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Let's Go Outside: Lessons Learned from Taking Students out of the Classroom and into the Field

Kevin E. Courtright*

"Corrections is full of opportunities. Let's ensure as teachers that we seize these opportunities to make a transformative impact on our students." (Wright, 2019).



Let's admit it. Keeping our course material relevant to the professional world and of interest to students is often a struggle. My suggestion? Go outside! What follows are 10 lessons learned from my experience in taking students outside of the classroom and into the world of CJ professionals for the past 20 years.

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1. The off-campus educational trips were what students remembered most about their academic collegiate experience.

This is so important that it's worth repeating: field tripping is what students remember most about their academic experience. Don't take it personally that your lectures aren't as memorable as you'd like, and don't take my word for it. Ask them! Although I would be gratified if students remembered my class presentations, my publications, and my office-hours wisdom with awe, alas the "experiential learning" events trump these other, "auxiliary" pedagogical happenings. Time and time again, when I ask guest speakers what factor was most responsible for them considering a career in _____, in the majority of cases their responses are similar: As students they went on a tour of a facility, they listened to a guest speaker, or they interviewed someone for a class project. In others words, their coursework required them to interface with the people and places in a particular work arena. These outside-of-the-classroom experiences are what alumni remember and talk about when they return to campus as guest speakers.



2. Getting students out of the classroom has huge benefits in career decision making.

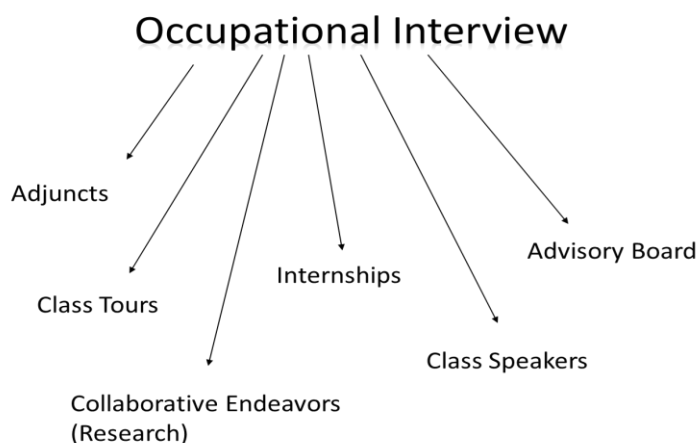
Even though some of us are "pracademics" who used to work in the field, many of us have been teaching and focused on the classroom for a long time. Students need data about careers from a variety of sources (i.e., not only from professors but also from career services professionals and practitioners in particular fields), and obtaining information from an outside-of-the-classroom source and from a person currently employed in the field of interest is highly beneficial. I've found this to be particularly important with nontraditional students, students with disabilities, and students with criminal records or a criminal history. Getting these students out in the community and in touch with professionals is imperative. Several years ago I had a disabled student who used a wheelchair take a number of my classes. He was mostly noncommunicative. It took him a minute or so to get a sentence out that *might* have been understood by others. He did have a device that allowed him to communicate better, but he didn't like to use it and generally wouldn't. I advised him that he would have to be able to communicate better in order to have a chance of landing a job in criminal justice. All of this talk and advice from me seemed to make no impression, until I put him in contact with an acquaintance of mine who worked for a local police department. This person (who also uses a wheelchair) told my student the same thing that I

had been trying to tell him, but it was now sage advice.

I have noticed in recent years that I seem to have more and more students who have criminal histories. It is imperative to put such students in touch with professionals who hold jobs to which they aspire. Because social norms and attitudes tend to shift back and forth, laws reflecting public views of past criminal behavior may place some jobs off limits to those with criminal histories. At present the “civil disability” of a criminal record seems to be in a state of flux. Information on occupational attainment and the realities thereof best comes from professionals working in the field.

Students can learn a lot by interacting with professionals from the community. This is particularly true for corrections, which is an occupation that many enter “by default,” meaning that it wasn’t a person’s first choice of profession. As an example, my CJ students are sometimes surprised to learn that the CJ major does not hold the key to some CJ-related jobs, such as federal law enforcement (where business and foreign language majors seem to be preferred at present). By hearing more from working professionals, not only students but professors may benefit, as the latter will be able to stay more current in their knowledge of employment trends their field.

3. Getting students out of the classroom helps in obtaining internship contacts, guest speakers, occupational interview sources, and contacts with alumni employed in the field.



My colleague Dave Mackey and I have written about the myriad benefits of the occupational interview (Mackey & Courtright, 2012). Our work indicates that one outside-of-the-classroom event can turn into others, parlaying a single experience into a multiplicity of opportunities and benefits. We have found, for example, that the occupational interview often provides faculty members with numerous opportunities to obtain guest speakers, collect class tour contacts, and secure adjunct instructors for needed classes (see figure).

4. Getting students out of the classroom helps them understand the complexity of problems in CJ, teaches them empathy, and educates them on the reality-versus-perception dichotomy of many CJ-related occupations.

Some of the best teaching experiences I've had have come from class tours. A few years ago, while touring a local prison and talking to a group of lifers, one of my students started to tear up upon hearing the inmate's story and history. Noticing this, one of the correctional officers chaperoning the tour that day quietly dismissed the offenders. After stating that it was all right to have some empathy for offenders, the officer then reminded my group of students that each of the men that they had just heard from had either personally killed someone or were somehow responsible for a person's death. Several punishment philosophies (and differing perspectives) were demonstrated within that brief period of time. I could not have provided a better example of these philosophies in the classroom. There are others who have taken this type of learning experience to the next level. For an example relating specifically to corrections, please see the work of Wright (2019).

Professional interview assignments are ideal for exposing the reality-versus-perception dichotomy of many CJ occupations, particularly if they can be parlayed into other opportunities, like ride-alongs and internships. If nothing else, my goal as an educator is to help students learn the

complexity of the issues we face in CJ. These types of experiential learning opportunities go a long way in that educational process. (For more on how correctional tours can influence students' thoughts about careers in corrections, see the work of Stacer, Moll, & Solinas-Saunders, 2019).

5. Students participating in class tours should be screened beforehand.

Every student we take out into the community is a representative of our department and university. If we have taught for any significant length of time, we have interesting stories to tell about something that reflected poorly on our group and/or institution. The father in me uses the tour as a reward for positive classroom behavior (e.g., coming to class on time, being respectful). I have had classes that I have chosen not to take on tours, and I have never felt bad or guilty in making this decision. The reputation of our universities is important to safeguard, and this responsibility should not be taken lightly.

6. The number of students who actually take a field trip is always smaller than the number of students originally committing to participate.

Students will sometimes let you down in terms of attendance and driving or carpooling. Events inevitably come up for them—bosses call them in to work, they fall ill, their cars break down, or they decide not to go. I typically lose at least five students from the time of the initial sign-up to the point when the caravan leaves the university. Given

our budget situation, we carpool to these events/tours. I try to select my drivers well, and of course I am always one of them. Some students decide to drive themselves. Fortunately, at least some of my students have vehicles and are willing to serve as drivers. I always select additional drivers in case we have a cancellation or two, which prevents the planned day from turning into a negative experience.

7. Tour rules should be communicated clearly and early on, including rules regarding proper attire.

These rules often include following the standards of the site or agency being visited as well as travel and other requirements the university may have. Both sets of rules should be reviewed with students prior to leaving campus. University rules typically reference “hold harmless” regulations, while agency standards typically involve rules of the institution, proper attire, and of course waivers and signatures demonstrating adulthood (i.e., that students are over 18). I have sometimes denied student participation in class tours due to inappropriate dress. Our university mandates that all students traveling off campus sign and complete a “travel manifest form” that contains emergency contact information and license plate numbers of all vehicles involved. This completed form is distributed to the Campus Police Office just before embarking on a field trip event.

8. If using technology for a virtual tour or presentation, equipment and software should be tested prior to the event.

Perhaps this point goes without saying. I find myself using Zoom Chat more and more. These experiences can be very rewarding and educational. My classes have recently chatted with incarcerated lifers and authors of books they are reading in my classes. Both groups field questions posed by the students. This technology has enabled unique learning opportunities among hard-to-reach or hard-to-afford populations (e.g., book authors as speakers). Questions are shared with both groups prior to the actual event.

9. Class tours should be optional; occupational interviews should not.

This is something that I’ve thought about a great deal. My experience suggests that it is often very difficult for some students to go on class tours or attend other events outside of normal class time because of jobs, other classes, child care, sports practice, and so on. By not making these events mandatory, I help to ensure that only those students who can go—and are interested in going—participate in these events. By making the tours optional, I have been able to make the tour itself, as well as the transportation, more manageable. Because of the greater flexibility of occupational interviews, they are typically mandatory and identified as such in the published course requirements. These interviews are scheduled and

arranged by the students themselves and are thus carried out at a time that is good for both the professional and the student.

10. Taking students out into the community and on class tours helps me to get to know them better as students and individuals rather than just as names on the class roster.

Simply remembering student names can sometimes be a struggle, one that hasn't gotten any easier with the passage of time. The unique learning experience of a class tour offers me another opportunity to get to know students better. Knowing my students as individuals has advantages, not only for me but for the students as well; I am better able to serve as a reference or to write them a recommendation letter in the future.

In conclusion, students remember and highly value their out-of-the-classroom experiences, and these events allow us faculty

members to better remember our students. It's a "win-win" situation for all.

Note: A version of this paper was presented as a workshop for the annual meeting of the Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences (NEACJS), June 5–8, 2019, Williamsport, PA.

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Dr. Kevin E. Courtright* is an associate professor of criminal justice at Edinboro University. He earned his Ph.D. in criminology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 1995. Prior to obtaining his Ph.D., he worked as a probation officer in New York State. Previous publications include articles appearing in the *Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *Federal Probation*, *The Criminologist*, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *The Prison Journal*, *Corrections Compendium*, and *Criminal Justice Studies*.

The Lived Experience of Sisters with an Incarcerated Brother: A Research Brief

Eman Tadros, PhD*

Rising rates of incarceration and recidivism have led to an array of unintended consequences, not only for the person incarcerated but for the family system as a whole. Incarceration has been found to have a negative and lasting impact on the family system (Tadros & Finney, 2018). Many family members are left to face various negative consequences due to having a loved one incarcerated (Datchi & Sexton, 2013). Particularly, partners, parents, and siblings endure various impacts due to incarceration (Datchi & Sexton, 2013). In sum, the whole family may be confronted with various contextual, financial, emotional, physical, and psychological effects of incarceration (Tadros, Fye, McCrone, & Finney, 2019).

A person's health and well-being as an adult also may be influenced by the quality of their sibling relationships. The amount of time spent interacting with siblings is substantial and has been estimated to exceed the amount of time spent with parents (Weaver et al., 2003). Though frequency of contact decreases as children enter adolescence and young adulthood, siblings still remain important influences in individuals' lives. However, in the event that a sibling is incarcerated, both nonincarcerated and incarcerated siblings face a multitude of challenges, misfortunes, and hardships.

To better understand the impacts of incarceration on siblings, it is necessary to be well informed and knowledgeable about the unique differences, needs, challenges, and obstacles experienced by these siblings. The purpose of this study was to better understand the lived experience of siblings of incarcerated individuals through a social media (Facebook) online support group. This research brief is based on the publication by Tadros, Fye, and Ray (2019).

Method

Phenomenological theory provided a framework for answering the research question and provided a guide for interpreting the emerging themes from the answers. Five participants were obtained due to the sensitive topic being discussed and the possibility of a negative emotional response occurring for participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during Spring 2019. Researchers analyzed and coded interviews, looking for any emerging themes. The sample of participants was derived from an online support group, found on Facebook, known as "Incarcerated Loved Ones." This method of recruitment was appropriate due to accessibility typically being difficult with protected populations. All participants were required to be at least 18 years of age, and it was explained via the informed consent that the interviews would be conducted on the phone, due to participants residing in different states and not being available for face-to-face interviews.

Interview questions included the following:

1. Can you please describe your experience as it relates to being the sibling of an incarcerated person, with as much detail as possible?
2. What words do you associate with your sibling's incarceration?
3. What effect has this experience, being the sibling of an incarcerated person, had on your life and relationships (either individually, with other siblings, parents, etc.)?
4. How has your sibling's incarceration impacted relationships with non-family members (significant others, friends, colleagues, etc.)?

Results and Discussion

Consistent with phenomenological methodology, the focus was on the "what" and the "how" this phenomenon was experienced, as the codes were clustered into structural and textual themes. The researchers clustered the codes into themes as a group and discussed each theme, until consensus was reached and it was agreed that the themes captured the essence of the lived experience being studied. Overall, findings indicated a generally negative experience for siblings of an incarcerated person. In coping with the impact of incarceration, participant experiences were viewed not only as a difficult adjustment for the family system, but specifically, a traumatic, stigmatized, and negative emotional experience for all individuals involved, with particular emphasis on the sibling subsystem. In the interviews, five themes

emerged: the emotional impact of the sibling's incarceration on the participant, adjustments that had to be made after incarceration, the prison experience of the sibling, the family impact of the sibling's incarceration, and stigma.

The first theme, emotional impact, highlighted siblings' distressed communication, mixed emotions, feelings of grief and loss, feelings of responsibility, mistrust, and religion or spirituality due to incarceration. The siblings in this study mentioned faith or spirituality with regard to forgiveness or judgement for the actions of their brother that led to incarceration. Many of them mentioned mistrust or a loss of trust in others after their brother was incarcerated. This theme, emotional impact, pointed to the significant toll on one's mental health due to losing their sibling to the system.

The second theme punctuated the adjustment that takes place for siblings after incarceration is experienced. This included financial impact, pre-incarceration lifestyle, addiction, justice system, the adjustment that the sibling relationship itself experiences along with other relational adjustments, and post-release concerns. After a family member is incarcerated, many families experience financial hardship due to the heavy costs of commissary, phone calls, and visits. Often, this responsibility falls on the sibling, which in turn leads to both financial and psychological strain. Participants also expressed concern for their

siblings after release from prison, with regard to previous lifestyles of addiction.

The prison experience, the third theme, included interview aspects such as prison culture, offender health concerns, prison conditions, and positive outcomes. Across all participants, this theme often emerged. Participants expressed concern for their loved ones' safety, mental and physical health/well-being, and quality of life. Many incarcerated persons do not receive appropriate medical, dental, mental, or psychiatric care, which poses risks not only to the individual but to all other incarcerated individuals in close proximity.

Family impact, the fourth theme, concerned the divide due to their brother's incarceration and the effects it had on overall communication among family members, or lack thereof. An understanding of the common sources of conflict and the emotional experiences of both sides can guide treatment, which makes this study a contribution to the current literature on this population. Having an incarcerated loved one can lead to partner strife, emotional cut-off between members, severed familial relationships, conflict, stress on particular subsystems, and other consequences.

Last, the theme of stigma emerged across all participant interviews. Incarcerated persons are a vulnerable population due to the debilitating stigma that is attached to this experience. Due to the inevitable judgement, false ideologies, and lack of

advocacy, this theme of stigma impacts many families and individuals experiencing incarceration, to the extent that multiple participants felt the need to lie and keep their brother's incarceration a secret. Many siblings often become defensive in reference to their loved one, or in reference to the topic of incarceration in general. Thus, all siblings shared the common goal of advocating for those who are incarcerated and their families.

Limitations

Although significant themes were discovered and many were present in every interview, it can be argued that a larger participant pool would allow for further immersion into their shared experiences and add rigor to the results. All five participants were sisters of incarcerated brothers, which was not purposefully done during recruitment, but does have implications for the results because brothers of incarcerated sisters or same-sex sibling dyads could have different experiences due to gender dynamics. Typically, interviews conducted over the phone inhibit the researcher from utilizing nonverbal forms of communication or including them in their memos or coding process. It is possible that the participants may have provided different information face-to-face than they did over the phone.

Clinical Implications

This study shows that the incarcerated experience impacts families in a multitude of ways. It is vital to take an approach that considers all of

the following: length of imprisonment, age, where their family is in the family life cycle, and pertinent medical conditions. Each individual's experiences are different depending on context and life circumstances. When working with individuals of the incarcerated population, it is important for the clinician to be aware of individual differences and ways society has labeled them. The interviews showed that each incarcerated brother was stigmatized in various ways due to his incarceration; this was particularly difficult for the sisters of these incarcerated brothers.

Stigma can be reduced by knowing and understanding each person's story and humanizing his experience while incarcerated. Challenges within the family system may stem from the complex changes to the roles, rules, hierarchy, and boundaries of the family structure (Tadros et al., 2019). Problems are caused by the disruption that results in dysfunction in the family system (Colapinto, 1979, Tadros, 2019). Typically, incarceration is viewed as a negative experience, which can maintain the dysfunction in the family

system as a whole. It appears that there is a lack of research involving the sibling subsystem within this family structure. The relationship between siblings is a bond that seems to be overwhelmingly unexplored in the realm of incarceration research.

Future Directions

Future research is needed on the unique experiences of siblings of an incarcerated individual. A suggestion for future research would be to interview both sisters and brothers with an incarcerated sibling, to account for gender differences in sibling roles as well as same-gender sibling experiences. Another recommendation would be to ask about the sibling relationship pre-incarceration and during incarceration. Finally, one of the major themes found in this study is the impact of stigma on families of incarcerated individuals. This stigma incorporated inaccurate ideas of prison conditions and the incarceration experience, along with negative views of the incarcerated population as a whole. This stresses the need for advocacy at multiple levels, including in research, policy, and in clinical settings.

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Eman Tadros* received her PhD from the University of Akron's Counselor Education & Supervision: Marriage and Family Therapy program. She is an adjunct professor at Cleveland State University and John Carroll University. She is an independently licensed marriage and family therapist and MBTI certified. Her research follows the trajectory of incarcerated co-parenting, incorporating family therapy into incarcerated settings, and family systems theories within these settings.

Book Review: David C. Pyrooz and Scott H. Decker, *Competing for Control: Gangs and the Social Order of Prisons*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-108-73574-2 (paperback). 297 Pages. \$34.99

Robert M. Worley*

In their book, *Competing for Control: Gangs and the Social Order of Prisons*, David Pyrooz and Scott Decker examine 802 interviews conducted with Texas inmates in order to explore a variety of issues related to gangs and the incarceration experience. This work is part of the “Lone Star Project,” which is the culmination of a five-year research undertaking funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). In 2016, the lead author, David Pyrooz, won the coveted Ruth Shonle Cavan Young Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology. Though he received his PhD less than eight years ago, Pyrooz is already known as one of the leading authorities on prison gangs and has contributed more literature to this topic than most established prison researchers, including those who have been active for 20, 30, even 40 years. Scott Decker, the book’s coauthor, is the 2011 recipient of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences’ Bruce Smith, Jr. Award, an honor that has only been bestowed upon 43 criminologists throughout the organization’s 57-year history. Given all of the expertise and accomplishments of both authors, it is no surprise that this work provides

readers with an evocative and in-depth scholarly analysis of prison gangs in Texas.

As Pyrooz and Decker write in the opening of their book, their study began in 2014, when they came across an NIJ announcement soliciting proposals to study gangs and gang violence. During this time, the lead author was working as a faculty member at Sam Houston State University’s (SHSU) College of Criminal Justice, an institution that is highly regarded for its strong commitment to prison research. The authors point out this may be due, at least in part, to the fact that SHSU is located in Huntsville, Texas (also known as “Prison City, USA” to many of its residents). On any given day, 13,000 inmates reside in one of seven correctional facilities located within miles of the Huntsville city limits, giving it the dubious distinction of having more inmates per capita than any other municipality in the United States, perhaps even the world (Alexander, 2012; Clear, 2009; Perkinson, 2010; Roth, 2016). In response to the NIJ announcement, Pyrooz and Decker put together a research proposal to interview both inmate gang members and non-gang members. To their delight, the proposal was approved by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), and ultimately, they received a large federal grant. This funding made it possible for the authors to hire and train dozens of graduate and undergraduate students to conduct interviews with inmates. The authors employed a longitudinal research design, in that their sample of inmates was

interviewed first in prison and then re-interviewed upon being released. *Competing for Control* focuses primarily on the first batch of interviews, which was conducted with incarcerated offenders in one of two prison facilities.

After reading the first few chapters of this book, it was obvious to me that the TDCJ provided an enormous amount of support and assistance to Pyrooz, Decker, and their research team. Although correctional agencies, in general, are not known for being overly receptive to researchers (see Fox, Lane, & Turner, 2018), it was evident that TDCJ worked closely with the authors from start to finish. In spite of the literature that portrays correctional facilities as institutions that seldom grant entrée to researchers, I was not completely surprised that TDCJ officials went out of their way to help Pyrooz and Decker. Over the years, this organization has done an excellent job of accommodating the needs of prison researchers, especially those affiliated with SHSU. I learned this firsthand in 2001, when the agency allowed me (at the time, an unpublished master's student) to singlehandedly conduct face-to-face interviews with 32 inmate manipulators who had lured correctional employees into having sex and smuggling drugs, money, and cell phones into the prison (see Worley, Marquart, & Mulling, 2003).

As the authors describe in their book, every week, Texas prison officials provided the authors with a list of inmates who were scheduled to be

released. The list contained relevant information, such as each prisoner's custody level, race, marital status, criminal history, prison disciplinary record, and gang affiliation (or non-affiliation). In order to ensure that an adequate number of prison gang members were included in their sample, the authors used this weekly list to employ a disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. They oversampled former, suspected, and confirmed gang members (by a factor of five) and then *weighted* the responses to make more accurate inferences to the general prison population.

By and large, most of the inmates the authors reached out to consented to be interviewed for this study. As Pyrooz and Decker note in their book, there were only 44 refusals, as well as four additional cases in which the inmate did not complete the interview, which made it ineligible. Whenever a refusal occurred, the research team used their sampling technique to find a suitable replacement. In the end, the final sample of 802 prisoners consisted of 346 inmates who claimed to be involved with a prison gang and 454 inmates who stated they had no prison gang affiliations. It was particularly interesting to me that the respondents' self-reported prison gang affiliation closely resembled the official data that was provided to the researchers by the prison agency. In some cases, the inmate respondents did not admit to being involved in a prison gang, but in most instances, they were truthful. Interestingly enough, 86% of the

respondents who were affiliated with a prison gang even named the gang they were a member of—though they were not, in any way, required to do so. To me this was quite impressive, given that many prison researchers (not to mention the popular media) tend to portray prison gang members as secretive and unwilling to cooperate with outsiders. I also found it intriguing that the participation rates between prison gang and non-prison gang members were roughly the same. In fact, a close reading of this book reveals that prison gang members were, indeed, slightly more likely to participate in the study than non-prison gang members. This, in and of itself, makes Pyrooz and Decker's book unique, and I found myself yearning for even more discussion as to how the researchers were able to so successfully build such a strong sense of rapport with their subjects.

As it states in the book, all 802 of the interviews were collected over an 8-month period in 2016. The researchers used computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), a method that reduces coding error and generally ensures more standardized responses among research subjects (Hagan, 2018). As the authors state in their book, CAPI also “allowed us to drill down data to the keystroke level of entry. And unlike paper and pencil, we encrypted the data immediately upon completing a survey” (pp. 60–61). The interviewers, of course, needed to have computers to enter their data during the course of each interview. Each day,

the completed interviews were scraped from laptops and uploaded to an outside secure server to safeguard the participants' confidentiality. It is worth noting that prison agencies typically do not permit researchers to bring computers into the research site. The fact that TDCJ officials accommodated the researchers in this respect, again, illustrates the agency's unwavering commitment to this project.

Although it would be next to impossible to fully discuss all of the significant findings of *Competing for Control* in this very short review essay (there are simply too many), I found it quite remarkable that when asked, the majority of respondents *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with the statement “Gangs get a cut of contraband profits” (p. 131). What was particularly insightful here is that even inmates who were affiliated with a prison gang tended to *disagree* (53.8% likelihood) with the above assertion. This finding is, in my opinion, quite significant because it is one of many examples throughout the book that debunk the popular notion that prison gangs tightly regulate the sale of contraband (e.g., illicit drugs, tobacco, and cell phones). We know that prison gangs may have an important role to play in the underground prison economy (e.g., see Sharbek, 2014); however, as the authors eloquently write, “it hardly rises to the iron-fisted and monopolistic control often ascribed to gangs” (p. 137). To me, this finding will likely be of

interest to most prison scholars for many years to come.

Most of this book is quantitative in nature, but *Competing for Control* also includes some qualitative data where interviewees responded to a series of open-ended questions. In some cases, respondents indicated that gangs closely controlled the flow of contraband. As one inmate reported, “If you’re not in the gang, you’re not going to sell nothing” (p. 145). The authors explain this discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative data may “lie in the *mythologizing* done by gang members regarding the control over contraband exercised by prison gangs” (p. 146, *italics added*). I found this to be a very astute observation. Most inmates are narcissists. And, they also know the value of a good story. It is likely that some of these research subjects may have magnified the dangers associated with prison life, perhaps as a way to inflate their own egos or sense of importance. Still, in virtually any type of qualitative research endeavor, this type of embellishment is to be expected. As qualitative research extraordinaire, Heith Copes told me in an *ACJS Today* interview six years ago, “We all exaggerate stories for dramatic effect. Stories that only relay the truth are not as engrossing as those with exaggerations” (Copes & Worley, 2014, p. 31).

Overall, *Competing for Control* is a very important work that will surely generate significant discussions in virtually any classroom. It is a must-read for those of us in academe, as well as anyone who works in a correctional facility (or perhaps even resides in one). One of the major takeaways from this book is that prison gangs, at least those in Texas, currently do not pose anywhere near the same level of danger, to either inmates or prison staff, that they did, say, 20 or 30 years ago. This is consistent with official statistics, which overwhelmingly indicate that, today, Texas offenders are significantly more likely to be killed on the streets rather than behind the prison walls. However, as Pyrooz and Decker remind their readers, this has not always been the case. The authors lament that during a 21-month period from the beginning of 1984 to the end of 1985, there were about 78 murders per every 100,000 prisoners in Texas. Some scholars may understandably disapprove of the usage of solitary confinement, but the evidence suggests that the TDCJ has been effective in using this controversial method of incarceration to considerably weaken the power of prison gangs—which has ultimately resulted in a prison system that is stable and relatively safe.

I am delighted to recommend *Competing for Control* to others. I believe it is a strong contender for the ACJS Outstanding Book Award, and if it wins, it will be Decker’s second time to win this prestigious award—which is pretty cool.

Note: This review essay was accepted for publication and is scheduled to appear in a future issue of *Theory in Action*. Permission was granted to publish the article in *ACJS Today*.

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Robert M. Worley, PhD is associate professor and director of the Criminal Justice Program at Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas. He has published extensively on “inappropriate relationships” that occur between inmates and correctional officers. He has been interviewed by Reuters, the New York Times, the Houston Chronicle, the Dallas Morning News, and the Marshall Project, as well as other media outlets. Robert is co-editor (with Vidisha Barua Worley) of the *Encyclopedia of American Prisons and Jails* (ABC-Clío), and his work has appeared in *Deviant Behavior*, *Criminal Law Bulletin*, *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, and *Criminal Justice Review*. He is currently an associate editor of *Deviant Behavior*, book review editor of *Theory in Action*, past editor of *ACJS Today*, and a member of the Institute for Legal Studies in Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University. In 2019, Robert won the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences’ Historical Mini-Grant Award (\$5,000).

Book Review: R. J. Maratea, Killing with Prejudice: Institutionalized Racism in American Capital Punishment. NYU Press, 2019. ISBN: 9781479888603

Thomas Dutcher *

“What remained intact is an apparatus of insidious racial chauvinism that continues to cast a pall over the pursuit of justice in the United States” (Maratea, 2019, p. 175). This is the conclusion Maratea reaches in his analysis of not only the death penalty but the overall criminal justice system in *Killing with Prejudice; Institutionalized Racism in American Capital Punishment*. The death sentence of Warren McCleskey and the subsequent Supreme Court case of *McCleskey v. Kemp* (1986) is used as a case study in which Maratea sets out to provide an analysis of the current state of institutionalized bias within the U.S. criminal justice system. Using a multi-tiered approach, the text argues that institutionalized bias is not unique to the death penalty. The death penalty is identified as just one example of how the United States struggles to come to terms with institutionalized racism, while preferring to address more tangible forms of direct individualistic racism. Within his argument, Maratea consistently refers to two of the conclusions of the Baldus Study (Baldus, Pulaski, & Woodworth, 1983). These two conclusions, which form the backbone of the book, are that (1) the black body is deserving of the harshest punishments and (2) so are those that harm the white body. Maratea

echoes the critical analyses of Anderson (2016), Kendi (2017), and Waquant (2009), engaging in a Foucauldian historical analysis of the disproportionate punishments laid out to black bodies that harm white bodies.

It is this historical analysis that informs the structure of the text. The author takes the reader on a journey, delving into legal racism and tracking its evolution from reconstruction to its modern-day “race-neutral” conclusions. This task is undertaken by tracing the history of Supreme Court decisions related to race and the death penalty. *Furman v. Georgia* (1972) and *Gregg v. Georgia* (1976) are two cases of high significance in relation to the argument of coded racial bias in the current criminal justice system. Arguing that *Gregg v. Georgia* (1976) reinstated the death penalty before serious sociocultural and socio-judicial normative change, the author aligns himself with the minority opinion of Justice Brennan (*Gregg v. Georgia*, 1976) and the findings of the Baldus Study (Baldus et al., 1983).

Alongside this analysis is a thorough discussion of *McCleskey v. Kemp* (1986), including the case put forth by the defense and prosecution, the political and ideological makeup of the Supreme Court, and the implications of Justice Powell’s majority opinion. The structure of the text, interweaving the specifics of *McCleskey v. Kemp* (1986) into socio-structural forces at play, makes it clear that Maratea is using the McCleskey decision to assert that the same forces that result in racial

disparities in death penalty sentencing permeate the entirety of the nation's criminal justice system.

From the outset, Maratea alerts the reader to process his text in this manner. As early as page 2, he describes the symbolic (rather than literal) power of Warren McCleskey, by preferring to paint the portrait of the individual, his crime, and his punishment via historic forces rather than an individual narrative. The book mimics *McCleskey v. Kemp* (1986) with its focus on the Baldus study and its implications. The Supreme Court's decision that the Baldus study, or any macro-level data, cannot prove that McCleskey's Eighth or Fourteenth Amendment rights were violated becomes a launching point for the main arguments of the book. Central to the argument of the text is the majority opinion of Justice Powell, that "apparent disparities in sentencing are an inevitable part of our criminal justice system" (*McCleskey v. Kemp*, 1986, p. 313). This finding is critical to the implications laid forth in the concluding chapter of the text. The implications section focuses less on racism specific to the death penalty and shifts to using systemic racism within the death penalty as a case study for overall systemic racism found in politics, American individualism, and "race-neutral" policies and law.

The strongest aspect of this text is its structure. The author withholds his feelings and potential biases toward the topic while presenting a historical analysis of the death penalty. It is only after the book covers this analysis that Maratea

begins to inform the reader of his interpretations. Although the author could have begun the book by proposing that "the egalitarian ideal of post-racial United States is little more than a myth" (Maratea, 2019, p.175), this conclusion is saved for the last paragraph. Rather than implant the idea of wide-reaching structural racism, the author keeps his analysis to the death penalty. Before providing his own analysis, he allows the reader to question the extent of structural bias within the U.S. criminal justice system.

An additional strength is the manner with which Maratea is willing to incorporate information that can be used to undermine his arguments. In doing so, he is able to explain why these limitations do not deter from the legitimacy of his own conclusions. Maratea avoids the critique of producing advocacy, and not data backed by research, by admitting that Warren McCleskey was guilty of certain crimes. Additionally, by highlighting that the methodology of the Baldus study is not flawless, potential criticisms that he ignored facts that did not support his conclusions are proactively rebuked. By acknowledging that various attacks against the death penalty have been defended over time, including by stating that it is not against the Constitution to execute an innocent person (*Herrera v. Collins*, 1993), Maratea prevents critics from assailing his analysis as being too narrow-minded and playing off the current social interest in racial bias studies.

A final strength within the historical analysis is that it uses the case study of McCleskey not as an endpoint but as a midpoint within the overall argument. Rather than tracing racial disparities and racism against black skin up to McCleskey, the text goes on to discuss more modern events. This approach enables the reader to recognize that the decision in McCleskey is not of isolated significance. This format structurally mimics the overall argument that the McCleskey decision is important because it provides an example of a larger phenomenon occurring in United States society. Instead of concluding with the McCleskey decision, the text dedicates its conclusion to discuss meaningful and specific implications of the case. This structure enables Maratea to provide his own justifications for the importance of his book while not mixing his opinions with his historical analysis. This allows Maratea to convey to the reader that McCleskey is not a conclusion; it is a continuation and example of something greater.

This is not to say, however, that the text was without flaws. While coming to grand conclusions on the state of structural racism, Maratea strangely distances his work from being interpreted as an anti-death penalty text. Although the case study approach lends itself to a fluid read, the choice to abandon the value of the case in question for broader conclusions seems unnecessary. The conclusion, in aiming to solidify the accusation of rampant implicit structural racism, situates the use of the death

penalty as largely symbolic. It does not argue for the abolition of the death penalty, instead stating that attempts to do so would result in displacement. Maratea argues that abolition, rather than being a solution to racial disparity, would result in an increase in racial disparities of persons serving life sentences. This analysis ignores that there is a difference between the power to take a life and the power to confine a life. This pessimistic attitude toward death penalty reform limits the conclusion to a condemnation of structural racism in the U.S. criminal justice system.

Second, there is a failure to discuss thoroughly the implications of punishing those who harm the white body. At several points, the text provides data that white victims are more sacred than are black and brown victims. This data comes directly from the findings of the Baldus study. The study found that persons who kill white persons are more likely to be sentenced to death (Baldus et al., 1983). This finding is juxtaposed against data showing that only 1% of the lynchings of black individuals in Georgia led to a criminal conviction (Baldus et al., 1983). Yet, when it comes to producing conclusions about structural racism, the text focuses on how the punishment of black and brown bodies is the primary indicator of structural racism. Had the author expanded upon what is called the “white victim effect” (Bowers, Steiner, & Sandys, 2001; Jennings, Richards, Dwayne Smith, Bjerregaard, & Fogel, 2014), he would have been

able to call on additional empirical research showing statistically significant racial bias in sentencing that makes a black individual convicted of killing a white woman the most likely to receive a death sentence (Paternoster & Brame, 2008; Williams, Demuth, & Holcomb, 2007). It is important to note, however, that these weaknesses are neither fatal to the overall argument by the author nor do they impede the readability of the book.

After factoring in the weaknesses, strengths, and style of the text, ultimately the importance of this text lies in its accessibility to a wide range of readers. Using a micro-level case study to highlight a macro-level, intangible phenomenon such as structural racism is not something that can be done easily, especially while refraining from technical jargon and verbose academic writing. This is what Maratea is able to accomplish. Maratea achieves readability by backing up his analyses with direct quotes from the opinions of Supreme Court cases.

Additionally, readability is achieved through his clear and simple structure. The book flows seamlessly from the Baldus study to the McCleskey decision, to the implications of this decision, all while maintaining the central theme of structural racism. His decision to blend micro and macro contexts blends the philosophical and the anthropological, and in doing so provides an excellent counterargument to the logic used by the Supreme Court in upholding McCleskey's death sentence. The importance of this book is that it provides an example of how a macro-level phenomenon, like structural racism, has micro-level impacts on individual cases. His analysis, while not unique in its conclusions, serves as a foundational and grounded text for those interested in examining the extent to which "separate but equal" logic remains pervasive in American society. This book is a necessary read for those interested in racial disparity as well as death penalty research.

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Thomas Dutcher* is currently a criminal justice doctoral student and fellow at the University of New Haven in Connecticut. He holds a master's degree in International Migration from the University of Kent–Brussels School of International Studies. His theoretical interests largely come from the field of critical criminology, specifically peacemaking criminology and humanistic criminology. His research interests include the criminalization of homelessness and the stigmatic impact of the criminal label.

Book Review: Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking:****Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*****Columbia University Press, 2017. 320 pages,****ISBN: 9780231139618, \$9.99 (Kindle)**

Tatiana M. Smith*

In *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*, Siddharth Kara seeks to convey to readers the pervasive nature of sex trafficking on a global scale and increase the awareness of the international community. Kara utilizes a shade of ethnographic research through the extensive interviews he conducts throughout his travels. However, there is not a discernible research question presented to the reader. Instead, Kara's discussion of sex trafficking is communicated through his firsthand experiences and understandings as he interacts with trafficked individuals, officials, traffickers, and others in each country. Kara's motivation originates from a study abroad experience when he was in university, which deeply affected him. He recalls, "It took me a few years to process my experiences in Slovenia...the stories of the trafficked women in Bosnia resurfaced in my mind... [and I] made a radical decision: The time had come to tell this story" (pp. xix–xx). This book is an examination of Kara's personal growth and journey, rather than a detailed analysis of sex trafficking with a focus on trafficked individuals.

This book does not represent a scientifically rigorous study with extensive empirical data to support Kara's experiences and objectivity when

analyzing the issue. The tone of this book is highly emotive, which is a significant risk scientific researchers recognize, and may refer to a "going native" or "inherent bias," when working with survivors and persons involved in sex trafficking (Cordisco Tsai, 2018; Tsampiras & Muller, 2018). Cordisco Tsai (2018), for example, recognizes the impact and toll working with trafficking victims can have on interviewers and researchers. However, the design of the study allows interviewers and researchers to create and maintain proper boundaries prior to engagement with these individuals. In contrast, Kara's informal approach and personal investment in his engagement with the sex trafficking industry and victims compromises his ability to remain objective and create any boundaries.

Kara is clearly passionate about the pervasive nature of sex trafficking; however, prior to his engagement with it on his travels, he possesses no knowledge on this issue. Even throughout his travels, while he collects ethnographic data through interviews with trafficking victims and traffickers, Kara is not well-informed about the surrounding institutions, such as offered services and justice systems. This is exemplified when Kara meets Police Lieutenant Colonel Suchai Chindavanich, whom Kara assumed had been ineffective and uninformed in his role and duties in preventing victimization of women in Thailand. This perception is similar to Dando,

Walsh, and Brierley's (2016) conclusions, that while "the public can be one of the most influential interest groups, [this is] only [true] if well-informed, supported and motivated [individuals move] towards positive action" (p. 11). Despite his passion, Kara suffers from his lack of knowledge. He is not well-informed on the issue of human trafficking at the time of his international journey. Furthermore, Kara is not informed about the practices of the criminal justice officials and systems in the countries he is visiting. In this interaction, Kara initially assumes that he knows better than the officer, through his position as an active bystander to sex trafficking in each country he enters. "The pamphlet was too large to conceal, so I tore off the portion on which the phone number was listed, placed it in her hand, and with the gesture of a telephone I said, "Appoggio. Liberta." Assistance. Freedom. It was the best I could do. I took the young girl's hands and said, "God be with you."" (p. 98).

Through ethnographic data from trafficking victims, Kara illustrates another concern. Kara presents a trafficking story from a victim he calls Katia; however, he also makes note of her reluctance to talk prior to disclosing. Due to his lack of proper training and background in trafficking prior to this trip, and in addition to the vague language used in this instance, this encounter raises two concerns: informed consent and coercion. These victims are in a vulnerable position when he

meets them, and it is unclear whether they understand why he is conducting these interviews. Dando et al. (2016) explored this vulnerability by measuring the public's understanding of psychological coercion. The findings suggested that the majority of the public has no awareness of the psychological coercion involved nor its relevance to human trafficking. These results are from 2016; it is unclear whether Kara had an awareness of informed consent and coercion. This is especially concerning given his interactions when interviewing victims about their experiences. Kara states that he often would leave the victims following interviews, and there is little discussion regarding his attempts to provide an intervention or assistance. In contrast, Cordisco Tsai (2018) addresses the importance of informed consent by stating, "it is self-evident that the informed consent process must be handled in a conscientious manner at the study outset, as the concept of informed consent may be unfamiliar to trafficked persons" (p. 14). This is significant because had this study been conducted by a scientific researcher, although barriers and challenges like informed consent and coercion would exist, there would be an awareness and effort to handle them appropriately.

Kara also highlights the corruption that exists in some international communities. While in Moldova, he meets a trafficking attorney he calls Peter, who faces barriers in the justice system due to the interpersonal relationship between law

enforcement officials, such as judges and prosecutors, and traffickers. It is significant that this illustrates the depth of this issue and raises awareness about existing barriers. This is perhaps one of the only significant objective insights Kara makes, though brief, that is focused on the issue rather than his perception.

Studying sex trafficking presents unique concerns, given the issues of accessibility and ethics when empirical research is conducted. Though Kara is not acting in a scientific researcher capacity, numerous circumstances during his journey raise ethical concerns. While in the United States, Kara interviews a trafficking victim at a massage parlor he visits. He is presented with an opportunity to report the location of a young girl, whom he calls Sunee, to a national hotline or her family. Despite this, Kara does neither, which he expresses guilt over. This instance raises the issue of mandatory reporting. Though mandatory reporting was not law in all 50 states at the time, as it is now (Hartinger-Saunders, Trouteaud, & Johnson, 2017, p. 195), Kara faced an ethical dilemma that he did not resolve, instead choosing not to disclose to authorities or a hotline. A scientific researcher may have acted differently due to access to information and training Kara does not possess.

Perhaps the greatest issue that compromises Kara's journey and ethnographic data, aside from his personalized focus and emotive tone, is the limitations of the qualitative data due to his weak

research methods and potential for bias. His approach appears to influence the data and findings, which diminishes their reliability and validity. Additionally, there is an absence of quantitative data within the study, whereas its inclusion may have provided more insight. Kara does attempt a minimal number of charts with some data beyond his interviews, but it is not enough to corroborate his findings—although it is important to note there is limited empirical research surrounding sex trafficking. Inclusion of scholarly sources and more rigorous scientific data would strengthen his book; without this inclusion, the book is largely anecdotal and self-focused.

In summation, Kara's personal journey to internationally examine sex trafficking is an excellent starting point and increases public awareness of the issue; however, it does not provide useful empirical insights into sex trafficking for scholars. Its focus is largely Kara cataloging his perceptions and growth, rather than on the trafficking victims. Moreover, Kara's full immersion into the trafficking world to collect qualitative data presents significant challenges that might compromise research findings. Issues such as informed consent, risk of coercion, potential ethical violations, and lack of reporting would be significant in a study. Overall, Kara's journey, interviews, and insight provides a foundation that empirical studies must build upon with a focus on victims through an objective and comprehensive lens.

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Tatiana M. Smith* is currently pursuing a PhD in criminal justice at the University of New Haven. Her research interests include sexual victimization, intimate partner violence, historical context and victimization, and criminological theory. She has a master's degree in forensic psychology, with a certificate in victim advocacy and service management, from the University of New Haven. She also earned a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Connecticut.



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Date: February 28, 2020

TO: Members of the ACJS Executive Board

FROM: Peter B. Wood, Chair, CJRA

RE: ACJS Annual Meeting Report

The Crime & Justice Research Alliance (CJRA:

<http://crimeandjusticeresearchalliance.org>) represents over a decade of planning and development, with support from the past twelve consecutive presidents and executive boards of ACJS and ASC. CJRA aims to a) promote criminology and criminal justice research published in journals of both associations; b) emphasize the relevance of the research conducted by members of our associations to criminal justice policy development at the local, state, and federal levels; and c) make the case for federal funding and access to data in support of such research.

Public-facing documents on CJRA state that the Alliance “...communicates with the criminal justice research and academic communities about legislative, appropriations and policy developments in Washington, DC” and “...assists policymakers across the political spectrum by summarizing published scholarly articles and identifying expert witnesses to speak to Committees, Members of Congress and Justice Department officials.” Importantly, CJRA is a non-partisan entity and resource to reporters covering crime and justice, and to members of both political parties.

History and Structure of CJRA

In 2009, ACJS and ASC began a partnership called the Criminology and Criminal Justice Policy Coalition (CCJPC). The two organizations contracted The Raben Group in Washington, D.C. to assist in developing contacts with key legislators and staff involved in criminal justice policy development, and further the dissemination of evidence-based research. The CCJPC consisted of four members appointed by ACJS and four members appointed by ASC. For several years, it organized visits by ACJS and ASC members to D.C. to urge legislators and their staffs to increase crime and justice funding. The coalition also conducted congressional briefings on issues related to policing and corrections.

In 2013, the CCJPC was renamed the Joint Oversight Committee (JOC) with a new charge from ACJS and ASC--to develop a more formal and permanent mechanism to

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represent the interests of ACJS and ASC in the crime and justice policy arena. The JOC included four members appointed by ACJS and four members appointed by ASC. With the blessing of both organizations, members of the JOC worked to conceive and design what is now the Crime & Justice Research Alliance (CJRA).

Established as a partnership between ACJS and ASC in late 2014, in 2015, CJRA retained The Brimley Group (a Washington, D.C.-based government relations consulting firm) and arranged for the development of the CJRA website (by FP1 Strategies). Shortly thereafter, the CJRA website was launched as a centralized resource of authoritative experts and scholarly studies, to provide policymakers, practitioners and the public direct access to relevant research on crime and criminal justice issues by ACJS and ASC scholars. Its purpose is to establish and promote CJRA as a go-to source providing objective research to inform legislators in criminal justice policy and appropriation decisions as well as reporters covering criminal justice topics in the news.

Through a competitive process, CJRA board members vetted finalists and Caitlin Kizielewicz, of KIZCOMM, LLC, was hired in November 2015 as the CJRA media relations and communications consultant. Caitlin oversees both internal and external communications for the Alliance—conducting daily outreach to reporters covering crime and criminal justice, managing the social media and web presence of CJRA, and working with CJRA experts on a variety of inquiries. Caitlin and Liliana Coronado, the Brimley Group representative, work in close partnership to elevate CJRA and the knowledge, expertise, and interests of ACJS and ASC members. Liliana conducts regular outreach to congressional staff, with a focus on House and Senate appropriations and justice committees; drafts letters in support of research funding from CJRA to key legislators and committee members, and takes the lead in local arrangements for the “Ask a Criminologist” series of Hill briefings in partnership with the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA). The Capitol Hill briefing in June 2019, “What is the Connection between Immigration and Crime?” was the most well-attended CJRA briefing to date, and provided an opportunity for Congressional staff and key stakeholders to engage directly with CJRA experts.

CJRA is governed by an eight-member board that consists of four appointees from each of the two associations, ACJS and ASC. Each appointee serves a three-year term, and the chair and deputy chair alternate between an ACJS and an ASC appointee every three years. Recently, both associations appointed CJRA board members who serve other leadership roles, such as treasurer and policy committee members, to enhance communications and understanding of CJRA and bring information back to association leadership. Ex-officio members include the executive directors of ACJS and ASC, and the immediate past chair of CJRA.

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What has CJRA accomplished in 2019?

CJRA efforts focus on two specific areas—a) government relations and the legislative policy arena, and b) media relations and publicity of policy-relevant research published in ACJS and ASC journals (*Justice Quarterly*, *Justice Evaluation Journal*, *Criminology*, *Criminology & Public Policy*,). More than 120 subject area experts featured in the CJRA Expert Directory are available for interviews or expert testimony (both ACJS and ASC have developed protocols to review applicants for expert status, who are then featured in the CJRA expert directory). To be impactful, engagement by CJRA’s media and government relations consultants—and a growing web presence—is critical, and affords the Alliance credibility and access. CJRA’s website is organized around main topic areas, featured experts, recent news, research by experts, and documents and communications related to policy outreach efforts, and it supports both the media relations and government relations functions of CJRA.

Government Relations in 2019

Key aims of the Alliance are to inform policymakers of relevant research, and advocate for sustained or improved levels of federal funding and access to crime and justice data. Liliana Coronado (The Brimley Group) has led CJRA efforts in this arena on and off Capitol Hill. After a year as a judicial law clerk on the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Liliana joined the Federal Public Defender’s Office and served as the Supervising Deputy Federal Public Defender for the Central District of California, Los Angeles. She also served as Counsel to the House Judiciary Committee for two years. Liliana brings significant experience and contacts on Capitol Hill, and her efforts are critical to navigating the halls of Congress and in representing ASC and ACJS funding, data, and policy priorities to legislators.

During 2019, government relations activities included:

- The charter for the DOJ/OJP Science Advisory Board expired in December 2018. Members of ACJS and ASC have served on the SAB to provide guidance on DOJ research priorities. CJRA engaged Capitol Hill champions who [signed a letter](#) to DOJ urging renewal of the SAB charter. DOJ subsequently declined to renew the SAB charter. In partnership with COSSA and the Center for American Progress, CJRA crafted language to codify the SAB. Sen. Schatz introduced a bill in the Senate with co-sponsors Senators Booker, Blumenthal, Markey, and Whitehouse, and Representative Dean introduced the same bill in the House—co-sponsored by Reps. Garcia, Scanlon, and Evans. CJRA-requested language in support of restoring the SAB is now included in the Senate DOJ funding bill for FY 2021.

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- In spring 2019, in response to concerns raised by association members, CJRA surveyed ACJS and ASC memberships about missing or delayed BJS data collections and reports. In October, the Alliance [sent a letter co-signed by CJRA and COSSA](#) to DOJ/BJS (shared with Hill champions) to inquire about missing BJS reports and datasets. In January 2020, AAG Sullivan responded to our inquiry, raising additional concerns about delayed BJS data products, a suspected workforce shortage, and the admitted need for BJS to prioritize projects it is able to complete. The ability of BJS to provide timely crime and justice data appears to have been compromised. We are crafting a new letter highlighting our concerns and will request help from Hill Champions to pursue this issue with DOJ.
- CJRA [began advocating](#) for increased resources in 2017, and by 2018 funding for NIJ and BJS increased by nearly 20%. Prior to the creation of the Alliance, BJS and NIJ had not received increased funds for many years. Starting in the FY 2017 Omnibus, House and Senate Appropriations committees approved significant increases which remained in the 2018 FY Omnibus and were signed into law in March 2018. However, budgets for both BJS and NIJ have been cut over 10% since 2018, and the Administration's FY 2021 proposal leaves BJS with funding well below the 2018 level and reduces NIJ's budget by 20%. Robust support for our primary Federal law and justice agencies—particularly those that support research, development, and implementation of crime policy—is crucial to ensure that we learn the best ways to address crime and justice in our communities. CJRA will again advocate for increased funding for NIJ and BJS in the FY 2021 budget process.
- CJRA secured removal of a provision of the First Step Act that would have eliminated the National Institute of Corrections, which provides much-needed training and technical assistance to correctional officers across the nation. First Step was passed in December 2018 without this provision. We are now tracking a renewed effort in the President's 2021 budget request to eliminate NIC. The Senate's FY 2021 DOJ funding bill has rejected the President's move to eliminate NIC. The United States imprisons 25% of the world's prisoners—more than two million are behind bars and another five million are under some form of correctional supervision. Continuing education for those who manage the largest prison system on Earth and who work with these offenders is important because well over 90% of these prisoners will be released back into our communities.
- CJRA presented its fourth annual [“Ask a Criminologist” briefing in June 2019](#), attended by numerous Congressional staff. “What is the Connection between Immigration and Crime?” featured Dr. Daniel Martinez (U-Arizona), Dr. Janice

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CRIME & JUSTICE RESEARCH ALLIANCE

Iwama (American U.), and Edward Flynn (Milwaukee Police Chief) as panelists. Anthony Peguero (Virginia Tech) and Nancy LaVigne (Urban Institute) moderated the event held in the Rayburn Federal Office Building in Washington, D.C. Immigration has long been at the center of many policy debates, and has been propelled into the headlines once again. Missing from much of the often heated discussion is what researchers have learned about the association between immigration and crime. This briefing informed policymakers deliberating immigration policy with rigorous research and hard data on the issue. This was the most well-attended CJRA briefing to date by Congressional staff from both sides of the aisle and stakeholders, and we received follow up requests for information from the Congressional Research Service. CJRA congressional briefings provide an opportunity for congressional staff and key stakeholders to engage directly with the experts who conduct research on a range of public safety and justice system topics.

- ☐ Assisted with outreach to Congressional staff for CEBCP's Congressional Briefing in September 2019 on mass gun violence. Consulted with Cynthia Lum (CPP co-editor) regarding Congressional co-sponsorship and outreach.
- ☐ Developing a partnership/collaboration with the American Statistical Association's "Count on Stats" initiative with a focus on delayed and missing BJS data collections and reports.
- ☐ Consulting with the Coalition for Science Funding about a possible collaboration to advocate for crime and justice research funding.
- ☐ Tracking other criminal justice legislation, including criminal justice reform, First Step Act, Pell Grant restoration for prisoners, National Criminal Justice Commission Act, other data/research-focused legislation.
- ☐ Monitor Congressional hearings, particularly those by House and Senate judiciary and appropriations committees, on criminal justice, funding, and data access issues.

Media and Communication Relations in 2019

A primary objective of CJRA is to promote scholarship and expertise generated by ACJS and ASC members—who represent our leading resource. CJRA communications consultant, Caitlin Kizielewicz of KIZCOMM, LLC, works to implement strategies to enhance and elevate the CJRA brand to the media and the public. She offers media training in the CJRA Media Training Workshop offered at ACJS and ASC annual

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meetings, which experiences high demand from ACJS and ASC members, and which has filled to capacity within hours of being announced. For the ACJS 2020 San Antonio conference, Caitlin will expand participation in the workshop to more than 50 attendees (double that of previous sessions)—more than 60 ACJS members applied for a seat. During 2019, the Alliance secured nearly 200 interview opportunities with national and local media outlets, and established on-going relationships with a deep bench of reporters covering crime and justice topics. In February 2016, Caitlin created and began to distribute a monthly CJRA newsletter. She has also built, maintained, and grown social media channels with more than 4,500 Twitter followers. In 2019 she launched more than 15 research campaigns that featured articles in ACJS and ASC journals. Caitlin maintains the CJRA expert directory which is now comprised of 120+ ACJS and ASC experts. A large portion of her job involves expert relations which includes updating biographies, managing incoming inquiries and providing additional support to Alliance experts. In 2019, she prepared and published 94 research summaries to highlight key findings of CJRA experts, and she maintains the latest news and updates on the Alliance website.

During 2019, media and communications activities included:

- ❑ Continued to augment a growing CJRA expert directory and associated downloadable research products. Added 10 experts in 2019 and maintained expert relations with 126 ASC and ACJS experts.
- ❑ Established an informal partnership with the Scholars Strategy Network (SSN) and helped more than 50 CJRA experts join SSN to increase the number of media opportunities and possible requests to testify in Washington, D.C.
- ❑ Created more than 90 research summaries featuring work by ACJS and ASC experts on the CJRA expert directory to highlight key findings by experts
- ❑ Secured 145 media interviews with 56 members of ASC and 21 members of ACJS, 33 of whom had two or more interviews.
- ❑ 154 news articles featuring ACJS/ASC members have been published since January 2019.
- ❑ Achieved significant increases in both reporter requests and secured interviews.
- ❑ Maintained a list of more than 40 reporters who request research updates from CJRA on a monthly basis.
- ❑ Launched 15 research campaigns that featured 2019 research articles from ACJS and ASC journals.
- ❑ Created a social media presence with now more than 4,500 Twitter followers and a 28% increase in Twitter followers since January 2019.
- ❑ Developed and distributed a monthly newsletter to more than 950 subscribers (not including ACJS and ASC members) – securing an average open rate of 35%

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- Nurtured relationships with publishers (Taylor & Francis and Wiley & Sons) and editors of four academic journals (*Justice Quarterly*, *Justice Evaluation Journal*, *Criminology*, *Criminology & Public Policy*,) to streamline publicity efforts.
- Finalized the 2019 update of the CJRA website to serve as the go-to source for authoritative experts and relevant research on crime and criminal justice topics to policy makers and reporters.
- Conducted media training workshops for members at the 2019 ACJS and 2019 ASC annual meetings; received a 97% excellent rating from participants
- Coordinated with the CJRA government relations consultant to promote events, briefings, and conferences organized by ASC and ACJS members, including the September 2019 congressional briefing by the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (Cynthia Lum and George Mason University) on mass gun violence.
- Worked on exclusive media opportunities to feature the February 2020 issue of CPP which includes research articles from ASC experts who presented at the CEBCP briefing.
- Promoted the first and third most-downloaded articles in *Justice Quarterly* in 2019. The first most-downloaded article registered over 11,000 downloads in 2019.
- Three of the top four Altmetric-scoring articles in JQ were promoted by CJRA.
- CJRA promoted the most down-loaded article in the *Justice Evaluation Journal* in 2019, and the top Altmetric-scoring article in JEJ in 2019.
- Contacted all ACJS and ASC section journal editors to solicit research for promotion in the upcoming CJRA One-Page Initiative, to launch in 2020.
- Now working with ACJS/ASC section journals/editors to coordinate topics and schedules for the CJRA One-Page Initiative to begin in 2020.

The infrastructure creation, growth, and development that characterized CJRA's first three years has been rewarded. The Alliance is reaching its stride and has a demonstrable impact on legislative policy, federal funding of crime and justice research, and access to crime and justice data. CJRA promotion of research by ACJS and ASC scholars and experts has resulted in increased downloads and Altmetric scores associated with journal articles the Alliance promotes through targeted media campaigns, raising the profile and relevance of our members' research. Our social media presence has rapidly expanded, and offers a new vehicle to disseminate research by ACJS and ASC scholars. And more than 50 CJRA experts are now listed by the Scholars Strategy Network.

CJRA's recognition and reach among policymakers, news media, and the general public is growing, and it is critical that CJRA maintains its efforts in media and government relations activities moving forward. Full support of these activities from ACJS and ASC is essential to the ongoing success of the Alliance, and its impact in elevating evidence-

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based research in the crime and justice arena and increased federal funding for future research in this space. The efforts of CJRA and its consultants could not be more critical and timely given the absence of evidence that has begun to pervade political discourse, and recent and impending threats to federal funding and access to data. CJRA worked to restore 50+ missing data tables to the annual CIUS report in late 2018, protected the National Institute of Corrections from elimination, and is pursuing efforts to investigate missing data collections and reports at BJS, and to reinstate the OJP Science Advisory Board. In the process we've developed working relationships with COSSA and the Center for American Progress, and are discussing partnerships/collaborations with the American Statistical Association and the Coalition for Science Funding. In just five years, and in large measure due to sustained effort by our KIZCOMM and Brimley consultants, the Alliance has evolved from an idea to a respected, non-partisan resource and player in the crime and justice policy arena, and a critical conduit for the dissemination of research by ACJS/ASC scholars and practitioners.

CJRA welcomes any questions you may have and invites you to engage with us as a board, and/or with individual board members, to seek clarification or detail.

Please visit our website at: <http://crimeandjusticeresearchalliance.org>

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Want to Publish on Assessment?

The Assessment Committee, in conjunction with *ACJS Today*, would like to announce an opportunity for ACJS members to publish works on academic assessment in an Assessment Forum to be published 1–2 times per year (submissions permitting) in *ACJS Today*. These articles can be descriptions of unique assessment plans, experiences in what has worked or not worked in implementing plans, discussions on how to create learning objectives and assessment plans, research studies on assessment outcomes, or anything else that would be useful to those of us in ACJS who use assessment as a tool to improve our programs and the experiences of our students. In particular, if you have presented at our Assessment Workshop, this is an excellent place to publish your presentations to a wider audience. More information on the criteria for ACJS articles can be found on the ACJS website.

Check out the first article published in the *ACJS Today* Assessment Forum in the January 2019 edition of *ACJS Today*: “Who Do We Want Our Students to Be? Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in Undergraduate Criminal Justice Programs,” by Kristi Holsinger and Lindsey Arbuthnot Clancey.

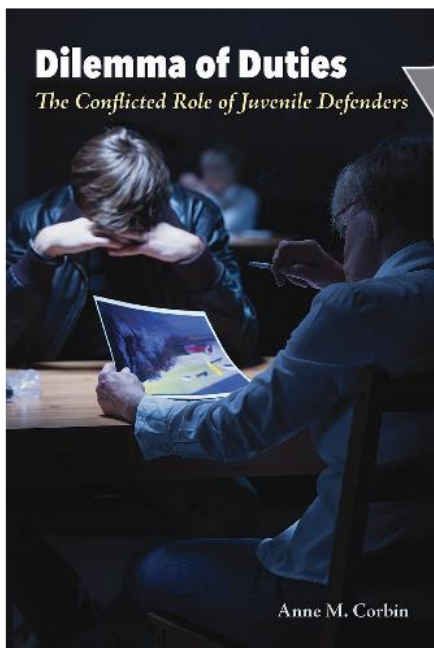
For more information or to submit an article, contact Robert Lytle (2020–2021 Committee Chair) at rdlytle@ualr.edu or Samantha Clinkinbeard (2020–2021 Deputy Committee Chair) at sclinkinbeard@unomaha.edu.

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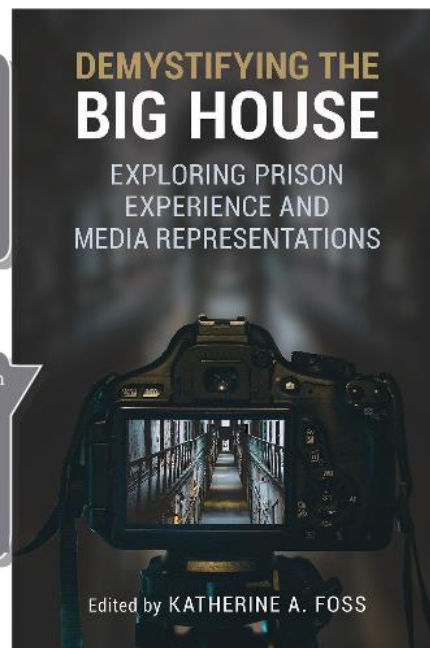
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Joseph A. Schafer, Series Editor
Saint Louis University
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ACJS Seeking Committee Volunteers for 2021-2022

Heather Pfeifer, incoming ACJS 1st Vice President, is actively seeking Committee volunteers to serve during her presidency, April 2021 – March 2022. If you are interested in learning more about how to be actively involved in service to ACJS, contact Heather at hpfeifer@ubalt.edu to volunteer. Every attempt will be made to place ACJS members who volunteer on a standing or *ad hoc* Committee.

Committee membership is limited to ACJS members. The composition of all committees will be as diverse as possible with regard to gender, race, region, and length of Academy membership.

Every year, ACJS needs volunteers for the Academy's Standing Committees. Committee volunteers usually serve for one year, beginning with the Friday of the Annual Meeting after the Executive Board meets. Appointments to the following ACJS Standing Committees are for one year, unless otherwise stated:

- ☐ **Academic Review** (Members serve three-year terms)
- ☐ **Affirmative Action** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Assessment** (Open to three new members who serve three-year terms)
- ☐ **Awards** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Business, Finance, and Audit** (Open to one person from the ACJS membership selected by the 2nd Vice President)
- ☐ **Committee on National Criminal Justice Month** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Constitution and By-Laws** (Open to three new members selected by the 2nd Vice President and serve three-year terms)
- ☐ **Ethics** (Members are nominated by the Trustees-At-Large and appointed by the ACJS Executive Board and serve three-year terms)
- ☐ **Membership** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Nominations and Elections** (Members are appointed by the Immediate Past President)
- ☐ **Program**
- ☐ **Public Policy** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Student Affairs** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Crime and Justice Research Alliance (CJRA)** (Open to two members at large appointed by the 1st Vice President)
- ☐ **Doctoral Summit** (Open membership)

*The success of ACJS depends on having a dedicated cadre of volunteers.
Committee membership is an excellent way to make a
difference in the future of ACJS.*

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Prabha Unnithan
Colorado State University
Department of Sociology
200 West Lake Street
Fort Collins, CO 80523
970-491-6615
prabha.unnithan@colostate.edu

1st Vice President

Cassia Spohn
School of Criminology and Criminal
Justice
Arizona State University
411 N. Central Ave, Suite 600
Phoenix, AZ 85004
602-496-2334
cassia.spohn@asu.edu

2nd Vice President

Heather L. Pfeifer
University of Baltimore
1420 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-837-5292
hpfeifer@ubalt.edu

Immediate Past President

Faith Lutze
Washington State University
Criminal Justice Program
P.O. Box 644872
Pullman, WA 99164
509-335-2272
lutze@mail.wsu.edu

Treasurer

Marlyn J. Jones
California State University,
Sacramento
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819-6085
916-278-7048
marlyn@csus.edu

Secretary

Erin A. Orrick
Department of Criminal Justice &
Criminology
Sam Houston State University
Box 2296
Huntsville, TX 77341
936-294-3643
eorrick@shsu.edu

Trustees-At-Large:

Ashley Blackburn
Department of Criminal Justice
University of Houston – Downtown
One Main Street, C-340M
Houston, TX 77002
713-222-5326
blackburna@uhd.edu

Lorenzo M. Boyd.
Henry C. Lee College of Criminal
Justice and Forensic Sciences
University of New Haven
300 Boston Post Rd.
West Haven, CT 06516
203-931-2988
LBoyd@newhaven.edu

Anthony A. Peguero
Virginia Tech
Department of Sociology
560 McBryde Hall (0137)
225 Stanger Street
Blacksburg, VA 24060
540-231-2549
anthony.peguero@vt.edu

Regional Trustees:**Region 1—Northeast**

Cassandra L. Reyes
Department of Criminal Justice
West Chester University of
Pennsylvania
512 Business and Public Management
Center
50 Sharpless Street
West Chester, PA 19383
610-436-2529
creyes@wcupa.edu

Region 2—Southern

Leah Daigle
Georgia State University
Department of Criminal Justice and
Criminology
140 Decatur Street
1227 Urban Life Building
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-413-1037
ldaigle@gsu.edu

Region 3—Midwest

Victoria Simpson Beck
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Department of Criminal Justice
421 Clow Faculty, 800 Algoma Blvd.
Oshkosh, WI 54901-8655
920-424-7094 - Office
beckv@uwosh.edu

Region 4—Southwest

Christine Nix
University of Mary Harden Baylor
Criminal Justice Program
UMHB Box 8014, 900 College Street
Belton, TX 76513
254-295-5513
christine.nix@umhb.edu

Region 5—Western

Stephanie Lipson Mizrahi
Division of Criminal Justice
Alpine Hall 107
California State University,
Sacramento
Sacramento, CA 95819
916-824-9444
smizrahi@csus.edu

National Office Staff:**Executive Director**

John L. Worrall
University of Texas at Dallas
800 West Campbell Road, GR 31
Richardson, TX 75080
972-883-4893
acjsexecutivedirector@acjs.org

Executive Director Emeritus

Mittie D. Southerland
1525 State Route 2151
Melber, KY 42069
270-674-5697
270-674-6097 (fax)

Association Manager

Letiscia Perrin, CMP & CAE
P.O. Box 960
Greenbelt, MD 20768-0960
301-446-6300
800-757-2257
301-446-2819 (fax)
manager@acjs.org

ACJS Consultant

Cathy L. Barth
P.O. Box 960
Greenbelt, MD 20768-0960
301-446-6300
800-757-2257
301-446-2819 (fax)
cbarth@acjs.org

AJCS TODAY

Editor: **David Myers, Ph D**
 Professor &
 Ph.D Program Director
 University of New Haven
 300 Boston Post Rd.
 West Haven, CT 06516
 Phone: 203.479.4883
 dmyers@newhaven.edu

Historian: **Robert M. Worley, Ph.D.**
 Associate Professor &
 Director of Criminal Justice
 Programs
 Lamar University
 PO Box 10026
 Beaumont, TX 77710
 409-880-7827

ACJS National Office

Executive Director: John L. Worrall
 worrall@utdallas.edu

Association Manager: Cathy L. Barth
 manager@acjs.org

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
 P. O. Box 960
 Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Office Location:
 7339 Hanover Parkway, Suite A
 Greenbelt, MD 20768-0960
 Tel.: (301) 446-6300; (800) 757-ACJS (2257)
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*The editor will use his discretion to accept,
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