

ACJS *today*

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Newsletter



ACJS Presidential Welcome

ACJS President Welcome from ACJS President Stephanie Mizrah

On March 14, 2025, I had the singular honor of accepting the presidential gavel and starting my term as ACJS President. It was one of the most memorable moments of my career, and I would like to start by thanking all who gave me such a warm welcome. Thank you for your support and your confidence in me as I embark on a challenging, busy, and rewarding year. I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, discuss some of my goals for this year, and update everyone on our plans for the 63rd Annual Meeting in March 2026 in Philadelphia.

I am a Professor of Criminal Justice at Sacramento State University, having taught there since the Fall of 2009. Before that, I taught at Chico State for four years. I earned my bachelor's degree at University of the Pacific in Stockton (I won't say how long that has been). I went to law school at McGeorge (1994) and graduate school at Washington State University, where I got my master's and PhD in Criminal Justice. In between college, law school, and graduate school, I served as a prosecuting attorney in rural Washington and an intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency focused on international terrorism and international narcotics. Today I teach and research in the areas of law, terrorism, homeland security, emergency management, and transnational crime. I have presented in these areas at regional, national, and international meetings including the 2023 and 2024 meeting of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (UN CCPCJ). I have co-authored

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two textbooks and am currently working on a third on Homeland Security policy.

As for hobbies, I started figure skating in college and skated competitively (at the beginning adult levels) until about ten years ago. When I finish my presidential year, I hope to go back and finish up some of my tests. I am also working toward getting my judges appointment to judge local skating competitions. I love listening to music from Broadway musicals while I work. Unfortunately, I can't hold a tune if my life depended on it. I should also note that I am owned by an 11-pound mix of just about everything named Angel and a calico named Queen Victoria. I have taken to calling them my home office assistants. Some of you may be familiar with them from Facebook.

I have been a member of ACJS since 2006 and active at both the regional and national level since 2011. I served as the Region V Trustee from 2019-2022. I had the honor of serving twice as Program Co-Chair (2020 and 2021). I have also served on a number of committees, including Program, Student Affairs, Publications, Nominations and Elections, Tellers, and Assessment. I have chaired the Assessment Committee and was one of the founders of the annual Assessment Workshop. I am a past President of the Western Association of Criminal Justice and its Conference Coordinator. I founded and served as the initial chair of the ACJS Mentoring Committee and have had the opportunity to chair the Minorities and Women's section Awards Committee.

My involvement with ACJS has provided some of my most meaningful and enjoyable professional achievements. I consider it in many ways my professional home. Serving as its President gives me a chance to give back by representing ACJS nationally and internationally. I see ACJS as a place where we can exchange ideas and experiences in teaching, research, and practice that

encompass as wide a variety of perspectives as there are members.

I believe that ACJS can play three particularly important roles in our discipline. First, to support our students as they build their careers either as practitioners or in academia. Second, to support, mentor, and encourage our members—both practitioners and academics – in a way that links all of our innovative and creative practice, teaching, and research efforts. Finally, to provide a bridge between the passionate work of our members and the needs of local, state, federal and international communities and policy makers as they face the reforms needed to create a fair, inclusive, and functional justice system.

Helping me in this endeavor is a group of amazing volunteers who share my dedication to and passion for ACJS. I would like to start with introducing my standing committee chairs:

- Academic Review - Jay Albanese
- Affirmative Action - Miltonette Craig
- Awards Committee -- Jason Williams
- Assessment - Claire Bratten
- Committee on National Criminal Justice Month - Lisa M. Carter
- Constitution and By-Laws: Mark Denniston
- Doctoral Summit - Heather Pfeifer
- Employment Exchange - Jonathan Lee
- Membership - Robert Lytle
- Mentoring - Rashaan Deshay
- Public Policy - Gary Cordner
- Student Affairs - Jennifer Noble

I would also like to thank all the members who have agreed to serve on these committees. Space does not allow me to list all of them here, but their efforts and energy is what makes ACJS work and fulfill its mission. You can find a full list of committee members on the ACJS website www.acjs.org.

Part of my role as President is to represent ACJS in

regional, national, and international forums. Over the course of the Fall 2025 semester, I will have the chance to attend three of our regional meetings: the Southern Criminal Justice Association meeting in Charleston SC, the Midwest Association of Criminal Justice in Chicago IL, and the Western Association of Criminal Justice in Lake Tahoe NV. Since no one has yet invented a way to be in two places at once, my thanks go to Aimee Delaney and Erin Orrick for agreeing to represent me at the Northeast and Southwest regional meetings respectively. This will give me a chance to enjoy time with our regional members and continue to help build the strong connections between ACJS and the regional leadership. In November, I will be attending the meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Washington D.C., continuing the meaningful and long-term ties between ACJS and ASC.

I will also have the honor of representing ACJS at three international meetings. In doing so, I hope to continue the goal of many of my predecessors -- most recently by Immediate Past President Bitna Kim -- of expanding and strengthening our cross-border ties and efforts as an international organization. To that end, I will be attending the 2025 UN CCP CJ meeting and moderating our ACJS panel. I will also be attending the Stockholm Criminology Symposium and the European Society of Criminology meeting. I will be using the time at these events to promote our 2026 meeting and to connect with potential speakers and panelists on the myriad of cross-border criminal justice issues we are facing and the role our associations can play in addressing them.

One of the best things about ACJS is that it provides a welcoming space for academics and practitioners and can serve as a professional home for both. This is reflected in the number of practitioners that serve at both the sectional and national levels and by the connections they are making with practitioner organizations. For

example, our Corrections Section is actively working with the American Correctional Association on programming and awards. I hope this year to work to expand our connections to practitioner associations by:

- Expanding workshop opportunities that would be of interest to both academics and practitioners and provide continuing education options.
- Working with the practitioners serving on the 2026 Program Committee to develop panels that bring together practitioners and academics.
- Working with our sections to explore and expand connections to practitioner organizations.

In addition to the section efforts, the Mentoring Committee includes opportunities for practitioners to serve as mentors and for graduate students who are looking at alternatives to academia to find mentors.

Of course, one of the major tasks of ACJS presidents -- and perhaps the most visible one -- is to organize and preside over the association's annual meeting. It is my honor to invite you to attend the 63rd ACJS Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from March 3-7, 2026, at the Philadelphia Marriott. In organizing this meeting, I am supported by a dream team of colleagues who have agreed to spend two-three years on this journey with me.

- Aimee Delaney, Program Co-Chair
- Paul Gormley, Program Co-Chair
- Jared Dmello, Program Co-Chair
- Author Meets Critic, Schannae Lucas
- Local Arrangements, Cassandra Reyes
- Student Panels and Awards, Pauline Brennan
- Research Showcase, Jennifer LaPrade
- International Advisors, Phil Reichel and Prabha Unnithan

The theme of the conference is **“Crises Across the Criminal Justice Landscape: The Nexus of Governance and Responsibility”**. The goal of this year’s theme is to use the 25th Anniversary of the tragic events of 9-11 to look at how criminal justice has changed in the last two decades. This includes the emerging issues facing the criminal justice system, and — most importantly — the responsibility of the criminal justice system in addressing those issues at home and abroad. Because many of the issues criminal justice academics and practitioners are facing no longer stop at national borders, the conference is going to have a strong international as well as domestic focus.

As part of the process of forming my Program Committee, I am trying out a new program committee role for 2026 – that of a Track Chair. These are ACJS members with previous experience with ACJS programs and substantive expertise in many of the topics in their track. A Track Chair will be similar to a Topic Chair but will serve a more coordinating role over multiple topics ranging from four to six topics per track. They will also have the ability to suggest or create cross-topic featured panels that reflect both their track and the conference theme. My goal is to draw on the amazing expertise of ACJS members to help create a program that celebrates both our discipline’s specific areas of research and allows for an integrated and well-flowing 2026 conference.

There are 11 separate tracks, with three of the tracks -- Climate Security, Transnational Crime and Conflict, and Emerging Threats in the 21st Century -- serving as Presidential Theme Tracks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 2026 Track Chairs for taking on this new role.

- Track 1: Climate Security, William Moreto (Presidential Theme Panel)

- Track 2: Transnational Crime and Conflict , Phil Reichel (Presidential Theme Panel)

- Track 3: Emerging Threats, Kyung Shick Choi (Presidential Theme Panel)

- Track 4: Theories of Crime and Criminality, Wesley Jennings

- Track 5: Offending and Victimization: Types, Causes, and Interventions, Janice Joseph and Chad Posick

- Track 6: Domestic and Global Issues in Law Enforcement, Eric Dlugolenski

- Track 7: Domestic and Global Issues in Courts and Law, Michael Vaughn

- Track 8: Domestic and Global Issues in Corrections, Faith Lutze

- Track 9: Domestic and Global Issues in Juvenile Justice, Jennifer Peck

- Track 10: Research Methods, Ryan Spohn

- Track 11: Criminal Justice Education and Pedagogy, Cathy Marcum

The track chairs are supported by over 70 topic chairs to whom I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks for their service. The 2026 Call for Presentations will be released shortly, and the submission system will open in early June.

The keynote speaker on Thursday March 5 will be Dr. Gary LaFree from University of Maryland. Dr. LaFree is the 2024 winner of the Stockholm Prize in Criminology. The Stockholm Prize is one of the foremost international prizes in the field of criminology. The prize is awarded

for outstanding achievements in criminological research or for the application of research results by practitioners for the reduction of crime and the advancement of human rights. Dr. LaFree is also the founder of START at the University of Maryland, one of the foremost research organizations on domestic and international terrorism. The title of Dr. LaFree's address is "In the Shadow of 9-11: How the Study of Terrorism Has Reshaped Criminology."

Pre-Conference workshops include our Assessment Workshop, the Sage Faculty Development workshop and the Academic Leadership workshop. Plans are also being explored for a tentative workshop on Cryptocurrency Fraud given by Dr. Kyung-Shick Choi from Boston University for both academics and practitioners (including local law enforcement in the Philly area). Stay tuned to the ACJS website for more information on registering for these workshops. The program committee is also exploring tours of Eastern State and Independence Park. There will be plentiful opportunities for networking and fun, including a Trivia Night, the Ice Cream Social, and the Presidential Reception. You might want to pack your dancing shoes for that one.

Before I close, I would like to thank the members of the Executive Board for their hard-work, dedication, and the energy they devote to ACJS. I consider myself lucky to be working with all of them. A huge thank you to our Association Manager Letiscia Perrin for her never-ending help, support and friendship. I also want to thank our Executive Director John Worrall for everything he does to keep ACJS on an even keel and sustainable over the long-term. Finally, I want to welcome our new Assistant Manager Debra Grandy, who joined us this past year and immediately became a valued part of the ACJS family.

I state the obvious when I say that the mission of ACJS -- *"transforming criminal justice through research, education, and practice."* -- is going to

especially challenging this coming year. Those of us in education and public service are facing obstacles and uncertainties, some of which we have dealt with for decades, and some of which we could not have predicted even six months ago. It is a frightening time for many of us both personally and professionally. I have no easy answers or predictions. But I find myself optimistic -- and dare I say certain -- of the ability of ACJS to successfully navigate whatever comes our way this year and in years to come. That optimism stems from the people I have met and the ACJS friends I have made over the years. The dedication, passion, and compassion for what we do is inspiring. Everyday our members strive to make a difference in their communities large and small and that will never change.

On March 6, 2026, I will turn the gavel over to David Myers.¹ On that day, I know I will be leaving ACJS in good hands. In the meantime, I offer my pledge to represent ACJS to the very best of my ability and to dedicate myself to helping ACJS continue its mission.

¹ I encourage anyone who is interested in serving on ACJS committees or getting more involved in ACJS service to keep an eye out for his Call for Volunteers as he puts his 2027 team together.





Translational Criminology: Its Origins, Current Developments, and Future

By: *John H. Laub*

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I am deeply honored by your invitation to deliver a keynote address at the annual meeting of the 62nd Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. I am especially grateful to the President of ACJS, Bitna Kim. I consider myself fortunate to be with you today to exchange ideas on the most important topics regarding crime and justice.

This morning I will talk about "Translational Criminology: Its Origins, Current Developments, and Future."

I. Origins of Translational Criminology

Before I begin, a brief note about definitions.

I am well aware that many scholars make a sharp distinction between criminology and criminal justice. Using the classic definition of criminology from Edwin Sutherland, I see criminology as encompassing criminal justice as well as the sociology of law. "Criminology is the body of knowledge regarding ...the processes of making laws, of breaking laws, and of reacting toward the breaking of laws" (Sutherland and Cressey, 1955:3).

In this presentation, I use the word "translational" to

refer to the process of taking scientific discoveries and turning them into practical application.

To provide some background, since the early 2000s, I have been deeply concerned about the disconnect between sound research, strong theory, and public policies on crime and justice. Looking at the historical landscape of criminology, there appeared to be far less distinction between theory and practice in the early days of the field. I am struck when re-reading the oral history interviews I did for my book, *Criminology in the Making* (1983) how prominent scholars like Dan Glaser, Don Cressey, Al Cohen, and Lloyd Ohlin moved easily between the worlds of scholarship and policy.

As individuals and organizations like ACJS and the American Society of Criminology, we need to find ways to become more involved in policy and practice. In my view, coherent theory organizes research findings, sets priorities for future research, and provides influential guides to policy and practice. Despite efforts by many to divide theory and research from policy, the fact is theory, research, and policy are deeply intertwined and central to the lives of everyone involved in explaining crime and advancing justice and public safety.

In 2003 when I was president of the American Society of Criminology, I organized the annual meeting program around the following theme: "The Challenge of Practice, The Benefits of Theory." I did this because I believe a theory/research and policy/practice divide is unnecessary and, ultimately, counterproductive for the field. Furthermore, as I noted, the distinction is inconsistent with much of the history of criminology. We have a strong tendency to favor dichotomies, all-or-nothing propositions, and subsequently we

¹ This paper was delivered as a keynote address at the 62nd annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice on March 13, 2025 in Denver, CO. I thank Rob Sampson and Larry Sherman for their insightful comments on an earlier draft. I also thank Ever Maya Sheplee for her superb research assistance.

are forced to choose, theory or policy. As I wrote in my presidential address, I believe that in order to enhance policy and practice one needs not only sound research, but strong theory (see Laub, 2004).

My Tenure at the National Institute of Justice

After 30 years in academe, I had the good fortune of being nominated by President Barack Obama to serve as the Director of the National Institute of Justice in the Office of Justice Programs in the Department of Justice. After a long wait to be confirmed by the US Senate, I started at NIJ on July 22, 2010.

Created more than 50 years ago, NIJ is the research, development, and evaluation agency in the Department of Justice. The Institute is dedicated to improving knowledge and understanding of crime and justice through science. NIJ provides objective and independent knowledge and tools to reduce crime and promote justice, particularly at the state and local levels. I have had a longstanding belief that NIJ has a unique mission as a science agency focused on policy and practice. Given this position, NIJ faces a twofold strategic challenge: generating research that is scientifically rigorous and disseminating knowledge that is relevant to local and state practitioners and policymakers. The way in my mind that I am able to fuse these two ends, if you will, is the idea of “translational criminology.” I first learned about translational research in the field of medicine from my daughter who is a pediatrician. The idea of translational criminology is simple yet powerful. If we want to prevent and reduce crime, scientific discoveries must be translated into policy and practice. As director, I believed that the concept of translational criminology was a stepping stone to what NIJ could and should be in the future.

What Is Translational Criminology?

Translational criminology aims to break down barriers between basic and applied research by creating a dynamic interface between research and practice. This process is a two-way street: scientists discover new tools and ideas for use in the field and evaluate their impact. In turn, practitioners offer novel observations from the field that stimulate basic scientific investigations. This is the knowledge creation process and both researchers and practitioners play key roles here. In translational medicine, this is referred to as T1—taking research from the “bench” (basic research) to the patient’s “bedside” (clinical/applied research; see <http://www.michr.umich.edu/about/clinicaltranslationalresearch>).

A unique aspect of translational criminology is the dynamic interface between research and practice and vice versa. To have this kind of exchange assumes a great deal of trust. It should be recognized that there is skepticism among practitioners about researchers, and researchers do not often trust the observations of practitioners as meaningful and important.

Thus, translational criminology requires something that heretofore has not occurred with much regularity—the research community and the practitioner community working together as equal partners.

Another goal of translational criminology is to address the gaps between scientific discovery, program delivery, and effective crime policy. This is the knowledge application process. This is referred to as T2 in translational medicine—“enhancing access to and the adoption of evidence-based strategies in clinical and community practice” (http://obssr.od.nih.gov/scientific_areas/translation/index.aspx).

Translational criminology thus calls for more data on the implementation process. In particular, we need to know whether the research evidence is being implemented with fidelity. We have spent a considerable effort to find out what programs work and what programs don't work. However, this is not enough. What is needed is an understanding of how to implement research evidence in real world practice settings and to find out why a program works. Unpacking the underlying mechanisms of successful policies and programs is essential in translational research.

Finally, translational criminology focuses on dissemination of existing research results as much as generating new knowledge. What is needed is more systematic study of the process of knowledge dissemination with the recognition that successful dissemination of research findings may well require multiple strategies.² We spend so much time and energy on the front end of the research process, but not nearly enough time on making sure that critical research findings make their way into the field in a meaningful way. Without robust dissemination efforts, research evidence will not be used the way it was intended—to inform criminal justice policy and practice.

Recently, Robert Sampson and colleagues (2013) articulated a strategy and a set of principles for translating causal claims into public policy. The key question they raise is "how does policy work within a larger social context?" They contend the answer to this question goes beyond estimating causal effects. According to Sampson and colleagues, there are three domains which must be part of the translational process. The first is the identification of mechanisms and causal pathways. The second is an assessment of effect heterogeneity. And the third

is contextualization. The key point they make is that theory is essential to understand the policy implications of any research evidence (see also Sampson, 2010: 491–492 and Laub, 2004).

At NIJ, I sought to infuse translational criminology into all that we did at the Institute. For example, I organized a Translational Criminology Working Group made up of NIJ staff that met monthly. The purpose of this working group was to discuss what translational criminology really means for NIJ's work and how we can use this conceptual framework as we move forward in our grant solicitations and dissemination of NIJ-funded research. By coming together as a collective, I hoped we would be able to articulate a set of questions that would help us not only do research better but ensure that the research evidence generated is brought to bear on policy and practice.

During my tenure at NIJ, there were several ongoing conversations about translational criminology. What I was hearing was that people were talking about translational criminology in distinct and different ways. For some, it was a matter of communicating research results in a more effective way by reducing jargon (better marketing?), which academics—who make up the bulk of our research community—are prone to use. For others, it was about how we were able to actually integrate the various different kinds of studies into one place so that they were easily accessible for practitioners and policymakers (e.g., see <http://www.crimesolutions.gov/>).

And, finally, for some, translational criminology was really something much deeper in that it was questioning the very nature of the research enterprise. For example, it is promoting more action research programs, researcher-practitioner partnerships, and engaging the practitioner throughout the research process.

² Jolene Hernon was the head of communications at NIJ while I was Director. Jolene used one word to describe NIJ's dissemination efforts: COPE—Create Once Publish Everywhere.

The William T. Grant Foundation produced a large portfolio of research on the use of research evidence covering a wide range of topical areas affecting youth ages 8 to 25 (see <http://www.wtgrantfoundation.org/>), and that work continues to this day. I believed that there were a number of lessons from that research program that we could apply to NIJ. As one example, research has demonstrated the importance of social networks in acquiring research evidence (Tseng, 2012). The implication of this is that we needed to better understand how it is that criminal justice practitioners and policymakers hear about NIJ research.

In sum, the goal of translational criminology is theoretically driven evidence-based policy and practice.

II. Current Developments: Illustrations of Translational Criminology at NIJ and Beyond

One of my proudest achievements at NIJ was funding the Harvard Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety. In my view, the Executive Sessions are an exemplar of translational criminology. Here the leading police executives and researchers come together on a regular basis to tackle the major issues facing the field. The Executive Sessions recognize in a direct way that practitioners are partners in the research enterprise. It is not about pushing research results out to the field. Rather, it is focusing on practitioners and finding out what research they need to do their jobs. There is also considerable attention being paid to how best to “influence the field” through concerted efforts to transform practice and policy. An impressive crop of papers (jointly written by police chiefs and researchers) are available on topics such as police leadership, race and policing, police culture, police professionalism, rightful policing, and social media and policing. The

Harvard Executive Sessions on Policing are foundational both here in the U.S. as well as internationally.

NIJ Updates from 2013 through 2024

After my departure, NIJ actively pursued the idea of translational criminology in a number of ways. For example, in 2014 NIJ made four awards (three grants and one fellowship) directed at cultivating strategies to better understand and improve the use of research evidence in criminal justice decision-making (NIJ, 2014). The recipients addressed topics including the effectiveness of NIJ dissemination efforts and the social networks through which empirical evidence are passed (Award number 2014-IJ-CX-0033), cross-sector research utilization (Award number 2014-IJ-CX-0032), the impact of collaboration between researchers and policymakers on research utilization (Award number 2014-IJ-CX-0035), and the process of defining and implementing evidence-based policies (Award number 2014-IJ-CX-0034). Moreover, each year NIJ funded multiple collaborations between criminologists and criminal justice agencies in an effort to encourage translational research (NIJ, 2014). The hope is that this line of research will help us better understand both the obstacles to and facilitators of the use of evidence in the criminal justice policy world. One of the findings that emerged from this research was government sponsored research, peer networks, and intermediaries were more effective in translating research into practice than academic journals and expert testimony (Pesta et al., 2016).

In 2014, NIJ and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) launched the Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) program to support the professional development of law enforcement officers who are interested in conducting research (NIJ Website). Under the LEADS program, awards were offered to police

officers who partnered on a research project or incorporated research into policy and practice within their agency. In 2019, the LEADS program expanded to include an academics to scholars program to advance practitioner-led research and sustain research-practitioner partnerships. NIJ also provides technical assistance to support internal research activities within police agencies. In 2019, the LEADS program expanded to include law enforcement civilians to partner with LEADS scholars. Today there are more than 115 LEADS Scholars in the network.

In 2023, Nancy La Vigne resurrected the annual NIJ conference. The conference theme promoted the Evidence to Action Initiative she touted as NIJ director. The conference theme “reflected NIJ’s efforts to ensure the field learns about research, trusts the findings, and is inspired to make evidence-informed changes to improve their policies and practices” (NIJ conference website, August 21, 2023). One of the goals of this initiative was to bring practitioners and researchers together throughout the entire research process, including the early stages of design and implementation (see also La Vigne, 2024).

In 2024, NIJ and the Crime, Law, and Justice Committee of the National Academies of Science organized a seminar on advancing the science of implementation in law and justice.

Implementation science is defined as “the scientific study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence-based practices into routine practice, and hence, to improve the quality and effectiveness of services” (Committee on Law and Justice website). It was noted that implementation science in the justice field lags far behind other fields like health and education. One finding that did emerge in the seminar was that culture and organization in police agencies can be barriers to successful

implementation of evidence-based policies (del Pozo et al., 2024).

Examples Beyond NIJ

Although not necessarily using the term translational criminology, there are several activities that capture the essence of translational criminology. For example,

- Cynthia Lum and colleagues at George Mason University: Translational Criminology is the official magazine of the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy. The Translational Criminology magazine was first issued in the Summer, 2011.³

- Lawrence Sherman at Cambridge University: Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing and the Cambridge Journal of Evidence-Based Policing. The goal of this program was for police officers to learn to be “pracademics” (practitioners and academics) in their field and use research evidence in policy and practice. Sherman also served as the chief scientific officer of London’s Metropolitan Police from 2022–2024. Currently, Sherman is a for-profit CEO focusing entirely on translational criminology (www.benchmarkcambridge.com).

- Elizabeth Stanko: London Metropolitan Police and the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime in London. The focus of Stanko’s work was to improve the police handling of rape cases.

- The Emerging Adult Justice Learning Community at the Justice Lab at Columbia University.

- Jens Ludwig and colleagues at the University of

³ I was the NIJ director when the Translational Criminology magazine was launched at George Mason University. Many of my colleagues asked me if I was upset that they were using the idea of translational criminology. I said not at all. Thomas Abt, a colleague at the Office of Justice Programs, told me that a measure of success in government is when someone takes your idea and uses it.

Chicago Crime Lab. The Chicago Crime Lab also provides, on a part-time basis, advanced education that includes translational criminology to senior U.S. police leaders.

- The University of Pennsylvania Department of Criminology will award a newly approved degree of Master of Applied Criminology and Police Leadership (MCPL); see <https://www.lps.upenn.edu/degree-programs/mcpl>.

- Bianca Bersani directs the Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center at the University of Maryland, College Park.

- Thomas Abt, Center for the Study and Practice of Violence Reduction at the University of Maryland, College Park.

- Liz Glaser, co-editor of *Vital City*, The Translation Project

In addition, there are translation tools that are being developed and used. For example, NIJ's CrimeSolutions.gov clearing house, the Campbell Crime and Justice Coordinating Group, the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction in the College of Policing in the UK, the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing Services at Arizona State, and the Evidence-Based Policing Matrix at George Mason University.

There is also a book series called Springer Briefs in Translational Criminology that began in 2014 and there is a published book, *Translational Criminology in Policing*, edited by The George Mason Police Research Group with David Weisburd (2022). Recently, Blomberg, Copp, and Turanovic (2024) in the *Annual Review of Criminology* examined the challenges and prospects for translational criminology. Finally, there is a small but growing body of papers focusing on translational criminology (see Welsh et

al., 2024; Mears, 2022; Lum and Koper, 2017; Telep, 2023 and 2024; Blomberg et al., 2022; Nichols et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2024; and Kim and Kang, 2024).

Indeed, we have come a long way since Larry Sherman's pioneering essay on evidence-based policing published in 1998 by the Police Foundation.

Bringing research evidence to bear on policy decisions requires a cogent understanding of the knowledge application process (Laub, 2012). Primarily, criminal justice policymakers must be aware of research findings in order to use them in decision-making. This point may seem obvious, but a survey conducted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 2011 revealed that only one-third of police practitioners consult academic journals when making policy decisions (Lum et al., 2012; Alpert et al., 2013). In a later survey of police officers in three agencies, Telep and Lum (2014) found that officers rarely read academic journal articles, and when they did learn about research it was from their own agency. Moreover, while there was an openness to research partnerships, the officers believed that experience should dictate their police work far more than scientific knowledge.

Other studies reveal that decision-makers prioritize information produced by professional associations or interest groups over empirical evidence from academic journals (Tseng, 2012).

These findings are concerning given that most criminologists aim to publish their research in refereed journals. In order to target policymakers most efficiently, it is essential to identify the sources they utilize to access research evidence. Additionally, it would be beneficial to map the social networks that provide decision-makers with empirical evidence (Tseng, 2012).

In a recent paper, Cody Telep asks, “What works best to translate findings into successfully implemented evidence-based policies and practices? (2024: 37). His answer is to focus on dissemination, research partnerships, influential peers (e.g., research champions), facilitators for learning about research, and reinforcements and incentives (Telep, 2024). In a similar vein in a 2025 paper, Daniel Mears conceptualizes translational criminology through an evaluation framework. Mears argues that by “adapting a translational research approach—especially an emphasis on researcher-practitioner collaborative relationships—to the five main types of policy evaluation [needs, theory, implementation, outcome and impact, and cost-efficiency] identifies the salience of, and creates opportunities for, translational work that can advance criminal justice science and policy.”

III. Gaps in the Original Conceptualization of Translational Criminology

The Role of Criminological Theory—“Big Ideas”—in Research and Policy

As I noted, the goal of translational criminology is theoretically driven evidence-based policy and practice. I think in current discussions of translational criminology the role of theory gets lost. When I was NIJ director, I was once faced with an impossible task: I had ten minutes of remarks to honor Herman Goldstein, George Kelling, and James Q. Wilson for their contributions to the field. One point I made about their work was the power of their ideas.

Goldstein, Kelling, and Wilson did not offer a specific intervention per se, nor did they evaluate a specific program.⁴ Rather, they created a new research agenda for policing and public safety by focusing on powerful ideas that were foundational in nature. Not surprisingly, these ideas had a huge

impact on the field and transformed it as we knew it. Think about it for a moment: police discretion, order maintenance, problem-oriented policing, community policing, fear of crime, social and physical disorder, and broken windows, to name some of the key concepts in the writings of Goldstein, Kelling, and Wilson. It is hard to imagine a world of policing at large where these ideas did not exist. What was also significant about the works of Goldstein, Kelling, and Wilson was that they relied on the power of observation, sober thinking, and good old-fashioned logic. The question that was always at the center of their work was what do the data say regarding the best strategies for citizens and the police that will benefit the community at large.

In a paper on criminology’s policy relevance, Richard Rosenfeld called for “raising the level of public debate” (2010: 31). Rosenfeld stated that it is not enough to know whether some policy works or not, but why it succeeds or fails. He goes on to say, “No evaluation should be considered complete until it produces or invokes an idea, what we like to call ‘theory,’ that situates the success or failure of the extant policy or program in the context of other initiatives based on the same operating principles” (2010: 32). Rosenfeld concludes, “When it comes to increasing consciousness of criminal justice policy and its effects, what matters are organizing ideas, not disconnected research findings” (2010: 33).

John MacDonald has done exactly what Rosenfeld has called for. In his 2022 Joan McCord Lecture to the Academy of Experimental Criminology, MacDonald reviewed both experimental and quasi-experimental evidence and “found that social

⁴ George Kelling, unlike Goldstein and Wilson, was best known for two specific policies, one of which he evaluated: preventive patrol in Kansas City and the other called “broken windows policing.” I thank Larry Sherman for pointing this out to me. For an important reexamination of the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment see Weisburd et al. (2023).

programs focused on increasing social control (formal and informal) in families, schools, communities, and by the criminal justice system are effective at preventing serious crime” (2023: abstract). MacDonald makes sense of the research using criminological theory within and across distinct substantive areas.

The Role of Lived Experience in Research and Policy

There is a gap in the original conceptualization of translational criminology in that the idea of lived experience is not considered. In current discussions of research and policy, there is lots of emphasis on the lived experience of those involved in the justice system. In my view, translational criminology can easily make room for lived experience in a research to policy and practice model.

My colleague at the University of Maryland, Rob Stewart, was formerly incarcerated and he makes an important point that I think gets lost in our discussions of lived experience. In an interview, Rob said, “I don’t believe my expertise comes from my lived experiences, but rather my doctoral training” (2024: 16). In addition, too often we think of lived experiences quite narrowly. Police officers, probation officers, and correctional officers, for example, have relevant lived experiences, too. The point is we want to involve both practitioners and those affected by the policies and practices of the justice system in translational criminology.

IV. Threats to Translational Criminology

In my view, there are both internal and external threats to translational criminology. I will start by identifying the internal threats.

#1 Weak Data Infrastructure

Traditional methods to study crime and the justice

system response include the Uniform Crime Reports, the National Crime Victimization Survey, and various self-report surveys. Some of the weaknesses of these crime measures have been highlighted by the Council of Criminal Justice (2023). Larger concerns have been raised about the federal statistical system beyond crime and justice (see American Statistical Association, 2024).

Valid, reliable, and expansive data are needed for translational criminology to be successful. Recently, serious concerns have been raised about the crime and justice data infrastructure. For example, in his 2017 Presidential Address to the American Society of Criminology, Jim Lynch (2018) warned of the increasing use of “big data,” defined as open source data (e.g., scraping the world wide web) and administrative records, for research purposes. Lynch asks what is the quality of big data? In contrast, surveys like the National Crime Victimization Survey follow clear protocols for data collection. Along the same lines, Lynch asks what is the sampling error for open source data? Administrative records? The fact is criminal justice research is plagued by weak data. Many see official administrative records as the solution, but the fact is these records are often not suited for research purposes and missing data are a major concern.

In her 2022 Presidential Address to the ASC, Janet Lauritsen argued that “criminology lacks data for many types of crime that are of great concern to society” (2023: 187). These crimes include financial law violations, fraud against governmental agencies, cyber-crime, and identity theft. Lauritsen concludes, “One of the most challenging hurdles to improving crime data is the need to develop a stronger federal coordination and governance role for producing valid, reliable and timely crime statistics” (2023: 195).

#2 A Lack of Descriptive Criminology

Within quantitative criminology there has been a strong shift from research design to statistical methods. So much of our work focuses on the application of statistical methods that we often lose sight of the importance of asking good research questions. Moreover, there needs to be more candid discussion about the validity and reliability of the data we use in our empirical studies.

In addition, I believe we have lost what I would call descriptive quantitative criminology. At times I wonder if we knew more about the nature of crime and the characteristics of offenders and victims many years ago than we do now. Here am I thinking of the groundbreaking descriptive studies of Marvin Wolfgang and colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania. Wolfgang began this tradition with his book, *Patterns of Criminal Homicide* (1958). Others at Penn examined other types of crime in excruciating detail. Thankfully, the Blocks continued and expanded this line of work studying homicide in Chicago (Block and Block, 1998). Wolfgang and his colleagues (1972) turned their descriptive lens to the Philadelphia Birth Cohort Studies; here we learned enormous bits about the patterning of criminal careers. This descriptive work has appeared again recently with the detailed analysis of the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development by Alex Piquero, David Farrington, and Al Blumstein (2007). During the 1970s, descriptive studies by Michael Hindelang and colleagues at the State University of New York at Albany informed us about patterns of criminal victimization using the newly created National Crime Survey data on victimization (see, for example, Hindelang 1976). My question is where is descriptive criminology today? Is it possible that we know less about the basics because of our ability to run complicated statistical models with a point and a click?

#3 Time Pressure

It has been argued for a long time that academic criminology and public policy are two distinct worlds governed by inherently different values, goals, routines, and rewards (Caplan, 1979). The gap between research and policy poses two additional challenges to translating criminological research: time and reward structures. With regard to time, the research process is time consuming and demanding when executed properly (Skogan, 2010). Policymaking, on the other hand, happens rapidly, often in response to a crisis. Decision-makers cannot wait for criminologists to conduct an experiment or collect data on a pressing issue; they need immediate answers in order to act quickly. If relevant research on the issue at hand is not available and cannot be accessed quickly, policy decisions will be made in the absence of criminological research.

Here is one vivid illustration of this fact. After the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012, NIJ responded to multiple requests from Congress, the Department of Justice, and the White House about gun violence. I was asked to review a joint proposal from the Department of Homeland Security and the Office for Community Oriented Policing Services calling for scores of school resource officers to be placed in schools around the country. I asked if there was any empirical evidence that school resource officers reduced violence in school. I was told, "John, good question, but what we need now are answers, not questions."

#4 Fragility of the Evidence

Overall, in evaluation research in criminal justice there are few studies that use randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and as a result, selection issues loom large. Moreover, single-site studies are the norm, and once positive results are found there

is enormous pressure to scale up quickly. When the results came in from a NIJ-funded study of Judge Alm's HOPE program (Hawaii Opportunity Probation with Enforcement) showing large reductions in recidivism, NIJ was under pressure from Congress to implement HOPE in all fifty states!

However, even more RCTs may not solve the problem of fragile evidence. Recently, an important paper appeared by Megan Stevenson entitled "Cause, Effect, and the Structure of the Social World" (2023). This paper is an in-depth examination of the empirical literature, especially RCTs, in criminal justice research. Stevenson offers a number of important observations. She finds that most interventions are not effective; when significant effects are found, they are not sustained over time; and effective interventions are not replicated. Stevenson concludes that stabilizing forces in the complex structure of the social world resist change.

#5 The Overselling of RCTs

Some researchers have strongly advocated moving criminology and criminal justice to adopt the paradigm akin to evidence-based medicine as a solution to the research policy divide (see, e.g., Sherman, et al., 1997). Using the umbrella of "What Works in Reducing Crime," the centerpiece of this approach is the randomized controlled experiment. I am skeptical of this argument because I believe the problem of policy is as much a theoretical issue as the type of research method one employs to study crime.

In 2010, Rob Sampson examined the experimental turn in criminology and the belief that evidence-based meant experimental-based. Sampson highlighted what he called "Gold Standard Myths" regarding RCTs. The myths are "(1) randomization solves the causal inference problem, (2) experiments are assumption (or theory) free, and (3) experiments are more policy relevant than

observational research" (2010: 490).

In 2019, Nagin and Sampson argued one should not equate causality with method; indeed, causal explanations require substantive theory (see also Sampson, 2010). Nagin and Sampson asked how can nonexperimental methods be used in policy and practice by focusing on long-term or system-wide impact of treatments being tested in RCTs? To address this challenge, they developed "an analytic framework for integrating causality and policy inference that accepts the mandate of causal rigor but is conceptually rather than methodically driven" (2019: 123).

#6 Failure to Consider Implementation and Context

In response to Megan Stevenson's paper discussed above, Nancy La Vigne argues that Stevenson overlooked the crucial study of implementation in the process of using research evidence for policy and practice (2024a). What is critical in La Vigne's view is whether the program was implemented as intended. This is typically referred to as implantation with fidelity. In addition, La Vigne says one can ask was it implemented in a different setting or context? This takes into account contextual variation. La Vigne offers the Titanium Law of Evaluation: "The less deliberate the implementation of a social program is, the more likely its net impact will be zero" (2024a: 4). La Vigne concludes that we must measure and account for implementation fidelity and local context. One way to do this is to use an "action research model" (see La Vigne, 2024b).⁵

⁵ Stevenson was pointing out that treatment heterogeneity can occur even if there is treatment fidelity. I think this is an important conceptual distinction. We need more work on treatment failures/heterogeneity alongside fidelity.

Bottom Line: We Need Multiple Data, Multiple Methods, and Theory⁶

Next, I will identify the external threats to translational criminology.

#1 Public Distrust in Science and Scientific Experts

Perhaps exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic, there is an increasing distrust in science and scientific expertise (for recent examples, see Lauritsen, 2023 and Blomberg et al., 2024). In a recent New York Times article, Thomas Edsall (2024) argued that research on public opinion data and trust in science revealed that there is a crisis of public trust in science, especially among conservatives.

#2 Politics of Crime and Crime Control

Too often data and research are ignored by politicians and, at times, policymakers and practitioners. Blomberg, Copp and Thrasher (2022) point out that politics can impede the successful translation of research results. Research can be ignored when it is contrary to ideology or in conflict with professional experience (see also Mears, 2022: 173). Recent examples include research on immigration and crime, crime trends, bail reform, and crime rates. (For specific examples regarding the relationship between immigration and crime, see "Immigrants and Crime," 2024; Goncalves et al., 2024; and Nowraster, 2024.) In a provocative op-ed in the New York Times, Steven Pinker wrote "Trump Says the Country is 'Dying.' The Data Say Otherwise" (October 29, 2024).

In the current era, there is direct opposition to research evidence. Research is not just ignored; it is

often distorted and sometimes squashed. Plus, scientists who engage in such research are punished and ostracized through social media assaults and defunding. Witness the history of research on guns in criminology and the aggressive tactics of the NRA and the gun industry to silence gun researchers. Or more broadly, consider research on climate change. In such an environment, all the translation in the world will not make a difference. What does that mean for translational criminology going forward?

#3 Role of Academics Today

When I entered the field as a graduate student in the 1970s, criminology was an exciting field because people were passionate about ideas. Today "career concerns" are center stage in the field—for example, publication counts, citation counts, the amount of external funding generated, departmental rankings, likes on social media, etc., are the new measures of intellectual impact and scholarship. Too often today we are writing more and more about less and less.

There is also a growing direct threat to translational criminology within the academy. Here I am referring to the recent politicization within academia, one that in some corners is taking a direct aim at the entire idea of "cooperation" between researchers and justice system practitioners "working together." For example, see Robert Vargas (2020), regarding the work of Jens Ludwig at the University of Chicago Crime Lab with the Chicago Police Department. Also, see the recent essay in ASC's newsletter *The Criminologist* on "copaganda" attacking researchers who work with the police (Chagnon and Phillips, 2024; see also Karakatsanis, 2025). In a recent paper, Vargas and colleagues examine police research and conclude that "Academic Copaganda operates more like 'politics-based evidence making' masquerading as 'evidence-based policy

⁶Most of the examples of translational criminology focus on policing. Why is that the case? There seems to be far less interaction between researchers and the courts and prisons.

research” (Vargas, et al., 2025: 20). There is a growing movement that is not just suspicious, but in fact hostile to the very ideas I am promoting here. These “copaganda” scholars would scoff, for example, at the Harvard Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety for selling out or being co-opted.

#4 Role of Universities: Is Translational Criminology Possible in a Traditional Academic Setting?

The reward structure within academia is also not favorably disposed toward applied research. Instead, tenure review processes are governed by the quality and number of publications on an individual’s CV, which often reflect a basic research agenda (Petersilia, 1991). Influencing policy decisions involves a large time commitment and often goes unrewarded unless the experience results in a peer-reviewed publication. The perception that applied research will not advance an academic career deters criminologists, and younger criminologist especially, from engaging in policy-relevant research (Petersilia, 2008; Tonry, 2010).⁷

Adam Gamoran, the president of the William T. Grant Foundation, has called for “reshaping incentives within the university to support faculty research that responds to real life challenges” (2018: 1). Gamoran points out that more than the quality of the evidence, it is the quality of the relationships between the producers and consumers of evidence as well as key

intermediaries that determine whether research is actually used to set policy and practice. As Gamoran rightly notes, universities do not typically reward researchers for the time and effort it takes to build relationships in the field. As a result, the William T. Grant Foundation has launched a grant competition for universities to reconsider incentives and reward “engaged scholarship and research-practice partnerships” (2018: 3). The Institutional Challenge Grant “calls on universities to partner with a public agency or nonprofit, develop a joint research agenda, provide research fellows to execute the research, and build the capacity of the agency to use evidence from research in its decision-making” (2018: 3). For examples of the Institutional Challenge Grant awards made so far I refer you to the William T. Grant Foundation website and Institutional Challenge Grant Task Force and Adam Gamoran, (2024).

The Institutional Challenge Grant idea is a possible vehicle to incorporate translational criminology research with existing departments of criminology and criminal justice across the country. Perhaps the National Institute of Justice can launch institutional challenge grants for justice system agencies. (For other concrete steps moving forward, see Laub and Frisch, 2016.)

V. Future of Translational Criminology

In 2012, the National Research Council of the National Academies of Science issued a report, *Using Science as Evidence in Public Policy*. The report stated that “Science is not the only source of knowledge used in policy argument—beliefs, experience, trial and error, reasoning by analogy, and personal or political values are also used in policy argument” (2012: 8). Thus, while I was at NIJ, I argued forcefully for science to be at the policy and practice table (see also Lum and Koper, 2017). However, I soon recognized that political considerations, personal experiences, and value

⁷ In an essay on his work with the St. Louis police department, Rick Rosenfeld makes an excellent observation that age and experience are crucial for making a partnership successful. Rosenfeld states, “I could not have done this earlier in my career” (2014:7). As an untenured faculty, he could not have devoted the extensive time it takes to maintain an active partnership. Nor did he have the confidence in his professional judgment earlier in his career. Moving forward, Rosenfeld recommends pairing senior and junior faculty in order to enhance the likelihood of a successful partnership.

preferences are also present in all policy decisions.

The goal of translational criminology is transformational change in policy and practice. The National Research Council review of the use of research aptly noted that “Although the relative recent approach known as evidence-based policy and practice, focusing on improving understanding of ‘what works,’ has influenced the production of scientific knowledge, it has made little contribution to understanding the use of that knowledge” (2012: 3). The Board of Science Education of the National Academies of Science recently hosted a workshop to explore how to advance engaged research, which is defined as “research that involves the active collaboration among researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and/or communities throughout the research lifecycle to accomplish shared goals” (May 23, 2024 email). Despite the challenges, students in criminology and criminal justice today, much like the pioneers in criminology, want to have a social impact, and I believe translational criminology is the vehicle to do so. But the hard truth is we have a lot of work to do, especially in this environment where research on selected topics is being shut down, public data are being removed from federal websites, and funds for grants are being frozen.

A useful framework going forward is Larry Sherman’s (2013) idea of a Triple T strategy: Targeting, Testing, and Tracking. Targeting is essentially descriptive criminology, Testing is experimental criminology alongside other methods, and Tracking is taking seriously implementation. The weak link here is Tracking. As Sherman told me, “The fundamental problem with translation is we have no theory about how to establish tracking and use it to implement evidence properly” (personal correspondence, January 6, 2025). I call on younger scholars in the audience to consider how best to develop a tracking system for practitioners using or not using—ignoring?—

evidence-based policies and practices. How do we change both the behavior of those implementing policies and practices and the organizational culture where it occurs?⁸ Perhaps new technologies like GPS and body worn cameras using artificial intelligence can provide some answers here.

In face of threats to shutdown science, both within and outside the academy, we must fight the good fight. We cannot be discouraged and give up. I urge the next generation of scholars to find creative solutions to meet the challenges involved in the politicization of translational criminology and the politicization of science more broadly.

I want to end by noting that “the fundamental principle of science is that evidence—not authority, tradition, rhetorical eloquence, or social prestige—should triumph. This commitment makes science a radical force in society: challenging and disrupting sacred myths, cherished beliefs, and socially desirable narratives. Consequently, science exists in tension with other institutions, occasionally provoking hostility and censorship” (Clark, et al., 2023: 1).

Thank you for listening to this address.

⁸ It has been noted that very little research is used in policy and practice across justice and nonjustice settings. In a study of 30 U.S. cities that conducted 73 RCT’s with a national nudge unit, DellaVigna, Kim, and Linos (2024) find that strength of the evidence does not lead to adoption. Instead, they identify organizational inertia as the leading obstacle to evidence adoption. Business as usual is very powerful.

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Dr. Laub's areas of research include crime and the life course, crime and public policy, and the history of criminology. He has published widely including *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life*, co-authored with Robert Sampson, Harvard University Press, 1993. With Robert Sampson, he wrote *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70*, Harvard University Press, 2003, which analyzes longitudinal data from a long-term follow-up study of juvenile offenders from a classic study by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. Both books have won three major awards: The Albert J. Reiss, Jr, Distinguished Book Award from the American Sociological Association's Crime, Law, and Deviance Section; the Outstanding Book Award from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences; and the Michael J. Hindelang Book Award from the American Society of Criminology.

Call for Program Chair Volunteers

**ACADEMY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SCIENCES
2027 ANNUAL MEETING**

March 30-April 3, 2027

Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center

Orlando, FL

**Conference Theme: *Criminal Justice Leadership: Forging
Stronger Connections Between Research, Education, &
Practice***

David Myers, ACJS President
University of New Haven

Cathy Marcum, Program Co-Chair
Appalachian State University

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ACJS 2027 Program Leadership

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Local Arrangements Matt Nobles University of Central Florida	Research Showcase Courtney Porter Marymount University
Author Meets Critics Janet Garcia-Hallett University of New Haven	

Listed below are the program topics for the 2027 ACJS Annual Conference, which subsequently will be organized into broader categories called “tracks.” Topic chairs will be responsible for organizing submitted papers into panels with 4-5 presentations, as well as approving pre-organized panels and roundtables under their area categories. If you are interested in serving as a topic chair, please email Dr. Cathy Marcum and Dr. Ráchael Powers at 2027acjsprogram@gmail.com with your preference of category.

Offending Behaviors*

Cyber Crimes	Personal Crimes
Environmental Crimes	Property Crimes
Family and IPV	Public Order Offenses
Hate Crime, Terrorism, and Violent Extremism	Sex Offenses
Human Trafficking	Violent Crimes
	White Collar Crimes

Victimization Experiences*

Cyber Crimes	Personal Crimes
Environmental Crimes	Property Crimes
Family and IPV	Public Order Offenses
Hate Crime, Terrorism, and Violent Extremism	Sex Offenses
Human Trafficking	Violent Crimes
	White Collar Crimes

***If a topic under offending or victimization is selected as your preference for topic chair, please indicate if your focus is on the offending or victimization aspect.**

Criminal Justice Systems Categories

Policing: Administration and Leadership

Policing: Community Relations

Policing: Decision-making

Policing: Investigation and Evidentiary Issues

Policing: Operations, Personnel and Training

Policing: Technology and Specialized United

Policing: Strategies and Interventions

Courts: Courtroom Workgroup

Courts: Decision-making and Discretion

Courts: Pretrial

Courts: Procedural and Evidentiary Issues

Courts: Sentencing

Courts: Specialty Courts

Courts: Strategies and Interventions

Corrections: Community Corrections

Corrections: Death Penalty

Corrections: Incarceration

Corrections: Institutional Personnel and Administration

Corrections: Pretrial Detention

Corrections: Reentry and Reintegration

Corrections: Strategies and Intervention

Contemporary Issues and Applications

Advances in Pedagogy

Applications in Criminal Theory

Assessment in Education and Program Review

Author Meets Critic

Comparative and International Issues in CJ

Drugs and Alcohol

Innovations in Criminology and Criminal Justice Research

Innovations in Evaluation Research

Global Migration, Immigration and Human Rights

Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice



Collaborating for Change: Examining Pennsylvania's Involuntary Commitment Process, A Research Note

By McKenna Newnam, Tori Rhea, & Michele P. Bratina

Introduction

The prevalence of mental illness in the United States remains a pressing concern, with one in five adults experiencing a diagnosable mental illness in any given year (National Alliance on Mental Illness [NAMI], 2023). In Pennsylvania alone, February 2021 data estimated that more than 1.8 million adults reported having a mental health condition, with 447,000 individuals experiencing serious mental illness. Alarming, nearly 600,000 Pennsylvania adults with mental health conditions did not receive care they needed during this period (NAMI, 2021).

Despite Pennsylvania's relatively high number of primary care physicians, mental health care providers, and psychiatric hospital beds per resident compared to the national average, critical gaps in access persist. Of the state's 67 counties, 28 are categorized as "high needs areas" where barriers such as poverty, provider shortages, alcohol and substance abuse prevalence, and limited transportation prevent residents—14% of Pennsylvania's population—from accessing care (Heun-Johnson et al., 2017). Additional obstacles that further hinder service utilization include stigma, a mistrust of mental health providers, and perceptions of self-reliance (Brenes et al., 2015).

More recent statewide data have revealed a growing mental health crisis across the common-

wealth, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among youth and young adults (Gajanan, 2023). The crisis has strained the state's resources, leading to an increasing number of individuals with mental health conditions being incarcerated in county jails (Pennsylvania Prison Society, 2023). While the nationwide implementation of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline has made strides, there are still a multitude of other complex funding and access issues to be resolved (Brooks-Holliday et al., 2023). These issues underscore the importance of evaluating the accessibility and availability of Pennsylvania's crisis response network.

Involuntary Emergency Commitment in Pennsylvania

Involuntary emergency commitment laws, implemented in nearly all states, serve as a mechanism to engage individuals in mental health crises with necessary services. In some cases, commitment acts as a diversion from incarceration, particularly when law enforcement is involved. In Pennsylvania, involuntary commitment falls under the Mental Health Procedures Act of 1976 (MHPA), with Section 302 outlining the criteria and processes for initiating involuntary hospitalization, emphasizing timely and carefully executed responses to psychiatric emergencies (Pennsylvania Mental Health Procedures Act, 1976). The MHPA prioritizes both public safety and individual well-being by providing a legal framework for immediate intervention when individuals and their prevailing circumstances meet certain criteria. To be eligible for involuntary commitment, the individual must have shown behaviors within the last 30 days that demonstrate imminent risk to themselves or others, inability to care for themselves, or actions like attempting suicide or self-harm (MHPA, 1976). While the law aims to connect individuals with care

and reduce the overreliance on county jails, systemic gaps, ethical concerns, and limited resources have signified the need for reform.

The MHPA establishes a structured process for involuntary hospitalization. While the process is nuanced and may vary depending on the circumstances, it generally follows a specific procedure beginning with the filing of a petition, in which the petitioner must describe behaviors exhibited by the individual within the past 30 days that demonstrate imminent danger (MHPA, 1976). Petitioners fall in one of two categories, referred to as Part A and Part B; The type of petition determines its pathway:

- **Case A Petitions:** Filed by community witnesses (e.g., family members, counselors, and healthcare providers) and require authorization by a county delegate before proceeding;
- **Case Part B Petitions:** Filed by professionals, such as physicians or police officers. These petitions bypass delegate review and proceed directly to evaluation (National Alliance on Mental Illness [NAMI], 2024).

Once the petition is authorized, the individual is transported to a facility where a mental health professional evaluates whether the individual meets the legal threshold for involuntary hospitalization. If the criteria are satisfied, the individual may be detained for up to 120 hours (5 days). Any further extension requires judicial review to ensure a balance between individual rights and the need for continued care (MHPA, 1976).

Context and Gaps in Existing Literature

Research regarding the frequency and details of involuntary commitment in the U.S. is limited (Lee & Cohen, 2020). Variations exist within state laws regarding emergency holds, resulting in

inconsistency in terms of the process and the rights to which a committed individual is entitled (Hedman et al., 2016). Research has also shown disparities in who is committed, with higher rates observed among marginalized populations, including racial minorities and those with low socioeconomic status (Freitas et al., 2023). Furthermore, there has been a notable increase in emergency commitments during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Simpson et al., 2021). Interestingly, petitions initiated by police officers are subject to greater scrutiny and have lower approval rates than those submitted by healthcare professionals, likely due to differences in training and documentation practices (Hedman et al., 2016).

Welle and colleagues (2023) analyzed data from Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, the state's second most populous county after Philadelphia. Their findings revealed significant disparities and trends in the involuntary commitment process. Notably, Black individuals and men were disproportionately represented among those petitioned for involuntary commitment; however, petition-upheld rates were consistent across race and gender. Further significant trends emerged from the analysis, including elevated mortality rates among individuals subjected to 302 petitions and increased adverse outcomes, such as criminal charges and additional involuntary hospitalizations. Moreover, there were significant variations in decision-making/case outcomes based on physician credentials (Welle et al., 2023). These findings underscore the need for enhanced collaboration and targeted training to improve the efficacy and equity of the involuntary commitment process.

Current Research Initiative

Our research is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (PADHS), Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

(OMHSAS). Supported by resources from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), this work is part of a broader initiative to develop low-barrier, research-based crisis solutions. The grant also facilitated a small research team, including two graduate students (both lead authors on this research note) and a data consultant. The overall aim of this research is to provide a comprehensive and detailed review of the 302 processes in select PA counties. Throughout the course of the study, the team has had a unique opportunity to engage with a group of county mental health program administrators from across varied regions of the state. These collaborative efforts illustrate the potential for data-driven corroboration to bridge gaps between research and practice, ultimately contributing to systemic improvements in the crisis system and delivery of mental health services. The following research questions were developed to guide and focus our analysis:

1: What are the characteristics of those petitioned for involuntary commitment, and are there critical variations by county/region?

2: Do specific variables (such as race, sex, type of petitioner, observed behavior/circumstances) have an impact on approval of petitions or outcomes related to involuntary commitment?

3: To what extent do differences exist between individuals committed under Section 302 before and after the pandemic?

4: To what extent do high utilizers of 302 commitments differ from other individuals?

In this research note, we summarize preliminary evidence for questions 1 and 2 using data from a single jurisdiction.

Methodology

This research utilizes secondary case-level data from 10 participating counties in the state of Pennsylvania, spanning a 5-year period from January 2019 to December 2023. The analysis focuses on demographic characteristics of the individual subjected to a 302 petition (e.g., age, sex, race), role of the petitioner (layperson, police officer, mental health professional), legal criteria met/behavioral observations, petition upheld/denied, time to evaluation, length of commitment, and several outcome variables extracted from the dataset, allowing for an examination of critical variations.

For the purposes of this research note, we provide preliminary descriptive data from one of the counties included in the study, referred to as County "A." A summary of key findings is provided below:

Key Findings

- Case Study: County A
- Administrative data on 302 petitions occurring between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2023
- 302 petition/case-level data
 - 8,469 petitions involving 5,043 unique individuals
- Individuals subject to 302 petitions in County A
 - Were predominantly white (80%)
 - Were predominantly male (56%)
- The relative % of petitions involving non-white clients is higher among police officers than other petitioners. Corroborating with existing public health data, this could be because non-white clients have less access to other resources or community supports and thus their behavior may be more likely

to come to the attention of the police.

- There is a weak, but statistically significant ($p = 0.05$), positive correlation between non-white race and delegate approval of a 302 petition ($r = 0.02$).
- There is no statistically significant correlation between non-white race and doctor's approval of inpatient commitment.

The next phase of our study will include developing standardized labels and values across all 10 counties and further analysis of any missing data. This stage will likely involve additional collaboration with the individual counties to develop codebooks and help us understand any values unique to the county-level data systems. These efforts aim to ensure consistency across datasets and enable meaningful comparisons.

Following this, the data will undergo cleaning and re-coding to align county-specific files with the standardized labels and values to create a comprehensive multi-county dataset to be analyzed. The full analysis will include the variables described in the project's scope of work as well as additional exploratory analyses, including an examination of differences between cases pre- and post-pandemic and whether there are variations in process or outcomes for high utilizers (individuals with 3 or more 302 petitions over the period of study). To identify patterns and examine any changes and relationships over time, descriptive statistics, multivariate, and trend and time series analyses will be utilized, with attention to potential confounding factors identified within the dataset. Ethical considerations were addressed by adhering to access guidelines and maintaining confidentiality of individual cases.

Enhancing Data Consistency for Future Policy and Research

The primary outcome of this research is a comprehensive report that will inform policy and practice in Pennsylvania. While the collaboration with county partners has presented significant opportunities, inconsistencies in how data is collected and reported across counties are evident. Variations in variable names and identifiers have posed challenges in categorizing the data accurately, and inconsistent demographic information (e.g., race and gender identity) is likely to impede the ability to assess disparities and detect any emerging trends.

We anticipate that our final report will leverage the exhaustive data gathered to develop actionable policy recommendations that emphasize the need for a uniform, standardized approach to data collection—not just in Pennsylvania, but nationwide. A coordinated effort will enable researchers and policymakers to conduct meaningful comparative analyses designed to support systemic reforms that enhance the efficiency, fairness, and effectiveness of the involuntary commitment process.

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In 2020, Dr. Bratina co-founded the first NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) chapter at WCU, and she is the NAMI advisor. With James Fagin, she is co-author of *CJ 2019 & CJ 2022* (Pearson), and the author of *Forensic Mental Health: Framing Integrated Solutions* (Routledge), Second Edition. Dr. Bratina's research concerns comparative forensic mental health systems, crime and gerontology, and trauma-informed-care for justice professionals. Her recent research has appeared in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* (JCJE) and *Criminal Justice Policy Review* (CJPR).



Mckenna Newnam is a graduate of West Chester University (WCU), where she earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in Criminal Justice. During her academic career, she collaborated with faculty on several research projects and presented her work at regional and national conferences, including those hosted by the Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences (NEACJS), the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS), and the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Justice Educators (PACJE).

In 2024, Mckenna co-authored a peer-reviewed article published by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Sage Journals, in collaboration with her former professor and colleagues. Her primary research interests include comparative hate crime legislation, victimization trends, and the evolution of sex crime laws.

Tori Rhea is a graduate student in the M.S. in Psychology program at West Chester University of Pennsylvania (WCU), where she also serves as a Graduate Research Assistant in the Office of Institutional Research. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from The Pennsylvania State University in 2023. Rhea presented "Evaluating Involuntary Commitment Policies and Practices: The Road to Crisis System Transformation" at the 2024 American Society of Criminology (ASC) Annual Conference, where she examined the implications of 302 petitions for crisis system reform. Her academic and professional work is informed by her current role in forensic and blended case management in Chester County, Pennsylvania. She has conducted qualitative coding for behavioral health research, participated in immersive simulations of lived experience with psychosis, and previously worked as a Registered Behavioral Technician. Her research interests include mental health policy and trauma-informed care.



Policing: An International Journal

Call for papers: Police and terrorism, violent extremism, and targeted violence



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Policing: An International Journal

Interdisciplinary and wide-ranging in scope, *Policing: An International Journal (PIJPSM)* covers the latest research on all topics relevant to policing that focus on theory, policy, and/or practice. Policing is a generalist journal, and one that provides readers with a truly global and comparative perspective.

Police and terrorism, violent extremism, and targeted violence

This special issue has several objectives. The first is to identify the strategies used by police to counter terrorism, violent extremism and targeted violence today and to assess whether these strategies are effective in preventing or responding to terrorism, violent extremism and targeted violence. The second aim of this special issue is to explore police preparedness for mass casualty events stemming from terrorism, violent extremism and targeted violence. The third objective is to determine what effect terrorism, violent extremism and targeted violence has on police wellness. The fourth aim is to identify police as offenders or catalysts for violence, such as the case of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka. Manuscripts addressing any of these topics are welcome for consideration.

Submission Information

- Opening date for manuscript submissions: [30 April 2025](#)
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- Submissions to PIJPSM are made using ScholarOne Manuscripts: Registration and access is available at: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/pijpsm>
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Mitchell Roth's

Man With the Killer Smile: The Life and Crimes of a Serial Mass Murderer

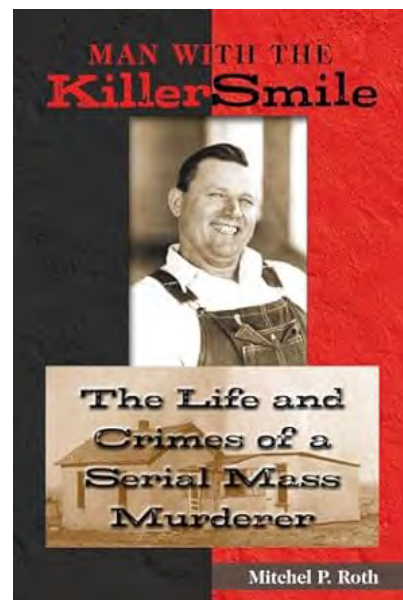
University of North Texas Press

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Review by Deja McCray

Lamar University

George Jefferson Hassell was born in 1888. While a lot is unknown about his parents, it is obvious that George took after his grandfather, a blue-collar laborer who was in and out of the Texas justice system for various crimes. It is evident that George had a troubled upbringing, having started chewing tobacco at age 6, having his first sexual experience at age 8, and possibly witnessing domestic violence in the home. These troubling characteristics continued into his young adulthood. George claimed to have committed his first crime at age 17: stealing money from his employers at a local cotton gin. Due to this crime, George was indicted and confined to prison. Mitchel Roth details the brutal conditions of the Texas justice system in the 1900s. During this period, Texas was utilizing the convict leasing system, known for brutal work conditions and treatment of inmates. Roth notes that prior to George's 2-year stint in jail, George had no record of violence and could have been severely impacted by this stint. After being released from prison and deserting the Army, George went back to Taylor County, Texas, and met a woman named Minnie Laughlin. After "falling in love," getting married to Minnie, and having a son, George gained employment from his previous employers, who gave him a farm to work and live on. This arrangement did not last long, as George went back to forging checks. It is unclear how George



and Minnie's relationship officially ended, but George's son claimed that his mother intentionally left George because he was trying to kill them. George would later claim that the failure of this relationship led to violence in the future. Soon after, George joined and deserted the Navy, leading to his arrest and conviction for fraud and desertion. He served time in three military prisons, having to endure more penal violence in some of the most brutal prisons of the period.

It is unclear how George's next relationship started. All that is known is that George met Marie Vogel somewhere, bonding over their shared love of children. The couple, along with Marie's son Gerald, moved to Whittier, California, where they mysteriously acquired the custody of two young children. The family of four was only in Whittier for several months before tragedy struck. It is unclear what prompted an argument between George and Marie on a summer night in 1917, though it is suspected that it was over money. Sometime during this marital spat, George Hassell strangled Marie with his hands and a stocking before doing the same to their three children. George buried his family in a cellar hole (which he had dug several weeks in advance) before eventually deserting the Whittier home.

Shortly after the mass murder of his family, George made frequent visits to his older brother, Thomas Hassell, in Oklahoma. Thomas had a large family consisting of a pregnant wife (Susan) and eight children. Shortly after Thomas's mysterious death in 1924, Susan and George married and moved their family to Farwell, Texas. From an outsider's perspective, the Hassell family was normal: the children attended school, Susan was a traditional Texas farm wife, and George was a hardworking patriarch with a temper. In reality, tensions were rising within the household after the discovery that George sexually abused Maudie, his young niece/stepdaughter, leading to her pregnancy. This discovery led to frequent arguments between Susan and George, which came to an end on December 2, 1926. According to George, Susan and he were arguing about the sexual abuse of two of his nieces/stepdaughters before he went outside to drink whiskey (much to Susan's disdain). After he came back inside, the argument continued and George hit Susan in the head with a hammer and then strangled her. He then killed the seven sleeping children via strangulation, axe wounds, and gunshot wounds. The oldest child, Alton Hassell, was out of the house at the time of the massacre, so George waited for him to return three days later, only to shoot him in the head as he slept. George buried his family in a hole in the yard, which he had begun to dig months in advance. After the murders, George failed to come up with a convincing story to explain the disappearance of his family, leading to suspicion in the Farwell community and catching the attention of law enforcement. After a faux and unexplainable suicide attempt, George was faced with the evidence of his 1926 mass murder. While awaiting trial in jail, George confessed to the 1917 mass murder, opting to forgo details and promising to disclose the location of the victims on his death bed. The trial of George Hassell focused primarily on the murder of Alton because it was most evident that this act constituted murder in the first degree. On

January 12, 1928, George Hassell was found guilty and was sentenced to death. While awaiting his execution in prison, George participated in numerous interviews detailing his life, affairs, and the 1926 familial massacre. George Hassell was executed via the electric chair on February 10, 1928.

There is so much to learn from Mitchel Roth's *Man With the Killer Smile*. George Hassell is an anomaly due to his overlapping criminal identities. In this analysis, the different identities will be addressed and what contributions can be learned from George Hassell in relation to the identities.

The most obvious and well-known identity of George Hassell is serial killer. According to the definition provided by Gabriella Simon (2020), George is the epitome of a serial killer: an individual who kills at least three people on different occasions, with a cooling-off time in between the kills. George killed his first family (consisting of three people) nearly a decade before killing his second family (consisting of nine people). Simon (2020) states that serial killers usually kill for psychological gratification with varying motives, and she places the serial perpetrators into categories: mission-oriented, lust, thrill, gain, or power killers. George Hassell would fall into the category of a mission-oriented killer: an individual who kills to get rid of a particular group of people (Simon, 2020). Since George never provided an explanation for his killings, one can only analyze his actions: He murdered his family members (constituting a particular group of people). While George Hassell fits the textbook definition and most characteristics of a serial killer, it is important to note how he differs. A serial killer usually exhibits a lack of remorse, guilt, and empathy while displaying high intelligence and false/manufactured normalcy and emotions (Roth, 2022). Corroborating this fact, some scholars have found that the intelligence of a serial killer can be

displayed in the way the perpetrator stages the victims after the murder. According to Mark Pettigrew (2022), the staging of a crime scene can display increased forensic awareness and knowledge in the serial murderer's attempt to conceal the crime. The disposal method that George Hassell utilized in his killings is a clear indication of his low intelligence; for instance, in 1926, George buried his family in a hole in the front yard of the home that was in plain sight of his neighbors. He had done such a poor job concealing the location that law enforcement found the hole almost immediately. If staging a crime scene is indicative of a serial killer's intelligence, George Hassell does not fit the "highly intelligent" criterion.

George Hassell is also identified as a mass murderer—a family annihilator, to be specific. A mass family annihilator is an individual who kills their spouse and one, if not all, of their children in a single incident (Frei & Ilic, 2020). These individuals usually have close ties to their families and use guns during the killings (Roth, 2022). George fits the definition of a familicidal mass murderer, but he does not entirely fit the characteristics. For instance, while George utilized a gun to kill a few of his 1926 family members, it was not his usual *modus operandi*; he typically opted for strangulation with a stocking or his bare hands. Also, it is not suspected that George had a close relationship with his 1917 Whittier family, as they had only lived together as a family for some months prior to the murders. Also, George's motives do not align with those of other family annihilators. According to Andreas Frei and Andrea Ilic (2020), family annihilators are usually suicidal individuals who do not want to leave their family in a bad situation or are vengeful individuals who target their children to hurt their wives before killing their wives and themselves. George did not target his 11 stepchildren to hurt Marie and Susan, nor did he commit suicide following the murders. George

targeted his wives first and killed the children seemingly as an afterthought. Also, it is important to note that while George had "attempted suicide" following the 1926 mass murder, it is not believed to have been a legitimate attempt, mainly due to the fact that George initially blamed the Lindop family (the family that purchased the home from George following the murders) for the injuries. Christine Sarteschi (2016) also points out other notable characteristics of mass murderers, such as a lack of desire to discuss the committed crimes with others and evidence of mental health disorders/delusions. George was not reticent when it came to discussing the brutal murders of his family, based on the numerous interviews he participated in while incarcerated. Also, there was no evidence or records of George having any mental disorders, but to George's benefit, it was the 1900s, an era that was not equipped to recognize or treat mental disorders.

Finally, George Hassell can be identified as a sexual offender and child molester. George Hassell had sexually assaulted two of his nieces/stepdaughters, Nora and Maudie, prior the 1926 mass murders, resulting in their pregnancies. While Nora was 18 years old at the time of her assault, it is safe to assume that she was not a consenting party in the sexual relations with her, at the time, uncle. Fast forward a few years: George goes on to sexually assault Maudie, his 13-year-old niece/stepdaughter, who was under the age of consent even in the early 1900s. According to scholars, children who have been sexually abused have an increased chance of becoming adult sexual predators (Coxe & Holmes, 2001). This statement applies to George, as he was sexually assaulted at 8 years old. While he may have boasted about his numerous affairs with women throughout his life, George was under the age of consent when he had his first sexual experience with a 15-year-old girl, which constitutes statutory rape. Suppose scholars are correct in assuming most sexually abused

children have the potential to go on to abuse others. In that case, George Hassell fits the criteria, and his inappropriate actions with his nieces prove it.

In conclusion, Mitchel Roth's *Man With a Killer Smile* expertly describes the life, crimes, trial, and death of George Jefferson Hassell, as well as prompts further exploration into what scholarly contributions can be made from his book and the life of this disturbing man. George Hassell is an anomaly as he is classified as a serial killer, a mass murderer, and a sexual offender. While George Hassell can be classified as these criminal identities, he does not possess all the associated characteristics. It is shocking how George Jefferson Hassell has flown under the radar of criminal justice and true crime. Due to his overlapping criminal personas, faux charismatic personality, and endless interviews, one would expect that George Hassell would be mentioned in the same breath as Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer. Yet, he remains one of the lesser-known serial killers in American history. Hopefully, with the publication of Mitchel Roth's book and excellent storytelling, the stories of Susan Hassell, Marie Vogel, and their innocent children will be honored and shared.

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Deja McCray is a dedicated and passionate student in Criminal Justice. She earned her master's degree from Lamar University in 2024 and her bachelor's degree from Prairie View A&M University in 2023. She is currently furthering her education at the University of Houston.



Meghna Bhat, Ph.D., an independent scholar-practitioner and a gender and social justice consultant, received the 2025 Victimology Impact Award from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) Victimology Division on March 15th in Denver, CO. She was recognized for her contributions in inspiring survivors/ victims, and marginalized groups experiencing oppression, to find their voice and craft their narratives in safe spaces.

Dr. Jenenne Valentino-Bottaro and **Dr. Kimberley K. Blackmon** received the Walden University Research and Applications for Social Change Grant for their applied project titled *A New Leash on Life: Providing K9 Companions to Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence*. This project aims to provide women in Central Florida who have experienced domestic or sexual violence with a rescue dog companion. The project seeks to achieve this by covering adoption fees and providing a training session for the women and their new dogs. The goal is to improve the survivors' mental well-being, promote physical activity, foster social connection, and increase their sense of independence. Valentino-Bottaro and Blackmon will be collecting data on survivors' self-reported levels of trauma prior to adopting the dog and then again one year later after having received the dog. They hope to both present and publish their results next year.

Dr. Jennifer Feitel became a first-time contributor on Corrections1.com, publishing an article titled "Return on Investment: Continuously Train Correctional Staff". The article can be found at <https://www.corrections1.com/corrections-training/return-on-investment-continuously-train-correctional-staff>

Evaristus Obinyah and colleague published the following article:

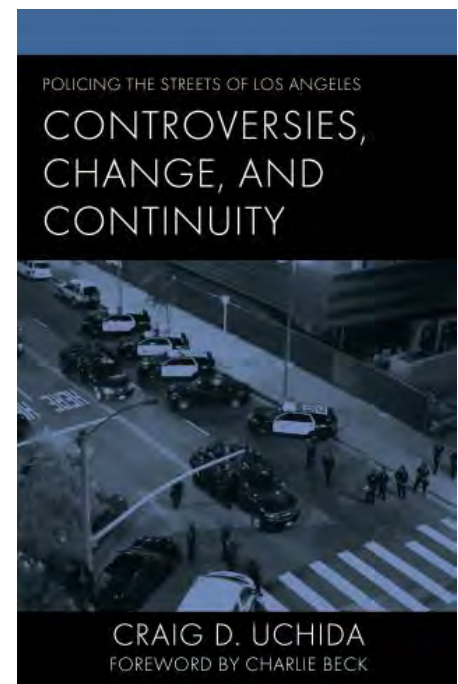
Obinyah, E., & Turner, S. (2025). The "bulimic over-criminalization" of "social junk": The origins and functions of the Berkeley County, West Virginia Panhandling Law. *CJAG*, 8(1).

Craig D. Uchida published the following book:

Uchida, C. D. (2025). *Policing the streets of Los Angeles: Controversies, change and continuity*. Rowman & Littlefield.

This book explores how LAPD has sought to regulate officer conduct in the face of repeated controversies over 60 years. In a time of crisis and controversy in American policing, the book provides important insights into LAPD's successes, failures, and areas still needing improvement in terms of policing transparency and accountability.

Uchida's book can be ordered at <https://Rowman.com/Lexington>. For a 30% discount use code LXFANF30



Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, PA) has been approved as a new host site for a police academy by the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission (MPOETC), Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and the Office of the Governor. Dr. Kadee Crandall, Director of Criminal Justice, led the effort to establish the Elizabethtown College Police Academy, marking the first academy approval in the Commonwealth since 1979. As the only Act 120 training academy in Lancaster County, the Elizabethtown College Police Academy offers a convenient location for recruits from Lancaster, York, and nearby counties. The academy also enhances Etown's Criminal Justice Program by integrating the Act 120 certification into the four-year degree curriculum. The Elizabethtown College Police Academy reflects Elizabethtown College's commitment to excellence, service, and integrity.

Marc S. Buslik will receive the Hinda Honoree of the Year award from the Hinda Institute (www.hindahelps.com) on May 18, 2025. Hinda provides a variety of services to people who are incarcerated, to people returning to the community, and their families. Buslik is the "law enforcement representative" on their advisory board.

After publishing two articles in *The Journal of Criminal Justice Education* (about his 33-year prison tour program and the challenges of documentary film making in an academic setting), **Paul Sutton** (PhD 1970, State University of NY at Albany) has been touring with his latest prison documentary about a creative writing class that he and his wife instituted and taught on a maximum security yard for four years. That film, "From Pen to Paper," has been screened at a dozen film festivals across the U.S. and garnered top honors for best documentary short or best directing in Asheboro, North Carolina Chandler, Arizona San Diego, and Santa Ana, Healdsburg, California and most recently at Idyllwild, California. The feature-length version of that film was previously nominated for an Emmy for best documentary.

Robert Geibler successfully defended his dissertation at the beginning of April 2025. Geibler is completing his PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Texas at Dallas. He will be starting as an Assistant Professor of Criminology and CJ at Missouri State University in the fall.

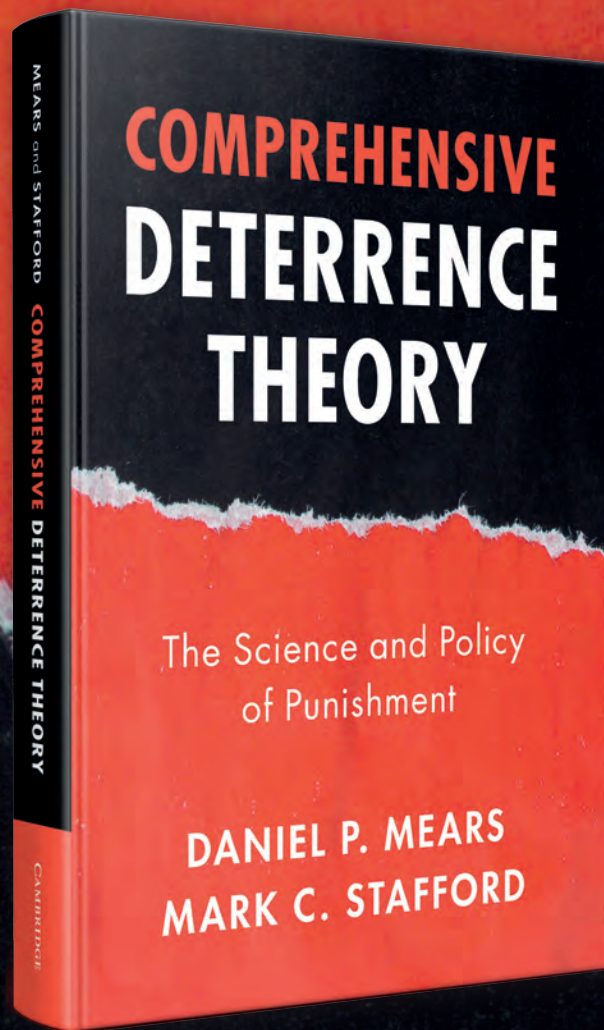
Michael L. Perlin and colleagues published the following article:

Perlin, M. L., Roitberg Harmon, T., Geiger, M., & Houde-Camirand, M. (2024). Their futures, so full of dread: How Barefoot's contamination of the death penalty trial process continues. *Richmond Public Interest Law Review*, 27(3), 77-124.

Dr. Natasha N. Johnson and colleagues published the following articles:

Johnson, C., & Johnson, N. N. (accepted March 2025). Effectively executing a CJ study abroad experience at one R1 university in the southeastern United States. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*.

Johnson, N. N., & Johnson, T. L. (2025). Passing the baton: Extending the power of FLCs through a newly inducted Criminal Justice Learning Community. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 36(1), 62-85.



Mears and Stafford provide an in-depth understanding of the classical account of deterrence theory, its limitations, and a reconceptualized version that establishes a more complete and powerful picture of how legal punishments can deter crime.

Thorough and corrective, *Comprehensive Deterrence Theory* gives readers a new way of thinking about and understanding legal punishment.



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Leveraging the Battlefield: Military-Trained Gang Members Across History

By Carter F. Smith

Military-trained gang members (MTGMs) represent a unique and significant threat to both military and civilian communities. By leveraging the advanced skills they acquire through military service, MTGMs enhance the operational capacity of criminal organizations, including street gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs), and domestic terrorist extremist (DTE) groups. The issue of MTGMs is not new, as historical examples date back to the Revolutionary War. However, recent incidents highlight their ongoing relevance and the heightened risk posed by their participation in organized crime and extremist activities. This article delves into how these individuals exploit their military training and explores ways to curb the influence of MTGMs.

MTGMs Across Time

The impact of MTGMs extends beyond the military's internal structure. Within the military environment, these individuals bring corrupt influences that degrade unit morale and pose threats to military families stationed on installations (Smith, 2017). Outside the military, the civilian communities adjacent to military bases also face increased risks. For example, MTGMs' skills in tactical planning and firearms training allow them to operate with deadly efficiency in criminal organizations. The enhanced combat skills MTGMs gain through their service make them particularly dangerous within their criminal organizations, contributing to a growing threat of violence, narcotics distribution, and organized criminal

activity (Smith, 2017).

In 1764, gang leaders in colonial Boston like Ebenezer MacIntosh, head of the South Enders and a militia member, used their military status to lead violent protests against the Stamp Act of 1765. MacIntosh's title, "Captain General," reflects the intertwining of militia authority and gang leadership (Smith, 2017). This early example shows how military and criminal roles could merge to destabilize local governance. In the years following the formation of the United States, military-trained criminals like Captain Samuel Mason, who once served as a militia commander in West Virginia, turned to piracy and banditry along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers (Smith, 2017).

The 19th century demonstrated a continuation of the MTGM phenomenon, with veterans leveraging their military experience to establish or join criminal groups. The Mexican-American War contributed to the rise of MTGMs on the West Coast after street gang members from New York were discharged to newly created San Francisco at the time of the Gold Rush. Shortly after they arrived, they organized as the Hounds, later known as the San Francisco Society of Regulators. These early MTGMs then engaged in both labor enforcement and nationalist domestic terrorism (Smith, 2017).

Military service continued to shape criminal enterprises into the 20th century. In 1917, infamous gang leader Edward "Monk" Eastman enlisted in the 106th Infantry during World War I, participating in trench warfare in France. Despite his criminal background, he demonstrated notable bravery under fire, earning the respect of his comrades. Reports suggest that his combat skills, street toughness, and leadership abilities—honed during his gang activities—contributed to his effectiveness as a soldier. Eastman's military service

culminated in an honorable discharge, and the governor of New York later restored his full citizenship rights in recognition of his wartime contributions. Eastman returned to criminal activity after discharge, a typical pattern among MTGMs (Smith, 2017).

In more recent history, the affiliation between MTGMs and organized crime, particularly OMGs and street gangs, has been well-documented. For example, Jaime Casillas and Andrew Reyes, soldiers in California, sold military-grade weapons to an undercover agent posing as a drug trafficker (United States Department of Justice [DOJ], 2016). This case highlights the deep-rooted connections between military-trained criminals and Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs; National Gang Intelligence Center, 2017). Vietnam War veterans founded many OMG like the Hells Angels, which remain heavily involved in criminal activity, with several OMGs now classified as highly prioritized organized crime groups by the Department of Justice (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives [ATF], 2010).

Members of the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) are classified as terrorist organizations in their home country of El Salvador due to their use of military-style tactics, high-powered weapons, and acts of terror, including targeted murders of civilians and law enforcement personnel. The administration used mass trials to prosecute these individuals, with up to 900 defendants tried simultaneously. While this streamlined process expedited convictions, it faced criticism for undermining individual rights and due process, raising serious concerns about false convictions and arbitrary detentions. The international community has expressed significant concern about the government's policies. Although the gang members typically have no direct military training, the gang's operations involved military-style training camps and tactics, including targeted assassinations and organized assaults. Those

actions significantly enhance MS-13's capacity for violence and coordination, underscoring the gang's militarized approach to criminal operations (Chavez Rodriguez, 2024).

The case of Freddy Ivan Jandres-Parada underscores how criminal organizations like MS-13 adopt militarized tactics to operate with greater precision and lethality, reflecting a broader trend of militarization among transnational gangs. While Jandres-Parada himself did not have military connections, his gang operated military-style training camps that included the use of IEDs, rocket launchers, and other advanced weaponry. These operations, which also featured strategic coordination, closely resembled military tactics, demonstrating the increasing sophistication of MS-13's criminal activities (Miller & Shulman, 2024).

The Domestic Terrorist Extremist (DTE) Connection

MTGMs represent a heightened threat when connected to DTE groups. A striking example is Micah Johnson, an Army Reservist and former New Black Panther Party member. In 2016, he leveraged his military sniper training to orchestrate a deadly attack on Dallas police officers, leaving five officers dead and others injured (Fernandez et al., 2016). Similarly, James Fields, who served briefly in the U.S. Army, weaponized his military training during the 2017 Charlottesville car attack at a white nationalist rally (Bromwich & Blinder, 2017).

More than 200 veterans were involved in the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Many of these individuals were affiliated with DTE groups, such as the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys, and utilized their military training in weapons handling, tactical planning, and leadership to coordinate the breach. Many had served in the Army, Navy,

Marines, or National Guard. Their roles ranged from planning the breach to leading violent assaults, showcasing how military expertise can be co-opted for extremist activities (Dearen et al., 2024).

In 2024, a former National Guard member conducted paramilitary training for civilians affiliated with extremist ideologies. The training sessions included drills for kidnapping, assault tactics, and the use of explosives. This case highlighted how former service members could exploit their military skills to support extremist agendas and advance the operational capabilities of domestic terrorist groups (Dearen et al., 2024).

White supremacist groups often include military-trained individuals. Groups like Atomwaffen Division and The Base have recruited veterans and active-duty personnel who brought combat training and leadership skills to plan hate crimes, bomb plots, and targeted assassinations. For example, the U.S. Army discharged a private in 2020 after he was implicated in neo-Nazi activities, including plotting with Atomwaffen members (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.).

Why Is That a Problem?

Academic research has explored the intersection of military training and gang affiliation, highlighting the potential dangers posed by MTGMs. Studies indicate that MTGMs may leverage their military-acquired skills to enhance the operational capabilities of criminal organizations, thereby increasing the threat to military and civilian communities (United States Army Criminal Investigations Division [USACID], 2011).

Military training provides individuals with advanced tactics, weapons handling, explosives, and strategic planning skills. When gang members acquire such training, they can significantly elevate

the operational effectiveness of their organizations. Smith (2018) notes that gangs with military-trained members often pose ongoing and persistent threats due to their enhanced capabilities.

Research by Sazonov (2011) examined the attitudes of soldiers toward gang-affiliated members within the military. The study found that gang members engaged in various criminal activities, including narcotics distribution, theft, and assault while serving. Some military officers permit such activities, facilitating an environment where gang affiliation could thrive.

When veterans transition from military to civilian life, they often find it challenging, and for some veterans, it may lead to involvement in criminal activities. Bouffard (2003) examined whether military service influenced individual criminal behavior, finding that the military might provide a setting for the continuation of prior behaviors, especially among those with pre-existing tendencies toward criminality.

The relationship between military service, psychological health, and criminal behavior has been a subject of study. Traynham et al. (2019) investigated how posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms correlate with criminal behavior in U.S. Army populations. The study found that PTSD symptoms had a direct effect on incarceration status, with significant indirect effects through suicidal ideation and psychopathy, suggesting that psychological factors mediate the relationship between military experiences and subsequent criminal behavior.

The presence of MTGMs in civilian communities increases the threat of violence due to their specialized training. Smith (2015) emphasizes that MTGMs bring danger to communities, as their military skills can further criminal enterprises, making them formidable adversaries for law

enforcement.

Gaps in the Literature

Empirical Studies on Causation: While numerous case studies document the dangerousness of MTGMs, there is limited empirical research exploring the causation or correlation between military service and subsequent criminal behavior. Future research must evaluate whether military affiliation actively increases gang participation or merely enhances pre-existing tendencies.

Psychological Factors: More research is needed on the psychological impacts of military service, including PTSD, and how these factors contribute to involvement in criminal or extremist activities. Studies on reintegration programs that reduce psychological risks could be beneficial.

Policy Effectiveness: Few studies evaluate the effectiveness of existing military policies in identifying and mitigating the risks posed by gang-affiliated service members. A cost-benefit analysis of enhanced screening processes and preventative programs is particularly critical.

Cross-Disciplinary Insights: The intersection of criminology, military studies, and psychology remains underexplored in MTGMs. Bringing together experts from these fields could result in comprehensive intervention strategies.

Call to Action for Academic Researchers

To combat the persistent threat posed by MTGMs, academic researchers must play a pivotal role in enhancing law enforcement's capabilities. Future research should focus on the following areas:

1: Developing Predictive Models: Studies should explore the precursors and warning signs of

gang-affiliated individuals entering or emerging within the military. This would aid in identifying at-risk service members early in their careers.

2: Exploring Psychological Interventions: Investigating the impact of military service, including PTSD and other mental health challenges, on susceptibility to gang involvement is critical. Tailored interventions can help redirect vulnerable individuals toward constructive reintegration into society.

3: Evaluating Policy Effectiveness:

Researchers must assess the efficacy of current military policies aimed at preventing gang infiltration and propose evidence-based improvements. This includes exploring the feasibility of enhanced vetting processes and mandatory reporting mechanisms for suspected affiliations.

4: Interdisciplinary Collaboration:

Combining insights from criminology, psychology, and military studies can provide a holistic understanding of MTGMs and their impact. Collaborative approaches are essential to developing comprehensive mitigation strategies.

Conclusion

Military-trained individuals possess advanced skills in combat, leadership, and strategic planning that, when redirected, can significantly enhance the operational effectiveness of criminal organizations, gangs, and extremist groups. These capabilities pose substantial risks to public safety and national security, as evidenced by historical and contemporary examples. The repeated misuse of military expertise in criminal enterprises underscores the urgency of addressing this issue at its root.

Recent cases demonstrate that this threat is not confined to specific eras or geographies but

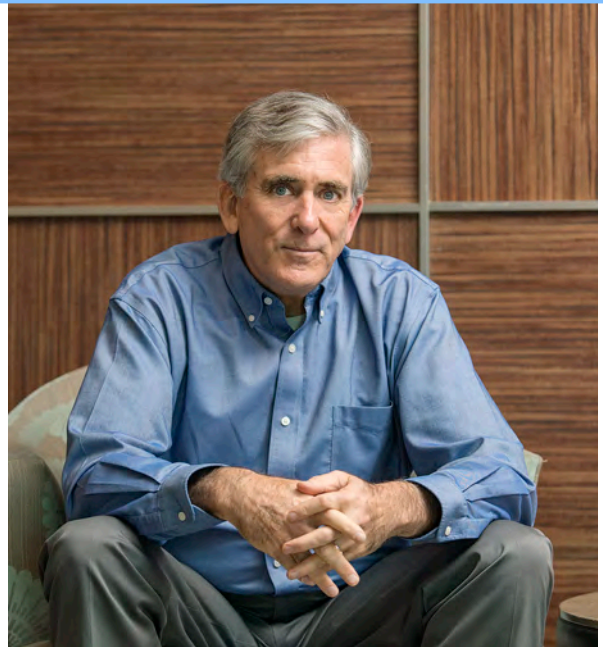
reflects an enduring pattern of militarization within organized crime and extremist activities. From the Revolutionary War to modern times, MTGMs have leveraged their training to increase violence, coordinate complex operations, and evade detection by law enforcement.

While significant strides have been made in understanding this phenomenon, gaps in empirical research, psychological analysis, and policy evaluation persist. Addressing these gaps is critical to equipping military institutions and law enforcement with the tools needed to effectively detect, monitor, and mitigate the risks associated with MTGMs.

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Dr. Carter F. Smith is an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice Administration at Middle Tennessee State University. He teaches courses on investigations and organized crime and directs the graduate program. He is a retired U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Division (CID) Special Agent and was involved in military and federal law enforcement for over twenty-two years in the United States and abroad. In addition to dozens of academic publications, recent books he has authored or co-authored include *Gangs and the Military* (2019 & 2017), *Gangs and Organized Crime* (2018), and *Private Security Today* (2017). He has recently developed a passion and interest in historical organized crime, focusing on river pirates in the late 18th Century.



JOURNAL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

Embedding Implicit Bias Education into Curricular Interventions: Insights for Criminology Programs

April Smith & Cody Porter

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"Err on the Side of Grace, for Yourself, and for Your Students": A Resource List and Advice for First-Time Race and Crime Instructors

Carlene Y. Barnaby, Alexander H. Updegrave, Maisha N. Cooper, Ahram Cho, & Andrekus Dixon

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The Extent and Sources of Support for Mitigating Collateral Consequences: A Comparison of Criminal Justice Majors and Non-Majors

Sunmin Hong, Haley N. Puddy, & Alexander L. Burton

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Policing and Corrections in the Classroom: Criminal Justice Students' Perceptions of Course Material and Career Attractiveness

M. Dylan Spencer, Amber Wilson, & Riane M. Bolin

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Social Events and Career Aspirations: An Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Criminal Justice Student Motivations

Carl Dement & Jaime Burns

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Shanell Sanchez, Catherine Venegas-Garcia, Kelly Szott, & Larry Gibbs

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James F. Albrecht

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Book Review - Corporate Liability and International Criminal Law

By Alessandra De Tommaso

Routledge

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The Role of Social Media in Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Police and Career Interest in Law Enforcement

Ko-Hsin Hsu, Jaeyong Choi, & Melanie C. Mogavero

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JCJE Special Issue: Executing a CJ Study Abroad Experience - Study Abroad Programs: Real-Life Considerations and Cautions

Samantha M. Gavin, Andrew Dombek, & Donna Dombek

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Book Review - Sustainable Finance and Financial Crime

By Michel Dion

Springer

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Ditya Riski Taher

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Reflections from an Industry and University Youth Justice Partnership

Laura Metcalfe, Garner Clancey, Melanie Simpson, Cathy Little, & David Evans

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Crime as a Job: Risk Assessment and Desistance Within Professional Narratives Roles

Gustavo Fondevila Pérez, Martín Hernán Di Marco, Carolina Agoff, & Sveinung Sandberg

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Hiring and Working With Emerging Adults: Law Enforcement's Biggest Challenge?

By Christopher Salvatore & Travis Taniguchi

Police agencies continue to face a crisis in hiring and retention. Across the U.S. there has been a decrease in the number of sworn officers and civilian employees. Agencies are struggling to find qualified candidates, find it difficult to retain those they do hire, and struggle with the impact of high levels of turnover. A variety of factors may be contributing to

this problem:

- High-profile incidents of police misconduct, which has highlighted the gap between police and the communities they serve;
- Wider acknowledgement of stress and physical danger associated with law enforcement careers;
- A perceived lack of flexibility and autonomy associated with day-to-day work activities;
- A belief that policing is a “forever” job that provides little flexibility to optimize work-life balance;

- Pay and benefits that are not competitive with private sector careers; and
- A perception of poor work ethic of millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996) and Gen Z (those born after 1997). (Dimock, 2019)

Although these factors may contribute to reduced recruiting, it is not obvious why they are having such a dramatic impact today. Taking a longer-term view, none of these factors is unique to modern times. Law enforcement has always been perceived as a career with inherent dangers that operates within rigid organizational structures. Some have placed special emphasis on generational differences of millennials and Gen Z. People of both generations tend to express a desire for a better work-life balance (Dimock, 2019) and find demanding jobs with relatively low pay less inherently appealing than prior generations. However, while popular media points to generational changes as the sole culprits, research has suggested that broader social changes in the economy and education have contributed to the challenges we are seeing. The social changes impacting law enforcement recruitment and retention may be summed up in two words: emerging adulthood. The purpose of this article is to describe how one central factor, the developmental stage of life called emerging adulthood, may be responsible for changing how people interpret the value of and emphasis placed on characteristics inherent to policing.

The emerging adulthood stage of life was first identified in the early 1990s. Emerging adulthood was described as a distinct stage of life between adolescence and young adulthood that developed because of a variety of broader societal changes that started in the middle of the 20th century. A key characteristic of emerging adulthood is that many of the defining characteristics of adulthood, such as getting married, having children, and completing

education, are delayed. During the period between adolescence and adulthood, emerging adults are freer to experiment with their identities in a variety of areas including jobs, views of the world, and relationships.

To better understand the impact of emerging adulthood on law enforcement staffing, we need to understand some basics about it. While the age range has evolved, emerging adulthood is generally considered to start in the late teens and run through the late 20s. At the start of emerging adulthood, most people will be living at home with their parents or other adult caregivers, still be in high school, and have just started developing more complex work and romantic relationships (Salvatore, 2018). By the time people reach the end of emerging adulthood, many will be living independently from their parents/families, have had some type of long-term relationship, completed college education or technical training, and have professional work experience. These are, of course, generalizations based on historical experience. The experience of any person, as well as similarly aged groups of people, depends on a variety of factors in their lives, as well as wider social and even historic events like war or global pandemics like COVID-19.

Most people will experience more changes during emerging adulthood than at any other point in life except for early childhood (Wood et al., 2017). Identity exploration during emerging adulthood leads many to experiment with key aspects of their lives resulting in changing jobs, relationships, and training and education. This can result in moving in and out of their parents' home, dropping in and out of college, changing romantic relationships, and trying out a variety of jobs and fields to see what fits (Salvatore, 2018). The changes caused by this exploration can be particularly problematic for organizations trying to recruit and retain young people (Bureau of Justice Assistance & Office of

The Problem With Policing for Emerging Adults

The experiential nature of emerging adulthood creates challenges with law enforcement recruiting and retention. First, law enforcement has traditionally had strict hiring standards regarding criminal history or drug use. Emerging adulthood, however, is frequently associated with increased low-level offending and experimentation with alcohol and drugs. These life experiences would typically preclude someone from a career in law enforcement.

Second, emerging adulthood is a period when people explore different activities, careers, and interests. Policing has historically recruited younger people (historically high school graduates and more recently recent college graduates) with an aim toward long-term careers that may last 20 or more years. In the past, the long-term stable employment and defined benefits retirement package were key draws for policing careers. However, the nature of emerging adulthood encourages people to experience different types of work and suggests that people are less likely to stay in a field long term. In some ways, the stability that policing careers offer may be a disincentive. People in emerging adulthood today are more interested in having different professional experiences, not being tied to a specific profession or job long term.

Finally, policing has historically emphasized the difficulty, danger, and sacrifice needed. This emphasis of policing as a challenging career can create problematic perceptions for people in emerging adulthood. Although this messaging may appeal to some, people in emerging adulthood are more interested in healthy work-life balance. This includes the ability to build a family and maintain social relationships outside of work. While policing

careers can offer healthy work-life balance, historical messaging around this issue tends to focus on sacrifice.

Recommendations for Law Enforcement Working With Emerging Adulthood

Emerging adulthood is a stage of life when experimentation is common; law enforcement agencies should take advantage of this experience-seeking behavior and highlight how policing can fit with the personal development desires during this period of life.

First, where possible, officers can be offered a variety of different types of assignments. Giving officers a choice and allowing them to rotate specific duties or divisions they are part of may satisfy the experience-seeking nature of emerging adulthood. Adapting to this challenge may require a number of changes. Immediate supervisors may need to recognize signs of boredom and disengagement and may need to be direct in exploring career growth expectations. Seasoned officers, who have also experienced emerging adulthood, may be needed to help guide incoming millennial and Gen Z officers.

Second, law enforcement agencies should embrace the self-focus during emerging adulthood. Although this self-focus may be seen as a limitation, it can also be a useful trait for some aspects of policing. Officers in emerging adulthood may have lower levels of external commitment and can focus on their professional and career development. From a recruiting perspective, agencies can highlight the extensive training opportunities and variety of careers available within law enforcement. Once hired, officers in emerging adulthood could be good candidates for assignments that demand a high level of commitment, such as undercover work. Officers in emerging adulthood may be incentivized by organizations committing to their

professional development, such as providing reimbursement for higher education or specialized training in more technologically focused areas such as crime mapping and statistics or data analytics. These initiatives can provide emerging adult officers with experiences during an uncertain time when interests may be shifting. Providing a variety of experiences with a single employer can provide a sense of stability and support while also conveying that their departments understand their needs for long-term development.

Third, the current generation in emerging adulthood has a greater focus on social justice issues, such as equity and diversity. Law enforcement agencies can capitalize on social justice issues by highlighting the importance of police-community partnerships. During recruiting, this may include greater focus on the social and community importance of policing. Existing officers should be encouraged to pursue passion projects that focus on programs and positions that have greater levels of community engagement. This may include positions such as school resource officer, youth mentoring, and community policing units.

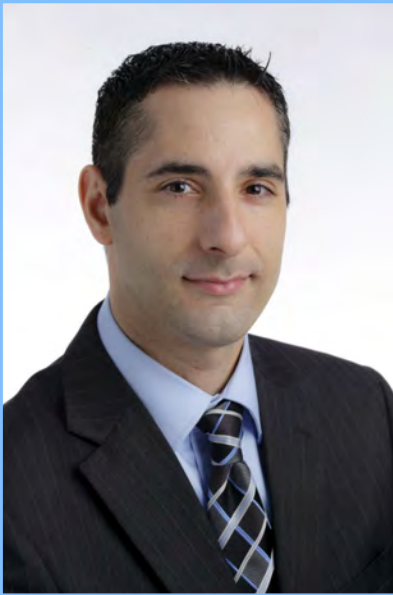
Finally, and perhaps most important, emerging adulthood is characterized by optimism and positivity toward the future. Officers in emerging adulthood can be encouraged to see the long-term professional opportunities a career in law enforcement can offer, along with the positive impact of their service to their community. Officers in emerging adulthood may also act as good ambassadors for law enforcement agencies during times when public opinions are not favorable, resources tight, or other challenges dominate the law enforcement profession. The optimistic nature of emerging adults may help insulate them from these issues, making them built-in leaders who help keep organizational culture high.

Summary

The characteristics of emerging adulthood are important considerations for law enforcement agencies to recruit and work with new officers. Young people in emerging adulthood have distinct perspectives, views, and needs that may differ from prior generations. Although recruiting and retention strategies may need to adapt, the changes found in emerging adulthood also represent a considerable opportunity for agencies.

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Building and Expanding Opportunity and Evidence Through the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program: The Role of the National Institute of Justice in Addressing Inequalities in the Criminal Justice System

By Roseanne L. Flores & Angela Moore

Authors' Note

Opinions or points of view expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. The authors assume full responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the information presented in the paper.

Over the last 20 years, the research literature has consistently demonstrated the racial and ethnic disparities experienced by American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Blacks and African Americans, Hispanics and Latinx, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders across the criminal justice system (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2023). In 2020, the Committee on Law and Justice of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine brought together a group of experts to form an ad hoc committee to evaluate the scientific evidence on inequalities within the criminal justice system and how policy could be used to reduce and/or eliminate the disparities. The committee outlined several recommendations including enhancing the role of the federal government in making grants that would support the reduction of inequalities across

the criminal justice system and improving the data infrastructure to ensure adequate reporting of racial and ethnic data within and across the system (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2023). As the Academies rightly notes, the Federal government plays a significant role in funding research across various disciplines, with implications for scientific advancement, public policy, and economic growth. Various federal research enterprises play crucial roles in advancing knowledge and addressing societal challenges through structured and well-funded research initiatives that aim to foster innovation and improve the quality of life for all Americans (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2023).

This article provides a brief overview of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program and the significant role it has played in supporting research at the intersection of race, crime, gender, and the administration of justice in the United States. Since its inception, the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program has supported research and influenced the diversification of the next generation of scholars and researchers, making a tangible impact in the field.

The Role of the National Institutes of Justice in Addressing Inequities in the Criminal Justice System

The NIJ is the research, development, and evaluation arm of the Department of Justice. Its mission is to improve and advance knowledge within the criminal justice system through a scientific lens (NIJ, n.d.-a). NIJ provides objective, independent knowledge and tools to inform the decision making of the criminal, juvenile, and tribal justice systems at the local, tribal, and state levels.

To accomplish its mission, NIJ invests in basic and applied research to advance policy and practice and to build, expand, and diversify the pool of researchers engaged in safety and justice research through fellowships, research assistantships, and early career awards, such as the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program; to translate and disseminate research findings; and to measure the performance and impact of funded research to ensure investments by NIJ produce the desired outcomes (NIJ, n.d.-a).

The W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program

The NIJ launched the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program in fiscal year (FY) 2000. The original goal of the program was to build and expand the pool of underrepresented researchers interested in advancing knowledge in the fields of criminal justice, criminology, sociology, psychology, and other related fields (Travis, 1999). The program generally aimed to increase research concerning the convergence of crime, justice, and culture across various contexts (Travis, 1999). Given the goals of the program, prospective applicants were encouraged to submit proposals that addressed topics including police and community relationships; sentencing and disparities within the courts and correctional system; immigration; crime and victimization; and transnational crime (Travis, 1999). In FY 2016, NIJ expanded the program to include a funding category with support for more extensive research projects and funding led by experienced principal investigators (PIs), also referred to as W.E.B. Du Bois scholars, who mentor early career researchers. The addition of a mentoring component is crucial for fostering the development of the next generation of scholars and advancing knowledge.

In FY 2018, the program was paused and relaunched in FY 2021. Building upon the original work, the program currently focuses on research to

reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the justice systems (NIJ, n.d.-b). NIJ invests in social and behavioral sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics research through the program. NIJ also supports quantitative and qualitative research that furthers the department's mission by advancing knowledge regarding the intersections of race, crime, violence, and the administration of justice within the United States. Through the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program, NIJ funds investigator-initiated research examining how observed racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system might be reduced through public policy interventions at any point during the administration of justice (NIJ, n.d.-b). NIJ accepts applications from two categories of researchers: (1) W.E.B. Du Bois scholars, who are researchers advanced in their careers interested in research, evaluation, and mentoring early career researchers; and (2) the W.E.B. Du Bois fellows, who are early career professionals interested in conducting research and evaluation.

Projects Funded Through the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program 2000–2024

Forty-two awards have been made through the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program over the last 24 years, from FYs 2000–2024, totaling close to \$11 million. In FY 2000, Dr. Becky Tatum from Georgia State University received the first fellowship. Her project examined the role of social support on adolescent crime, identifying race, class, and gender variations. Results from grant-funded publications emanating from the award showed that factors such as class, family structure, gender, physical residential proximity to relatives, and exposure to inappropriate peer pressure had less of an impact on African American youth's perception of family support. The findings, however, did not address whether the family support provided was sufficient to meet the needs of the youth (Tatum, 2001). Moreover, the findings from the research suggested that perceived family support served as

protective factor to reduce the prevalence of certain types of delinquent behavior among African American youth. African American youth with high levels of perceived family support were less likely to have engaged in moderate offenses, such as forging a check or destroying someone's property, than their African American peers with low perceptions of family support (Tatum, 2001). In short, this research suggests that prevention measures involving family support should consider which behaviors are involved and how delinquency has been defined and measured (Tatum, 2001). Although the amount of funding to support the project was modest, it expanded and broadened research funding provided to underrepresented scholars interested in pursuing research in the criminal justice field. Dr. Tatum was a distinguished scholar whose scholarship extended beyond research and continues to influence contemporary discussion on race, ethnicity, and crime.

Since the first award, W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program awards have been made to researchers addressing topics in the areas of immigration, the justice system and minority youth, cultural context and the criminal justice system, criminal justice and health, and a wide variety of topics that encompass justice systems across the lifespan (NIJ, n.d.-b). In 2001, Dr. Ramiro Martinez from Florida International University received the second award; his research aimed to examine the impact of immigration on ethnic-specific violence (armed robbery and aggravated assault) by identifying individual and community characteristics in Miami, focusing on the Latinx, African American, and Haitian populations. He found that African Americans had the highest reported aggravated assault victimization rate, followed by Latinx and Haitians. In contrast, robbery rates were twice as high for Latinx and Haitians as for African Americans. Moreover, neighborhood economic deprivation and levels of recent immigration accounted for some of the ethnic risk differences

regarding service. At first, it all is new and exciting, discovered among the groups, particularly with respect to aggravated robbery (Ramiro, 2001). Findings from this research suggest that when examining racial/ethnic differences in non-lethal violence in major cities, in addition to economic and demographic conditions, local context should also be considered (Ramiro, 2001). Dr. Martinez has been instrumental in assembling multi-city data collection efforts that have enabled comprehensive studies on violent crime across diverse communities.

From FYs 2003 to 2010, NIJ increased its investment in the program, funding eight fellows and scholars whose research topics focused on gender-based violence within cultural contexts, police officer learning and training, racial workgroup diversity and courtroom outcomes, crime victimization, and immigration. NIJ funded 24 fellows and scholars between FYs 2011–2020, with the largest number of proposals funded in 2016.

In addition to increasing the number of awardees, NIJ also increased the size of the awards, ranging from \$49,279–\$500,000. A significant award was made to Dr. Amy Lerman at the University of California, Berkley. Her work focused on examining how changes in parole eligibility impact the release of convicted felons back into the community and recidivism rates. Findings from her research indicate that there are variations in the trajectory of state and local incarceration rates, with lack of uniformity in the reduction of prison and jail populations across all racial groups. Moreover, the results suggest that trends in incarceration might be due to changes in return to prison for probation and parole violations, rather than for the commission of new crimes (Lerman & Mooney, 2022). Taken together, these findings suggest that policies aimed at reducing the prison population should be examined at the state and local levels because recent efforts have targeted reducing state

prison populations, ignoring the fact that there are more jails in the United States than state prisons (Lerman & Mooney, 2022). Other W.E.B. Du Bois awards made between FYs 2011–2020 focused on drugs and crime, immigration and deportation, transnational crime, racial bias and perceptions of crime and justice, support for reinvestment in the justice system, youth and gang violence, neighborhood context and sentencing decisions, and jury instructions and trial outcomes.

From FYs 2021–2024, NIJ made five awards through the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program, with the largest being \$1,133,976 to Life After Justice in FY 2024. The awardee will examine the incentivization of informants and wrongful convictions through this project. Other research awards made during this period focus on building equity-based objective prison classifications to address disparities, evaluating sentencing guidelines to address racial and ethnic inequality and sentencing outcomes, factors impacting the coding of 911 calls, and the effect of economic and informational inequality on court-ordered compliance.

In FY 2021, the U.S. Congress directed the U.S. Department of Justice through the appropriation process “to award a research grant for an evidence-based, nonpartisan analysis of existing evidence to examine how observed racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system might be reduced through public policy. The study should be awarded via a competitive grant process open to all applicants to promote the most rigorous research to be applied to this important question.”

All awards made since FY 2021 focus on the U.S. Congressional mandate and recommendations by the National Academy of Sciences, to examine how observed racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system might be reduced through public policy.

Future Directions

As noted in the report “Reducing Racial Inequality in Crime and Justice: Science, Practice, and Policy” (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2023), to address the intractable racial and ethnic inequalities experienced by American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Blacks and African Americans, Hispanics and Latinx, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders within the criminal justice system, inequities within and across interconnected social systems such as housing, employment, and health must be addressed. Since the inception of the W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship Program, NIJ has funded researchers whose innovative research has examined the relationship between social context, economics, culture, and ethnic and racial disparities within the criminal justice system. NIJ should continue to support the research of fellows and scholars interested in examining the intersection of criminal justice and social justice reforms to ensure that diverse perspectives are included in the public discourse. Such evidence could lead to action on the part of criminal justice practitioners and policymakers, resulting in positive changes that increase public safety, decrease racial and ethnic disparities across the criminal justice system, and enhance individual and community well-being. In addition, it would expand the pool of researchers from across disciplines, providing an interdisciplinary lens through which to examine topics of critical importance to the criminal justice field.

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Roseanne's current research focuses on the intersection between education, health, and human rights. She is the co-editor of the award-winning *Cambridge Handbook of Psychology and Human Rights*. She currently serves as a AAAS Science Technology and Policy Fellow at the National Institute of Justice where she supports the work of staff scientists on firearms and violence, juvenile justice, and fellowships and graduate internship programs.



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Awards: Founders Award, Regional Fellow Award, Roslyn Muraskin Emerging Scholar Award, Gerhard O. W. Mueller Innovator Award, Faculty Teaching Award, Graduate Student Teaching Award, The Michael Israel Graduate Student Scholarship, Gerhard O. W. Mueller and Freda Adler Undergraduate Student Scholarship, Patrick J. Ryan Community College Student Scholarship, Undergraduate and Graduate Paper Competitions, and the CJPR-NEACJS Policy Paper Award

Region Two - Southern Criminal Justice Association (SCJA)

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Conference: September 9th - 12th, 2025 @ Charleston, SC

Hotel: Francis Marion Hotel

Theme: Bridging the Gap: Advancing Research to Practice

Abstract Deadline: June 15, 2025

Award Submissions: Roughly July 1, 2025

Awards: Outstanding Education Award, Outstanding Professional Award, The Tom Barker Outstanding Undergraduate Award, Outstanding Masters Student Award, Outstanding Doctoral Student Award, and Outstanding Student Poster Awards

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of the
Southern Criminal Justice Association
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September 9-12, 2025

“Bridging the Gap: Advancing Research to Practice”

Dr. Julie Baldwin, President
American University

Dr. Shaun Thomas, 1st VP & Program Chair
University of Arkansas

Deadline for abstracts is June 15, 2025.

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****Due to planning requirements, there will not be a submission extension.****

Please email questions to Shaun Thomas at shaun@uark.edu



Click here to access SCJA
conference webpage



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Call for Nominations SCJA Awards



*Presented at the September 9-12, 2025 Conference
Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston, SC*

Student Awards Deadline: July 7, 2025

Tom Barker Outstanding Undergraduate Student

- Chair: Dr. Dave May (dmay@soc.msstate.edu)

Outstanding Masters Student

- Chair: Dr. McKenzie Jossie (mjossie@lsu.edu)

Outstanding Doctoral Student

- Chair: Dr. John Boman (jboman@bgsu.edu)

Outstanding Student Poster Award

- Chair: Dr. Jeff Smith (23jsmith@gmail.com)

SCJA recognizes exemplary student achievement through four awards. Eligibility is limited to students currently enrolled (or graduates who were enrolled through May 2025) in schools within the Southern region. Each nomination must contain a description of the nominee's accomplishments in areas such as scholarship, leadership, and public service. The nomination should include the nominee's GPA and additional information to answer: "In what ways has this student contributed to his/her academic program, college and/or community?"

- Student award winners receive a travel stipend and must attend the conference to claim the funds.
- Master & Doctoral awardees receive a free 3-year membership, which may upgrade to a lifetime membership by paying the difference.
- Poster competition does not require nominations. Students must register as the lead author (faculty co-authors allowed) and present at the conference. Two winners will each receive \$500.

Outstanding Educator Award

Chair: Dr. Jeff Walker (jeffw@uab.edu)

Deadline: July 7, 2025

This award recognizes one criminal justice educator for outstanding academic achievement in teaching, research, and service. The recipient of the award is selected on the basis of overall contributions to higher education in criminal justice. Nominees must be members in good standing of SCJA. Nominations should include the nominee's Curriculum Vitae and supportive letters. The winner will receive a lifetime membership to the association.

Outstanding Professional Award

Chair: Dr. Fred Williams (frederick.williams1@kysu.edu)

Deadline: July 7, 2025

This award recognizes a practitioner in the field of criminal justice for outstanding contributions. Nominees must currently serve in a criminal justice-related position within the Southern region. Nominations should include a nomination letter detailing the nominee's record of achievement and the nominee's resume. The winner will receive an honorarium to attend the conference.

Student & Untenured Faculty Travel Awards

Chair: Dr. Tasha Youstin (tjyoustin@wcu.edu)

Deadline: July 28, 2025

SCJA has set aside funds for a number of students and untenured faculty to receive a two-night stay at the conference hotel. Preference will be given to applicants currently enrolled in schools within the Southern region. All applicants must be 1) current members of SCJA at the time of application, 2) lead author on a paper or poster at the conference, and 3) available to stay for two nights at the conference hotel. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate the need for travel funds and how attending the conference and presenting their research will enhance their careers and professional development in 250 words. A form is available on the SCJA awards website.

Region Three - Midwestern Criminal Justice Association (MCJA)

<https://www.mcja.org/#/>

Conference: September 25th & 26th, 2025 @ Chicago, IL

Hotel: Aloft Hotels Magnificent Mile

Abstract Deadline: July 15, 2025

Award Submissions: July 15, 2025

Awards: Student Travel Scholarships, Student Paper Competitions, Poster Competitions, Practitioner Award, Tom Castellano Award

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Cybercrime in the Shadow of TikTok: Prevention Strategies and Future Challenges

By Csongor Herke & Bushrat Jahan

Abstract

As a global social media platform, TikTok significantly impacts cybercrime and digital regulation. This paper provides a detailed analysis of the crimes on the platform, such as data breaches, fake news, and cyberbullying. It describes the investigative tools that can effectively help uncover digital evidence. It also offers recommendations for developing regulatory and investigative strategies. These emphasize the need for global regulatory convergence and address future challenges posed by deepfakes and other artificial intelligence tools.

Keywords: TikTok, cybercrime, data protection, digital evidence, regulatory strategies

Problem Statement

In November 2024, the news hit the world press that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro had summoned the TikTok authorities over a viral challenge on the platform (Fagbemi, 2024). The “clonazepam challenge” on the TikTok website, which urged users to inhale “dangerous mixtures” of substances, served as the basis for the action. The challenge resulted in the deaths of three youngsters, ages 12, 13, and 14. The president ordered Jorge Márquez, president of the National Telecommunications Commission (Conatel) to direct TikTok Latin America to remove any content associated with the challenge.

However, the prospect of action against TikTok has been mentioned in other countries besides Venezuela. In November 2024, Australia authorized a social media ban for children under the age of 16 (Ritchie, 2024). If tech companies do not comply, they might face fines of up to A\$50 million (US\$32.5 million). According to Australian Communications Minister Michelle Rowland, the restriction will apply to Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, and Snapchat. The platforms that are used for texting and gaming and websites that do not require an account to get access (like YouTube) will not be subject to this rule. Although technology businesses are covered by the restriction, minors who violate these rules will not face consequences—similar to laws prohibiting alcohol consumption by those under 18.

According to a 2019 survey by the Cyberbullying Research Center, 36.5% of 12- to 17-year-olds in the United States have experienced online bullying. Similarly, a study in India reported a comparable figure of 37% (Pooja, 2023). Even higher rates (42%) were measured in the UK by the mental health website Ditch the Label (2020) and in Australia (44%) by the eSafety Commissioner’s (n.d.) research. Slightly lower figures (34%) were measured in Canada by MediaSmarts (n.d.) and in South Africa (36%) by UNICEF South Africa (n.d.). Figure 1 illustrates that the proportion of young people experiencing online bullying ranges from 34% to 44% in each country.

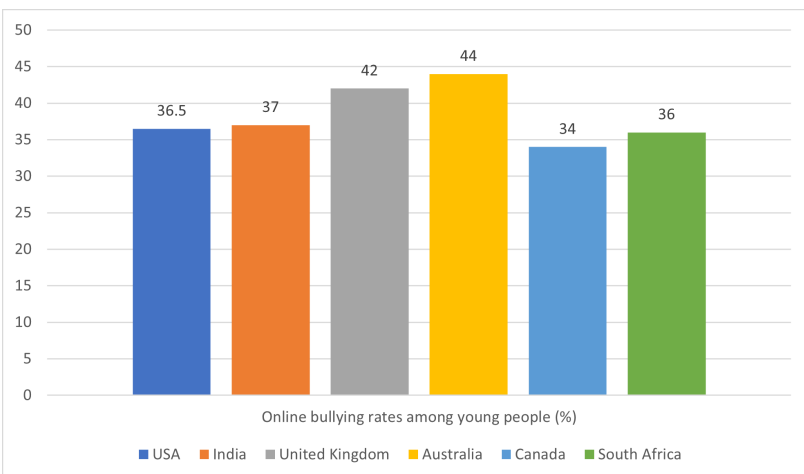


Figure 1: Online Bullying Rates Among Young People

Research Method

This study used a comprehensive methodological approach, which included several aspects, to explore the relationship between TikTok and cybercrime. The following methodological steps defined the framework for the research:

International literature review: The primary objective of the research was to review the international literature on the operation, algorithms, and cybersecurity challenges of TikTok. The study explored links between the platform and cybercrime patterns through a critical review of academic literature, reports, analyses, and relevant online sources. This included the role of digital platforms in the protection of personal data, the spread of fake news, and the impact on minors.

Statistical data analysis: The research also analyzed global and regional statistical data on TikTok-related cybercrime incidents. Data was collected from a variety of sources, including government reports, studies by international organizations, and publications from professional conferences.

Regulating TikTok's algorithms is a key issue in the context of the EU Digital Services Act (DSA) and Section 230 of the U.S. Communications Decency

Act of 1996. These laws have a fundamental impact on the platform's content moderation responsibilities and the level of data protection.

The approach used in this study incorporated multiple disciplines, including legal, sociological, and IT analyses. The synthesis of the findings provided a thorough evaluation of TikTok's role in cybercrime and the formulation of prevention strategies.

Literature Review

Literature Definition of TikTok

To explore the connection between TikTok and cybercrime, it is important to analyze the platform's characteristics, various forms, and usage. A review of several relevant studies in the literature has been conducted to establish a framework for this research.

Anderson (2020) examines the functioning, growing popularity, and social impact of the social media platform TikTok. The study highlights the role of algorithms as personalized content recommendations that contribute to user engagement but also raise security and privacy issues for the platform. The author stresses the need to educate users to identify potential risks in addition to TikTok's innovative solutions.

Auxier and Anderson (2021) looked at social media usage patterns in 2021, highlighting that 72% of U.S. adults actively use at least one platform. The research found that YouTube and Facebook are the most popular, but the popularity of TikTok has also grown significantly, especially among younger generations. The authors emphasize the growing role of platforms in information acquisition while highlighting the challenges of privacy and disinformation.

Dilon (2020) looked at the impact of TikTok on teenagers and young adults, with a particular focus

on their everyday use of the platform. The research shows that TikTok is used not only for entertainment, but also to foster creativity and build communities. It significantly influences users' behavior and identity formation. At the same time, the study draws attention to the risks associated with the platform, such as distorted self-image and increased peer pressure.

Fatima (2021) observes that TikTok has gained significant popularity among Generation Z, enabling them to express their creativity and showcase their unique identities. The platform's algorithm offers personalized content recommendations, allowing users to discover videos that align with their interests, which boosts engagement and increases the time spent on the app. Additionally, Fatima notes that TikTok serves as more than just an entertainment tool; it also opens up business opportunities. Many young entrepreneurs are using the platform to promote their products and services, reaching new markets and helping their businesses grow).

Hoffman (2021) draws parallels between the Schrems II case and the privacy challenges posed by TikTok, emphasizing the issues related to international data transfers and government access. The Schrems II case stems from a 2020 ruling by the European Court of Justice, which invalidated the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield because U.S. surveillance practices failed to meet fundamental EU legal standards, especially regarding personal data protection. Hoffman analyzes how both the U.S. and the EU have sought to regulate cross-border personal data transfers, focusing on Facebook and TikTok. He highlights the shortcomings of both approaches and advocates for the development of a global trust-based framework led by the OECD.

Liqian (2018) examines the perceived popularity of TikTok through three key factors: product positioning, content diversity, and uniqueness.

Utilizing quantitative methods, the study surveyed 200 participants born between 1970 and 2000 in Beijing. The findings revealed a positive correlation between these factors and the platform's popularity, suggesting that TikTok's success is shaped by a combination of these elements.

O'Connor, Shen, and Manley (2020) analyze the portrayal of prison life on the TikTok platform, comparing it to similar trends in the "true crime community." The authors highlight that these dark online subcultures can romanticize crime, potentially influencing young users in harmful ways. They emphasize the responsibility of platforms to limit the spread of such content and offer recommendations to address this issue.

Omar and Dequan (2020) conducted an exploration into how personality traits and user motivations shape TikTok usage patterns. Their research reveals that extroverted individuals are more inclined to create or share videos, whereas introverted users tend to engage primarily as viewers. The authors highlight that TikTok's popularity largely arises from its ability to foster social interaction and encourage creative self-expression among its users.

Findings From the Literature on Crimes That Can Be Committed on TikTok

After reviewing the fundamental characteristics of TikTok, we examined international literature on the types of crimes associated with its use. Although one would think that primarily IT crimes would arise, the platform is much broader than that (see Table 1).

Literature Source	Crime Committed on TikTok
New Age Bangladesh ("5 TikTok Youths," 2021)	violation of a national symbol
Andika (2023)	spreading fake news (HOAX)
Masters of Media (Aguilar, 2021)	true crime
Associated Press ("Alabama Student Arrested," 2021) AL.com (Koplowitz, 2021) CGTN ("Man Steals," 2018) Shejuti (2023)	crime challenge, devious licks
Ballard Brief (Smith & LeSueur, 2023) Zamharir (2024)	pornography
Dhaka Tribune ("Case Filed," 2021)	cyberbullying
The Daily Star ("Girl Kidnapped," 2021)	kidnapping
The Daily Star ("Man Surrenders," 2021)	homicide
Ek5 (2023)	suicidal persuasion
Ek5 (2023)	mass murder, incel
Rindiani (2021) Wang (2020)	illegal content distribution, data breach
The Business Standard ("Teenager TikTok Girl," 2020)	sexual violence
The Daily Star ("Transnational Gang," 2021)	human trafficking
Ek5 (2023)	drug trafficking
Reid (2022)	smuggling
Webster (1982) Shejuti (2023)	copycat crimes
Weimann (2020)	hate speech
Meichtry (2019) The Sun (Wheatstone, 2019)	beheading videos, scary videos

Table 1

Literature	Expert Method
Nofiyani & Mushlihudin (2020), Herawati & Riadi (2021), Bintang et al. (2020), Prasetyo et al. (2022), Adijisman et al. (2021), Timor et al. (2023), Riadi et al. (2020)	National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) method
Cahyo (2016), Wahyudi et al. (2021), Majeti et al. (2023), Rafika et al. (2021), Fajar & Nur (2019)	analysis of digital evidence
Rahmansyah et al. (2021), Soni & Hamadi (2022), Yuliana et al. (2022)	NIST method analysis of digital evidence
Natsir (2021), Kim et al. (2018), Na'im et al. (2023), Pandela & Riadi (2020)	other expert methods

Table 2

Certain actions classified as offenses may be considered criminal in some countries while remaining noncriminal in others. This variation highlights that behaviors deemed deviant can manifest in various forms across different cultures and legal systems. Ultimately, the essence of these actions reflects a spectrum of conduct that may challenge societal norms and expectations.

Measures Proposed by the Literature

Finally, we reviewed the literature on measures to combat TikTok-related crime (see Table 2).

Some literature analyzes the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) methodology, while others focus on digital evidence, with some overlap between the two. Additionally, other expert methodologies are also present.

Nofiyani and Mushlihudin (2020) present a digital forensic analysis of phishing attacks utilizing the methodology established by NIST. The authors simulated a fake login page and domain, adhering to NIST’s four-step process: data collection (using Wireshark), inspection (using Hashcalc), analysis, and reporting. These techniques helped identify digital evidence such as phishing URLs, attacker DNS records, IP addresses of servers and targets, and the identities and emails of both victims and perpetrators. These findings significantly contribute to the detection of cybercrime.

Herawati and Riadi (2021) conducted a forensic analysis of Facebook’s browser services utilizing the NIST methodology. Their research employed NIST’s four-phase process to recover digital evidence, including user activity, metadata, and deleted content. The findings emphasize that the NIST methodology serves as an effective tool for identifying abuse on social media platforms and aiding law enforcement efforts.

Bintang, Umar, and Yudhana (2020) have conducted a valuable forensic analysis of the Facebook Lite app using NIST methodologies. By utilizing mobile forensic tools, they effectively identified and recovered important digital evidence, such as deleted messages,

activity logs, and metadata, following the structured four stages of the NIST framework. Their findings highlight the NIST-based approach as a robust tool for uncovering cybercrimes related to Facebook Lite. This enhances the effectiveness of forensic investigations.

Prasetio, Dahlan, and Riadi (2022) conduct a forensic analysis of the web version of Telegram utilizing the NIST methodology. Their research adheres to four steps outlined by NIST to identify user activities, metadata, and digital evidence related to data communication. The findings indicate that the NIST methodology serves as an effective tool for detecting and substantiating cybercrimes committed through Telegram.

Adijisman, Dahlan, and Riadi (2021) embarked on an in-depth investigation into the forensic analysis of the WhatsApp mobile application, employing the comprehensive NIST methodology as their framework. They meticulously followed the four stages outlined by NIST to pinpoint user activities, recover deleted messages, and uncover vital digital evidence associated with potential cybercrimes. Their thorough research reveals that the NIST methodology is applicable and remarkably effective in conducting investigations and forensic analyses related to criminal activities occurring on WhatsApp. The results underscore the methodology's robustness in navigating the complexities of digital evidence retrieval and user activity analysis within mobile applications.

Timor, Dahlan, and Riadi (2023) specially focused on digital forensics analysis of TikTok web services utilizing the NIST methodology. Their research identified various digital evidence, including user activities, video metadata, and the devices employed on the platform, following the four steps outlined previously. The findings demonstrate the efficacy of the NIST methodology in investigating cybercrimes associated with TikTok and in aiding

the pursuit of justice.

Riadi, Fadlil, and Aulia (2020) present a forensic examination of digital evidence found in optical drives using the NIST methodology. Their research follows the four stages of NIST to effectively identify and recover deleted files, as well as to uncover data-related activities. The results indicate that the NIST methodology can be effectively applied to the analysis of optical drives in digital forensic investigations.

Regarding the literature on digital evidence, the first study to be highlighted is that of Cahyo (2016), which examines the role of digital evidence in proving cybercrime in the courts. The author analyzes how digital evidence is accepted as legally valid evidence and highlights the importance of procedures for collecting it and ensuring its authenticity. The paper stresses that appropriate legislation and technical expertise are essential to ensure that digital evidence is used effectively in the fight against cybercrime.

Wahyudi, Muntasa, Yusuf, and Hamzah (2021) engaged in impactful research on developing and testing digital evidence for cybercrime in a digital forensics workshop. They established a robust process for collecting, analyzing, and verifying digital evidence, ensuring its legal admissibility and credibility in court. The results demonstrate that these workshops not only enhance technical capabilities but also significantly improve the efficiency of investigative and judicial processes in the field of cybercrime.

Majeti et al. (2023) introduced sophisticated forensic techniques for the collection and analysis of digital evidence derived from web browser activities. Their research applied innovative methods to identify, recover, and analyze data, emphasizing user interactions and metadata. The

findings demonstrate that these advanced forensic approaches serve as effective tools for detecting cybercrime and ensuring the integrity of evidence.

Rafika, Qibriya, Ambarwati, and Susilo (2021) are engaged in digital forensic analysis of instant messaging applications on Android-based smartphones. Their research outlines methods for collecting and analyzing digital evidence to identify and recover data, messages, and metadata from applications like WhatsApp and Telegram. The findings demonstrate that the forensic techniques presented can be effectively utilized to uncover evidence of cybercrime and assist the justice system.

Fajar and Nur (2019) conducted a study on forensic analysis tools for web browsers to effectively search for and collect digital evidence. Their research compared the functionalities of various forensic software, including features for logging visited pages, tracking cookies, and analyzing browsing history. The results highlight that selecting the appropriate tools is crucial for reliably identifying and processing the data needed to prove instances of cybercrime.

As previously noted, several studies not only present the NIST methodology but also explore digital evidence in detail, with some overlaps among the research. Notably, the study conducted by Rahmansyah, Carudin, and Ali Ridha (2021) compares digital evidence from the Facebook and Instagram applications in the context of the NIST methodology. This research indicates that studies involving Instagram generally demonstrate a higher success rate in recovering deleted content and analyzing activity logs compared to Facebook. The findings suggest that the NIST methodology serves as an effective tool for identifying digital evidence and investigating cybercrime across both platforms.

Soni and Hamadi (2022) engaged in a comprehensive examination of digital evidence derived from the MiChat smartphone application, employing the NIST methodology. This research utilized systematic data collection and analytical techniques to uncover user activities, messages, metadata, and recover deleted data. The results highlight the NIST-based approach as an effective tool for identifying evidence of cybercrimes involving the MiChat app. This, in turn, contributes to the integrity of the justice system.

Yuliana, Yuniati, Zen, and Kresna (2022) analyzed digital evidence related to cyberbullying on social media platforms using the NIST 800-101 methodology. Their research followed the four phases outlined by NIST: data collection, investigation, analysis, and reporting. They examined content indicative of cyberbullying, including messages, metadata, and activity logs. The results indicated that the NIST methodology provides a structured and reliable framework for uncovering evidence of cybercrime and supporting forensic investigations.

In our analysis, we also examined several expert studies, including Natsir's (2021) research on the forensic analysis of content and timestamps within the TikTok application. This study demonstrates how this data can be utilized to reconstruct user activities, such as tracking the timing and content of uploaded videos. The findings emphasize that timestamps and metadata are effective tools for investigating and gathering evidence related to cybercrimes involving TikTok.

Kim, Jang, Kim, and Wan (2018) evaluated sampling methods for content analysis of Twitter data. Their research compares various sampling techniques, including time-based, random, and keyword-based sampling, focusing on their representativeness and accuracy of results. The findings highlight that selecting the right sampling

strategy is essential when analyzing social media data, especially to ensure reliable and valid results.

Na'im, Jum'ah, Wijaya, and Ismail (2023) employed the Digital Forensic Process Model (DFD) for tracking social media through Hunchly tools. Their research demonstrates how digital evidence can be effectively collected and analyzed using Hunchly, which thoroughly documents browsing activities and online interactions. The findings indicate that the integration of the DFD model with Hunchly serves as a dependable approach for detecting cybercrime and enhancing digital investigation processes.

Pandela and Riadi (2020) undertook an in-depth investigation into the browser forensics of TikTok web applications, concentrating on user activities and metadata. They employed forensic tools such as FTK Imager and Browser History Examiner to successfully recover deleted data, including videos, profile information, and browsing history. Their results clearly illustrate the efficacy of these tools in uncovering evidence of cybercrimes linked to TikTok, significantly supporting investigative efforts.

TikTok as a Potential Platform for Cybercrime

The rapid evolution of information technology has dramatically transformed how we share and access information, allowing it to be disseminated at lightning speed across the globe. With remarkable advancements in technology and digital media, individuals from diverse corners of the world can now communicate with one another instantly, bridging vast geographical distances with just a click. This shift has elevated the role of social media platforms, embedding them in everyday life. They now influence nearly every aspect of our existence—from personal relationships to professional networking—and shape public opinion in unprecedented ways (Zamharir & Gani, 2024).

Social media platforms such as TikTok, with their extensive global user base, are exceptionally well-suited for the dissemination of various types of content, including images, videos, and text messages. Nevertheless, the widespread appeal of these platforms also brings inherent risks, as they can be leveraged to propagate misinformation, false narratives, or hoaxes.

The widespread use of social media demonstrates the significant influence that these platforms have on social communication. TikTok, in particular, has gained immense popularity among the younger generation, as they share creative content and document their daily lives. What makes TikTok unique is its emphasis on allowing users to express themselves creatively through short videos (Rifqi & Riadi, 2024). As noted by Shejuti (2023), the appeal of TikTok lies in the fact that anyone can create content and connect with a global audience. Additionally, users are often drawn to its user-friendly interface and the endless possibilities for content consumption (Shejuti, 2023). TikTok utilizes its algorithm to provide users with content that matches their interests, leading to increased engagement and interaction. The platform's rapid rise in popularity has even allowed incarcerated individuals to connect with the outside world and share glimpses of their lives on social media. The phenomenon known as "Prison TikTok" features inmates posting videos that showcase the challenges of prison life, recreational activities, food preparation, and elements of the prison subculture (Reid & Niebuhr, 2022).

Hoaxes pose a significant challenge in today's digital landscape. These are false claims that use manipulated images or videos to lend credibility. Such content is frequently aimed at defaming individuals or organizations and inflicting social harm. The prevalence of fake news extends beyond social media, also leading to legal ramifications. To address these issues effectively, it is essential to

collect the right digital evidence to identify and hold the perpetrators accountable (Andika et al., 2023).

As one of the world's most popular social media platforms, TikTok boasts more than 1 billion active users, many of whom are under the age of 14. Despite its significant influence on children, the algorithm that curates content on TikTok remains largely opaque. This lack of transparency presents serious challenges in addressing crimes that occur on or involve the platform. TikTok continuously analyzes user interactions—such as the duration spent watching videos, along with likes and shares—to tailor content recommendations. The algorithm is specifically designed to enhance user retention and prolong time spent on the platform, often resulting in harmful consequences.

One of the principal risks associated with TikTok's algorithm is its ability to manipulate content exposure. Research indicates that young users who are exposed to harmful content quickly receive an even greater volume of such videos as recommendations. The algorithm prioritizes user engagement, even if it means perpetually presenting users with detrimental material. Studies show that platforms like TikTok lack adequate protections for young users, often recommending content that negatively impacts mental health and frequently violates community guidelines (Ekō, 2023).

Main Crimes Related to TikTok

The literature review clearly illustrates that TikTok serves as a platform that can facilitate a wide range of criminal activities. We want to draw attention to several of these offenses, as they hold particular significance in understanding the darker aspects of social media interaction.

- **Cyberbullying and online harassment:** Cyberbullying and online harassment have

- **Human trafficking and sexual exploitation:** TikTok has increasingly become a target for criminal organizations, especially in the areas of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Criminals use the platform to find potential victims, often targeting young girls who are vulnerable and easily manipulated by their desire for fame. They may promise celebrity endorsements, modeling careers, or similar opportunities to lure these victims. As a result, many end up becoming victims of international trafficking or sexual exploitation. In such cases, TikTok serves merely as a means of contact that leads to offline crimes. This situation is particularly dangerous, as criminal organizations exploit the naivety of young people and the popularity of the platform ("Girl Kidnapped," 2021).

- **Copypat crimes:** The challenges of TikTok frequently drive young users to engage in risky behavior. Participation in such challenges frequently results in illicit activity such as theft, vandalism, or violence. These so-called "copypat crimes" occur when people conduct crimes inspired by TikTok videos (Webster, 1982). One of the best-known examples is the "devious lick" challenge, in which students stole school supplies and posted them on TikTok. The challenge soon gained popularity and caused issues in schools throughout the world. This form of crime is frequently inadvertently malicious but can have major implications for individuals involved, including school disciplinary action and legal repercussions (Shejuti, 2023).

- **Fame crimes:** Some users are engaging in more extreme behavior in an attempt to increase their number of followers and views on TikTok. These crimes are frequently violent or unlawful deeds committed to garner attention. To boost their social media presence, some users may even engage in acts of homicide, vandalism, or harassment (Shejuti, 2023). As an illustration, consider Zachary

T. Latham, who became well-known after making films of himself harassing his neighbor. Ultimately, the recordings sparked a dispute that resulted in homicide (Geiger, 2020).

- **Fake news and misinformation:** The TikTok platform is also plagued by the issue of false information and fake news. Users can distribute misleading information fast, which can lead to confusion or panic. Fake news can spread especially dangerously during public health emergencies, epidemics, and political elections. Videos disseminating misleading information about COVID-19 vaccines or political events have frequently been posted on the platform. One of the biggest challenges facing public agencies and social media platforms is combating false information and fake news (Rifqi & Riadi, 2024).

- **Financial scams and frauds:** TikTok users could fall prey to money frauds and scams. Videos that promise rapid money-making techniques or phony investment opportunities are frequently encountered. These scams typically include requesting money from people, promising them a large return, and then giving them nothing in return.

Suggestions on Investigative Tools, Prevention Strategies and Future Challenges Related to the TikTok Platform

TikTok, as a prominent global social media platform, has unfortunately become a venue for various crimes, including cyberbullying, phishing, and the dissemination of false information. Actions such as those taken in Venezuela and age-related restrictions in other countries may serve as common strategies to combat offenses on TikTok. However, these measures primarily function as preventative safeguards to avert future incidents, underscoring the need for concrete solutions to identify and substantiate offenses that have already taken place.

Identifying digital evidence—such as phishing URLs, attacker DNS data, IP addresses of servers and victims, and emails of both perpetrators and victims—can greatly support cybercrime investigations (Nofiyah & Mushlihudin, 2020). Additionally, mobile forensic tools can be employed to identify and recover digital evidence, including deleted messages, activity logs, and metadata (Bintang et al., 2020). The research shows that the NIST methodology is effective in uncovering misuse on social media platforms such as Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, and TikTok, while also supporting digital forensic analysis—including of optical drives—in law enforcement.

The main challenge with digital evidence often lies in its collection. Effective search and retrieval of digital evidence can rely on logging visited web pages, cookies, and browsing history (Fajar & Nur, 2019). It is crucial to emphasize that appropriate legislation and technical expertise are essential for utilizing digital evidence effectively in the fight against cybercrime. Digital evidence can only be significant in criminal proceedings if it is recognized as legally valid and if the procedures for its collection and authenticity are credible (Cahyo, 2016). When these conditions are met, it can lead to significantly more efficient investigative and judicial processes in the realm of cybercrime (Wahyudi et al., 2021). Additionally, innovative techniques for identifying, recovering, and analyzing data can serve as valuable tools for detecting cybercrime and ensuring the credibility of the evidence (Majeti et al., 2023).

Forensic analysis of the content and timestamps within the TikTok application can be instrumental in investigations. These data allow for the reconstruction of user activities, including tracking the timing and content of uploaded videos (Natsir, 2021). However, selecting the appropriate sampling strategy—be it time-based, random, or keyword-based—is crucial when analyzing social

media data (Kim et al., 2018). Cybercriminals often go to great lengths to hide their activities—just like traditional offenders. However, advanced forensic tools can effectively recover deleted data, including videos, profile details, and browsing history (Pandela & Riadi, 2020).

To enhance the safety of TikTok and similar platforms, it is crucial to implement robust prevention strategies that focus on stricter regulation and comprehensive user education. One fundamental approach involves increasing the transparency of algorithms used by the platform, which would allow users to better understand how content is curated and presented to them. Additionally, improving the filtering systems for harmful content is vital; this means developing more effective mechanisms to identify and eliminate misleading or dangerous materials before they can reach users.

Strengthening data protection measures is another essential component of ensuring user safety, as it helps safeguard personal information from misuse and breaches. Moreover, promoting digital literacy, particularly among younger audiences, plays a pivotal role in preventing cybercrime. By incorporating digital literacy into educational curriculums, we can equip future generations with the skills they need to navigate online environments safely and responsibly.

Looking ahead, there are significant challenges on the horizon, particularly with the rise of advanced criminal techniques, such as deepfake technology. This innovative yet potentially harmful tool can create deceptively realistic fake videos and audio recordings, which may be used to spread disinformation or manipulate public opinion.

Compounding these issues is the current lack of uniformity in global regulations, making it increasingly difficult to hold platforms accountable

for their content and behaviors. To navigate these complexities effectively, governments, technology companies, and civil society organizations must work in closer collaboration. Such partnerships are key to enhancing the overall security of TikTok and ensuring a safer online community for all users.

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Gender Differences in Strain Among Chinese Adolescents

By Juan J. Mei & Amaia Iratzoqui

Abstract

Outside of the Western world, scant research uses general strain theory (GST) to examine the relationship between strain and delinquency, and even fewer studies look across the spectrum of gender and race/ethnicity. In China, there is limited research on the applicability of GST to explain juvenile delinquency, particularly the gender differences across strains, emotions, and coping strategies. This paper systematically reviews GST research through the lens of intersectionality, to explain the gender differences (1) in the GST model among Chinese adolescents, given the Confucian influence on gender roles and hierarchy, and (2) within specific components of the GST model.

Keywords: general strain theory, Chinese youth, gender differences, delinquency

Introduction

The rise of juvenile delinquency is a worldwide social issue, especially in China. The Supreme People's Court of China (SPC) defines juvenile delinquency as illegal activities committed by individuals at the age of 25 or younger (Kang, 2023). Although the Chinese adolescent population (10 to 19 years old) was 158 million in 2020, there has been a significant decline in the adolescent population since 2000 (UNICEF China, 2023). Yet, despite declining population rates, the number of incarcerated youths has surged, from 199,212 in 1998 to 245,074 in 2020 (cited in Kang, 2023).

Limited work has been done to understand the reasons for this trend, particularly from an outside perspective. Developed by Robert Agnew (1992), general strain theory (GST) argues that adolescents engage in deviant behavior as a form of corrective action to the negative emotions experienced after a source of strain. Despite being developed for the Western world, GST may be an especially appropriate theoretical explanation for Chinese delinquency. Chinese adolescents are certainly susceptible to strain, as the pressure to succeed academically and professionally has been a longstanding tradition within Confucianism (Bao & Haas, 2009; Liu & Lin, 2007). Chinese people also view status achievement, which the Confucius doctrine equates to family honor, as a channel to obtain personal happiness.

Moreover, the gender differences in negative emotions and coping within the GST model (Broidy & Agnew, 1997) may also be reconciled within Chinese culture broadly, as well as their patterns of juvenile delinquency. Confucian beliefs have heavily influenced China's hierarchical stipulation for men and women and sex-typing, and they have created gender differences at home, school, and work (Liu, 2016). Men are typically expected to have high educational and occupational attainment and become the primary provider for the family, whereas women are expected to exist for the sake of men (Liu & Lin, 2007). As a majority of the adolescent population in China is male (53.6% or 84.66 million) versus female (46.4% or 73.28 million), it is perhaps not surprising research indicates that like their Western counterparts, Chinese male adolescents are more susceptible to delinquent involvement (Agnew et al., 2002; Cheung et al., 2007; Liu, 2012).

However, very little strain-delinquency research has been done outside of the Western world (Liu & Lin,

2007). There is even less research on gender differences in patterns of juvenile delinquency crime rates in a country like China, which represents a large part of the world's population. The following systematic review summarizes evidence that (1) examines Chinese populations specifically, and (2) addresses the gender differences in strains among Chinese adolescents through the lens of GST.

Literature

The Applicability of General Strain Theory

Robert Agnew's (1992) GST is a revised version of the classic strain theories, specifically focusing on adolescent delinquency, among other outcomes, as maladaptive coping strategies to stressors. Agnew argues that juveniles experience three major types of strain, with different negative impacts on behavior: (1) the prevention of achieving positively valued goals; (2) the removal of, or threat of removing, positively valued stimuli; or (3) the presence or threat of noxious or negatively valued stimuli (Agnew, 1992). Strain produces negative emotions, which place pressure on people to respond with some form of coping to reduce, minimize, or escape from the strain. Certain strains are more likely to be managed with coping mechanisms related to delinquent and criminal behavior when they are seen as unjust, high in magnitude, or produce situations conducive to criminal forms of coping (Agnew, 2013).

GST has also seen several extensions in recent years. Agnew et al. (2002) emphasize the importance of personality traits, focusing on how juveniles turn to delinquency due to their high negative emotionality and low constraint. Subjects with high negative emotionality and low constraints tend to be more likely to act on their delinquent impulses by risk taking and resolving strain with aggressive or antisocial behavior. In his latest version of GST, Agnew (2013) discusses several

factors that must converge before criminal coping occurs, including individuals (1) possessing characteristics that generate a strong tendency for criminal coping; (2) experiencing unjust and high-in-magnitude criminogenic strains; and (3) engaging in situations open to criminal coping. The unfulfilled conditions of individual traits and social norms that contribute to strain and negative emotions can increase or decrease the likelihood of deviance for individuals, depending on the availability of coping mechanisms and resources.

Intersectionality and GST

It is also important to consider the potential for gender differences in the GST model. Broidy and Agnew (1997) examine how gender plays a role in GST and discover the differences in how males and females experience different types of strains, as well as how negative emotions experienced across gender groups may increase the chances of aggressive crimes (for males) and self-directed and escapist behavior (for females). Broidy and Agnew argue that differences in coping strategies, social support systems, opportunities, social control, and the tendency to commit crime are the reasons why male individuals are more likely to respond to strains with delinquency and crime.

In addition, the experiences of strain can be compounded by factors not just related to gender but also race and ethnicity. The intersectional nature of crime can leave certain populations especially vulnerable to this source of strain. For example, sexual victimization is predominately a female form of victimization (Jennings et al., 2012), while low-income and disadvantaged populations may face an "intersectionality of terror" in terms of their dual vulnerability from danger occurring in both their home and community (Fine & Weis, 1998). These experiences almost certainly have a lasting impact, as evidence suggests that experiences of both racial and gender-based

dangers impact overall mental health and well-being (Perry et al., 2013).

Specific Application of GST to Non-Western Populations

While most applications of intersectionality have looked at Black and Latino populations, Agnew (2015) calls for an application of these principles to Asian populations, as well. Indeed, extant research indicates GST can be used to link stressors, emotions, and outcomes among Asian populations. Interpersonal strain such as negative relationships with parents, teachers, and peers was indirectly linked to delinquency for Chinese and Filipino youth (Bao et al., 2004; Maxwell, 2001). These strains have an impact on delinquency as both objective and subjective stressors (Lin & Mieczkowski, 2011). At a macro level, higher levels of life stress and numbers of strained individuals increase the aggregate strain indirectly associated with higher aggregate delinquency in Chinese populations, and individually among Korean populations (Moon et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2018). Within the correctional context, a GST relationship linked experienced and anticipated strain to inmate misconduct and deviance among South Korean populations (Choi, 2019; Jang, 2020). Anger also appears to be the negative emotion most directly tied to non-drug delinquency and drug use, as well as violent crime, among Korean populations (Jang & Song, 2015; Lee, 2024). Negative emotions may also be indirectly tied to delinquency, when delinquent peers also influence behavior (Gao et al., 2016).

However, there is a distinct lack of studies on other Asian populations (Suzuki et al., 2018), as well as on gender applications within these populations (Huang & McKeown, 2022). A greater understanding of the cumulative findings of research on (1) Asian populations broadly; (2) the impact of gender differences; and (3) which strains,

emotions, and coping strategies are supported within a GST model is needed to fully understand the applicability, or lack thereof, of GST in non-Western countries. As identified earlier, the Chinese adolescent population is becoming an increasingly larger proportion of the world's delinquent youth. This review addresses this gap by systematically reviewing the research on GST in terms of gender differences in Chinese adolescent populations, identifying themes in findings, and providing a basis for future research in the area.

Current Study

The objective of the systematic review was to examine the current state of research on evidence of gender differences in strains for Chinese adolescents. Specifically, the research looked at

- 1: Are there gender differences in GST supported relationships for Chinese adolescents?
- 2: Are there specific gender differences in strains and emotions across the strain-delinquency relationship for Chinese adolescents?

The research reviewed was examined to see whether it supported or did not support the following hypotheses:

- 1: Gender differences in GST-supported relationships are evident for Chinese adolescents.
- 2: Gender differences in strains and emotions explain the strain-delinquency relationship for Chinese adolescents.

Methods

A search for studies was first conducted on Google Scholar, a search engine that includes scholarly journals, books, theses, and dissertations, and then within the reference lists of identified articles as a second resource. While this resource has its

limitations (see, e.g., Cohn & Farrington, 2012), it was employed in the current review for ease of access by both authors. Keywords used included “strains among Chinese adolescents,” “gender differences in strains-delinquency in China,” and “general strain theory Chinese youth.” Both authors conducted searches separately and over multiple dates to ensure impartiality and independence of findings.

Paper titles and abstracts were scanned to see if they (a) were in English¹, (b) were published in or after the year 2000, (c) examined the strain-delinquency relationship among Chinese youth, (d) focused on GST, and (e) focused on the gender differences in strains. Studies were excluded if they (a) did not use GST; (b) conducted the studies on Chinese Americans living in the West; (c) did not explicitly examine gender differences; and (d) did not study adolescents, the focus of the GST-crime relationship. A total of 10 studies met the criteria.

Results

Table 1 summarizes the results of the body of research, all of which were published between 2004 and 2023. As a whole, the research underscores the shared strains among Chinese adolescents and gender differences in strains while highlighting the Confucian beliefs and Chinese gender roles that influence these differences. The systematic review revealed three main themes in the research: (1) gender differences; (2) support for an intersectional perspective; and (3) support for certain types of strains, emotions, and coping strategies across gender.

¹ Although the study focuses on Chinese youth, the review process was limited to English-only studies for both ease of review and of replication by a majority-English language scholarly body.

Gender Differences

Research provides evidence of both gender similarities and differences in strains, emotions, and coping strategies among Chinese juveniles. Liu and Lin (2007) report that boys commit more deviant activities, have more delinquent attitudes and peers, and have lower self-control; adolescents who reported higher levels of frustration also reported greater involvement in juvenile crimes. Supporting a GST model, male and female adolescents turn to criminal coping when experiencing negative emotions due to strains, but the strains can differ between males and females. For example, although the breakup of romantic relationships serves as a strain for adolescents generally, family financial stress is more impactful for males, while health-related stressors are more impactful for females (Liu, 2016).

The Intersectionality of Gender and Ethnicity

Research that specifically focuses on Chinese populations suggests that stressors impacting males tend to be more representative of their impact on others, while stressors for female Chinese populations tend to be more self-directed. Studies indicate that the strain of status achievement and finances are significantly correlated to delinquency for Chinese male adolescents (Liu & Lin, 2007; Liu, 2016). Chinese male adolescents tend to have more pressure to succeed in the academic and working fields because they are the main providers for their families. Parental marital instability may disrupt family order and the privileged status of being male in Chinese society (Liu, 2016). Additionally, one study not only found a relationship between educational goal blockage and delinquency but also connected it to negative school experiences (Cheung & Cheung, 2010). Because education and peer connections are highly valued by Chinese adolescents, negative

Table 1. Summary of Studies

Study	Resource	Source of Strain (IV)	Form of Delinquency (DV)	Key Findings
Li, Zhang, & Cheng (2023)	Sample of students Grades 8–9 from four junior high schools in a city in China ($n = 552$)	Academic stress, extracurricular participation	Physical, verbal, and relational aggression and anxiety	Academic stress increases adolescents' anxiety levels and may lead to aggression and problematic behaviors. Anxiety can induce aggression when not properly handled.
Xu, Sun, & Wu (2023)	Sample of elementary and middle school left-behind children (LBC) and non-left-behind children (NLBC) in three Chinese cities ($n = 1,036$)	LBC status, depression, school strains: academic difficulty and bullying victimization	Tardiness, truancy, use of profanities, fighting, and excessive video game playing on computer or mobile	LBC are less likely to be involved in delinquency. Male adolescents, middle school students, and students undergoing parental abuse and poverty are more likely to show signs of depression, which relates to higher delinquent behavior.
Yu & Chan (2019)	Sample of rural-to-urban migrant children in two cities in China ($n = 631$)	Three forms of victimization: family, interpersonal, and community	Status offenses, minor offenses, property offenses, and violent behavior	Male adolescents are more likely to commit deviant behavior than female adolescents, except for cheating, truancy, staying out overnight, and threats or acts of violence.
Liu (2016)	Sample of middle school students from an urban city in China ($n = 589$)	Domain-specific events: parent marital instability, family financial disruption, health crisis, romantic dissolution. Aggregated life events: one index that contains all four strains	Illegal/disruptive behaviors such as acts of violence, alcohol consumption, tobacco use, theft, and vandalism	Family financial disruption is related to delinquency for male adolescents while health crisis is related for female adolescents. Romantic dissolution is significant for male and female adolescents.
Bao, Haas, Chen, & Pi (2014)	Sample of public-school students in Grades 8 to 11 in three areas of China ($n = 615$)	Negative treatment by parents and teachers, parent attachment, school attachment, conventional beliefs about morality, and relationship with delinquent peers	Acts of violence and property offenses	Repeated negative treatment by parents and especially by teachers increases delinquency. Female adolescents are less susceptible to delinquency.
Liu (2012)	Sample of middle school students in China ($n = 1,735$)	Achievement strains such as school grades, career, interpersonal relationships, relationship with their peers, personal appearances	Illegal/disruptive behaviors such as acts of violence, alcohol consumption, tobacco use, theft, and vandalism	Achievement strains increase delinquent involvement for Chinese adolescents. Boys report more delinquent activities.

Study	Resource	Source of Strain (IV)	Form of Delinquency (DV)	Key Findings
Cheung & Cheung (2010)	Sample of Chinese students from nine schools in Hong Kong ($n = 1,015$)	Educational goal blockage, coercive parenting, negative school experiences, negative relations with peers, and stressful live events	Loitering at midnight, running away from home, truancy, smoking, drinking, gambling, vandalism, theft, robbery, acts of violence, joining a gang, and intimidation/blackmail	Educational goal blockage and negative school experiences are significant strains for males, and negative relations with peers and negative school experiences are significant strains for females.
Liu & Lin (2007)	Sample of middle school students in China ($n > 1,700$)	Academic, financial, and status achievement blockages, physical well-being, career, interpersonal relations, relationships with peers	Smoking, drinking, acts of violence, theft, vandalism, lying/cheating, and filial defiance	Academic and financial blockages are the most inducing strains for Chinese adolescents. Males are more vulnerable to status achievement strains whereas females are vulnerable to physical well-being strains.
Bao, Haas, & Pi (2007)	Sample of middle and high school students from rural and urban areas of China ($n = 615$)	Interpersonal strain variables: negative relations with parents, teachers, and peers	Acts of violence and property offenses	Male students and low-income students reported more delinquency. Female adolescents are more likely to seek support from friends and family members while male adolescents are more likely to show delinquent behaviors when they have more delinquent friends.
Bao, Haas, & Pi (2004)	Sample of middle and high school students from rural and urban areas of China ($n = 615$)	Poor relations with parents, teachers, and peers	Acts of violence, property offenses, and school deviance	Negative relations with parents and peers impact delinquent behavior.

school experiences can disrupt educational attainment and peer relationships and result in school suspension. In sum, the removal of these positively valued stimuli appears to more likely prompt boys to commit delinquent activities to cope with these stressors.

For Chinese female adolescents, Liu and Lin (2007) note that the strain of physical well-being, such as physical looks and health, are more significantly correlated to delinquency. Due to the exposure to Western values that center on physical appearance, Chinese adolescents are facing severe pressure to conform to societal beauty

standards as attractive physical appearance plays a significant role in employment, career advancement, status, and popularity (Liu, 2012). Because women are viewed as servants to men due to Confucian beliefs, physical appearance is deemed a greater advantage for girls than academic ability. Compared to men, who are pressured to achieve social status while obtaining academic success, Asian women are less susceptible to status-related concerns when obtaining the same academic success (Liu & Lin, 2007). The failure to achieve such beauty standards that are highly valued for the female sex causes criminal coping to occur.

One study finds negative school experiences most correlated with delinquency for Chinese female students (Cheung & Cheung, 2010). Although male adolescents suffer more from negative school experiences than female adolescents, this type of strain is still a key source of frustration for female adolescents. Although previous studies also reveal that girls are more susceptible to interpersonal and relational strains in Western settings (Agnew & Brezina, 1997), the consistency for Chinese female youth is notable given the influence of Confucian beliefs in the East.

Types of Strains, Emotions, and Coping Strategies

Studies show that the strain that Chinese adolescents overall are most responsive to is the failure to achieve academic and financial goals (Liu & Lin, 2007; Cheung & Cheung, 2010; Liu, 2016). Educational stress impacts mental disorders, such as anxiety, that induce aggression when mismanaged (Li et al., 2023). Another study conducted on Chinese left-behind children (LBC) discovered that LBC status is correlated to academic difficulty and depression (Xu et al., 2023).

However, school support and family support buffers the impact of adverse treatment by authority figures, especially for girls. Bao et al. (2007) found that female adolescents turn to peer support when they have negative relationships with parents while male adolescents turn to delinquent behaviors when they have more delinquent friends. The school experience is crucial for Chinese adolescents, as lack of success in school can lead to negative treatment from teachers, rejection by peers, and being labeled as a failure. Due to Confucian beliefs, Chinese adolescents (especially males) face great pressure to succeed academically and financially to achieve a high status that represents family pride and honor.

However, other work looked at multiple sources of strain, including victimization. Yu and Chan (2019) focused on three types of victimization (strains): family, including child maltreatment and witnessing family violence; interpersonal, among peers and siblings; and community, conventional crimes. They found that male adolescents are more likely to display delinquent behaviors than female adolescents, and that family victimization and interpersonal victimization were associated with more types of deviant behaviors compared to community victimization.

Discussion

Overall, findings from this research supported (1) a GST model for Chinese adolescents; (2) gender differences between male and female juveniles; and (3) different sources of strain, emotions, and coping strategies both specific to Chinese populations and to larger juvenile delinquency patterns. First, this research indicates that Chinese adolescents generally turn to crime when they are prevented from achieving academic and financial goals (Liu & Lin, 2007; Cheung & Cheung, 2010; Liu, 2016). Second, there are gender differences in how boys and girls respond to different types of strains. These studies showed that the stressors for Chinese male adolescents are status achievement, education blockage, and finances (Liu & Lin, 2007; Cheung & Cheung, 2010; Liu, 2016). These findings are consistent with the Western counterpart that supports the strain-delinquency connection. Other strains for boys include parental marital instability, romantic dissolution, and negative school experiences (Liu, 2016; Cheung & Cheung, 2010).

However, the strains for female adolescents do not largely match other studies in Western settings. Studies reveal physical well-being, romantic dissolution, health crisis, and negative school experiences to be stressors for Chinese female adolescents, but interpersonal and relational strains

tend to be more important for Western female adolescents (Liu & Lin, 2007; Liu, 2012; Liu, 2016; Cheung & Cheung, 2010; Agnew & Brezina, 1997; Hoffman & Su, 1997). As Chinese society and cultural values are heavily influenced by the Confucius doctrine, educational and financial achievements are highly valued and viewed as an equivalent to family honor and pride. For men, there is greater pressure to perform well in school to obtain a high-paying job, whereas for women, physical appearance is extremely important as employment, career advancements, and relationships depend on looks.

Limitations and Implications

There are several limitations to the current systematic review. First, there were only 10 studies reviewed. Given the absence of studies, it is not possible to make broad conclusions on the reliability of these research findings across Chinese populations, male or female. As China is the second-most populated country in the world, with many different ethnic groups and cultures, it is not possible to generalize to its entire population. Furthermore, some may consider the Special Administrative Regions (SARs), Hong Kong and Macau, and particular regions and countries, such as Taiwan and Tibet, to be separate or part of China; thus, researchers need to clarify which region of China is being studied and the context in which the strain operates.

Additionally, there were limits to the topics and approaches each of these studies covered in their analyses. That is, the source of strains, emotions, and coping strategies were constrained to the coverage of the included studies. Other strains, negative emotions, and coping strategies may also be relevant, particularly when looking at gender differences. For example, the scope of gender in the current body of research is largely binary, despite some work indicating that stress, loneliness,

and drug use are linked in a GST-type relationship for trans Chinese women (Xu et al., 2023). As well, the data themselves necessitate a broader scope; longitudinal data is needed for future studies to more rigorously test the causal relationship between gender differences in stressors among juveniles in China and delinquency over time, since prior works used cross-sectional data.

Conclusion

The results from this systematic review offer specific directions for future research, broadly and substantively. First, there is a clear need for more research that involves international populations, both by Asian scholars and Western authors. Most of the scholars doing work on Asian populations, specifically Chinese samples, appear to be Asian themselves. International scholars (whether they are Asian or Western) need to submit their work to a variety of outlets for more research on Asian populations to be conducted and disseminated (Cohn et al., 2019).

Future research also needs to unpack more of the contextual differences between strains, emotions, and coping strategies, especially between genders. In addition, the body of work thus far has focused on gender differences in delinquency, but evidence also suggests these coping strategies create differential opportunities in subsequent victimization (see, e.g., Iratzogui, 2020). Moreover, studies should more closely examine the interactions between emotions and gender in the strain model, as gender roles and Confucian beliefs in Chinese society may dictate the way emotions are shown and differ for each gender (Liu, 2021). Prospective research incorporating cultural values and beliefs when examining stressors for delinquency and crime may better enhance the model from an intersectional perspective.

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