

THE RURAL CRIMINOLOGIST

The latest on rural criminology around the world



Places Around the World

The photos (1-7) featured in this issue are from featured scholar Gorazd Meško. They are of rural areas in Slovenia, his home country, some of which he became quite familiar with early in his career as a village police officer. When reflecting on this experience he stated, "... being a police officer in a village meant to knit more personal bonds with local people than it can ever happen in a city... [it] was a lifetime opportunity to learn about all kinds of stuff, from social work, helping farmers, caring for kids on their way to school, to being challenged by physically strong men full of testosterone and alcohol."



EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to the third issue of *The Rural Criminologist*. This issue includes updates on the rescheduled conferences and the newly formed International Society for the Study of Rural Crime, summaries of recent events, and the highlighting of rural scholar, Gorazd Meško. We hope all future issues will do the same. If you want to nominate a scholar, research topic, new publication, or upcoming conference for mention in this newsletter or on the website, please feel free to contact us.

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UPDATE FROM DRC PRESIDENT

By: Joseph F. Donnermeyer

If you do not yet know that nearly every criminological society meeting in 2020 was cancelled, then you were either kidnapped by zombies or you yourself are one. From my perspective, the first victim of COVID-19 was a colloquium organized by Vania Ceccato from the Royal Institute of Technology (Stockholm) and other colleagues from Sweden on "Safety, resilience and community: Challenges and opportunities beyond the city", originally scheduled for April 23. Quickly following with cancellations were the British Society of Criminology in early July, the European Society of Criminology in mid-September, and the biennial conference of the Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe, which typically follows only a few days after ESC. Plus, the American Society of Criminology annual meeting in November was postponed. Finally, a session sponsored by the International Society for the Study of Rural Crime as part of the World Congress of Rural Sociology, to be held in Cairns, Australia and scheduled for early July, was vetoed.

Of special note was that the ESC had approved a Rural Criminology Working Group (#28), under the leadership of Kreseda Smith (Harper Adams University) and Artur Pytlarz (Technical University Dublin). However, a session on rural criminology is now part of the ESC online replacement version, scheduled for September 10 and 11 (https://e024fbf5-6c7b-4d28-a274-3ea640442f02.filesusr.com/ugd/7a9c76_6f3ddf703ef4492d811bd434dcad65c7.pdf).

UPDATE, CONT'D

The Swedish conference on safety, resilience and community is now rescheduled virtually for September 29. To register, go to: <https://www.sakraplatser.abe.kth.se/2020/06/16/save-the-date-colloquium-safety-resilience-and-community-23-april-2020/>

BSC also switched to an online version, which took place on July 7. Both conferences organized by the Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe and the World Congress of Rural Sociology are re-scheduled at the same place, and with similar dates, for 2021. The Central and Eastern European conference (under the leadership of Gorazd Meško) will maintain its rural theme for 2021, which is “Perspectives of Rural Safety, Security and Rural Criminology”. The ASC meeting for November, 2021 is scheduled for Chicago. Hopefully, DRC will be able to sponsor several (if not more) thematic sessions at ASC next year.

Even though we must face the realities of COVID-19, let’s not lose hope that we shall all meet in person at a criminological conference in 2021, and together lift a glass of our favorite beverage to the health and welfare of each other.



DRC ELECTION RESULTS

In September 2019, we held our first election and the commencement of the 2019 ASC conference in San Francisco marked the start of the two-year terms. We wanted to share the news with you again in case you were not able to attend.

From left to right, top row:

Chair: Joseph F. Donnermeyer, The Ohio State University

Vice Chair: Walter S. DeKeseredy, West Virginia University

Secretary-Treasurer: David May, Mississippi State University

From left to right, bottom row:

Executive Counselor: Ralph Weisheit, Illinois State University

Executive Counselor: Kyle Ward, University of Northern Colorado

Student Representative: Ashley Lockwood, University of Central Florida

Call for Book Proposals

We are pleased to announce that there is a new edited book series entitled 'Research in Rural Crime' being developed with Bristol University Press.

This series will provide an outlet for original, cutting-edge research in this emergent criminological subfield.

Truly international in nature, it leads the way for new research and writing on a wide range of rural crime topics, rural transgressions, security and justice.

The editors welcome monograph-length titles that are jurisdictional specific or related to themes that transcend political and juridical boundaries, presenting outlooks on contemporary and pressing public policy issues.

Those who contribute to this series will present pioneering interdisciplinary and comparative rural criminological perspectives. The 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.

Books in this series can be sole or joint authored, or edited collections, and will be between 60,000 and 80,000 words in length.

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

Alistair Harkness,
Federation University Australia,
alistair.harkness@federation.edu.au

Matt Bowden,
Technological University Dublin,
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THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF RURAL CRIME



By: **Bridget Harris and Alistair Harkness**

It has been a very busy and active time for ISSRC since the first newsletter of 2020. The Society is growing quickly, with a broad range of interests represented by both scholars and practitioners alike across all four corners of the world.

ISSRC Roundtables

A particular highlight of the year was the inaugural ISSRC roundtable. In examining Rural Access to Justice academics, advocates and practitioners considered: emerging issues, potential responses or solutions to inequalities and future research and practice that could enhance access to justice.

Our fantastic panellists were: Dr Danielle Wilson, Senior Lecturer in Justice at Queensland University of Technology; Dr Liz Curran, Honorary Associate Professor at the Australian National University and Principal at 'Curran Consulting: Enhancing Justice and Human Rights'; and ISSRC President and Emeritus Professor at Ohio State University, Joseph F. Donnermeyer.

They discussed the notion of 'postcode [or zipcode] justice' – variances in justice system delivery and outcomes based on the location of the criminal justice agency, offence or offender. Also explored was the limitation of theoretical models and gaps in curriculum and training that hinders understandings of and initiatives to bolster access to justice. Limitations in Western models were also noted, as were tendencies to employ Northern initiatives in Southern contexts, without considering the context and limitations of imported models.

Technologies (Zoom and social media) ensure we could connect with scholars, practitioners and advocates across the globe. We had an engaged audience and rigorous discussion and, hopefully, helped build networks and directions to move forward in this arena. Thanks again to our panellists and audience members! We appreciated your attendance and also feedback (which has guided how we will develop and deliver future events).

A recording of the event can be accessed by ISSRC members via the members only section on www.issrc.net. You can also see Twitter commentary and discussion of the event via: #ISSRC2020. Please note that this hashtag will be utilised in future roundtables held this year, so you will be able to search for and follow events via this channel.

Do you have you an idea for a future Roundtable? If so, let us know! Proposals should be submitted to admin@issrc.net for consideration and should include:

- An overview / rationale for the event (minimum of 200 words)
- Details of the organising committee and roles identified
- A draft schedule / run sheet
- Proposed speakers (with 100-200 word biographies): Note that ideally speakers will include a range of advocates or practitioners and advocates; more senior and junior participants; a diverse range of participants (e.g. should reflect gender, ethnic, geographic diversity)
- A promotion and social media strategy (minimum 100 words)

Upcoming Special Issue of IJRC

We are pleased to share with you that Volume 5, Issue 2 of the International Journal of Rural Criminology (formerly the International Journal of Rural Crime) will soon be available for you to view at <https://kb.osu.edu/handle/1811/51122>

This special issue was guest edited by Dr. Walter S. DeKeseredy at West Virginia University. As he states in his introduction, "... there has never been a special issue of any journal devoted entirely to disseminating contemporary international work in the field. Thus, this issue is a historical milestone..."

Below is a list of the passionate researchers and theorists that contributed to this historic issue of IJRC.

"Thinking theoretically about male violence against women in rural places: A review of the extant sociological literature and suggestions for future theorizing" by Drs. Walter S. DeKeseredy and Callie M. Rennison

"The impact of rurality on women's 'space for action' in domestic violence: Findings from a meta-synthesis" by Drs. Kate Farhall, Bridget Harris, and Delanie Woodlock

"A perfect storm: Violence toward women in the Bakken oil patch" by Drs. Rick Ruddell and Sarah Britto

"Violence against women of Belize in rural communities" by Dr. Kiesha Warren-Gordon

"#MeToo in regional, rural and remote Australia: An analysis of regional newspapers reports profiling the movement" by Drs. Rachel Loney-Howes and Bianca Fileborn

"Intimate partner femicide in context: An examination of firearm type across the rural/urban divide" by Dr. Ashley M. Mancik, Dr. Richard Stansfield, and Sylessia M. Kinard

A review essay of *Outlaw Women: Prison, Rural Violence, and Poverty in the American West* (Dewey et al, 2019) and *Big House on the Prairie: Rise of the Rural Ghetto and Prison Proliferation* (Eason, 2017) entitled, "Fitting In: A Book Review Essay on Rural Prisons and Prisoner Re-entry through the Lens of a Rural Critical Criminology" by Drs. Rosemary Gido and Joseph F. Donnermeyer

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF RURAL CRIME, CONT'D

Call out to multi-linguists!

We are keen to translate a welcome message for the ISSRC website into a variety of different languages. The message would only be a few paragraphs long, essentially briefly outlining the purpose of the Society and encouraging membership, but aimed at providing a warm and friendly welcome.

Would this be something you might be able to do? If so, please email admin@issrc.net

Call for blog contributions

The blog on www.issrc.net provides an opportunity for pithy observations or reflections on topical rural crime news and developments, a summary of research, promotion of publications, advertisements for upcoming events... and more! Blog posts are a crucial way of sharing ideas amongst ourselves and also more broadly.

If you would like to contribute something for the blog, email a submission of between 100 and 500 words to admin@issrc.net

Establishment of an awards program

ISSRC is establishing an awards program to champion students, early career researchers and practitioners making a strong contribution to the study of rural crime. More details will appear on www.issrc.net later this year – watch this space!

Member profiles

Are you a member of ISSRC and want to publicise your research interests? We are in the process of assembling a member profile section on the ISSRC website. A name, photo and key words will be presented and visitors to the site can click through to a more fulsome biography of members. This will allow people to connect their interests more quickly and clearly.

If you would like to appear on the website, please email your name, title, research interest keywords, photo and brief biography to admin@issrc.net

Social Media

We are keen to support and promote rural work and events! If you have a publication, conference or project you would like promoted, please email bridget.harris@qut.edu.au with information / links / photos and so on, or tag us at @RuCrimSociety

RURAL SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHT: GORAZD MEŠKO

Gorazd Meško, Professor of Criminology and Head of the Institute of Criminal Justice and Security with the University of Maribor in Slovenia, has always found himself drawn to rurality. As a young child living in an urban setting, Meško would visit his grandparents in their small village. He was further exposed to a variety of rural perspectives in 1984 when he began to work as a village police officer, responsible for the vast area at the base of the beautiful mountains featured in photos 5, 6, and 7 on page 6.

In policing a close-knit community, Meško was able to develop personal bonds with the community members that would remain with him even 30 years after leaving the area. He continues to be invited to birthdays and weddings because as one community member states, "... we know who served our community and never betrayed us. You are still one of us. My grandson is now a police officer because of you..." The vibrant and intensive experience as a village cop has greatly influenced how he feels about rural criminology presently. When Meško reads literature, he often reminisces on his past experiences. He states, "It's a good feeling to be able to have a sociological and criminological imagination and even more, to write about rural and other criminological problems."

Since his academic career began in 1992, Meško has researched a number of criminological and criminal justice topics. He finds the work of rural criminologists interesting and academically invigorating. He believes it is essential to become educated on rural aspects of deviance, crime, and social control, and we are far from being fully informed. Meško elaborates, "I believe there is still a lot of work to be done, especially from the comparative perspective. Doing rural criminology (besides the urban one) is going back to the roots of criminology, testing basic ideas in new social circumstances. It is a privilege to be a researcher and university professor."

It was while working on a post-doc grant study crime prevention "western style" in 2001 that Meško learned again that most crime prevention initiatives focused on urban problems of the most severe reported crimes, rarely mentioning, let alone focusing, on rural perspectives. His early field work experience proved that at the local level, most NGOs, support groups, and state institutions were in the cities while, due to the distance, there was almost nothing for the people in rural areas. Twenty years later, these rural populations are now faring better, in part due to European Union investments in the development of infrastructure in rural regions.

Learning about rural perspectives can enrich every researcher. It was in training the Slovenian police that he was informed of urban and rural safety, security, crime problems, and their frustrations. His interest in rural perspectives developed even further with a project on crimes against the environment (2009-2012) with researchers of green criminology, where he co-edited a book on understanding and managing threats to the environment and learned that rural settings were more threatened by environmental risks than urban ones (<https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789400706101>). Additionally, he has served as a national representative to the Council of Europe in a project on the prevention of everyday violence in a democratic society and traveled to eight places in Europe coping with different problems (e.g., migration/refugees – cultural conflict, domestic violence in rural settings).

DEASON CENTER VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE

On Monday, April 20th and Thursday, April 23rd, the Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center hosted virtual roundtables to discuss Covid-19 and access to justice in small, tribal, and rural (STAR) communities. Researchers and stakeholders from jurisdictions across the country met to discuss opportunities, obstacles, and priorities for research and scholarship.

The online sessions sought to:

- Engage academics, researchers, and STAR justice practitioners;
- Highlight research priorities in STAR communities;
- Identify the support, partnerships, and resources necessary for successful research about STAR justice; and,
- Share resources and foster collaborations among participants.

The resulting conversations:

- Described how Covid-19 had delayed legal system operations;
- Addressed critical information gaps;
- Explored useful data collection methods;
- Identified technology-driven strategies for remote operation of justice systems;
- Compared successful STAR justice system responses to COVID-19; and,
- Strategized about how to sustain successful Covid-19 adaptations in the post-COVID-19 world

To document local criminal legal responses to the COVID-19 crisis, the Deason Center is partnering with students, faculty, and staff from law schools across the nation. This team is tracking pandemic policies adopted by law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, defense attorneys, courts, and corrections agencies. To follow Covid-19 policy trends in STAR communities, visit the Deason Center's webpage at <https://deasoncenter.smu.edu/covid-19-criminal-justice-response-by-jurisdiction/>.

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RURAL SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHT, CONT'D

Meško's current research project, financed by the Slovenian Research Agency, focuses on rural settings with regard to safety, security, and crime. This team of Meško and 15 researchers from the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security at the University of Maribor are studying topics such as rural crime and disorder, perception of crime and disorder, green criminology, policing in rural settings, rural community policing, crime prevention and safety partnerships, social cohesion and safety, and rural state border control.

More recently, he helped organize a national conference on local safety and security – the comparison between the urban and the rural, and edited conference proceedings on rural and urban safety and security issues in 2019. With the assistance of Joe Donnermeyer (to whom he is very grateful), he published a special issue of the *Journal of Criminal Investigation and Criminology* (2019/5) on criminology of the place, emphasizing urban and rural perspectives of crime, deviance and social control. He also wrote an editorial for the *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law, and Criminal Justice* – on rural criminology and research challenges in the future (https://brill.com/view/journals/eccl/28/1/article-p3_3.xml?language=en).

Currently, he is working with the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security at the University of Maribor to organize an international conference on Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe (CJS in C&E Europe) in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2021. This conference themed 'Perspectives of rural safety, security, and rural criminology' was initially planned for September 2020 but was postponed to September 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (<https://www.fvv.um.si/conf2020/>). Meško is looking forward to hosting the participants of the 2021 conference in Ljubljana because "This is a traditional Central European biennial international conference since 1996. We are very proud of it because it is a hub of many researchers from the region and beyond."

When asked if he had any concluding thoughts, Meško wanted to express how happy he is to have met Joe Donnermeyer, Ralph Weisheit, and others at the ASC conferences, especially those within the Division of Rural Criminology. He believes that scientific networking and other similar interactions "contribute to the development of science and our (rural) communities [that] are essential in making an impact on the world outside academia" especially considering that "rural criminology deserves a more prominent position in criminology in general."

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