

ACJS *Today*

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New Study Suggests Novel Explanation for Public Attention to Mass Violence Events

Jack Levin* and Julie B. Wiest**

What is it that draws news consumers to stories about mass violence events? Despite decades of scholarly attention to this question, the answer is still unclear. Some scholars suggest that observing violence from afar can produce a cathartic effect, allowing the observer to “get it out of his system” without actually having to commit a violent act (Campbell, 1993; Durkin & Barber, 2002). Others argue that the attention is related to a fascination with the gory details of mass violence events (Krcmar & Kean, 2005; Slater, 2003; Vicary & Fraley, 2010). Still others suggest that interest in extreme violence is an escape from the very real problems of everyday life (Miron, 2003; Sparks & Sparks, 2000; Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld,

2004). Findings from our recently conducted study, however, indicate that for many people, attention to mass violence may have little to do with interest, enjoyment, escape, or morbid fascination. In fact, our data indicate that news consumers actually may be searching for nearly the exact opposite: a silver lining or glimmer of hope (Levin & Wiest, 2018).

Incidents of mass violence inevitably—and understandably—inflame emotions and generate a host of questions, both for those directly affected and for others watching from a distance. In the immediate aftermath, journalists rush to these scenes to begin reporting every piece of information as it is uncovered or announced in real time. News media outlets devote enormous amounts of print

space and broadcast time to these incidents, focusing mostly on details about a perpetrator's personal history, violent motivations, and deadly methods (Duwe, 2000; Fox, Levin, and Fridel, 2018; Katz, 1987; Lankford and Madfis, 2018; Tiegreen & Newman, 2009). Journalists may assume that these details are precisely what consumers want. After all, violent crime news—especially the deadliest and most bizarre—consistently draws large audiences and revenue (Miller, Purcell, & Rosenstiel, 2012). Yet, at the same time, consumers frequently say that news media devote too much attention to these stories (Pew Research Center, 2007).

This seeming contradiction has puzzled journalists and media scholars, alike. Why do consumers claim not to want crime news when such stories regularly generate the highest ratings and sales? One possibility is the so-called social desirability bias, which describes a tendency for research subjects to give socially desirable responses to controversial questions. In other words, because it is generally unacceptable to express enjoyment or fascination with violence, those who hold such private predilections may never publicly admit it. But what if that's not it? Maybe the grisly details are no draw at all. Perhaps news consumers instead flock to violent stories in spite of those details. We designed an experiment to find out.

We first developed three versions of a hypothetical news story about a deadly shooting rampage at an ordinary high school (see accompanying images at end of article). All versions appeared identical, with the same layout, same two photographs, same

number and size of headlines, and same approximate word count of the story excerpt. The only difference among the versions was the news focus: One placed the rampage shooter in the spotlight, another highlighted the killer's first victim, and the third featured a heroic student who ended the rampage and saved lives. The three versions were randomly assigned to more than 200 subjects so that each version was seen by about one-third of the sample. After subjects studied their assigned version, each was given the option to continue reading the story right away, to skip the rest of it, or to decide later. This option served as a measure of subjects' actual interest in the news story. (In fact, all three selections ended the experiment and presented subjects with a debriefing statement explaining that the news story was fictional and contained no additional text.)

Findings revealed that subjects were significantly more interested in the story about the hypothetical hero, compared to the stories featuring details about the killer or the victim. This suggests that the immense public attention that typically follows a mass violence event may be—at most—only indirectly related to interest or fascination. Instead, it could mean that many news consumers merely tolerate the grisly details (while others are repelled) as they search for a silver lining, or some sort of hope, on the edge of such tragedy. Others still may be interested in heroic stories as part of an effort to glean effective strategies that could prove useful if they encounter a similar situation.

Fortunately, real-life heroes do exist in some incidents of mass violence. As recent examples,

consider the heroes who helped save lives during the February 2018 rampage shooting that claimed 17 lives at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. To name just a few, they included assistant football coach and school security guard Aaron Feis, who lost his own life while shielding students from gunfire; geography teacher and cross-country coach Scott Beigel, who helped students get safely inside a locked classroom and was fatally shot while blocking the door; 15-year-old student Anthony Borges, who was shot multiple times while holding the door to a classroom with about 20 other students inside, all of whom were unharmed; teacher Melissa Falkowski, who hid with 19 students inside a classroom closet; and the (publicly unidentified) custodian who helped students escape from a dangerous hallway.

When these heroes reveal themselves, our study suggests that news outlets should feature them front and center—or at least more prominently than the

perpetrator(s) or victims. Not only would that practice honor their selfless actions, but it also would provide a ray of hope for the community and might inspire others to step in and save lives during a future incident. The reality is that episodes of mass violence are exceedingly rare in the United States, and most Americans will never be faced with such terrifying circumstances. Stories about heroes remind us of the good that still exists all around us, help us not to succumb to feelings of fear and helplessness, and just may restore a badly needed sense of hope. Most important, emphasizing the heroic behavior of individuals at the scene of a rampage shooting might actually encourage a new form of the copycat phenomenon. Rather than inspire future killers, we might instead inspire more heroic rescuers.

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Image 1: Experimental news article focused on the killer

“Please take a moment to examine the following news story of a recent mass murder event. Be sure to read the headlines, photo captions, and first paragraph so that you can answer a few questions on the next page.”

**Associated Press**

Center City High School students leave the school building shortly after the shooting began on April 30.

Mass murder at school

Details emerge about life of killer

“He was always so reserved and quiet. No one could have ever guessed that this would happen.”

■ **Melanie Brooks, 10th grader**

By Rachel Juniper
Associated Press

Days after the savage school shooting that claimed the lives of 30 students and teachers, new details have emerged that shed light on the life of Daniel Morrison, the student-turned-mass murderer that struck Center City High School on April 30.

Full story inside



Daniel Morrison killed 30 students and teachers at Center City High School on April 30.

Image 2: Experimental news article focused on a victim

“Please take a moment to examine the following news story of a recent mass murder event. Be sure to read the headlines, photo captions, and first paragraph so that you can answer a few questions on the next page.”

**Associated Press**

Center City High School students leave the school building shortly after the shooting began on April 30.

Mass murder at school

New information about first victim

“He was always so reserved and quiet. No one could have ever guessed that this would happen.”

■ **Melanie Brooks, 10th grader**

By Rachel Juniper
Associated Press

Days after the savage school shooting that claimed the lives of 30 students and teachers, new details have emerged that shed light on the life of Daniel Morrison, the first victim of the shooter that struck Center City High School on April 30.

Full story inside



Daniel Morrison was the first of 30 people killed at Center City High School on April 30.

Image 3: Experimental news article focused on a heroic bystander

“Please take a moment to examine the following news story of a recent mass murder event. Be sure to read the headlines, photo captions, and first paragraph so that you can answer a few questions on the next page.”

**Associated Press**

Center City High School students leave the school building shortly after the shooting began on April 30.

Mass murder at school

Meet hero student who stopped it

“He was always so reserved and quiet. No one could have ever guessed that this would happen.”

■ **Melanie Brooks, 10th grader**

By Rachel Juniper
Associated Press

Days after the savage school shooting that claimed the lives of 30 students and teachers, new details have emerged that shed light on the life of Daniel Morrison, the hero student who stopped the attack at Center City High School on April 30.

Full story inside



Daniel Morrison heroically stopped the shooting at Center City High School on April 30.

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Book Review: Dean A. Dabney & Richard Tewksbury, *Speaking Truth to Power: Confidential Informants and Police Investigations*

University of California Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-520-29048-8 (Paperback).

Reviewed by Jackie Knight* and Robert M. Worley**

In *Speaking Truth to Power: Confidential Informants and Police Investigations*, Dean Dabney and Richard Tewksbury provide readers with an in-depth examination of the clandestine world of narcotics enforcement. This ethnographic study won the coveted 2018 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Outstanding Book Award. It is based on field work carried out at two different law enforcement agencies in major metropolitan areas. The research sites are referred to throughout the book as “Central City” and “River City,” in order to provide the research subjects with anonymity. Both Dabney and Tewksbury worked with these agencies for several months. In addition to conducting a 10-month ride-along project with police officers, Dabney also spent 18 months studying the same department’s homicide unit. During their investigation of police work, the authors rode with vice squad officers, took field notes, completed interviews, and made observations. Throughout their ethnographic study, Dabney and Tewksbury dressed and acted similarly to the police officers they were observing and used a digital recorder to capture conversations with their research subjects.

In their book, the authors contend that confidential informants are citizens who, due to various circumstances and diverse motives, assist law enforcement in an active manner. The difference

between an *informant* and an *informant* is that the former merely transmits information, while the latter seeks it. Confidential informants enter into exchange relationships wherein their performance is compensated with various tangible and intangible rewards, including money, revenge, and lenient treatment in regard to pending criminal charges or minor probation/parole violations (also see Miller, 2011). Dabney and Tewksbury point out that there are also “civic-minded” informants who voluntarily provide police with information out of a genuine sense of social responsibility. These actors may be Neighborhood Watch members or “police wannabees” (our term, not Dabney and Tewksbury’s).

Speaking Truth to Power illustrates the way that officers work differently with their confidential informants. The authors periodically remind the reader that law enforcement officers need informants as much as the informant needs the officers. There are indentured informants who provide their handlers with information to avoid jail or for lesser charges. As Dabney and Tewksbury worked with the officers, they discovered that informants are an integral part of working cases. As one of the officers, Pedro, reported, “I think it would be very difficult to do my job without informants at all. Can I do my job without them?”

Absolutely! Can I do it as effective without them? Absolutely not!” (p. 64). Indeed, the above observation was made by many other police officers, some of whom insisted that it was next to impossible to be an effective investigator without informants.

“Confidential informant” evokes images of an offender who has committed a crime involving drugs and wants to snitch on his partners in crime. Yet, as the authors demonstrate in their book, confidential informants also play an important role in the investigation of commercial sex crimes. Interestingly, most of the officers Dabney and Tewksbury observed worked hard to develop quasi-friendships with some of their informants. Officers occasionally provided their sources with a token amount of money (e.g., “ten bucks”) and listened to personal stories or hardships—sometimes even offering advice. In River City, one police officer, Justin, worked to cultivate nurturing and caring relationships with his informants. He would often buy them groceries and call them, sometimes just to “check in.” According to the authors, this particular officer was especially protective of female informants, especially those who had a history of being exploited by pimps and drug dealers. Some respondents, however, reported to Dabney and Tewksbury that it was inadvisable for a male officer to get “too close” to female informants—there was the possibility they could be “set up.” One investigator described this in the following manner, “If they [informants] can ever get you to compromise yourself with drugs, alcohol, or women, then no longer are you working them. Now

they’re working you” (p. 173).

It is evident from this book that working with informants has many steps to it. First, as the authors demonstrate, there is the recruitment of an informant. Often, many officers will attempt to develop some kind of rapport during this phase. On the other hand, some officers only see informants as objects (rather than human beings) and will deliberately try to conduct themselves in an overly formal, businesslike manner. It is clear that there are different working personalities among narcotics officers, and not all informants are easy to handle. The officers also reported to Dabney and Tewksbury that there are the “good folks” and the “bad folks.” The “good folks” are law-abiding citizens in the community who are invested in their homes, children, and neighbors. The “bad folks,” on the other hand, are “troublemakers,” such as drug addicts, prostitutes, and gang members. It is noteworthy that the respondents also informed Dabney and Tewksbury that some civilians, such as civil rights leaders, will give officers a hard time and must be handled with care. One of the research subjects described his animosity toward this group in the following manner: “Just let me catch one of those Citizens Against Police Brutality people doing something wrong—man would I have fun with that...I’d love to pull one of them over and get to write them up. Hell, I might get lucky and have them try to resist!” (p. 87).

As noted in the book, drug dealers, drug distributors, and prostitutes are the classes of people focused on by the flex unit, narcotics unit, and other street-level special unit officers. In the eyes of these

investigators, drug offenders are the worst of the worst in the community and the primary reason for neighborhood problems. As we read through the pages of *Speaking Truth to Power*, it came as no surprise to learn that Dabney and Tewksbury's research subjects held negative views of offenders, especially those who peddled illicit substances. Indeed, this has been known for decades and is well-documented in Peter Manning's (1980) pivotal work, *Narcs' Game*. But, Dabney and Tewksbury go a step further, as they help readers understand the ways in which vice officers navigate the treacherous world of undercover narcotics operations. This deep sense of understanding, or what Max Weber (1949) famously refers to as "verstehen," demonstrates how there is often a symbiotic relationship between informants and police officers. It is clear from reading *Speaking Truth to Power* there are risks, but also rewards, that come with managing informants.

According to Dabney and Tewksbury, police officers in both "Central City" and "River City" were expected to maintain official documentation on informants, who had to be registered. Even though the registration procedure typically required a lengthy approval process, some of the research subjects welcomed this, as they believed it protected them. As one officer explained, "There has to be a paper trail when you deal with an informant. That's just the bottom line. I mean, you're setting yourself up for disaster if you don't have a paper trail" (p. 109). Other officers, however, viewed the approval process as an unnecessary bureaucratic ritual that took them away from doing real police work. This

aspect of the book regarding the paperwork strongly resonated with us. We both have extensive experience working in law enforcement and corrections within the State of Texas. We can confirm that the paperwork for documenting informants is extensive, and many officers complain about it. One of us can recall an experience of having to sit in a parking lot waiting for the upper level chain of command to authorize an informant to make a drug buy after his paperwork cleared. We also know that behind the prison walls, internal affairs investigators rely on documentation whenever they use inmates (sometimes as "bait") to catch deviant correctional employees who are suspected of engaging in inappropriate staff-offender relationships (see Worley, 2011).

Given that we both have experience working in law enforcement organizations, and therefore understand the importance of paperwork and documentation, we were somewhat taken aback to learn that several of Dabney and Tewksbury's research subjects often went out of their way not to register confidential informants. Indeed, one of the major findings of this book is that on many occasions informants were neither formally registered nor vetted by the upper administration. One respondent even went so far as to declare, "I'd be surprised if 20 percent of CIs [confidential informants] are on the books" (p. 111). In spite of the fact that some of the officers had a cavalier attitude toward paperwork, Dabney and Tewksbury point out that working with unregistered informants is a violation of organizational policy and could technically expose an officer to disciplinary actions.

Nevertheless, the authors discovered that many officers circumvent this policy by treating an informant as a “source of information,” or a “one-time intelligence provider” (p. 110). This not only helped an officer stay out of trouble but also prevented informants from having to be photographed and fingerprinted. Still, a few of the respondents in Dabney and Tewksbury’s study frowned on this practice and believed it violated the spirit of the departmental rules.

Throughout their book, Dabney and Tewksbury illustrate the tangible benefits for narcotics officers who work with informants. It is evident that informants are able to gain entrée into neighborhoods where police are simply unable to go. The authors also demonstrate that because informants are often in need of money, or want to “work off” a charge, police typically have leverage that can be used to manage informants effectively. This book also reveals some of the pitfalls of working with informants, who can often be unpredictable, manipulative, and perhaps, even dangerous. Dabney and Tewksbury spent literally hundreds upon hundreds of hours immersed in this ethnographic field work project. While it is obvious the authors developed cordial relationships with their research subjects, they were still not afraid to ask the tough questions, and for this, they are to be commended. This book is innovative, fun to read, and provides one of the most extensive scholarly examinations of police work that we have ever come across. We strongly recommend *Speaking Truth to Power!*

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Pedagogical Issues in Criminal Justice: Often-Ignored Problems With Null Hypothesis Significance Testing

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A recent article in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, “Assessing the Relevance of Statistics and Crime Analysis Courses for Working Crime Analysts” (Kringen, Sedelmaier, & Elink-Schuurman-Laura, 2016), demonstrated that, despite limited use of hypothesis testing among working crime analysts, statistics courses offered in support of crime analysis concentrations and/or certifications focus primarily on classical hypothesis tests relying on null hypothesis significance testing (NHST). The article advanced the position that statistics education in criminal justice at the undergraduate level should be re-oriented toward preparing consumers of statistical information rather than producers. It is perhaps unsurprising that NHST remains the primary focus in statistics courses as NHST is the most common approach to statistical inference in the social sciences and represents the primary tool used by quantitative criminologists and criminal justice researchers (Bushway, Sweeten, & Wilson, 2006). Yet despite its prevalence, the technique is highly controversial.

Criticism of NHST is almost as old as the technique itself (Pearce, 1992), and modern critics can be found in fields as diverse as psychology, political science, education, sociology, and communication (e.g., Carver, 1993; Gigerenzer, 1987; Gill, 1999;

Killeen, 2005; Kish, 1959; Krueger, 2001; Levine, Weber, Park, & Hullett, 2008; Morrison & Henkel, 1970; Nickerson, 2000; Rouder, Speckman, Sun, Morey, & Iverson, 2009; Rozeboom, 1960). Despite the abundance of literature on problems with NHST in other disciplines, the topic has received little attention within criminology and criminal justice. This limitation is noteworthy considering that one study that assessed errors in the application of NHST in criminological and criminal justice research found several common problems in articles published in both *Criminology* and *Justice Quarterly*, two of the field’s top journals (Bushway et al., 2006).

While mistakes in the application of statistical techniques and the proper interpretation of results in top-tier academic journals may seem unexpected, the issues highlighted allude to an underlying problem related to the key conclusions offered by Kringen et al. (2016). Specifically, the current state of teaching statistics in criminal justice by offering instruction in techniques appropriate for academic producers often results in substantial misunderstanding of the techniques themselves. This may result from a general tendency in social science education to ignore the controversial methodological aspects of NHST and, instead, to teach NHST as statistics per se (Gigerenzer et al.,

1989). This matter-of-fact treatment of the material may add to a lack of understanding of the problems associated with NHST, thereby increasing the likelihood of its misuse. Indeed, the most recent versions of several commonly used statistics and methods texts in criminal justice (see, e.g., Cooper, Collins, & Walsh, 2016; Lanier & Briggs, 2014; Maxfield & Babbie, 2018) contain little to no discussion of any of the problems associated with NHST. Clearly, students need to be well-versed in the limitations of techniques that are frequently employed. Therefore, we conclude that methodological instruction in criminal justice that continues to teach material suitable to academic producers should include instruction regarding the limitations of NHST. Below we discuss the history of NHST and some of the limitations of the technique.

The History of NHST

Hypothesis testing, as commonly practiced by social scientists, represents the fusion of two alternative approaches. The first, formally known as the test of significance, was developed by R. A. Fisher (1925, 1935). The second, formally known as the hypothesis test, was developed by J. Neyman and E. S. Pearson (1933; Gigerenzer & Murray, 1987; Gill, 1999; Lehmann, 1993). The two approaches were developed to address different problems. While Fisher was attempting to develop a statistical technique for general scientific inference, Neyman and Pearson were attempting to design a model to be used for applied decision making (Chow, 1996). As a result of the different goals, the Fisher and the Neyman-Pearson approaches were

remarkably different.

Fisher's Test of Significance

Fisher's technique relied on a nil-null hypothesis (i.e., a statement of no difference, or that an effect equals zero), which yielded a single sampling distribution based upon the assumption that the null hypothesis was true. Testing the null hypothesis involved observing data and calculating the probability of the data using the single sampling distribution. As the data observed become less likely (i.e., the test statistic moves further away from its expected value under the null hypothesis), it becomes less likely that the data observed occurred by chance. When the probability becomes sufficiently small, researchers would reject the null hypothesis. Otherwise, they would fail to reach a conclusion (Fisher, 1925). The steps in Fisher's test can be summarized as follows:

- (1) State the null hypothesis (H_0).
- (2) Select the appropriate test statistic.
- (3) Identify the distribution of the test statistic under the assumption that the null hypothesis is true.
- (4) Calculate the test statistic from the data.
- (5) Determine the achieved significance level using the calculated statistic and the identified distribution.
- (6) Reject H_0 if the achieved significance level is sufficiently small.

Neyman and Pearson's Hypothesis Test

The Neyman and Pearson's approach (1933) differed in that two hypotheses (H_A and hypothesis H_B) were utilized. The two hypotheses yield two

separate sampling distributions. By including the second sampling distribution and specifying an a priori α , or Type I error rate, (i.e., the probability of falsely rejecting H_A under the assumption that it is true), the Neyman and Pearson approach allowed the estimation of β , or the Type II error (the probability of failing to reject H_A when it is false). The inclusion of the second sampling distribution also allowed Neyman and Pearson to calculate the statistical power ($1 - \beta$) of a test (Gigerenzer & Murray, 1987). Statistical power represents the long-run probability of accurately rejecting a false null-hypothesis. The procedure for the Neyman-Pearson hypothesis test can be summarized as follows:

- (1) State the hypothesis of interest (H_B).
- (2) Determine the competing hypothesis (H_A).
- (3) Specify an a priori α .
- (4) Select the appropriate test statistic.
- (5) Identify the distribution of the test statistic under the assumption that H_A is true.
- (6) Develop the test that has the highest power for the a priori α .
- (7) Determine the critical value for the test.
- (8) Calculate the test statistic from the data.
- (9) Reject H_A and accept H_B if the test statistic is further from the expected test statistic than the critical value. Otherwise, accept H_A .

The Emergence of NHST

Fisher and Neyman-Pearson considered their approaches to be fundamentally incompatible and ultimately irreconcilable. Further, each side vehemently defended his approach as superior to

the other (Gigerenzer et al., 1989). This resulted in one of the most heated disputes in modern science, the effects of which have been characterized as largely destructive to the field as a whole (Zabell, 1992). Because of the ferocity surrounding their rhetoric, Fisher and Neyman-Pearson were unable to reconcile their methods, which resulted in exaggerated misunderstanding among nonstatisticians (Lehmann, 1993). Rather than engage in the debate, social scientists simply merged both sets of techniques, yielding a hybrid methodology of anonymous origin. This hybrid methodology was then taught as statistics per se and became institutionalized within the social sciences, despite the fact that neither of the founding camps would have accepted the methodology (Gigerenzer et al., 1989).

Modern NHST

The current approach to hypothesis testing (see Maxfield & Babbie, 2018) represents the modern adaptation of the hybrid method. The modern approach specifies two complementary hypotheses (mutually exclusive and fully exhaustive) and an a priori alpha level (from Neyman-Pearson). The alternative or research hypothesis (H_1) states some belief about the phenomenon under investigation, while the null hypothesis (H_0) represents the negation of the alternative. Data are observed, and a test statistic is generated as a function of data. The test statistic is then compared to the probability distribution implied by the null hypothesis, and a significance level (i.e., p -value) is calculated (from Fisher). If the p -value is smaller than the specified alpha, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the

researcher concludes the alternative is correct (from Neyman-Pearson). If the p -value is larger than the specified alpha, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis (from Fisher). The procedure for modern NHST is as follows:

- (1) State the null hypothesis (H_0 , *the Fisher null*) and the alternative hypothesis of interest (H_1 , *from Neyman-Pearson, except that H_1 is defined not as a specified non-central distribution but simply as not H_0*).
- (2) Specify an a priori α (*from Neyman-Pearson*).
- (3) Select the appropriate test statistic.
- (4) Identify the distribution of the test statistic under the assumption that the null hypothesis is true.
- (5) Calculate the test statistic from the data.
- (6) Determine the achieved significance level using the calculated statistic and the distribution implied under the null hypothesis (*from Fisher*).
- (7) Reject H_0 if the achieved significance level is less than α (*from Fisher*).

The modern adaptation of NHST blends the Fisher and Neyman-Pearson models. The result is a test that attempts describe observed associations using one of two possible explanations. The first explanation, which yields the null hypothesis, states that the association observed in a sample is due to sampling error. The second explanation, which yields the alternative hypothesis, states that the association observed in the sample is due to an actual relationship in the population. The null hypothesis is assumed to be true a priori, and the p value, or the statistical significance, is simply the

probability of drawing a sample that demonstrates at least as great an association as the one observed from a population where no such relationship exists. If the probability of getting an association as high or higher is sufficiently low, then the relationship is declared to be statistically significant and the null hypothesis is abandoned, implying the alternative. We now turn to a discussion the issues associated with this process.

Problems With NHST

Sample Size

Several issues concerning NHST are related to the problem of sample size. P -values generated in NHST are a function of both the sample size and the magnitude of the effect. As a result, in small samples, important effects (i.e., those that would be of substantive importance) often fail to reach statistical significance. In contrast, large samples tend to yield small p -values for even minor effects that are theoretically uninteresting or practically unimportant (Levine et al., 2008). This compounds the problem of misinterpreting statistical significance in large sample studies as real-world importance (Gill, 1999; Nickerson, 2000) or as providing evidence in favor of the substantive theory motivating the analysis when, in fact, the low p -value is simply an artifact of a large sample size (Meehl, 1986).

Alpha is Arbitrary

Another commonly acknowledged issue concerning NHST in the social sciences stems from the arbitrary thresholds that are applied when determining whether to reject a null hypothesis

(Nickerson, 2000; Rozeboom, 1960). The commonly used thresholds of .05, .01, and .001 were introduced into statistics early on to alleviate the computational difficulties associated with significance testing. Because computers were rare and prohibitively expensive during the nascent stages of NHST, researchers relied instead on published tables. For convenience, consistent with Fisher's work, the tables were published for .05, .01, and .001 levels of significance. Despite the fact that modern computing has all but replaced the use of reference tables and that the actual p -values are generally reported, the idea of statistical significance remains tied to the levels conventionally applied (Gill, 1999), yet the use of these levels is completely arbitrary. There is no reason, other than convention, for the use of $p = .05$ as the cutoff for significance.

Further, it is clear that researchers generally treat .05 as an upper bound when evaluating statistical significance, but rarely is it specified as a true alpha in advance (Nickerson, 2000). That is, while the researchers did not set their alphas at .01 or .001 a priori, they report findings of .01 or .001 as if they were set beforehand and therefore meaningful. Because data are collected and analyzed without consideration of the specified alpha and researchers report a variety of p -values within their studies, it is clear that the conventional levels of significance become even more arbitrary.

A Hard Decision Rule

The arbitrary nature of alpha poses greater conceptual difficulties because it is an arbitrary

cutoff for a hard decision rule. Neyman and Pearson's (1933) Hypothesis Test was designed to yield decision rules that minimized errors. Modern NHST adopted this aspect of Neyman and Pearson's work and incorporates a hard decision rule that determines which hypothesis to conclude. According to the rules of conventional NHST, a p -value greater than alpha results in the failure to reject the null hypothesis regardless of how much greater it is. As Nickerson (2000) notes, it is conceptually difficult to consider a difference with $p = .05$ as meaningful while holding $p = .06$ (or better, $p = .051$) as meaningless. However, the decision rule imposed by NHST requires the distinction. As such, all hypotheses are dichotomized into one of two categories: the first significant and the second not. This classification scheme reduces the information about a particular hypothesis to the bare minimum, which may be detrimental to the advancement of knowledge (Meehl, 1978).

Rozeboom (1960) likewise objected to the hard decision rule imposed by NHST because the goal of scientific exploration is often not to render decisions. Rather, the goal of scientific research was to use data to reason explanations and generalities. Importantly, Rozeboom (1960) suggested that belief in a proposition was not an all or nothing matter; rather, belief in a proposition was a matter of degree. This led to the conclusion that the proper role of research was to make adjustments to the degree to which one believes the hypotheses being tested.

Test Bias

In NHST, when the p -value becomes sufficiently small, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes the alternative. However, when the p -value fails to become sufficiently small, the researcher simply fails to reject the null, unlike the Neyman-Pearson hypothesis test, where the researcher would accept the null. This is because lack of evidence for a research hypothesis does not rule out any other competing research hypothesis. This results in an asymmetric decision rule (Gill, 1999), which favors the alternative hypothesis (Rozeboom, 1960). While interpreting the failure to reject a null hypothesis as equivalent to demonstrating evidence of the null hypothesis is problematic, simply recognizing that one cannot conclude the null to be false in a single test provides almost no information at all (Cohen, 1994).

In contrast, rejecting a null hypothesis allows a researcher to conclude the alternative. In conjunction with the selection of a small alpha, typically viewed as a strong bias against rejecting a true null, the rejection is generally viewed as strong evidence for the alternative hypothesis (Nickerson, 2000). However, critics argue that NHST is biased against failing to reject the null, which raises questions concerning viewing a rejected null as strong evidence for an alternative hypothesis (Edwards, 1965; Lindley, 1993).

Falsification of a False Hypothesis

In typical NHST, the null hypothesis generally represents a nil-null hypothesis, or a statement of no relationship. Meehl (1978) argues that the observed

relationship between any two variables, or the difference between any two means, will seldom be truly zero. This may result from uncontrolled spurious relationships in correlational research or the fact that randomization does not precisely balance out all extraneous factors in experimental designs. This implies that the null hypothesis is, at least almost, always false. Krueger (2001) goes further, arguing that the probability that any individual point hypothesis is correct is zero, given an infinite population. This, in turn, implies that any zero-relationship null hypothesis must be false. Either way, whether the null is almost always or absolutely false, disproving a false hypothesis is uninformative (Cohen, 1994). In other words, demonstrating that there is not nothing provides little to aid in scientific advancement (Meehl, 1990).

Replication

Falk and Greenbaum (1995) point out one of the more serious limitations of NHST. They note that NHST tells relatively little about the replicability of results. Krueger (2001) places this problem in context by stating, "If the data collected in the past say nothing about data to be gathered in the future, empirical research is merely historical" (p. 21). If the goal of research in the social sciences is to understand cause, then significance may be an inferior metric because it fails to address consistency (Killeen, 2005). Falk and Greenbaum (1995) note that replication strengthens the conclusion that results are not due to chance. Further, they assert that consistency may be a better measure than significance for causal inference.

Thus, statistics that are more informative about the probability of replication might be more informative than standard significance tests.

To explain this issue, consider a result that comes out as statistically significant at p exactly equal to .05. Now, imagine a second study that provides an exact replication of the finding with an identical method, subject population, and sample size. A common misunderstanding is that the second replication study is highly likely to replicate the first (Lambdin, 2012). However, the power for any test with a p -value that equals alpha is .5. The best point estimate for the second result is that of the first study, but sampling error around that estimate means that the actual second result might be larger or smaller than the first. Since the first result was exactly on the cutoff, any value that is any lower (which is expected about half the time) will be nonsignificant. Because of this misunderstanding, some journals such as *Psychological Science* often report the probability of replication (Killeen, 2005) instead of the standard NHST p -value.

The Logical Fallacy of NHST

NHST demonstrates support for an alternative hypothesis by denying the null hypothesis. The null is denied misusing a logical argument formally known as *modus tollens* (Cohen, 1994). *Modus tollens* takes the form that if the premise “P then Q” is always true, then not-Q allows us to infer not-P (formally $P \rightarrow Q \quad \neg Q \vdash \neg P$). As used in NHST, this can be interpreted as follows:

(1) If the null hypothesis is true, then the data will follow a particular pattern.

(2) The data do not follow the pattern; therefore, the null hypothesis is not true.

While the logic of *modus tollens* is valid, thus guaranteeing that the argument yields a sound conclusion, *modus tollens* is based upon statements of certainty. Gill (1999) notes that hypothesis testing replaces these certainty statements with probabilistic statements, violating the logic of *modus tollens*. Using probabilistic statements yields the following formula:

(1) If the null hypothesis is true, then the data will *likely* follow a particular pattern.

(2) The data do not follow the pattern; therefore, the null hypothesis is *likely* not true.

Several authors have noted this fallacy regarding NHST (Falk & Greenbaum, 1995; Gill, 1999). Pollard and Richardson (1987) provide an instructive example that clearly demonstrates the error:

(1) If a person is American, then it is highly unlikely that he is a member of Congress.

(2) The person is a member of Congress; therefore, it is highly unlikely that he is American.

Several authors have relied upon this particular example to convey the problem associated with applying *modus tollens* to probabilistic statements (Cohen, 1994; Gill, 1999). The absurd conclusion that results from the misapplication of the syllogistic reasoning clearly demonstrates the issue. However, when applied to NHST, the fallacy is less obvious and is often overlooked.

Inverse Probability Problem

The next issue concerns the interpretation of conditional probabilities. In NHST, the observed test statistic is evaluated compared to the probability distribution of the statistic that exists if the null hypothesis is true. Therefore, the probability considered is the probability of the data given the null (i.e., $p(D/H_0)$). However, the probability of interest is actually the probability of the null given the data (i.e., $p(H_0/D)$). Another example, offered by Boster (2002), is instructive:

Suppose one wants to know something about the distribution of sex in the nursing profession. Denoting F as female and N as nurse, $p(F/N)$ likely has a high probability. In the main, females dominate the population of nurses. But, $p(N/F)$ likely has a very small probability, because relatively few members of the population of females select nursing as a profession. (p. 479)

Thus, one probability cannot be simply inferred from the other. Regarding NHST, this implies that $p(H_0/D)$, the probability of interest, cannot be determined from $p(D/H_0)$, the probability given (Cohen, 1994; Gill, 1999; Levine et al., 2008; Nickerson, 2000).

Recommendations

Although a variety of recommendations for researchers using NHST abound that may help address some of these issues (see, e.g., Bushway et al., 2006; Levine et al., 2008; Weisburd et al.,

2003), the key concern herein is what might benefit criminal justice students learning NHST. One approach may be to simply teach students about the issues described above. Popular textbooks used in undergraduate statistics and research methods courses exhibit few references to any of the drawbacks to NHST. Some dedicate limited attention (often a single paragraph) to warning that large sample sizes may yield significant results that are not substantively meaningful (Cooper et al., 2016; Maxfield & Babbie, 2018). Given the limited treatment of these issues in texts, it falls on instructors to fill in the gaps.

Unfortunately, statistics and methods tend to be courses that are greeted with high levels of anxiety and resistance from undergraduate students. It can be difficult enough to help students understand the basics of NHST without then introducing probabilistic issues and logical fallacies. However, limited presentation of material that ignores the underlying issues may train students to incorrectly interpret statistical information, which may be worse than not interpreting it at all. This, of course, returns to the question whether teaching NHST as a primary part of statistics education in criminal justice is the right approach. Doing a better job of teaching students to be good consumers of statistical information at the undergraduate level and covering techniques more likely to be interpreted by consumers in more detail might provide a better foundation for students who take more advanced statistics courses either at the undergraduate or graduate levels. With more foundation, NHST and its attendant caveats and

problems could then be addressed in a forum specifically oriented to producers, resulting in better educational outcomes for future researchers as well.

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A Journey Through Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System Reform

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Juveniles differ from adults in the fact that they may be entangled in both the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. The goals of juvenile justice systems are to hold youths who commit delinquent acts accountable, as well as to reduce future involvement with justice systems through restorative justice approaches and interventions rooted in knowledge about adolescent needs and development. However, most state legislatures have instituted punitive policies in response to the rising rates of delinquency since the 1990s. This article reviews the significant reforms of the juvenile justice system in the state of Connecticut during the past two decades. The evidence-based reforms in Connecticut focus on families and youth while aiming to incorporate rehabilitative models for youth that maintain public safety.

Historical Background

In 1992, Connecticut's juvenile justice system was faced with significant problems. It was plagued with overcrowding—unsafe, unsanitary, and overly punitive detention facilities. The pretrial detention centers were filled to twice their intended capacity. Youths were being detained for status offenses and misdemeanors, and many suffered from acute mental health or drug problems, with few or no services being provided (Mendel, 2013). According to the Connecticut Mental Health Cabinet Report in

2004, among children admitted to pretrial detention, 55% showed signs of a mental health disorder, 20% required prompt psychiatric intervention, and 22% of youth were in the mental health system when referred to court supervision (Rell & Sullivan, 2004). Moreover, increasing delinquency rates led to 1995 legislation and policies that made the system tougher. “Zero tolerance” policies gave prosecutors more latitude to transfer juvenile cases to the adult system and relaxed confidentiality rules so that families of the victims could learn about the sanctions placed on juveniles.

Since the 1990s, researchers have studied in detail the consequences of placing youth in adult institutions. Compared to youth in juvenile facilities, youth in adult facilities were seven times more likely to be referred for medical attention due to an inmate assault in Connecticut in 1995 (Ziedenberg & Schiraldi, 1998). Also, the suicide rate for juveniles in adult facilities was much higher than in juvenile detention centers (Memory, 1989) and was four times higher than among individuals who were 18 years or older (Mumola, 2005). Furthermore, youth who were sentenced in adult courts were more likely to receive longer sentences than they would have received in juvenile courts (Redding, 1999). In addition to these issues, the tougher policies on delinquents did not seem to have a deterrence effect. Studies on recidivism have

indicated that youth who are transferred are more likely to commit future criminal acts than youth kept in the juvenile justice system (Mulvey & Schubert, 2012; Myers, 2016).

In 2001, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS) was opened. It was built as a secure correctional facility and, unfortunately, it did not represent the changes needed to improve conditions through a therapeutic approach and educational services. Due to concerns from juvenile advocates, the facility became the subject of controversy for many years. In 2002, 10% of the youth placed at CJTS were in confinement for violent crimes, which were identified as more severe than simple fighting. The other 85% or more of youth placed at CJTS were most commonly held for criminal mischief, drug possession, breach of peace, disorderly conduct, or larceny (Mendel, 2013). At that time, Connecticut had one of the highest rates of youth incarceration in New England (EZACJRP, 2017). Also, severe racial disparities existed in the juvenile justice system. The number of confined Black and Latino youth was 7.5 times greater than the number of White youth in 2001 (EZACJRP, 2017). Unfortunately for many of these youth, justice-system involvement does not end with their experiences in the juvenile system. According to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), roughly 65% of those who were discharged from CJTS in 2011 and 2012 ended up with an inmate number in the criminal justice system at some point (Thomas, 2016). Altogether, calls for reform continued to mount and demand better services for youth in state-run facilities, as well as out in the community.

In the aftermath of opening CJTS, juvenile reforms became even more critical from 2005 to 2012. A new law in 2005 prohibited the detainment of status offenders for violating probation or court orders, and a 2007 law created special programs to provide services for status offenders while in the community (CGS § 46b-148; PA 05-250). The changes in the law called for status offenders and their families to be diverted from juvenile courts to community-based programs (such as Family Support Centers) that offered a wide range of programming, including mediation, crisis intervention, access to therapy, educational advocacy, and many other family counseling initiatives. The results of this major policy shift on status offenders brought about some very encouraging results. The number of status offenders detained fell from 493 to 0 from 2006 to 2009. (Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance, 2010). Status offender cases formally processed in court were reduced from 50% in 2006 to under 5% in 2010 and 2011. Since 2006, 70% fewer status offenders were rearrested for delinquency, and their improved behaviors were documented at home, in school, and in the community (Mendel, 2013).

Also, in 2007, the Connecticut legislature passed the Raise the Age (RtA) legislation (PA 07-4) that extended the age of youth's eligibility to be charged in the juvenile court up to 18 years old. From 2010, when the RtA law first went into effect for 16-year-old youth, to June 30, 2012, more than 8,000 16-year-olds were removed from prosecution and punishment as adults. Seventeen-year-olds became eligible for juvenile court processing on July 1,

2012, and subsequently, the 17 and under population in Connecticut's criminal justice system also dropped. Specifically, it decreased from 403 to 151 between January 2007 and July 2012 (Mendel, 2013). Although an increase in caseloads was expected, it did not come to pass due to declining crime rates, expanded diversionary practices, and an overall reduction in offender recidivism.

Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee and the Tow Youth Justice Institute

With many significant improvements already underway in 2014, Connecticut established the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) to supervise the continued reform of the juvenile justice system, to evaluate policies related to the juvenile justice system, and to develop goals and recommend changes in state law regarding juvenile justice (PA 14-217, Sec. 79).

Alongside the establishment of the JJPOC, the Tow Foundation and the University of New Haven created the Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) in October 2014 to link an academic partner to the state's juvenile justice reform initiatives. TYJI was founded to focus on juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice policies, and it is contracted by the state to provide staffing, consulting, and management resources to the JJPOC. Beyond the scope of juvenile justice, a broader framework of youth justice, embraced by the TYJI, allows this work to look more holistically at education, opportunity, equity, and positive development for youth throughout their lives. This is accomplished through collaborative planning and policy

development, training, research, and advocacy efforts.

When the JJPOC work groups were established in 2015, they identified the following strategic goals to be achieved by June 30, 2018 (PA 15-183):

- Increase diversion of children and youth from the juvenile court by 20%.
- Decrease the number of children and youth confined (incarcerated) in state-run facilities by 30%.
- Decrease the rate of recidivism among juvenile offenders by 10%.

As of October 2017, Connecticut's juvenile justice system has made strong progress toward those strategic goals. Diversion from the courts has increased by nearly 20% and incarceration has been reduced by almost 50%, while recidivism has fallen by about 2% (TYJI, 2018).

To better assist and achieve their stated goals, there was a workgroup (diversion, incarceration, and recidivism) established for each goal, as well as a cross-agency data sharing workgroup to establish an integrated data collection and tracking systems for system-wide improvements. In addition to these three major goal areas, the JJPOC developed recommendations regarding behavioral/mental health and education. The recommendations continue to support the reform of the juvenile justice system.

The inclusion of these additional areas represents the intersections between juvenile justice and other areas of work affecting youth. There were many

laws and policies passed in 2016 and 2017, some through the efforts of the JJPOC and others through executive and legislative leadership (TYJI, 2016). The 2016 reforms were largely accomplished through the efforts of JJPOC's passionate and dedicated members (PA 16-147). The following are some major system changes:

- Eliminating truancy and defiance of school rules as status offenses in order to divert youth from the juvenile justice system.
- Limiting pretrial detention to cases in which a youth represents a genuine public safety or flight risk, or in which the youth is being held for extradition to another jurisdiction.
- Closing the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS) and Pueblo as expeditiously as possible, no later than July 2018, in accordance with a plan jointly developed by DCF.
- Adopting a nationally recognized recidivism reduction framework.
- Establishing a permanent JJPOC cross-agency data sharing workgroup to link data maintained by executive branch agencies and the judicial branch.

In 2017, much of the work outlined by the JJPOC complemented, enhanced, and moved forward legislation and advanced approved policies from previous years. The 2017 JJPOC recommendations were embodied in Public Act 17-2. Significant reforms include the following:

- Required OPM to report on juvenile

recidivism every year, with the first report due no later than August 15, 2018.

- Mandated for DCF and Children's Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board to submit recommendations for meeting the mental health needs of youth who are at risk of justice system involvement on or before July 1, 2018. Also, the Board shall have at least one service provider that works with children involved with the juvenile justice system.
- Stated that, as of July 1, 2019, Families with Service Needs cases—status offenses—will be no longer formally prosecuted in juvenile courts.
- Prevented the misuse of information gathered from youth during the detention intake process, allowing the full disclosure of sensitive information only for the purpose of providing appropriate treatment.

What's Next for Juvenile Justice in Connecticut?

Recommendations from the JJPOC for upcoming legislation were proposed in January 2018, which is when they were discussed and adopted. These recommended strategies involve changes at the legislative, policy, and program levels. The following are some major recommendations that emerged from the workgroups and will potentially affect future reforms in Connecticut's juvenile justice system (TYJI, 2018):

- The Community-Based Diversion System Plan

and the School-Based Diversion Framework should be implemented by State Department of Education and/or the Youth Service Bureau network no later than July 1, 2018.

- Beginning January 1, 2021, no child under the age of 18 shall be housed in the custody of the Department of Correction.
- By January of 2019, a single state agency, supported by resources reallocated from the existing fragmented array of service providers, will be responsible for ensuring high-quality educational services and transitional supports for youth in the deep end of the justice system.

Today, Connecticut is widely considered a model for how a state can improve its juvenile justice system while improving public safety and overall youth outcomes. Increasingly, youth charged with minor offenses are diverted from court involvement and may, instead, receive behavioral health supports and other programming proven effective. For youth involved in the court system, the state has passed laws ensuring evidence-based practices, greater access to education and behavioral health care, and improvements in legal processing. The state also now regulates many issues stemming from school discipline policies that may otherwise push youth into unnecessary court involvement.

As a pioneer of many reform policies based on a better understanding of crime deterrence and youth developmental psychology, Connecticut has earned recognition for its leadership, continued reforms, and innovations that will allow the state to uphold this reputation and to better serve our youth.

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Book Review: Barry C. Feld, *The Evolution of the Juvenile Court: Race, Politics, and the Criminalizing of Juvenile Justice*.

New York University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-4798-9569-4 (Hardcover).

Reviewed by David L. Myers*

In the mid-1990s, when I was a developing doctoral student and chose to specialize in juvenile justice and delinquency, I started reading the work of Professor Barry C. Feld. At the time, it was the height of the youth violence epidemic, with a variety of juvenile justice reforms being proposed and implemented. These reforms typically had a “get tough” orientation, focusing on such policies and procedures as fingerprinting juveniles, opening juvenile courts to the public, mandatory sentencing, and transferring larger numbers of adolescent offenders to adult court. Professor Feld researched and critiqued many of these topics, and he generated a great deal of discussion and debate with his views on the “criminalization” of juvenile justice, “justice by geography,” the right to effective defense counsel, race effects in juvenile justice, and even abolishing the juvenile court altogether (see, e.g., Feld 1991, 1993, 1997, 1998, 1999).

Professor Feld wrote (and continues to write) in a unique way, integrating legal and social science research, with an underlying passion for doing right by children and youth in our society. During the past 45 years, he has produced an impressive number of publications, including several award-winning books (see, e.g., Feld 1999, 2013). Most recently, *The Evolution of the Juvenile Court: Race, Politics, and the Criminalizing of Juvenile Justice* provides an up-to-date, thorough, critical, and evidence-based assessment of past and current juvenile justice philosophy and system operations in our country. It is a book that should be read and

utilized by policy-makers, researchers, practitioners, and students, and it concludes with an epilogue that should make all of us with an interest in juvenile justice think about the importance of our work in this field.

The book is divided into four parts, corresponding with four distinct eras of juvenile justice, as identified by Feld: the Progressive Era, the Due Process Era, the Get Tough Era, and the Kids Are Different Era. In covering these stages of evolution, Feld examines the relationship between social structural factors and changes in juvenile justice policy, particularly those occurring during the past 50 years. He discusses how the social structural factors of economy, urbanization, family, race/ethnicity, and politics shape society’s views about juvenile justice and delinquency. In doing so, Feld focuses primarily on the experience of African American children and adolescents, as these youth have experienced a distinct history of inequality and injustice, revealed through decades of research.

The Progressive Era of juvenile justice is covered in Chapter 1. Feld first examines the movement to control and administer social change, which included efforts to distinguish “our children” from “other people’s children.” Moreover, although progressive reformers recognized social structural features as contributing to delinquency, they focused on changing individuals through focusing on their character. Feld concludes that early juvenile courts seldom achieved their rehabilitative

goals, but they did keep the vast majority of youths out of the more damaging criminal justice system, which the later Get Tough Era sought to reverse.

Part II, the Due Process Era, is presented in Chapter 2. Here, Feld traces the social and legal context within which the due process revolution occurred, including African American migration from the rural South to the North and West in the decades surrounding World War II. Later in the chapter, Feld asserts that in the *Gault* and *Winship* cases, the Supreme Court transformed juvenile courts from welfare agencies into scaled-down criminal courts, endorsing a more adversarial model with at least some procedural protections. In *McKeiver*, however, in denying the right to a jury trial, the Court continued to view youths as immature and unable to benefit from all the rights granted to adults. *Gault* and *Winship* also produced use of formal prosecutors in juvenile courts (to offset the presence of defense attorneys), but the constitutional right to appellate review was not provided. This set the stage for the “criminalization” of juvenile justice, with reduced rehabilitative goals, harsher sanctions, and a disproportionate emphasis on minority youths.

The Get Tough Era of juvenile justice is covered in Chapters 3 through 7. Chapter 3 examines the structural, economic, and demographic changes in American cities during the 1970s and 1980s that contributed to escalating Black youth homicide rates and provided the context for various get tough policies. Chapter 4 follows-up by considering how the politics of race, class, and crime fostered realignment of the Democratic and Republican parties, and how the Republican party embraced a “Southern strategy” to attract white suburban voters. This latter approach, Feld argues, includes the use of coded language to convey a message with

racial appeal, while allowing speakers and recipients to deny its racist content.

Chapter 5, “The Kid Is a Criminal,” thoroughly examines the various get tough reforms in late 20th century juvenile justice policy, programs, and practices. Specifically, Feld assesses the topics of juvenile transfer to adult criminal court, use of pretrial detention in juvenile court, and the shift from treatment to punishment in juvenile sanctions. In doing so, he documents how politicians assaulted the idea that children are different from adults and rejected the premise of keeping youths out of prisons. Consequently, incarceration of both adolescents and young adults increased rapidly, while sanctioning philosophy shifted from rehabilitation to deterrence and incapacitation. The weight of these changes fell most heavily on Black male youths, who (as research shows) receive more punitive sanctions at virtually every stage of juvenile court decision-making.

Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the impact of get tough policies on girls and schools, respectively. Feld argues that perceived increases in female juvenile violence during the Get Tough Era were an artifact of changes in police practices and other juvenile reforms, and that the narrowing of the gender gap was due mainly to criminalizing family conflict and confining girls more frequently for minor offenses. Concerning schools, Feld discusses their social control functions, the purpose of compulsory attendance laws, formal and informal segregation, and zero-tolerance policies that have impacted disproportionately on Black male students. In school, youth also have fewer due process rights, with increasingly greater police presence and punitive policies. This allows for an educational environment characterized by disparities in funding, social inequality, and limited opportunities in high-

poverty urban districts.

Part IV, containing Chapters 8 and 9, assesses the contemporary “Kids are Different” era. In Chapter 8, Feld discusses how research on adolescent development and corresponding views on culpability helped shape Supreme Court decisions on the death penalty for juveniles and life sentences without the possibility of parole. These decisions essentially recognize youthfulness as a mitigating factor in sentencing, which Feld extends to propose that a more general “Youth Discount” should be enacted in state sentencing statutes. Chapter 9 then examines modern juvenile court procedures and a typical youth’s ability to exercise due process rights. Topics here include conflicting views on juveniles’ competence to exercise rights, *Miranda* warnings and interrogation, competence to stand trial and waive counsel, and the right to a jury trial. Feld concludes that in many cases, get tough laws designed to punish delinquents simultaneously eroded the already diminished protections of juvenile courts, and legislators need to address existing procedural deficiencies impacting disproportionately on minority youths.

At various points in the book, Feld asserts that regardless of how we feel about adults and their behavior, children are innocent bystanders and victims of their parents’ circumstances, with limited ability to escape the criminogenic environments to which our larger society often consigns them. In an Epilogue, Feld returns to this theme and offers his current views on appropriate juvenile justice reform, reflecting a detailed understanding of economic inequality, concentrated poverty, and racial isolation. Central to his proposed reforms is the Youth Discount in adult court sentencing, but other recommendations include extending the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 18 in every state, with

further legal protections up to age 21; greater use of diversion to community resources, risk and needs assessment, data-driven decision-making, and evidence-based delinquency prevention programs; stronger procedural safeguards, including mandatory and effective counsel in court proceedings; and the right to a jury trial and appellate review.

The final pages of Feld’s book discuss the history and research on child poverty in the United States, with a reminder that while poverty is a leading risk factor for positive childhood development, it does not affect all children equally or as intensely. African American children, in particular, experience much higher poverty rates, limited educational opportunities, and are more likely to live with an unmarried single parent, in racially segregated neighborhoods, and to experience various forms of trauma. In addition, parental education and income affect family formation, childrearing practices, and childhood brain development, along with cognitive abilities, socio-emotional skills, and behavior. As a result, children of poor and less educated parents are disadvantaged at the start and have fewer resources with which to overcome life’s obstacles.

In the end, Feld concludes that persistent child poverty is current American public policy, which should be changed through tax reform, income support programs, paid paternal leave, and subsidized childcare. However, he is pessimistic this will happen, due to institutional and individual racism, political views on the deserving versus undeserving poor, and a culture that attributes crime, poverty, and unemployment to individual deficiencies. The final paragraph of the book conveys Feld’s sadness and despair over the enormous problems faced by children and the unwillingness of political leaders to address them,

with a hope that future generations of Americans will look back with shame on “contemporary child abuse inflicted by the state.” Personally, I hope this book helps facilitate the type of change proposed by Feld and motivates those (like me) with a strong interest in juvenile justice to do more to speak for the most disadvantaged in our society, while advocating for policies that treat children and youth as both cherished and worthy of our time and financial investment.

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- *David L. Myers, PhD, is a Professor and Director of the Criminal Justice PhD Program at the University of New Haven. He currently serves as editor of ACJS Today, chair of the ACJS Public Policy Committee, board member of the Crime & Justice Research Alliance, editor of Routledge Studies in Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, and vice-president of the Association of Doctoral Programs in Criminology and Criminal Justice. His research and teaching interests include juvenile justice and delinquency, reentry and recidivism, and criminal justice policy, planning, and evaluation.*



ACJS Seeking Committee Volunteers for 2019-2020

Prabha Unnithan, ACJS 1st Vice President, is actively seeking Committee volunteers to serve during his presidency, March 2019 – March 2020. If you are interested in learning more about how to be actively involved in service to ACJS, contact Prabha at Prabha.Unnithan@colostate.edu to volunteer. Every attempt will be made to place ACJS members who volunteer on a standing or *ad hoc* Committee.

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

Every year, ACJS needs volunteers for the Academy's Standing Committees. Committee volunteers usually serve for one year, beginning with the Friday of the Annual Meeting after the Executive Board meets.

Appointments to the following ACJS Standing Committees are for one year, unless otherwise stated:

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

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



ACJS Leadership and Innovator Award

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Nominations of *practitioners* are being accepted for the new ACJS Leadership and Innovator Award. Practitioners are individuals employed in a professional capacity in the criminal justice system, related and ancillary programs, services, and agencies such as victim services, juvenile justice, case management and treatment, drug/alcohol and mental health services, and community coalitions, as well as research, government, or public service.

This award will be given to recognize a practitioner whose work has had a direct, positive, and significant effect on the criminal justice system, with a commitment to improving the criminal justice system. These contributions may include program development, policy implementation, education, training, direct services, research, and legislative action.

To be eligible for this Award, the candidate shall have:

1. been an outstanding leader and innovator in a professional capacity.
2. demonstrated commitment to improving the criminal justice system.
3. contributed to criminal justice or related programs, relevant policies, or community development.
4. provided exemplary professional service to his or her organization.

Nominees need not be ACJS members.

Regional Organizations affiliated with ACJS and ACJS members may nominate a practitioner for this award by submitting a letter of nomination. The nomination letters shall include the nominees' full contact information, resume, and rationale for the nomination. Send the complete nomination packet to Aimée "May" Delaney at adelaney@worchester.edu (ACJS Leadership and Innovator Award Committee Chair). Nominations must be received no later than August 15, 2018.

The winner of this award will receive a plaque recognizing their exemplary commitment and service to criminal justice sustenance improvement. The nominee selected to win this award is expected to attend the ACJS annual meeting in Baltimore during March 2019 and will receive a \$600 travel award to assist with travel expenses.

Contact information for the Regional Trustees is listed below:

Region I	Northeast	Aimée "May" Delaney	adelaney@worchester.edu
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CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The ACJS Nominations and Elections Committee is soliciting nominations for the following Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences offices: Second Vice President, Secretary, Trustee-At-Large, Region One Trustee, and Region Five Trustee. All candidates for office must be regular ACJS members in good standing. The individuals who are elected will take office at the Friday 2019 ACJS Executive Board Meeting.

The person elected to the office of Second Vice President will have a four-year term of office on the ACJS Executive Board and will hold the offices of Second Vice President, First Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President in turn. The persons elected to the office of Secretary and Trustee-at-Large will have a three-year term. The person elected to a Regional Trustee position will have a three-year term. Only current ACJS Regular members holding professional employment affiliation in the Region and having been a member of the respective regional association for at least one full year immediately prior to being nominated or petitioning may run for the respective Trustee position. Region One includes the states Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont; and District Columbia and the Canadian Provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec. Region Five includes the states of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming; and Canadian Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia; and the Pacific Territories and Possessions.

Individuals seeking ACJS office may achieve candidacy by either petition or nomination. Individuals who use the petition process automatically secure candidacy, as long as the petitions are deemed to meet the minimum number of signatures required. Individuals who are nominated for office shall compete for placement on the slate via review by the Nominations and Elections Committee, which will make a recommendation to the ACJS Executive Board regarding the final slate of candidates.

Those nominating individuals for ACJS office are expected to contact the nominee to ensure that the nominee is willing to run for the office in question. An ACJS member seeking an office via petition must obtain seventy-five (75) signatures of Regular ACJS members in good standing. The petition must state the name and complete address of the candidate, e-mail address, home and office phone numbers, and the office the candidate is seeking. To facilitate verification, the petition must also include the clearly printed name, signature, and institutional affiliation or address of each ACJS member signing it and the signature date. More than one petition form may be submitted on behalf of a specific candidate.

Nomination Forms Must Be **Postmarked** By July 1, 2018. The Nomination Form can be found on the ACJS website at: <http://www.acjs.org/page/FormsPolicyManual>

Petition Forms Must Be **Received** No Later Than June 15, 2018. The Petition Form can be found on the ACJS website at: <http://www.acjs.org/page/FormsPolicyManual>

Mail all nominations and petitions to:

Nicole Leeper Piquero, Chair
ACJS Nominations and Elections Committee
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
7339 Hanover Parkway, Suite A
Greenbelt, MD 20770.

Address any questions to the Committee by contacting Dr. Piquero at npiquero@utdallas.edu.

As per ACJS Policy 303.01, the following rank-ordered criteria will be used by the Nominations and Elections Committee in making recommendations to the ACJS Executive Board regarding the final slate of candidates.

1. *Dependability, demonstrated experience, record of accomplishments.*
2. *Demonstrable service to the Academy.*
3. *Demonstrable record of scholarship or contributions to the field of criminal justice.*

ACJS Policy 104.01 states its goal of inclusivity. ACJS seeks to provide opportunities for all its members to participate in the business of the Academy, including policy and decision-making.

NOTE: *The final slate of candidates approved by the ACJS Executive Board will be asked to complete a Candidate's Information Form. This document will include length of ACJS membership, previous service for ACJS, previous service to other criminal justice organizations, major publications, and a candidate's statement.*



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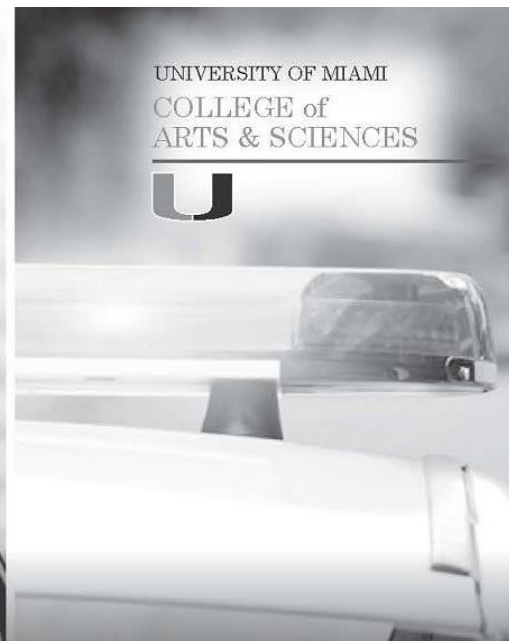
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***Award descriptions, nominations criteria, and submission information are
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Articles may vary in writing style (i.e., tone) and length. Articles should be relevant to the field of criminal justice, criminology, law, sociology, or related curriculum and interesting to our readership. Please include your name, affiliation, and e-mail address, which will be used as your biographical information. **Submission of an article to the editor of *ACJS Today* implies that the article has not been published elsewhere nor is it currently under submission to another publication.**

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