

Foreword to the 10th Anniversary Special Issue

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The 10th Anniversary Special Issue of the *Journal of Experimental Criminology* (JOEX) is a watershed moment in the life of the journal. We present this Special Issue to commemorate the milestone, honor the contributions to experimental criminology by some of our leading scholars, and celebrate the advances made in our field over the last 10 years. Experimental criminology has come a long way in 10 years. The journal is now the official journal of the Division of Experimental Criminology (DEC), which was established five years after the JOEX in 2010 and is now one of the largest divisions in the American Society of Criminology (ASC). The journal's 5-year Impact Factor for 2014 is 2.215, making it the 12th ranked journal (of 55) in the Criminology and Penology category (see Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports®), with global distributions to over ten million desktops, tablets, and mobile devices worldwide via library and consortia subscriptions to SpringerLink and over 40,000 downloads per year.

The JOEX publishes original research that advances theories of crime and criminology (see, for example, Harrell 2006; Rosenfeld 2006; Taxman and Friedmann 2009; Weisburd et al. 2011) and informs the development of evidence-based crime and justice policy (see, for example, Petersilia 2008; Piquero et al. 2009; Welsh et al. 2014). The journal focuses on manuscripts that report from high-quality experimental and quasi-experimental research and evaluation projects, as well as from systematic reviews that meet the standard of reviews of the Campbell (see <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org>) or Cochrane Collaborations (see <http://www.cochrane.org>). In the spirit of the journal's mission, this 10th Anniversary Special Issue gathers together seven articles that collectively demonstrate the breadth of impact achieved by experimental approaches to criminology, crime policy, and justice issues across the globe.

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In the lead article, titled “Street walking: randomized controlled trials in criminology, education, and elsewhere”, Robert Boruch focuses on the challenges that scientists from a range of different disciplines face in designing, funding, launching, executing, and publishing high-quality randomized controlled trials. The efforts to mount high-quality randomized controlled trials, Boruch argues, are common across the many “streets” of different academic neighborhoods. With examples from criminology, education, medical, welfare, and manpower research, Boruch offers a unique bird’s-eye view across the landscape of experimentation, bringing together the divergent disciplinary languages to speak as one voice, and demonstrating the shared challenges of disciplinary forays into experimentation.

As scholars who are not dissuaded by the challenges identified by Boruch, Lawrence Sherman, Heather Strang, and their team at the University of Cambridge offer unique insights into the development, execution, and results of 12 restorative justice trials conducted across the UK and Australia. Titled “Twelve experiments in restorative justice: the Jerry Lee Program of Randomized Controlled Trials in Restorative Justice Conferences”, the paper brings together the collective findings gathered over the last 20 years of restorative justice (RJ) experiments. Citing earlier RJ papers published in the JOEX (see, for example, Angel et al. 2014; Sherman and Strang 2009; Sherman et al. 2005; Strang 2012), Sherman and colleagues’ work finds that RJ conferences reduce repeat offending, particularly for violent offenders. They also find that offender apologies during RJ conferences led to victims being less fearful and happier with how their cases were handled. With four articles published in the JOEX from this family of RJ trials, Sherman and his colleagues’ work clearly illustrates the important role that the JOEX is playing in providing a forum for publishing experiments, replications, and clusters of trials.

The uniqueness of the family of RJ trials stems from the capacity of Sherman and his colleagues to launch The Jerry Lee Program of Randomized Controlled Trials at Cambridge, bringing together philanthropic support (e.g., from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and the Smith Richardson Foundation) coupled with national competitive grant schemes, such as the Economic and Social Research Council (see <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/>), the Australian Research Council (see <http://www.arc.gov.au/>), and the US National Institute of Justice (see <http://www.nij.gov/>). The establishment of the JOEX in 2005 created a new outlet for experimental results (and replications) like the publications from the RJ trials. Yet, what continues to challenge researchers are the difficulties encountered in securing funding for experimentation in the crime and justice arena.

In the USA, the primary source of funding support for experimentation is the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). Joel Garner and Christy Visser (2003) published a paper in *Evaluation Review* that examined the funding support provided to experimentation relative to other types of study designs. In an update of that 2003 article, Telep, Garner, and Visser explore NIJ funding changes over time. In their paper titled “The production of criminological experiments revisited: the nature and extent of federal support for experimental designs, 2001–2013”, Telep and his colleagues find that the majority of NIJ funding goes to forensic science and technology support, with less than 15 % going to social science awards. While 35 % of funding went to social sciences for the period 1991–2000, it declined to 13.4 % between 2001 and 2013. Despite this, they find a sizeable increase in funding for experiments, with a total of 99 experiments

funded between 2001 and 2013, compared to just 21 for the period 1991–2000, with over half the number funded since 2009.

Field experimentation is only one part of the research published by the JOEX. Other experimental approaches published in the JOEX over the last 10 years include synthesizing the results of experiments using systematic review and meta-analytic methods (see, for example, Koehler et al. 2013; Telep et al. 2014; Wilson et al. 2006) and simulating experimental designs using techniques such as propensity score methods (see, for example, Bales and Piquero 2012; Farrington et al. 2007; Wermink et al. 2010).

Championing the important contributions of experiments, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses, Doris MacKenzie and David Farrington's paper titled "Preventing future offending of delinquents and offenders: what have we learned from experiments and meta-analyses" focuses attention on how the last 10 years of systematic reviews of experiments help us to better understand the types of correctional interventions (including surveillance, punitive, disciplinary, rehabilitation, skill building, and services) that work best to reduce reoffending. They conclude that therapeutic rehabilitation programs which include cognitive skills training offer the best policy option for reducing the likelihood of recidivism. Yet, MacKenzie and Farrington caution that the results are less clear for sex offenders.

As one of the world's leading scholars in the field of sex offender treatment, Friedrich Lösel has published three papers in the JOEX over the last 10 years. Demonstrating the high demand consumption of systematic reviews, Friedrich Lösel and Martin Schmucker's paper from 2005 (Lösel and Schmucker 2005) is one of the most cited papers published by the JOEX in the last 10 years, with 548 Google citations as of November 9, 2015. Updating this oft-cited review, Schmucker and Lösel contribute a paper to the Special Issue titled "The effects of sexual offender treatment on recidivism: an international meta-analysis of sound quality evaluations". Using systematic search techniques, the authors identify an additional 29 eligible comparisons evaluating psychosocial treatment programs, finding that treatment in prisons and pure group formats seem to be less promising than multisystemic and cognitive-behavioral treatment, particularly when they are more individualized. They conclude that "...treatment of sexual offenders can be effective, but the results are not homogeneous", echoing the findings from the 2005 JOEX paper.

From the outset, the JOEX set out to publish manuscripts that report from high-quality experimental, quasi-experimental research, and evaluation projects, systematic reviews that meet the standard of reviews of the Campbell (see <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org>) or Cochrane Collaborations (see <http://www.cochrane.org>), as well as papers that advance the science of experimentation and systematic reviews. Propensity score matching (PSM) is one pseudo-experimental method that was new to criminology at the time the JOEX started in 2005. Since inception, the JOEX has published 14 papers that advance the science of PSM as it is applied to criminology (see, for example, Bales and Piquero 2012; Coffman et al. 2015; Tollenaar et al. 2014). For the 10th Anniversary Special Issue, Thomas Loughran, Theodore Wilson, Daniel Nagin, and Alex Piquero critique common usages of PSM in criminology in their paper titled "Evolutionary regression? Assessing the problem of hidden biases in criminal justice applications using propensity scores", calling for propensity score methods to be used with datasets that include a "...rich array of pre-intervention measures which can be used to establish equivalence over a wide range of items across multiple domains".

They raise important issues regarding when this approach is likely to produce believable causal inferences (and when it might not), and challenge simplistic assumptions regarding PSM's ability to mimic experimental findings.

The overarching goal of the JOEX is to advance experimental methods in criminology. But to achieve that mission, we believe that the journal must also advance theories of crime and criminology and/or inform the development of evidence-based crime and justice policy. We are acutely aware, however, that policymakers around the world make decisions about crime policies on the basis of political expediency (Quaglio et al. 2015), incomplete or poor information (Bammer et al. 2008; Head 2008), and considering the cost of policy options (see Welsh et al. 2015). Jacque Mallender and Gloria Laycock explore experimental criminology contributions to crime reduction policy and practice. Focusing on the complexities of weighing up the choice of evaluation methods against the benefits–costs of interventions and the risks of error in different evaluation methods, Mallender and Laycock conclude with important insights for the relevance of experimental criminology to the process of evidence-based crime policies.

The breadth and depth of the papers in this 10th Anniversary Special Issue demonstrate that experimental criminology has come of age. Experiments in crime and justice are not without their critics (see Laycock 2012; Sampson 2010; Tilley and Laycock 2002), challenging those who engage in experimental criminology to think beyond gold standard methods and consider a range of approaches. Our collection of seven papers for this 10th Anniversary Special Issue, we hope, offers readers some insight into the role of the JOEX in showcasing the state-of-the-art of experimental criminology.

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