the Criminal Justice Research Center. Currently a faculty member at the University of California, Irvine, Dr. Kubrin specializes in criminology, law, and society. Her current work and a book project, co-authored with Dr. Erik Nielson (University of Richmond), have both focused heavily on the use of rap lyrics in criminal trials of young African American men. This work began in the early 2000s as a research topic for several papers based on content analysis of four hundred rap songs, but it was brought to the forefront of Dr. Kubrin’s career years later when she received a phone call from a District Attorney requesting her assistance as an expert trial witness. Dr. Kubrin has since branched out from the world of academia to the court room, where she has testified numerous times as a rap expert, and has even presented a TEDx Talk on the matter.



Dr. Charis Kubrin

On the day of her presentation at Ohio State, I had the opportunity to speak briefly with Dr. Kubrin. When asked why she pursued this niche research interest, she responded that she became “intellectually curious” about the difference between claims being made about rap and the substantial data collected on the matter. Rap lyrics serve as a readily available source of circumstantial evidence for prosecutors to use when framing the narrative surrounding the defendant. While Dr. Kubrin argues that such evidence should be inadmissible in court if it does not provide more probative value than its prejudicial impact on the jury, judges will often allow such evidence into their cases regardless. By providing rap lyrics that are often violent, as is the nature of most work created by aspiring “gangsta” rappers, the prosecutors persuade the juries of the defendant’s violent nature with ease. During her

Adam Jones and Gendered Genocide: The Controversy Regarding Massacring Male Victims

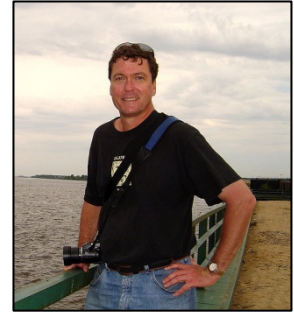
by Annie Curie, CJRC Undergraduate Intern

work with defendants, Dr. Kubrin often will first file pre-trial motions to exclude the rap lyrics from the evidence by assisting the judge in understanding why such evidence should not be accepted. If they choose to admit it, however, Dr. Kubrin will testify to the nature of the rap lyrics.

One argument against use of rap lyrics in prosecution of defendants is that minority males are disproportionately targeted with said evidence. While other forms of art are often considered art for arts' own sake, rap lyrics are typically perceived as autobiographical rather than artistic. For this reason, when lyrics are given as evidence in a trial, the defendant is painted to the jury as violent, and thus is considered guilty even if there is a lack of other evidence. Many of these men pen the sort of lyrics they do because they see this as the only way to gain success in the competitive industry. With violent lyrics, prosecutors can sway the juries on cases ranging from threats of violence to homicide convictions, even without other credible evidence to justify said convictions.

This talk comes at an appropriate time, as America currently is facing a nationwide dialogue regarding minority men singled out by the justice system. As the CJRC continues to address issues such as racialized justice, the nation must also examine issues of racialization in other judicial systems. It is Dr. Kubrin's aim to advocate just hearings through raising awareness about what should and should not be heard by the courts. She will continue to do so with opinion articles, lectures, and Amicus Briefs along with continued academic research.

Genocide is often captured in the media as an evil that affects the vulnerable members of a society, people displaced and murdered in bouts of senseless violence. The images of these vulnerable people are usually women, children, and the elderly, yet recent events and key research have shown that these are not the only groups vulnerable to such violence. October 8th, 2014 brought yet another riveting guest presentation in the Criminal Justice Research Center as Dr. Adam Jones, Professor of Political Science at the University of British Columbia Okanagan, came to present "Gendering Genocide" to a diverse audience of scholars and students. The aim of Dr. Jones' research is to illuminate the ways in which men and boys of fighting age can also be slaughtered during genocidal warfare.



Dr. Adam Jones

Dr. Jones' fierce interest in this subject originated when he was a child, when he became aware of human rights issues due to learning about the Holocaust. In the 1980's, he went to Central America to do humanitarian work, leading him to learn further about ethnic warfare. During his research on places such as the Balkans, East Timor, and Rwanda, Dr. Jones recognized a notable pattern in the response of governments and NGOs when dealing with genocide. Namely, the safety of women, children, and the elderly was placed above the needs of men and boys.

Dr. Jones began warning of the dangers of ignoring men in genocidal situations with his 1994 *Ethnic and Racial Studies* article "Gender and Ethnic Conflict in Ex-Yugoslavia." Often in genocide, men and boys are killed while women are sexually victimized by the genocidal actors. Thus, the gendered approach to genocide has traditionally focused on the devastating effects on women as a result of this process. Dr. Jones does not research this topic as a means to provide a false sense of security for female victims of genocide, nor does he intend to dispel the understanding of how women are harmed by these attacks. Rather, his research aims to provide men and boys with a voice in international mediation that can protect them from slaughter. In his

talk, Dr. Jones discussed the 1995 massacre of over several thousand men and boys in Srebrenica during the Bosnian War. During the conflict, Bosnian Muslims were targeted by Bosnian Serbs in an ethnically driven gain for territory. Foreign and United Nations forces rescued women and children, yet left behind all the men of fighting age, who were therefore considered to be a physical threat and were ultimately massacred. Though this was the group that was abandoned, it was also the group of people that is inherently most vulnerable to such mass killing during ethnic conflict. Dr. Jones argues that the United Nations had every reason to anticipate this outcome, yet even with this knowledge they did not prevent it.

By examining the disparate outcomes for males, Dr. Jones hopes to address structural and institutional failures in the ways that international groups address genocide.

Opportunities, Calls for Papers, and Conferences

Applications are now being accepted for the Crime and Justice Summer Research Institute: Broadening Perspectives and Participation at OSU, July 6-24, 2015. Faculty pursuing tenure and career success in research-intensive institutions, academics transitioning from teaching to research institutions, and faculty members carrying out research in teaching contexts will be interested in this Summer Research Institute. Funded by the National Science Foundation, the institute is designed to promote successful research projects and careers among faculty from underrepresented groups working in areas of crime and criminal justice. During the institute, participants work to complete an ongoing project (either a research paper or grant proposal) in preparation for journal submission or agency funding review. In addition, participants gain information that serves as a tool-kit tailored to successful navigation of the academic setting. **Completed applications must be sent electronically by Friday, February 13, 2015.** To download the application form, please see our web site (<http://cjrc.osu.edu/sri>). Once completed, submit all requested application materials to kennedy.312@osu.edu. All applicants must hold regular tenure-track positions in U.S. institutions and demonstrate how their participation broadens participation of underrepresented groups in crime and justice research. Graduate students without tenure track appointments are not eligible for this program. Please direct all inquiries to kennedy.312@osu.edu.

The Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice is currently soliciting manuscripts for a special issue on prisons and imprisonment. Manuscripts with a variety of foci will be considered for the issue, including examinations of 1) the causes and/or correlates of inmate maladjustment (e.g., mental health problems, crime, and victimization); 2) the responses to or consequences of inmate maladjustment; 3) correctional staff well-being (e.g., stress, safety, morale); 4) the effects of exposure to various prison environments on inmates or staff; and 5) effectiveness of strategies designed to improve inmate and staff well-being. The issue will be guest edited by Benjamin Steiner and John Wooldredge. All submitted manuscripts will be peer reviewed. Manuscripts must be 25 pages or less, double-spaced, and accompanied by an abstract of approximately 100 words. The abstract, references, and all figures and tables are not counted towards the 25 page limit. **Manuscripts should be received no later than December 1, 2015.** Manuscripts should be in MS Word format and conform to the formatting style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.). Please send two electronic copies of the manuscript, one complete version (with a cover page including the author's name, title, institutional affiliation with complete address, email and phone contact information, and any acknowledgments with relevant funding information), and one blind copy with all identifying information removed to Benjamin Steiner (bmsteiner@unomaha.edu). Please include "Special Issue of JCCJ" in the subject line.

~Featured Article~

An Interview with Hollie Nyseth Brehm

by Amanda Kennedy

I had the opportunity to sit down and speak with Hollie Nyseth Brehm, a new Assistant Professor in the OSU Department of Sociology and a recently appointed affiliate of CJRC. We discussed Hollie's path to becoming a sociologist with a substantive focus in genocide as well as her current and developing research.

We first discussed what led Hollie to her career in academe. She was raised in a small town in Wisconsin and attended University of Wisconsin-La Crosse as an undergraduate. Hollie majored in Sociology and Political Science while there and initially planned on attending law school. She did a minor in Spanish and a study



Hollie Nyseth Brehm in the field

abroad program in Mexico, where she taught English in a women's prison in the state of Puebla. "On a side note, I purposefully didn't tell my parents I was interning at a prison until we were on our way to the airport!" she said. Hollie explained that the class she taught there was completely voluntary, and the prison was fairly low security. "The women there were honestly some of the best students I ever taught because they really wanted to learn the material and took it really seriously." Hollie also did research at a human rights organization called the Center for the Development of Women. Between her teaching experience and her first exposure to conducting research, Hollie realized how much she enjoyed both. "When I returned to the states I decided to go to grad school instead of law school."

In her first year of the Sociology Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota, Hollie was unsure of what exactly she wanted to study. During a Public Health class on Human Rights, a guest speaker came from Genocide Watch, a non-profit whose mission includes forecasting and raising public awareness of genocide in the hopes of preventing further occurrences. "I had learned about the Holocaust, and had heard about Rwanda, but he [the speaker] started talking about genocidal events in Guatemala, Cambodia, and other tragedies I wasn't as aware of. I immediately looked for research on genocide through a sociological lens, and there were surprisingly few studies of it. That's when I thought: I want to study this."

We discussed Hollie's passion for her work on genocide. Despite genocide being a pressing human rights issue, many people assumed genocidal events were more random than they actually were. "There are social patterns in everything, and I think it's incredibly important to see genocide in that context." Hollie found it staggering when she learned in graduate school that more people died due to genocide in the twentieth century than deaths caused by wars or homicides combined. In addition, she realized the many forms of violence and upheaval genocide takes, including forced dislocation, the destruction of cultures, sexual violence, and lasting trauma. She also discussed some of the cardinal factors that prime a nation for experiencing

genocide. "Exclusionary ideologies typically created by governments to single out a segment of the population definitely matter, as well as forms of political threat to the state, such as civil wars, coups or assassinations."

Hollie explained how she approaches her research. "I look at genocide from multiple levels. I use quantitative models to look at elements that influence whether and when a genocidal event will occur in a given country." Hollie's dissertation focused on the process that unfolds in countries once genocide begins. She studied Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, examining the community-level factors that influenced the rate of violence during genocide. Hollie lived in Rwanda and Bosnia for several months, and traveled to Uganda to interview refugees from Darfur. "It was really difficult to interview survivors. Darfur refugees were still unaware of the fates of some of their family members, and they wanted to know why the U.S. wasn't doing anything. I felt helpless in not being able to adequately answer that question."

We next discussed Hollie's current research. While Hollie was in Rwanda she worked with the government's genocide prevention commission. It was 2012, and the Gacaca courts in Rwanda were finally closing. These courts tried most of the civilians who perpetrated the violence during the 1994 tragedy. Hollie accessed the court records from these trials, and along with a former graduate school mentor, Dr. Chris Uggen, is in the process of analyzing these data for a variety of factors. They have already done a study on the demographic characteristics of the perpetrators, where they found the average age of the perpetrator to be 34 years old. "It was surprising they were that old, because it defied the age-crime curve trajectory we usually see in criminal activity." This study is currently under review. "As we move forward, I want to use the data to learn more about the courts and how they functioned, and figure out whether they really helped to restore balance in Rwandan society." Hollie also is working on a project with colleagues at the University of Minnesota examining gender-based violence during genocide. They are using data from the Atrocity Documentation Survey that the U.S. government implemented in refugee camps in Chad in 2004. In addition, Hollie is developing a project regarding rescuers in Rwanda. "I interviewed these rescuers and want to see what made them stand up during these tragedies."

It is clear that Hollie has a bright future as a scholar, and her work is already gaining national attention. Due to her research, Hollie was recently asked by the CIA to join their Political Instability Task Force, a small team of scholars that consults with the CIA and other government agencies regarding international political instability and violence. The group will work on

forecasting models for genocide and other forms of mass violence. "While I am interested in the theory and research behind genocide, I am ultimately concerned and want to help with the real life impact genocide has on people."

Thanks to Hollie Nyseth Brehm, Adam Jones, and Charis Kubrin for sharing their valuable time and insights 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.
