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## EDITORIAL NOTES FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

August 25, 2013

I am thrilled to present the sixth issue of *Contemporary Journal of Anthropology and Sociology*. My first year as editor of the journal has been very busy, but I believe our outreach efforts to expand the geographical scope of CJAS has been effective. We will continue to push the journal forward in the upcoming year, striving to publish high quality anthropological and sociological research for our readership.

This issue of CJAS is a special issue, titled “Criminology at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels.” The issue was co-edited by Carrie Oser, Ph.D. and Erin Pullen, M.A. Dr. Oser is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Kentucky, with a joint appointment in the Department of Behavioral Science and Center on Drug and Alcohol Research. Her research interests include health services, health disparities, HIV risk behaviors/interventions, as well as substance abuse among rural, African American, and/or criminal justice populations. Dr. Oser has received several grants from the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) to examine these research interests and has published over 65 manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals.

Ms. Pullen is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Kentucky and a project director at the Center on Drug and Alcohol Research. Her research interests include health disparities, health service utilization, social networks, and substance use and misuse. Ms. Pullen's research has been published in *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *Journal of Social Science Research*, and *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Oser and Ms. Pullen for their extraordinary efforts in recruiting papers and reviewers for this special issue of CJAS. Putting together a special issue is a very time consuming and stressful process, and their hard work shows clearly in the high quality research presented in this issue. I would also like to thank the Managing Editor, Thomas Mowen, and all of the Associate Editors and Editorial Board members. Additionally, Doug Hume, Ph.D. continues to serve the invaluable role of webmaster for CJAS.

Ryan D. Schroeder  
Editor, *Contemporary Journal of Anthropology and Sociology*

## EDITORIAL NOTES FROM THE SPECIAL ISSUE CO-EDITORS

August 26, 2013

This special issue of the *Contemporary Journal of Anthropology and Sociology* is entitled “Criminology at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels” and explores crime using a sociological lens. Criminology is an exciting, growing sub-field in the discipline of sociology, and criminological topics can be explored at the individual, community, or societal level. We are thrilled to see a special issue devoted to this topic! The special issue includes three manuscripts that examine issues of crime at the micro-level including attitudes toward specific types of sex offenders, juvenile recidivism rates, and college male’s perspectives of different types of interventionists in a sexual assault prevention program. The special issue begins with a manuscript by Drs. Tanja Link and Jennifer McMahon-Howard, along with their graduate student, Ms. Kathryn Smith, from Kennesaw State University. All authors equally contributed to this manuscript which examines a very micro-level issue – how college students react to specific types of sex offenders (i.e., adult rape offenders, juvenile offenders, statutory rape offenders, female offenders, and child molesters). Using survey data which included vignettes from 707 college students, the authors examined the effects of demographic, attitudinal, and experiential variables on punitive attitudes and attitudes toward rehabilitation for each of the different types of sex offenders. Participants supported more punitive attitudes towards more “serious” sex offenders, such as the child molester and the adult rape offender, but expressed more rehabilitative views to the other types of sex offenders. The study is innovative in that it examines public opinion towards a specific type of offender -- those convicted of sex crimes -- and simultaneously explores both punitive and rehabilitative attitudes towards five different types of sex offenders.

The next two manuscripts in the special issue are evaluation studies. Holli Drummond, an associate professor of sociology at Western Kentucky University, examined one approach within the Restorative Justice (RJ) Movement called Victim Offender Mediation (VOM). The goal of the VOM is to offer a safe structured environment for the victim and juvenile offender to discuss their conflict, and possibly develop a reparation plan. This study included 197 juvenile offenders from one urban county who were referred to a VOM program as well as 198 juvenile offenders in a comparison group who were selected from a matched county. The comparison group’s diversion cases were managed by a court designated worker and were of similar race/ethnicity, gender, offense type, and offense date to the VOM participants. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) group comparison feature was used to examine if participation in the VOM (versus traditional diversion alone) moderated the relationship between individual characteristics (e.g., age, sex, school performance, and prior offending) and recidivism. VOM was not significant in reducing juvenile recidivism; however, juveniles who were male, status offenders, had prior disciplinary records, and had siblings involved in the juvenile justice system were more likely to recidivate. Thus, this study has important contributions to the Restorative Justice Movement because programs can be tailored to juvenile characteristics.

Colleagues in the Sociology Department at the University of Louisville also engaged in an individual-level study examining the effectiveness of peer versus professional educators in a sexual assault prevention intervention with college fraternity members. Melanie Duvall, a graduate student who has volunteered at a rape crisis center and local domestic violence shelter, along with Drs. Patricia Gagne and Ryan Schroeder developed this study which was grounded in

a theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity. The authors collaborated with the University of Louisville's Prevention, Education, and Advocacy on Campus and in the Community (PEACC) program on this study to empower men to overcome traditional masculine hegemonic views and intervene in situations that could lead to sexual assault. Thirty participants in four fraternities participated and were assigned to either the peer educator group (n=14) or the professional educator group (n=16). Little difference was found between the peer and professional educators, which may have important policy implications. Specifically, if peer educators are properly trained, they may be a more cost-effective interventionist for sexual assault prevention programs for men.

The meso-level of practice in sociology often explores the middle ground between individuals and society, such as communities, neighborhoods, or total institutions, as well as examines divisions in society based on socio-demographic characteristics. Two meso-level criminology studies are included in this special issue. Danielle McDonald, an associate professor of criminal justice at Northern Kentucky University, and Cheryl Lero Jonson, an assistant professor of criminal justice at Xavier University, evaluated a Second Chance Act mentoring grant. The Second Chance Act of 2008 was designed to provide federal grants to organizations that facilitate prisoner re-entry. In order to close, or at least slow down, the revolving door of prison, efforts are needed to facilitate inmates' successful re-entry to the community. Mentoring is a low-cost option that assists inmates during this time of transition. Drs. McDonald and Jonson used data from a variety of sources including interviews with program directors, mentors, and case managers as well as record reviews to examine if participation in a Second Chance Act mentorship program reduced recidivism and improved quality of life. Results suggest that while mentoring may be successful in reducing recidivism, increasing the likelihood of securing employment, and increasing the change of obtaining housing, it was not successful in increasing the receipt of mental health services. Their work suggests that additional reentry initiatives are needed since over 95% of state inmates are eventually released.

In another meso-level study, Dr. Rachel Stein, an assistant professor of sociology at West Virginia University, examined the effect of neighborhood context on the fear of crime in four neighborhoods. To set the stage for this quantitative study, Dr. Stein provided interesting descriptive information on these four high-crime neighborhoods in a Northeast city. Survey data was collected from residents in each neighborhood by interviewers who went door-to-door using a systematic selection of houses located on a particular block (n=336). Specifically, this study builds upon a previous study conducted in four neighborhoods in Miami by Swatt and colleagues (2013) in its examination of the relationship between measures of collective efficacy, perceptions of disorder, and the fear of crime across neighborhoods. Results of the regression analyses indicate that low collective efficacy, more social disorder, and living in a neighborhood for longer periods of time increased the fear of crime. Moreover, neighborhood factors impact the fear of crime, even after controlling for the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Study implications include tailoring crime prevention and control efforts to specific neighborhoods.

The final piece in this special issue is at the macro-level as it focuses on three decades of Kentucky's prison population and spending. This study is of great interest to sociologists and criminologists as it examines how the macro structure of prison filters down to the meso- and micro-levels. This study was devised by Paul Steele, professor of criminology and sociology and director of the Center for Justice Studies, and James Robert Masterson, assistant professor of government and director of International Education at Morehead State University. Drs. Steele

and Masterson based their study of Kentucky on Spelman's (2009) national-level analyses of prison growth. The authors argue that it is important to examine the predictors associated with each states' correctional spending and changes in its prison population over time because most offenders are detained in institutions that are managed and supported by the state. This study used Spelman's approach to investigate 18 factors which may have influenced Kentucky's prison growth between 1997 and 2005 and compared their Kentucky-specific results to Spelman's national findings. Kentucky is a high growth prison case in that it had the greatest rate increase in prison population in the United States in 2011. In the model examining the growth of prison capital spending in Kentucky, social threat, criminal justice policy, and structural dynamics were significant correlates. In the next model, measures of the social threat, criminal justice policy, and structural dynamics perspectives were significantly associated with Kentucky's growing prison population. Results differed from Spelman's national-level study in that he found no significant association between structural dynamics and either prison spending or populations. The authors argue that there have been fifty distinct prison booms, rather than one nation-wide boom, and they call for the development of cost reduction strategies in an effort to control prison growth and provide more humanitarian treatment of its citizens.

Carrie B. Oser, PhD & Erin Pullen, MA  
Special Issue Editor  
*Contemporary Journal of Anthropology and Sociology*

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