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Proxy Punishment: Consequences of Informal Sanctions among Families of Offenders in Japan

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Abstract

This study demystifies the nature of societal reactions to crime in Japan and their consequences on the family members of those who have trouble with the law. Over a 20-month period in metropolitan areas in Japan, participant observation and in-depth interviews were conducted with 50 mothers, fathers, wives, and sisters of those who had broken the law. Major findings include the role that the media and criminal justice authorities play in triggering the informal labeling of offenders’ kin. Families’ strong ties to communities also rendered them particularly vulnerable to the effects of informal sanctions, even more so than offenders themselves. Finally, this study reveals ironies of Japan’s low crime rate and its use of informal sanctions, highlighting the fundamental importance of offender rehabilitation and reentry.

Keywords: Stigma, gendered experience, informal labeling, modified labeling theory, reintegrative shaming, ethnography

INTRODUCTION

An increasing amount of attention has been paid to the collateral consequences of formal sanctions, specifically incarceration, and the hardships experienced by the family members of prisoners (Chesney-Lind & Mauer, 2003; Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; Murray, 2007; Travis & Waul, 2004). However, less is known about the collateral consequences of informal sanctions experienced by the families of offenders. Although there is a growing body of literature on the shame and stigma experienced by relatives of prisoners and offenders, virtually no studies have examined how families come to perceive such informal sanctions. Similarly, the labeling theory literature lacks research on the processes of informal labeling and how it interacts with formal labeling (Bernburg, 2009, 2010). Though numerous scholars have argued that informal sanctions are more potent than formal sanctions as both a deterrent and source of criminality (Braithwaite, 1989; Paternoster & Iovanni, 1986; Zimring & Hawkins, 1973), less has been said about the consequences of informal sanctions on those closest to offenders.

It is a well-known fact that Japan relies heavily on informal means of social control, namely reintegrative shaming and restorative justice, to maintain social order (Braithwaite, 1989; Haley, 1995, 1996). Due to this cultural characteristic, Japan is an ideal location to examine the repercussions informal sanctions have on offenders’ families, although scholars have contested the society’s reintegrative or restorative nature (Miyazawa, 1997). The fact that Japan experiences much less crimes than its Western counterparts also renders it an interesting site to investigate societal reactions to crime. This study examines offenders’ families in Japan where
the informal means of social control are prevalent and crime is uncommon to shed light on the mechanisms of informal sanctions and their consequences.

Shame and Stigma among Families of Offenders/Prisoners

Previous studies on the intimates and family members of prisoners in the West have highlighted the families’ experiences of shame and stigma due to their close proximity to prisoners (Arditti, 2003; Arditti, Lambert-Shute, & Joest, 2003; Girshick, 1996). Central to these studies is Goffman’s notion of courtesy stigma (Condry, 2007), which is defined as the stigma that attaches and extends to those who are associated with stigmatized individuals (Goffman, 1986, p. 30). Expanding this notion, researchers have argued that, in the case of serious offenses such as murder, not only does stigma extend, but it also implies that families have responsibility for causing the offense, which creates a new form of stigma they must endure (Condry, 2007; May, 2000). Previous studies of prisoners’ wives in the U.S. have also found that the wives’ experiences of stigmatization largely originated from their interactions with criminal justice authorities rather than their communities (Comfort, 2003; L. T. Fishman, 1990). While a larger body of literature exists on how the relatives of prisoners and offenders experience shame and stigma, virtually no studies have examined the processes through which families come to perceive informal, societal responses to crime.

In Japan, stigma has also been a primary focus in the limited but illuminating literature on the family members of offenders. Steinhoff (2008) vividly documents how the family members of political offenders faced severe condemnation from the public along with offenders themselves. One of the members of a New Left group responsible for a series of time bomb attacks in the mid-1970s in Tokyo recalled, “One morning after a snowfall, the snow was mounded up in front of our house and a pile of dog dung was left in it with the word ‘hikokumin’ (traitor) (Cited in Steinhoff 2008: 98).” When a serious crime such as this is committed in Japan, the news media broadcasts names and addresses of not only convicts but also suspects to facilitate community hostility. Terrified of being identified, families often relocate, switch jobs, transfer schools, and/or avoid public spaces as a result. They also fear any sort of news media or even popular media that remind them of their kin’s crime and thus, make a conscious effort to avoid them (Abe, 2015; Suzuki, 2010). Although the previous studies show that negative or inaccurate news coverage could foster hostile societal reactions toward offenders’ kin (Beck, Britto, & Andrews, 2009; Sharp, 2005), virtually no Western or Japanese research has examined the role that the media play in the processes of stigmatization.

Modified Labeling Theory and Reintegrative Shaming

To examine the families of prisoners/offenders and their experiences, this study draws from the modified labeling approach. One of the significant characteristics of modified labeling theory is its emphasis on both actual and anticipated social rejection that labeled individuals face (Bernburg, 2009). Elaborating on Scheff’s (1966) radical application of secondary deviance to mental illness, Link and colleagues (1989) highlighted that “Patients’ expectations of rejection are an outcome of socialization and the cultural context rather than a pathological state associated with their psychiatric condition” (p. 403). Assuming that individuals adopt societal views about mental illness regardless of whether they are mentally ill, Link and colleagues (1989) further noted that the labeled individuals use “secrecy, withdrawal, and education” to deal
with the public’s responses. Applying the modified labeling approach to societal reactions to
crime seems ideal because it not only recognizes the families’ anticipated and actual experiences
of stigma, but also addresses informal labeling, which is a major gap in the labeling literature
(Bernburg, 2009, 2010).

Another theoretical framework that is instrumental in understanding the public’s reactions to
crime in Japan is Braithwaite’s (1989) reintegrative shaming. According to Braithwaite, Japan is
the quintessential reintegrative society that “label[s] the act as evil while striving to preserve the
identity of the offender as essentially good” (1989, p. 102). He also argued that those with
stronger ties to conventional institutions suffer more damage from informal sanctions than those
with weaker connections. This thesis is critically important to the current study in two ways.
First, it provides a framework to appreciate and analyze positive societal reactions to crime such
as forgiveness and acceptance. While the majority of past research has focused on families’
passive experiences of shame and stigma, positive consequences of crime, including the efforts
to foster resilience by the families themselves, need to be documented (Condry, 2007). Second,
because reintegrative shaming was formulated based on Braithwaite’s’ observations of Japan,
this study is well-suited to test the concept (Miyazawa, 1997). Given the criticisms of the
conception of a “restorative” or “reintegrative” Japan (Aldous & Frank, 2000; Fujimoto & Park,
1994; D. T. Johnson, 2002; Miyazawa, 1997; Nelken, 1998), this study investigates families of
offenders and their experiences so as to demystify the nature of Japan’s societal reactions to
crime.

**METHODS**

**Participant Observation and In-Depth Interviews**

Throughout the 20 months of my field research from January 2014 to August 2015, I spent
more than 140 hours listening and observing at the family circle meetings held by four different
organizations, respectably supporting the family members of drug addicts, juvenile delinquents,
and those who committed other types of crime (i.e. violent crime, property crime, and sex crime).
By attending these meetings, I collected basic background information of the participants and
selected potential interviewees. I used purposive sampling to choose those who had any
interactions with criminal justice authorities. In the early stage of data collection, however, I
noticed that new attendees who had recently discovered their kin’s crime had difficulty sharing
their feelings and thoughts in front of others. In order to avoid potentially exploiting these at-risk
family members (Beck & Britto, 2006), I decided not to interview newcomers. Instead, I relied
on participant observation, an unobtrusive and unthreatening method (Adler & Adler, 1994), to
collect the narratives of the new attendees. By using participant observation in conjunction with
interviews, I was able to avoid skewing the study’s results by merely including the accounts of
long-term attendees.

Due to my regular presence at family circle meetings, I gathered various information of each
family prior to the interviews, such as the family structure, the offenders’ current criminal justice
status, and the family members’ mental states. Based on these observational data, I was able to
adjust my interview guide accordingly and avoid dwelling on the details of crimes committed,
which could have been retraumatizing for some family members (Beck & Britto, 2006).
Although I did not record any narratives at the meetings, I took extensive field notes after each
family circle. Included in the filed notes were facts about each prisoner’s offense, details on the criminal justice process, the family members’ responses. In addition, I wrote down how the participants told their stories, including their facial expressions, body language, and group interactions.

The interviews took the form of intensive interviewing, which encourages participants to reflect on earlier events and share their significant experiences as experts (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 25–27). Prior to conducting the interviews, I explained to each participant the purpose of my study and informed them that their personal information would be kept confidential and their names anonymous. Furthermore, I reminded all interviewees that they could skip any questions at any time. On average, the interviews lasted for two to two and a half hours. With interviewee’s permission, I recorded interviews with a digital voice recorder. It has to be noted, however, that two participants expressed uneasiness about being recorded. In these cases, I took extensive notes upon obtaining the interviewees’ permission. Interviews were semi-structured and thus, there was no fixed questionnaire, although I had specific ideas about what I wanted to know (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Those ideas included the interactions with the authorities, society and the media, stress and emotions, and the gendered world of offender support activities. I asked broad, open-ended questions that covered a range of topics that related to their lives before and after their kin’s crime. My rationale for using this type of interviewing technique was to avoid potentially retraumatizing and exploiting the families (Beck & Britto, 2006). All interviews were conducted and transcribed in Japanese. The study participant’s quotes were also translated from Japanese to English by the author whose first language is Japanese, retaining the speaker’s exact tones and nuances. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, all names were changed to pseudonyms while transcribing interviews and transferring field notes to Microsoft Word documents.

Sample. In total, I observed 50 family members at family circles, 31 of which I interviewed. Study participants include 34 mothers (68%), 7 wives (14%), 6 fathers (12%), and 3 sisters (6%), which reflects a clear predominance of women in the field of prisoner and offender support activities (Comfort, 2008; Condry, 2007). All participants were of 35-years of age and up and the eldest was in their late-70s. More than half of the women participants were working or had just started to work full-time or part-time during field research, while the remaining were either homemakers or receiving a pension. All men participants except one were working full-time. Every participant had at least one experience of interacting with law enforcement, such as being questioned and or searched due to their kin’s possible law-breaking behavior. All except five family members (90%) experienced their kin’s arrest and 34 participants (68%) experienced their kin’s incarceration, including juvenile prisons and training schools (7 parents). Table 1 shows the types of crime conviction or charges brought against participants’ kin, including sex offense (28%), drug offense (22%), fraud (10%), property crime (8%), murder (8%), assault (6%), other (4%1), and unknown crime (4%). These are the most recent criminal accusations or convictions that the participants could recall.

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1 Other includes vandalism (2%) and criminal threatening (2%).
Table 1. Type of offense committed by kin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Offense</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex offense</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug offense</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Arrest</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis.** This study is grounded in the literatures on prisoners’ families, the collateral consequences of incarceration, and informal sanctions. These three literatures helped structure the interview guides and initial data analysis. In the initial stages of my analysis, I coded the interview transcripts and field notes for the families’ relationships to the offenders as well as the criminal justice system, paying close attention to the offenders’ accused crime, their historical involvement in the criminal justice system, and their current status in the criminal justice process. As new ideas and themes emerged, the original coding scheme expanded (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Line-by-line coding revealed repeated concepts such as “condemnation from the family and relatives,” “verbal attacks from neighbors,” and “anticipated community disdain.” Using axial coding, similar themes were then linked to develop analytical codes, including “perceived stigma,” “actual hostility,” and “techniques to overcome negative societal reactions.” To enhance the study’s validity, throughout data collection and analysis, I reviewed and revised the analytical codes and the interview guides to verify my interpretations of the obtained data with the study’s participants and practitioners (Charmaz, 2006; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2005).

**FINDINGS**

The Fear of Detection

In this study, all participants, except for two parents of young substance users, expressed fear that their proximate communities would learn about their familial ties to offenders. Even long-term group members, those who most openly shared their experiences at family circles, were fearful of situations that could possibly reveal their status as family members of offenders. Kimiko, a veteran at the drug addicts’ family support group and the group for parents of delinquent youth, recounted her attempts to avoid public scrutiny visiting her son at the training school. She recalled:

[The training school] was located in the middle of nowhere. Even from the train station it costs about 5,000 yen ($50) by taxi to get there. You could take the bus
but it’s a kind of bus that, um, has no stop buttons. I didn't even know that those buses were still running, but you would have to yell out, “I’m getting off here!” And the bus stop we wanted get off was called the Training School. The Training School… I just could not bring myself to say, “I’m getting off in front of the training school…!” And my husband never says it either. He’s only been there a few times but whenever he goes he makes me say it. So the first time I went, I could not tell the bus driver where my stop is and I got off at the next stop. But those buses aren’t like the ones over here, you know? I thought I would only have to walk back 200 or 300 meters. I ended up walking more than a half-hour in the mountains. That's when I thought, “This isn’t gonna work. Either I have to make myself say it or drive.”

The fear of detection and the need for secrecy reported by Kimiko and other study participants arose from the interplay between formal and informal labeling.

According to labeling theorists (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951), labeling through both formal and informal institutions defines crime. As Bernburg (2009) puts it, “Formal labeling, such as an arrest or a conviction, may have little or no impact on a person’s social status as long as it is kept secret from community members, employers, teachers, and so on” (p. 344). Similarly, family members of offenders are likely to experience less shame and stigma if their kin’s formal label as a criminal was concealed from the public.

The present study identified two ways in which the formal label became available to the public. Firstly, the official label was made public by the news media, allowing community members to make direct associations between the officially labeled individuals and their family members. Kohei recounted the aftermath of having his adult son’s arrest for fraud published in the media as follows:

My son was twenty-two at the time of arrest so his name and everything else were aired on the TV and radio. I am the youngest of five siblings and my eldest brother is a fairly well known journalist, employed as a lecturer at the time at [a prestigious university] in Tokyo. The second eldest was also a principle of a private all-girls high school. So when they found out about what my son had done on the TV, they indeed, blamed and criticized me and my wife, saying that we have failed as parents. We had to, um, apologize, deeply bowing in front of them and such. Oh, they were really, really harsh and it really made me feel ashamed as a parent.

Kohei’s experience speaks to a mechanism of labeling in which the publication of a formal label prompts informal labeling. Following the formal labeling of an individual through arrest, the media disseminate the official label to the public, triggering informal labeling that often extends to the family of the formally labeled. As a result, Kohei’s family felt that his negative celebrity threatened their social status so they blamed and condemned him. Such reaction from intimates could have significant emotional consequences, as it tends to be more potent than impersonal state shaming (i.e. negative interactions with criminal justice agents) (Braithwaite, 1989).
Secondly, a formally imposed label became publicized when members of society assumed there was a link between the criminal justice agents and the offenders’ family members due to gossip or witnessing interactions between the two. Thus, the family members were increasingly wary of others frequently seeing them with uniformed police officers and probation and parole officers in the neighborhood, as well as in the vicinity of correctional and judicial institutions. Masae became deeply disturbed when she found out that police detectives had asked her neighbors questions and distributed their name cards in an effort to arrest her drug-abusing son. She explained that although she did not mind being visited by the police as it had happened many times before, what bothered her was that the detectives were so obtrusive that they could have disturbed the neighbors and, more importantly, publicized her family member’s shameful association with the criminal justice system.

Moreover, of the 34 participants whose kin experienced incarceration, at least six expressed an awareness of trial observers and at times felt threatened by their presence. Asami spoke of her experience of going to her husband’s trial for a sex offense as follows:

When I went to [the court], there was coincidentally a hearing for [a very celebrated criminal case]. So the lobby was packed with people. At the reception, there were books that showed the schedule and location for all court hearings for the day. I remember being terrified of the people who were studying those books and taking notes. I was also scared of bumping into somebody I knew. So I was like this [covers the left side of her face with her hand] whenever somebody walked past the door of our courtroom. … I think there were about twelve, thirteen [observers] in total. There were even these really young people with dyed hair and backpacks, looking not so intelligent and out of place. I was like, “Who are these people?” …I would never want to go back to trials and things of that sort.

Zimring and Hawkins (1973) argue that “A criminal trial followed by conviction and sentencing can be seen as a public degradation ceremony, in which the public identity of the convicted individual is lowered on social scale” (p. 79). Indeed, these family members perceived going to a trial as a stigmatizing experience rather than as an opportunity to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice. Saeko, the mother of a repeat sex offender whose case was tried under the lay-judge system2, said she dreaded testifying in court as a jojo shonin (character witness) and had lost four kilograms as a result of stress-induced appetite loss. But even those who did not appear in court as witnesses also expressed the uneasiness of seeing strangers in the courtroom. To them, these observers did not represent criminal justice officials or judicial experts, but rather curious lay people who could impose informal labels.

The accounts of the family members indicate that both the media and criminal justice system function as a means to publicize formal labels, which consequently enables community members to apply informal labels. Due to the high social visibility of criminal justice agents and establishments, such as police officers in uniforms, police cars, the courthouse, and the prison, they function as indicators that individuals are having trouble with the law. Thus, when family

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2 The lay-judge system, which came into effect in 2009, allows lay people to join professional judges in both fact-finding and sentencing processes during trials of serious cases in Japan.
members come in contact with these symbols of criminal justice, they became extremely fearful of being seen as the same as the targets of crime control.

However, it’s important to note that when family members of offenders in Japan discussed their prison visitation experiences, stigmatization by the correctional officers was not a frequent topic of discussion. Although Western prisoners often discuss their experiences of being humiliated, stigmatized, and even abused by prison guards (Christian, 2005; Comfort, 2003; L. T. Fishman, 1990; Hannem, 2011), only a few study participants spoke of similar negative experiences. This might be due to the family members feeling less vulnerable to stigmatization inside the prison than when they were outside because they were sharing the space with those who experienced similar events. Indeed, Braman (2007) posits that when family members are outside of prison, they are less “protected” from societal reactions than those who are inside prison walls with peers who can provide sympathy and share frustration or anger. Echoing this conjecture, because participants typically exist outside prison walls, they are more likely to intensely experience informal rather than formal reactions to crime when compared to their offender family members who live within prison walls.

**Actual and Anticipated Community Hostility**

Previous literature on Japanese families of offenders has highlighted serious and extremely sensationalized cases that led to severe condemnation from the public and proximate communities (Abe, 2015; Steinhoff, 1999; Suzuki, 2010). In this study, this type of intense public hostility was not reported possibly due to the less serious nature of the crimes committed. However, study participants sometimes encountered actual hostility from those who were in a close proximity to them, such as other family members and relatives, next-door neighbors, and local community members. Ten family members reported such experiences, which typically involved verbal hostility from family and relatives.

According to Schwartz and Weinstraub (1974), the American wives of prisoners often feel torn between personal positive perceptions of their husbands and parents’ and in-laws’ negative perceptions. According to the wife’s parents, the husband represents the source of agony inflicted on their children and grandchildren, while the husband’s parents tend to see the wife as at least partially to blame for his deviant behavior. Paralleling these findings, three wives discussed such experiences in the current study. Naomi and Akari, whose husbands were arrested for fraud and sexual assault respectively, described how their husbands’ families blamed them for their husbands’ wrongdoing. Though not blamed by her in-laws, Asami recalled that, “[My mother] refers to my husband as ‘that man’ in front of my children. The youngest always catches it and gets uneasy. So I had to ask her to stop doing it and call him their daddy instead.” Despite facing dilemmas, as Fishman (1990) found in her study of prisoners’ wives in the U.S., the wives in the current study largely made an effort to maintain their children’s perception of the incarcerated men as fathers rather than criminals.

Both Takashi and Yasuyo were very concerned about the reactions of their local communities. Takashi’s son was incarcerated for a drug offense, but the relationship between his family and his nextdoor neighbors had already started to deteriorate prior to his incarceration, when the neighbors called the police on Takashi’s son for public disturbance. He also recalled that the daughter of his next-door family told him to “piss off” when he tried to greet her on the
street. Yasuyo, whose son has been incarcerated for multiple counts of robbery, explained that even though her son tells her not to be bothered by it, she is convinced that the next-door family tries to avoid her whenever they see her on the street. Eight years following her son’s arrest, she explained:

> My son tells me that we don't have to worry about what other people think because he has already made amends. But in Japan, you still have to be concerned about other people’s views…. In our neighborhood, I always wonder if people are looking at us with disdain. Our next-door neighbors are alert, too. They recently installed a security camera. I know I could go on and on worrying about things like this, but Japan is still a conservative society, you know? Like, you have to go on living, feeling small and ashamed. …Our house is old and we want to repair the damaged roof. But it is going to require scaffoldings and everything and be very noticeable. I'm afraid that the neighbors are going to judge us and say, 'I can't believe they have the audacity to fix their house after their son has done such a thing!'

The discrepancy in perceptions of stigma suggests that offenders and their families experience different types of stigma as a result of their different legal statuses. Because family members only experience informal labeling and sanctions due to their legal innocence, the stigma of criminality persisted with no indication that it would discontinue with release from prison for instance. While we know that ex-offenders experience a number of blatant and systematic consequences of formal sanctions, also known as “civil death” (Petersilia, 2003, pp. 136–137), family members experience the potent and enduring effects of informal punishment.

The difference in the understanding of public perceptions between offenders and their kin was a frequent topic discussed by study participants. Eight out of the 34 participants whose kin had experienced imprisonment discussed such disparity. At one family circle, Kanako burst into tears as she discussed her frustration and anger toward her incarcerated brother who asked her to publish his journals on the Internet to publicize the reality of Japanese detention centers. She harshly criticized him for being completely oblivious to the daily inconveniences and the fear of discovery that his family had to endure in their communities. In her study of Canadian wives of prisoners, Hannem (2011) argued that women are more susceptible to extended stigma due to the patriarchal concept that women’s identity is limited to their roles of spouse and/or mother. Hagan, Simpson, and Gills (1979) have also noted that social stratification renders women more susceptible to informal sanctions than men because “Women are denied full access to the public sphere through a socialization sequence that moves from mother to daughter in a cycle that is self-renewing” (p. 34). The women participants in this research indeed seemed more concerned about the effects of informal labeling and stigmatization on the family and themselves than their male counterparts or male offenders. The women particularly noted that they became increasingly wary of gossip when they went outside to grocery shop or take out the trash. While men could devote their time to work and evade extensive informal labeling, women were relegated to their households and communities due to gender role expectations and frequently faced cringe-inducing and potentially shameful moments outside their home. Although the women in this study continued to fulfill the socially ascribed role of caretakers to their offender and other family members (Girshick, 1996), their efforts to maintain the normalcy of family life were continuously ignored, undervalued, and exploited (Richie, 2002).
Secrecy

In alignment with modified labeling theory (Link et al., 1989), secrecy was indeed one of the prominent methods participants used to deal with stigma. Secrecy was, however, used in various forms, including deception, half-truths, and selective disclosure. In this study, the majority of family members reported that they concealed their kin’s law-breaking from their colleagues, with the exception of a few who informed their immediate bosses to get time off. When the study participants interacted with neighbors and acquaintances, they often withheld their kin’s information by not saying anything or telling half-truths. Yasuyo reported that she confided in one of her closest friends, but she explained that she purposefully selected a friend who lived a considerable distance away from her local community to avoid becoming the subject of local gossip.

Ten family members explained that they concealed their kin’s wrongdoing even from other immediate family members and close relatives. They often justified secrecy as necessary to safeguard other family members’ psychological and physiological well-being, especially when they were perceived as too young, old, or emotionally vulnerable. Mitsuko, whose husband was arrested for indecent exposure, maintained that she would never want her adult daughter to find out about his offense, although the rest of her children knew. She explained:

Both our sons know [about their father’s sex offense] but our daughter doesn’t. So I wouldn’t want her and her husband to ever see [the media coverage]. I feel like everyone knows about it, but at least my daughter…I would never want her to discover because she loves her father so much. So I hope she doesn’t…find out, ever. …I contemplate divorce but supposedly I live here and my husband would have to go live with his parents. Then he has to tell them. He has told me never to disclose [his offense] to his mother or elder sister. So we never did. But I feel like, why am I the only one who has to suffer? I personally want to tell my sister-in-law at least but…

Prohibited by her husband to inform her in-laws, Mitsuko was forced to live in an intricate web of familial secrets, feeling the burden of keeping the information all to herself. Yasuyo managed not to let her mother, who was then hospitalized and now deceased, discover her grandson’s arrest and incarceration by convincing her that he was working abroad. While it is unknown if her mother ever found out about the offense, Yasuyo firmly believed that letting her mother pass away without the knowledge of her grandson’s criminal history was one of the few good decisions that she made regarding her son’s offending.

Findings highlight a careful selection process employed by the offenders’ family members to determine when, to whom, and how much they disclose about their kin’s offending. As noted previously, formal labeling becomes problematic when it is revealed to the public (Bernburg, 2009). Secrecy allowed the family members to have autonomy and control over the amount of information the public has about their kin’s criminality, and thus, enabled them to resist informal labeling. According to Scheppelle (1988), secrecy represents a means of wielding power, “wrenching advantage from the unknowing actions of others” (p. 5). In regards to deception, similarly, Simmel (1906) argued that “[t]he lie that succeeds—that is, which is not seen through—is without doubt a means of bringing mental superiority to expression, and of enabling
it to guide and subordinate less crafty minds” (p. 446). Thus, as Foucault (1980) reminds us of the inseparable nature of knowledge and power, the techniques shown above were used not only to curtail stigma but also to control knowledge and reassure power, which participants had often been often deprived of in the midst of chaotic and unfamiliar criminal justice procedures.

Scheppele (1988) further noted that “[t]he secrecy is the social mechanism through which the interest and intentions of particular social actors, making decisions in their daily lives, become translated into inequalities in knowledge” (p. 23). When secrecy was employed during interactions with the public, family members used the knowledge imbalance as a source of power—which was once taken away by the criminal justice system—to shield themselves from labeling. However, when secrecy was employed within the family, the knowledge inequality harmed the uninformed by depriving them of a possible source of autonomy. In this study, daughters, young children, and the elderly were often excluded from the whole criminal justice process and given distorted and misleading explanations about disturbances in the family. Previous studies have demonstrated that deception can have detrimental effects on the children of prisoners in terms of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive adjustment (Lowenstein, 1986; Schwartz & Weintraub, 1974). Moreover, these children are often aware of the facts despite adults misinforming them (S. H. Fishman & Cassin, 1981). Due to the sampling frame limitations, this study was not able to assess the repercussions of familial secrets on children and adult relatives of offenders. Nonetheless, findings suggest that secrecy is a tool of power afforded only to some, debilitating unwitting family members through disparate sharing of knowledge due to their gender, age, and/or ableness.

Revealing Secrets and Separating from Stigma

So far, the narratives of the study participants have highlighted the kind of shaming that is neither terminated by society nor followed by the gesture of forgiveness, which points to the fact that Japan is no more reintegrative than other societies. However, the family members did discuss their experiences encountering gestures of acceptance from others, albeit much less often. Such instances of reintegrative shaming occurred when the family members were disassociated from the crime committed by their kin. Kohei explained at the first Parent-Teacher Association meeting he attended after his son’s case was broadcast on television that he had no reason to feel sorry or shameful because his son, not he, had committed the crime, and he was grateful to those who sympathized and consoled him. The gestures of acceptance were expressed not only verbally, but also through the simple act of maintaining relationships with the family members even after the discovery of the incident. Kohei and at least four other parents of offenders reported that they felt great relief and gratitude when their children’s significant others expressed understanding and compassion upon learning the discrediting fact about their family.

According to Braithwaite (1989), decertifying deviance or de-labeling is a fundamental aspect of reintegrative shaming. In a reintegrative society, the deviant label will be removed from offenders upon punishment and shaming before it becomes their master identity. In this study, shaming was so potent and long-lasting, that family members disengaged themselves from the stigma of criminality to end the labeling and shaming. Haruko, a mother of a drug offender and one of the founders of a drug addicts’ family support group near Tokyo, recounted her first experience of attending a family circle 12 years ago as follows:
When I first went there, well, it was for families of drug users so I thought everyone there was like this [runs her finger across her cheek signifying a scar, indicating yakuza] or hostesses you see at the bar. So I was very, very scared [laughs]. Then when I went inside, I found out that they were actually, um, normal people. But when I was at the registration, people around me were saying stuff that didn't make any sense. They were like:

“Ah, my son got arrested again!”

“That’s good! If he’s in prison, he’s not using.”

“My son is still missing.”

“If there’s still no word, that means he’s not dead!”

Hearing these things, I was like, “Wow, so scary...” But, you see, they were all laughing... I couldn't even smile at that time, having thoughts like, “If only my daughter was dead... Maybe I should die with her, too...” When I saw these people laughing so much, I thought, “Wait, maybe it is ok for me to live. Maybe it is ok for me to... laugh... as well. And I felt like I saw this faint light at the end of the tunnel.

By openly discussing and even laughing at their kin’s situations, the long-time members signified to Haruko that the current state of her daughter was no longer something to be hidden. Family circles prompted her to reduce self-stigma by asserting that being a drug offender’s family member is a significant part of her identity (Boling, 1996).

Another prominent aspect of her account is the display of a very limited and skewed understanding of crime. According to modified labeling theory, the labeled individuals internalize the same conceptions about deviance as the public through various means, such as the media, and that they perceive societal responses based on those internalized views (Link et al., 1989). For Haruko, who grew up in a middle-class household in the outskirts of Tokyo and is a dedicated registered nurse, illicit drug use was something so foreign and unfamiliar that she initially associated it only with those who occupied the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder. This instance suggests that because crime is so uncommon in Japan, the public tends to hold very stereotypical and even stigmatizing views about lawbreaking, which may be internalized by the labeled. This process of self-stigmatization was reported frequently in this study. In fact, the distorted conceptions about deviance were not exclusive to Haruko or the other family members of drug offenders, but were similarly and unanimously expressed by most of the study participants who reported that it was a surprise to see people just like them in prison visiting rooms and family circle meetings.

To these family members, the family support groups served an educational purpose. They obtained accurate information about the nature of crime and the criminal justice system from peers and professionals, which fostered the process of de-stigmatization. Many also reported that family circles simply provided a place to cry. When their status as an offender’s family member is not socially recognized, they are deprived of space to express their complex set of emotions. Yasuyo, feeling out of place even at home where she lived with her husband and her son who
was recently released, recalled that she used to frequently go to a public swimming pool in the next town prior to discovering a support group. When asked about the reason, she simply replied, “I used to cry while I swim. Others wouldn't notice it if I was crying underwater, you know?”

Many study participants similarly explained that they used to come to the family circle just so they could cry. For those people, family circles represented not only an educational opportunity, but also a safe and protected place where they could disclose secrets and express their disenfranchised emotions without facing negative repercussions.

**DISCUSSION**

**Irony of Japan’s Low Crime Rate**

Japan is a society that experiences remarkably less crime than its Western counterparts. For example, in 2014, the rates of adults brought into formal contact with the police and/or the criminal justice system in the United States and Japan were 4,134 and 190 per 100,000 respectively (UNODC, 2016). The U.S. adult incarceration rate is 612, whereas it is only 47 in Japan\(^3\) (Carson, 2015; Ministry of Justice, 2015). While it is a welcoming fact that Japan is considerably safer than other societies, the previous studies found that fewer occurrences of crime in communities has an inverse effect on the level of stigma perceived by offenders’ kin (L. T. Fishman, 1988; Schwartz & Weintraub, 1974). Hirschfield (2008) has also shown that labeling has a limited impact on the youths in crime-familiar communities where the label of a delinquent is neutralized. These studies point to the existence of a great irony in Japan: The low crime rate, which is supposed to help families thrive in a safe society, is what actually causes offenders’ families harm.

In Japan, because the number of individuals affected by crime is so miniscule, families feel compelled to keep their troubles private, which allows the government as well as the general public to turn a blind eye. Indeed, Boling (1996) noted that privacy isolates individuals, rendering them unable to recognize public problems and political issues shared with others. Thus, crime tends to be seen as an individual problem in Japan, fostering stigmatizing societal responses. This is in stark contrast to the situation in the United States where crime is so prevalent and racialized that the whole African American community not only sees it as less stigmatizing, but also an opportunity to advocate for social change (e.g. Black Lives Matter). But even in the United States, with the daily reporting of innocent black lives lost to police brutality, the crime rate continues to drop (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015). In fact, there seems to be a global trend of crime decline in Europe and North America (Knepper, 2012; Tseloni, Mailley, Farrell, & Tilley, 2010). For these developed democracies, the Japanese experience serves as a cautionary tale that a “safe society” may not be a blessing for all individuals. This irony teaches us the importance of educating not only offenders’ kin, but also the general public about offending as a social phenomenon, so as to curtail stereotypes and the stigma of crime. Moreover, criminal justice officials, legal experts, as well as media personnel must be cognizant of how the consequences of their actions can reach well beyond offenders.

\(^3\) It has to be noted here that imprisonment is seldom used as a means of negative sanctions in Japan (Haley, 1991; E. H. Johnson, 1996), especially for those who commit minor offenses (D. T. Johnson, 2002).
Irony of Japan’s Crime Control

A closer look at Japan’s crime statistics reveals another fundamental irony that Japanese society experiences. Although the nation’s overall crime rates continue to drop, the average reincarceration rate remains stable, and roughly 40% of ex-inmates return to prison within 5 years of release. For inmates released in 2011 without parole supervision, by 2016, over half were reincarcerated (Ministry of Justice, 2016). Japan’s high-rate of reincarceration suggests that while using shame and stigma as a form of crime control may deter new offenders, it may also breed recidivism. Shunning ex-offenders through denying access to affordable housing, meaningful employment, and reliable social networks may compel ex-prisoners to reoffend (Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005; Travis & Waul, 2004).

The informal sanctioning of kin may not only beget re-offending, but persistent recidivism also emotionally injures families who fear stigmatization and shaming. Informal sanctions emotionally burden offenders’ kin, and re-offending perpetuates distress, which raises ethical concerns about the use of stigma and shame for social control (Condry, 2007). Family support is critical for successful prisoner reentry (Arditti & Few, 2006; Naser & La Vigne, 2006; Shapiro, 2001). However, prolonged informal sanctions can render families ambivalent towards newly released offenders, which diminishes chances for desistance. Japan’s high-rates of reentry have enduring collateral consequences for not only offenders, but also their kin.

Scholars have attributed Japan’s low crime rates to the country’s heavy use of informal sanctions for social control (Bayley, 1991; Braithwaite, 1989; Fenwick, 1982; Haley, 1991). Much like the United States where the state uses the fear of crime to govern people’s lives (Garland, 2001; Simon, 2009), Japan’s state-initiated use of informal sanctions has been the country’s pivotal means of crime control. A historical examination of Japan’s drug laws shows that Japan routinely portrays illicit substance users as pathological, morally-depraved, or as the “other” to maintain social control when the government’s legitimacy is threatened (Kingsberg, 2014). Through press clubs where bureaucrats, major corporations, and journalists form a tight-knit community, the Japanese government also has the mass media at its disposal to disseminate their own perceptions of crime and criminals to the public (Freeman, 2000). The Japanese state’s construction of distorted images of criminals through informal sanctions may be a substantial barrier to altering people’s perceptions of crime.

Yet, Japan’s Ministry of Justice has recently changed its views on offender rehabilitation. It has developed prison-based and community-based reentry programs to grapple with Japan’s persistent recidivism rates. These programs will provide individualized rehabilitation and reentry support to drug offenders, sex offenders, women, the elderly, and those with mental illness and disability. The ministry has also partnered with job replacement offices, private corporations, and non-profits to ensure ex-prisoners have access to affordable housing and meaningful employment. Finally, the ministry pledges to educate the public about the importance of social support for successful reentry to spread awareness about recidivism. While these new rehabilitation and reentry programs are limited in terms of accessibility and availability (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2014), they illustrate progress and indicate a paradigm shift in the minds of Japan’s practitioners and policy makers. This shift could also lead to the potential relaxation of informal sanctions on offenders and their family members in Japan.
CONCLUSION

This study explored the lived experiences of offenders’ kin in Japan to highlight a host of collateral consequences of informal sanctions and remind us of the fundamental importance of prisoner reentry and rehabilitation. It also illuminated the nature of societal reactions to crime in Japan, which challenged previous perceptions of Japan as an archetypical reintegrative society. The family members in this study demonstrated an immense fear of being informally labeled, which was precipitated by formal institutions such as the police, courts, and the media that generated and publicized formal labels. To avoid informal labeling, family members used secrecy and the power of knowledge. However, secrecy was usually not afforded to children, young women, or the elderly members of individual families. Essentially, there are two forms of power relations that affect offenders’ kin—one that occurs between formal institutions and family members, and the other within the families themselves. This study underlines the importance of educating the agents of control and media personnel, as well as the affected kin on how to empower every family member in the wake of kin’s crime.

While the current research is the most comprehensive study of Japanese families of offenders that has been conducted, it is not without limitations. Sampling from family support organizations excludes families who are unwilling or unable to reach out for help. Thus, the accounts of those who may not wish to support their incarcerated kin are left out. With an increasing number of the aging population in correctional facilities in Japan, it is assumed that a sizeable portion of prisoners have lost contact with their family members due to death or an extended period of separation. Therefore, this research also lacks the accounts of those who are unknowable about their kin’s offending. While attempts were made to increase research validity by confirming findings with the study participants and practitioners, the current study is void of inter-rater reliability checks. Consequently, there is a chance that interpretations of the data are skewed.

Finally, this study lacks the perspectives of male family members of offenders. Due to Japan’s cultural definition of manhood and demanding work environment (Iwao, 1998; Sodei, 1993), some men were perhaps reluctant to attend family circle meetings and share their emotions with others. This limitation highlights the need to investigate gendered aspects of offender support activities in Japan. More importantly, the universal gender imbalance in family circles in Japan and the West needs to be examined. Scholars should ask why women are at the forefront of offender assistance, providing continuous care for offenders throughout formal and informal sanctions. Although the male experience requires further examination, women should remain centered in research on family members of offenders. Because of their culturally expected role of a caregiver, female family members remain in a close proximity to offenders and may suffer from more negative repercussions of informal sanctions than their male counterparts. Using feminist thought and research techniques, future research needs to ascertain how power relations within the family and society influence women and men as family members of offenders.

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A Diversity Course for Criminal Justice Undergraduate Students: A Preliminary Evaluation

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Abstract

Racially-involved police community incidents demonstrate the urgent need for educating future criminal professionals to work in a multicultural environment. We present a qualitative evaluation of a criminal justice diversity course designed to broaden university students’ multicultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Results indicated that most students reportedly experienced a decrease in biases, described the importance of learning about cultural differences, acknowledged minorities’ negative attitudes toward the criminal justice system, and reported intentions to serve as fair and open-minded criminal justice professionals. Students also showed a significant increase in empathy across the semester.

Keywords: multicultural pedagogy, criminal justice course, undergraduate education

INTRODUCTION

A pedagogical strategy which provides students with opportunities to learn about their own culture and the cultures of others is particularly relevant to the discipline of criminal justice (Calathes, 1994) in view of the fact that over half of all U.S. jail inmates (Minton, 2011) and state and federal prisoners (West, Sabol, & Greenman, 2010) are either black or Hispanic and disproportionately economically disadvantaged (Reiman & Leighton 2009). In this paper, we describe an undergraduate criminal justice course on multicultural diversity. The purpose of this diversity course is to provide students with the opportunity to develop cultural relativism, defined by the notion that behaviors should be evaluated according to the norms of an individual’s unique culture rather than the standards of others. This multicultural awareness engenders the knowledge and skills that assist in overcoming the sociocultural differences characteristic of criminal justice professionals and the communities they serve. Diversity courses are commonly offered in criminal justice undergraduate programs, yet there is a paucity of research on the impact of criminal justice diversity courses on students’ attitudes and behaviors. Information on how well students are equipped for negotiating a multicultural workplace is unavailable, despite the necessity of students having a range of multicultural competencies to be

1 Corresponding Author: Nancy Blank, Widener University, 1 University Place, Chester PA 19013, email: nbblank@widener.edu. The authors would like to thank Donald Wallace and Robert Bonk for their editorial assistance and thought-provoking comments throughout the preparation of this manuscript.
prepared for criminal justice careers. In a survey of 126 faculty members who teach courses on social justice (including criminal justice), the most common response by instructors was that they did not evaluate the impact of their teaching on student outcomes (Holsinger, 2012).

Historically, the disciplines of criminology and criminal justice have been grounded in the experiences of a Western Eurocentric tradition, as evidenced by textbooks that focus predominantly on white culture. Barak (1991) argues that a culturally white and male bias focus on pedagogy has prevented students from learning the historical and social context of minority groups (e.g., African-Americans, women) necessary for understanding patterns of offending and marginalized minorities (p.174). However, there has been some headway, within the field of criminal justice regarding the teaching of cultural diversity. In a study of 321 criminal justice or related bachelor’s degree programs, Pattern and Way (2011) found that 67% offered one or more diversity courses. Yet, only 14% of university criminal justice programs nationwide mandate that students take a diversity class. Only two criminal justice textbooks (Hendricks, Bryers & Warren-Gordon, 2011; McNamara & Burns, 2009) and two empirical studies (Cameron, 2002; Holsinger, 2012) with a focus on multiculturalism pedagogy have been published; however, programs continue to emphasize the administration of justice, theories, and research methods rather than incorporating diversity within their curricula (Frederick, 2012).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Empirical Review of Diversity Courses for Undergraduate Students**

We uncovered two articles (Cameron, 2002; Holsinger, 2012) that tested the impact of criminal justice diversity courses on undergraduate student outcomes. In both studies, the researchers aimed to 1) provide the students with an understanding of the application of critical or feminist theory (even if the researcher does not use that term) and diversity, as well as 2) to develop knowledge in the classroom through the sharing of students’ personal experiences. Both courses reportedly contributed to the students’ understanding of inequities within society. Through Associative Group Analysis (APA), Cameron (2002) reported that the use of critical theory pedagogy contributed to students’ perceptions of justice that became well-developed over time. Using qualitative analysis, Holsinger (2012) reported that the students’ own experiences of injustice motivated their interest in studying criminal justice and future work toward confronting injustice.

Given the paucity of published diversity studies in the field of criminal justice, we examined additional studies outside the discipline of criminal justice. For example, the impact of diversity classes in education and psychology points to improvements in students’ multicultural competencies (e.g., Brown, 2004; Kernahan & Davis, 2009; Martin & Dagostino-Kalniz, 2015; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007; Simons et al., 2011; Simons et al., 2012). Hence, our course sought to address the lack of undergraduate criminal justice diversity courses.

**Police-Community Relations**

The need for diversity education becomes evident when examining police-community conflict between the communities served by the criminal justice system and professionals. Cultural insensitivity by the police has significantly contributed to the stress between the police
A consistent complaint by minority community leaders is that officers are not adequately sensitive to cultural differences (Smith & Holmes, 2003). Historically in the U.S., relations between police and minority residents have been plagued by varying degrees of conflict (Gould, 1997; McNamara & Burns, 2009). In the 1960s, urban protests against racial discrimination peaked. Police officers responded to protesters with physical brutality exacerbating tension in minorities-police relations (Walker & Starmer, 1999). Recent history such as the acquittal of the white officers accused of beating Rodney King, an African American in Los Angeles, led to race riots across the country. In the 1990s, police force abuse against African Americans (e.g., Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo in New York City) further increased tension between the police and minorities. In 2000, about 36% of blacks compared to 69% of whites reported that police treat individuals of all races fairly. Almost three times as many blacks as whites (36% vs. 14%) reported that the police would stop and arrest them when they are completely innocent (The United States Department of Justice, 2000: Table 2.30, 2.31).

Cultural competency in the criminal justice system is relevant to concerns related to policing and other criminal justice professionals. Smith and Holmes (2003) summarized evidence documenting police mistreatment or unfair treatment of minorities. For example, minorities, were disproportionately the targets of police brutality (Smith & Holmes, 2003), and prosecutors perpetuated racial disparities at the charging and plea-bargaining phases (Davis, 2007). Black youth were more likely than white youth to be waived to adult court, irrespective of the type of crime and age of youth (Bishop, 2000), and were given more punitive dispositions than white youth despite identical offenses and prior records (Mitchell, 2005). Sentencing laws for the possession of crack cocaine – more common among minorities – have been much harsher than laws for the possession of powder cocaine – more common among whites – despite the absence of pharmacological differences between the two forms of cocaine (Beckett, Nyrop, Pfingst, & Bowen, 2005). Unfair processing contributes to aggressive law enforcement and punishment, which in turn results in high rates of imprisonment of minorities (Clear, 2007). Thus, it is not surprising that minority residents reportedly distrust the police (Gould, 1997) and hesitate to call when in need (Anderson, 2000; Walker, 1999).

Demographic Differences between the Police and Communities they Service

Police community mistrust is magnified when the racial composition of the department is not reflective of the local population (Maciag, 2015). Among hundreds of police departments assessed nationally, the percentage of white police officers continues to be more than 30% higher than in the communities they serve (Ashken & Park, 2015). After the Michael Brown shooting, the percentage of white police officers in Ferguson, Missouri was 55 percent higher than the resident population (Ashken & Park, 2015). This disparity in racial composition contributed to strained relations between impoverished minorities and white officers in control. These demographic differences point to the importance of implementing and evaluating a diversity course for future criminal justice professionals.

Cultural Diversity Training Within the Criminal Justice System

Current events point to the need for enhanced training for police officers in the areas of community relations and diversity. Offering training at the university level for undergraduate
students studying criminal justice provides one way to address this unmet need. Cultural diversity training offered through police academies has been identified as necessary for effective policing (Brown & Hendricks, 1995). Law enforcement leadership recognizes that officers must become culturally competent to effectively work with the diverse communities they serve (Blakemore, Barlow, & Padgett, 1995; Lumb, 1995). However, diversity training within law enforcement has not kept pace with best practice diversity pedagogy as described by Holsinger (2012). The traditional model dominates academy training, which focuses on the mechanics of policing such as the law, regulation, and defense (Birzer, 1999). These topics are not integrated with teachings on interpersonal relations and conflict resolution, the skills that ultimately shape the outcome of police-resident interactions. Program curricula provide factual information or “canned programs” about certain cultures (Blakemore et al., 1995, p. 71), which sends the message that bias only results from misinformation or lack of information (Andersen & Collins, 1992). Providing information alone does not translate into developing multicultural competency, but instead, it is necessary to involve officers in an interactive learning process (Blakemore, et al., 1995, p. 74). Academy instructors have also used an “us-versus-them” (law enforcement vs. community) approach, which is damaging to any cultural diversity program (Gould, 1997) that aims to improve police-community relations. Also, academies rely on one-time training sessions that lack the evolutionary complexity necessary for transforming the attitudes and behaviors of the participants (Barlow & Barlow, 1994).

Consistent with best practice diversity pedagogy (Holsinger, 2012), police experts advocate for training that is student-centered with the instructor acting as a facilitator rather than a lecturer to empower recruits to self-explore and create an atmosphere conducive to open dialogue (Gould, 1997). Engaging participants in discussions about their own identities is necessary to help them develop their own cultural awareness and an appreciation of the impact of their culture on interactions with others (Barlow & Barlow, 1994; Nkomo, 1992). Effective diversity training is on-going and includes opportunities for officers to spend time with individuals from different cultures in situations that do not require the power dynamics of being a police officer; such interactions facilitate a reduction of fear and bias for all participants (Barlow & Barlow, 1994). Gould (1997) evaluated a diversity course at an Ohio academy and found that new recruits and experienced officers agreed that effective diversity courses should be offered early in an officer's career and continually reinforced over time.

**Summary of Introduction**

Diversity courses are essential for helping criminal justice students develop the necessary skills to serve as effective professionals. In fact, according to K. Tsang (personal communication, June 15, 2016) of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the most frequent careers chosen by 18-24-year-olds with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice include law enforcement, social work-related fields, law-related careers, and corrections. The American Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) includes the learning of diversity as a goal for all students (AAC&U, 2007) and described diversity as “newly central to a contemporary framework” for higher education to ensure that students “learn multiple and contrasting perspectives” (Musil, 2015, p. 5). Further, multicultural diversity courses provide opportunities for students to learn about systematic discrimination (Holsinger, 2012), social disparities, oppression, discrimination, and cultural differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, sexual
orientation) among groups. These courses encourage students to analyze their own views of justice and to challenge their own prejudices. Students with these skills are more likely to deal with social issues “with creativity and passion” (Holsinger, 2012, p. 123). Working toward helping criminal justice students develop multicultural competence is essential given the history of systemic discrimination against minorities and the poor as summarized by Pattern and Way (2011, p. 345). University graduates need to be prepared to address a society rife with human diversity.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND CONTENT**

**Theoretical Perspective and Course Application**

In the course described here, we employ a critical-feminist theoretical approach. Holsinger (2002) describes this pedagogy as the theory most consistent with best practices for teaching diversity and draws on Paulo Freire’s work (1970) when describing critical pedagogy: “to help students recognize and confront [socioeconomic] class domination…to take action to end oppression” (p. 17). Feminist theory extends critical theory to include differences not only by class, but also by race, gender, and culture. We applied this theory, for example, during class discussions of power dynamics that contribute to racial/ethnic and class conflict with mainstream institutions that historically failed to provide equal opportunity to individuals in impoverished communities. We discussed topics such as deindustrialization and its negative aftermath, including redlining in the 1960s (Massey and Denton, 1993), the code of the street (Anderson, 2000), and the school to prison pipeline (NAACP, 2006). We also applied critical-feminist theory when discussing cultural differences among groups and between genders, along with responses by criminal justice professionals who often do not mirror the demographics of the clients they serve.

**Course Content**

The criminal justice course described here is a 3-credit course titled *Gender, Race, Class, and Crime*. For purposes of this course, we adopted Calathes’ (1994) definition of multiculturalism: “A multicultural criminal justice curriculum incorporates…scholarly dialog among a variety of cultural and class perspectives. Such a curriculum incorporates the scholarship, history and culture of African Americans, and euro-ethnics, as well as traditional Eurocentric scholarship, and is sensitive to gender and class differences” (p. 2).

Academic topics focused on the relevance of diversity to understanding crimes committed by different groups and responses by criminal justice professionals. Topics included (but are not limited to) demystifying current myths about crime, stereotypes (e.g., the model minority), differences in world views, differences in methods of communication among different cultural groups, crime in the streets versus “crime in the suites,” and understanding the impact of gender differences (e.g., relational aggression) on offending and treatment by criminal justice officials.

Similar to Cameron (2002) and Holsinger (2012) and reflective of critical-feminist theory (Weiler, 1991), we used experiential in-class activities and students’ own lived experiences to foster learning about differences, with the teacher and students working collaboratively rather than the teacher acting as expert. As one example, the activity “Backward-Forward” (Kivel, 2002)
challenged the students’ preexisting notions that all Americans have equal opportunity to succeed. The students moved backward or forward to a series of questions (e.g., if you started school speaking a language other than English, take one step backward; if your family had more than fifty books in the house when you were growing up, take one step forward), and their final destination reflected their degree of privilege. Students who landed in the front of the line had grown up with more access to privilege than if they landed in the back of the line. After the activity, the students discussed their reactions to an unequal system as a consequence of their upbringings as influenced by race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

A second example is the use of talking circles, a method of communication used among indigenous people worldwide. This activity facilitates the sharing of power between students and professor. Circles center on the values of respect, honesty, trust, and forgiveness (Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2002). The chairs are organized in a circle. The professor facilitates the circle by asking the students reflection questions one at a time, but also participates by offering responses. The use of a talking piece within the circle to designate the speaker encourages listening by others and provides an opportunity for all to speak within the circle, if one so chooses. We used talking circles to discuss and delve deeply into emotionally laden topics (e.g., the verdict in the OJ Simpson case and a local case where a group of African-American teens residing in a low-income, urban community, shot and paralyzed another African-American male over a jersey).

To address the importance of exposing students to the realities of the criminal justice system, we invited guest presentations by ex-offenders. The use of personal story telling and subsequent class discussion after the presentations is consistent with critical-feminist pedagogy. One speaker served over 30 years in prison for a gang homicide, but since his release, has implemented reintegration programs. The speaker shared his experience of being strip-searched naked, beaten, and kept in the hole for seven years. The second speaker was a college student who had recently returned to the university after serving six years in prison for DUI manslaughter. Through discussions with the speakers, the students were able learn about the injustices and limitations of the criminal justice system as reported by the speakers. The class also toured a county jail.

Conceptual Framework

To assess the impact of this diversity course on undergraduate students, we used a framework commonly applied to examining the effect of undergraduate multicultural classes on improving an individual’s cultural competence (e.g., Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007; Simons et al., 2011; Simons et al., 2012). This framework includes three dimensions that contribute to an individual’s multicultural competency (or their ability to work with others who are culturally different from themselves): 1) attitudes/awareness, 2) knowledge of differences, and 3) multicultural skills. Our framework is based on a linear progression of development (see Figure 1). Individual changes within the students (development of self-awareness), combined with the development of cultural knowledge, are prerequisites for attitude changes (e.g., prejudice reduction) and subsequent behavioral change (Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007).

For our goal attainment evaluation, we assessed students’ cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. We chose this developmental framework for several reasons: The model is designed to
assess changes over time, which is consistent with our goal to measure changes during the semester; the authors could not identify alternative models and therefore used this model from the field of psychology as a starting place. Most of our students had not been exposed to diversity classes prior to this course, and therefore, we aimed to focus on change of awareness given that attitude change toward diversity is evolutionary and takes time to impact.

**Figure 1:** Framework for Investigating Diversity Pedagogy and Cultural Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Awareness</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skill Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) a willingness to self-examine oneself;</td>
<td>1) of group differences;</td>
<td>1) act in non-judgmental ways;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) belief that differences are valuable, learning about differences is necessary for career</td>
<td>2) of the ways that cultural differences affect communication;</td>
<td>2) communicate and interaction across differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) of the impact of history/oppression on groups’ attitudes toward CJ system;</td>
<td>3) empathize with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) of obstacles to diversifying the CJ system.</td>
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**METHODS**

**Sample and Setting**

Describing the setting of the university is relevant as it shapes the views of university students. The university is private with about 3,500 undergraduate students and 2,800 graduate students and is located in a low-income high-crime Northeastern urban metropolitan community. Since deindustrialization, this city has become the prototype of what ails urban America. The population of the city is predominantly African American/black (77%), with 19% White and 5% Latino or Hispanic. The average household income is $25,700 (U.S. Census, 2000a), which is one half of the county average (U.S. Census, 2000b). The city accounts for 67% of all homicides and 35% of all violent crime in the county, but only consists of 8% of the county’s population (Uniform Crime Report, 2007).

Twenty-four students (17 males and seven females) participated in our diversity course. All were full-time students. Predominantly representing the social sciences, their majors (including double majors) were criminal justice (n=14), business (n=4), political science (n=3), and psychology (n=3). The majority were white (n=20), with four African American students. The students ranged in ages from 19 to 23 with a mean age of 21. Half were seniors (n=12), followed by sophomores (n=7) and juniors (n=5). Most (n=14) students reported working during the semester. Six reported working 20 hours or more per week, four between 11 and 19 hours, and four 10 hours or fewer. Most (n=17) reported no participation in volunteer work. Five reported
taking a service-learning course and eight reported having taken a diversity class in past semesters.

Research Design and Procedures

We chose the case study research design to permit an in-depth analysis of our course within the context of real life (Yin, 2013), and adopted Pope and Reynolds’ (1997) conceptual paradigm of cultural competence. According to Pope and Reynolds (1997), this model is an important teaching tool to develop the necessary awareness, knowledge, and skills to work effectively with individuals who are culturally different from ourselves (p. 272). Also, Pope and Reynolds (1997) specify characteristics necessary for each component (awareness, knowledge, and skills), which made testing this framework feasible. We revised Pope and Reynolds’ framework to include only those parts relevant to our course material (see Table 1). We extended the a priori theoretical model to include additional multicultural competencies relevant to our specific class. We chose these additional categories post-data collection. We assessed our study goals of measuring attitudes, knowledge, and skills using two sources of data: 1) a pre- post quantitative empathy survey and 2) the students’ final take home exam.

Students completed a short quantitative survey at the start and end of the semester and a take-home, open-ended exam at the end of the semester. The university’s Institutional Review Board approved all study procedures.

Measures

The survey included a demographic questionnaire developed by the researchers and a shortened 7-item version of the Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale (BEES) (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). The BEES measures empathy as defined as emotional arousal or sympathy in response to the feelings or experiences of others (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). The 30-item BEES scale has acceptable measures of validity and internal consistency ranging from .87 to .90 (Mehrabian, 1996b). The abbreviated BEES scale has been shown to have construct validity and positively correlates with emotional and relationship success (Mehrabian, 2000). The BEES statements follow: “I hardly ever cry when watching a very sad movie;” “I very much enjoy and feel uplifted by happy endings;” “helpless old people don’t have much of an emotional effect on me;” “I cannot feel much sorrow for those who are responsible for their own misery;” “I get a strong urge to help when I see someone in distress;” “given the opportunity, I would watch an execution;” and “the sadness of a close one easily rubs off on me.”

We intentionally measured changes in empathy. Studies identify the college years as the time when students are developmentally most prepared for empathy training and when this training seems most effective (Courtright, Mackey, & Packard, 2005). This finding seems particularly relevant for criminal justice majors because studies have shown that these majors compared to other majors had the lowest levels of empathy (Courtright et al., 2005). Students with the lowest levels of empathy viewed law enforcement as an attractive profession (Courtright & Mackey, 2004). These findings point to the need for diversity courses aimed specifically to foster empathy among criminal justice majors for the purpose of developing professionals who are sensitive to the many complexities of a multicultural environment. The second source of data included final exam questions described in Table 1.
Analysis

For the qualitative data, we employed the technique of pattern matching. We matched the students’ responses against the pattern initially identified (Yin, 2013). For example, for the first goal under the concept of awareness, we speculated that students would demonstrate a willingness to self-examine, and when necessary, challenge their own biases. For this goal, a match was made for students who reportedly demonstrated this willingness. For the goals requiring more than a yes-no response, we used the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2009) to post code themes present in the data. Two coders content-analyzed the data according to categories of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, and inconsistencies were reconciled as needed. For the quantitative analysis, a paired t-test was used to evaluate changes in empathy attitudes before and after the class experience.

RESULTS

For the quantitative results using pre-post class surveys, students’ changes in empathy scores significantly increased over the semester (p<.05) from a mean of 38.2 (SD=6.2) to a mean of 42 (SD=8.3). Qualitative results are summarized in Table 1. Common themes are summarized below.

Table 1: Conceptual Framework with Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Data Source (Exam Ques.)</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>A willingness to self-examine, and when necessary, change, one’s own assumptions/biases *</td>
<td>Did any stereotype that you had prior to this class change over the course of the semester? Explain.</td>
<td>Reported a change in preconceived images (n=21): Asian model minority (n=10), only poor, minorities are involved in crime (n=8), loud black females (n=4). Reported no change (n=3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A belief that differences are valuable; learning about others who are culturally different is necessary for a CJ class *</td>
<td>Do you believe we should diversify the CJ system? Why or why not? What is the most important thing you learned in this class over the semester?</td>
<td>Agreed with importance of diversifying system (n=23) to eliminate racism (n=19); better understand each other (n=8); generate trust (n=10), create more effective criminal justice system (n=7). Student expressed ambivalence whether or not to diversify (n=1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge of other groups or group differences ***</td>
<td>Did any stereotype that you had prior to this class, change over the semester? Explain. Describe a myth studied that you originally thought was true but learned was a myth.</td>
<td>Identified myth that street crime is more serious than white collar crime (n=11), learned characteristics of white collar vs. street criminals, offered myth of Asian model minority, and learned cultural differences between cultural groups (n=7), about social class including the paucity of opportunities for low-income urban residents and that prison serves the middle class, not only the poor (n=4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about the ways that cultural differences affect verbal and nonverbal communication *</td>
<td>Did any stereotype that you had prior to this class change over the semester? Explain. What is the most important thing that you learned in this class this semester?</td>
<td>Described cultural differences (n=10): Asian-Americans avoid direct eye contact as a sign of respect, African-Americans place a higher value on emotional intensity when communicating than whites, females vs. males more likely to engage in relational aggression.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the impact of history on minorities’ attitudes toward the CJ system**</td>
<td>How do you think African-American history impacts, if at all, their views of the CJ system today?</td>
<td>Students (n=23) said minorities continue to lack trust in the CJ system due to war on drugs, under and over policing, etc. One student disagreed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding white privilege **</td>
<td>Describe white privilege.</td>
<td>Described (n=23) accurately white privilege.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An understanding of obstacles to diversifying the CJ **</td>
<td>Describe obstacles to diversifying police forces.</td>
<td>All (n=24) identified at least one obstacle: minorities have a negative view of the police (n=19), lack qualifications (n=13), have a police record</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
narrow hire searches (n=8). Students (n=8) described the challenge for females to enter a male-dominated profession.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multicultural Skills</th>
<th>The ability to empathize ****</th>
<th>What is the most important thing that you learned in this class over the course of the semester?</th>
<th>Students (n=3) volunteered statements pointing to their ability to empathize with others different from themselves.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Skills</td>
<td>The ability to have meaningful interpersonal interaction ****</td>
<td>What is the most important thing that you learned in this class this semester?</td>
<td>Students (n=7) reported improved ability to communicate across differences and interact cross-culturally within the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Skills</td>
<td>To act in open non-judgmental **</td>
<td>Did you learn anything in this class that will impact how you interact with the world around you?</td>
<td>Most (n=22) reported an openness and an intent to act without stereotyping and to treat people with respect and equality in their future careers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *Category taken from Pope and Reynolds’ cultural competency framework (1997, 271). **Category developed for this study in particular. ***Category revised from Pope and Reynolds (1997, 271): knowledge of diverse cultures and oppressed groups (i.e. history, traditions, values, customs, resources, issues). ****Category revised from Pope and Reynolds (1997, 271): capability to empathize and connect with individuals who are different from themselves.

Multicultural Awareness

The first goal outlined in Table 1 includes the willingness to self-examine, and potentially change, one’s own assumptions and biases. The process of breaking down stereotypes involves cognitive dissonance or a challenge to one’s fundamental assumptions. Almost all (n=21) students reported a change in their preconceived stereotypical images. The most frequently cited stereotype challenged the students’ belief in the Asian model minority: that “Asians were quiet and school-focused as a culture and didn’t have gangs and drug problems like other minorities in the United States” (ID #25). One shared:

Prior to this class [I thought] all Asians were smart. During this semester, I sat next to an Asian American in my Calculus course. I was under the impression that he would be able to help me throughout the course. Following the first test, I looked over at his test score and he had received an F…My stereotype…had been completely false. (ID #24)
Students also questioned the system’s response (or lack thereof) to Asian offenders. One student (ID #8) explained: “What really made me believe [the extent of problems experienced by Asians] was the Asian boy’s [experience going] in and out of the [juvenile justice] system. It made me think: How much do we overlook Asians because of our preconceptions [of the model minority]?”

Common stereotypes (n=8) focused on African Americans as the “leaders in crime statistics” (ID #1). Students acknowledged their misperceptions that focused on “the lower class black male as the average criminal” (ID #26) and that “only poor people commit crime” (ID #21). Students also reported developing an awareness that minorities lack opportunities, which contributes to an understanding of why “certain minority areas… are poor and crime riddled” (ID #21).

Several students described the impact of a guest speaker, a white middle class male college student who had completed a six-year prison term for DUI manslaughter. This presentation taught the students that crime crosses socioeconomic levels. One student (ID #22) described: “Often when we hear about those in prisons we think of the kids in the inner cities who are around the streets and not those who are educating themselves and trying to be successful.”

Four students acknowledged their stereotypes of African American females who are “loud and opinionated” (ID #22) because “their parents neglect to teach them respect and manners” (ID #26). The student continued:

My assumption was very wrong… I learned that black mothers actually socialize their daughters to be… assertive to ensure their protection in a discriminatory America. Their ancestors for many years were walked all over…and therefore, the mothers are attempting to make sure there are no chances of their daughters suffering from the same treatment. Unfortunately, I assumed because of their skin color that African Americans mainly came from lower class inner city areas that lack valuable resources and appropriate role models to teach them how to behave in public…This is a horrible stereotype that singled out young African American girls mainly because they were black. (ID #26).

Two additional students adhered to the stereotype that all females gossiped as a means to solve their problems. However, the students’ understanding of gossip became more complex after studying gender identity development and the use of female-specific relational aggression (e.g., Campbell, 1994).

Three students said their stereotypes did not change over the course of the semester. Two denied having any stereotypes. It is notable that one student (ID #18) who denied having stereotypes later wrote that the most important thing learned in class was the prevalence of stereotypes and the importance of “getting rid of my discriminatory views of other people.” The second student (ID #14) who expressed denial wrote: “In my future career, I plan to recognize and respect differences across people before stereotyping, jumping to conclusions or reacting…and implement with the least amount of bias that I can.”
Students offered the source of their stereotypes. Eight students reported learning about stereotypes through the media that “depicts the young black male as the leading criminal. This is why I was convinced that I was more likely to be victimized by a black male, than any other racial group” (ID# 2). Three students shared learning about stereotypes linking African Americans and crime as a consequence of their parents’ values. One reported (ID #1): “…I was raised to think African Americans were criminals. Through my older relatives, I truly believed African Americans were shooting and hurting all types of people.”

The second goal for multicultural awareness is the belief that differences are valuable and that learning about others who are culturally different is necessary. We measured this concept using student responses from the final exam question: “In your opinion, do you believe we should diversify the Criminal Justice system? Why or why not?” All but one student agreed with the importance of diversifying the system without reservation. Common reasons follow: to make minorities feel more comfortable, eliminate prejudice and racism (n=19), to improve communication and to better understand each other (n=8), to generate trust (n=10), to reduce crime/violence and to create a more effective criminal justice system (n=7). One student (ID #22) expressed ambivalence:

The criminal justice system needs some balance of diversity but without sacrificing quality of staff. Meaning well qualified officers should not be thrown away for less qualified officers who are of a different ethnicity. I don’t think there could ever be a balance…Affirmative Action has made it mandatory for there to be a percentage of minorities in companies. This created a reaction that has given people another reason to discriminate against others.

The students reiterated the importance of diversity when asked on the exam to identify the most important point learned in class. Twenty-three students acknowledged the importance of understanding others’ backgrounds as well as resisting stereotyping in order to prevent miscommunication and hurt feelings. Five students shared the recognition that discrimination exists, and that minorities do not trust the criminal justice system. Also mentioned was the need for diversity training. One student (ID #14) described: “There are so many differences across, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc., but very little knowledge of these differences by criminal justice system [professionals]. This is critical when the [professionals] consist mainly of Caucasians but frequently come across minorities.” Another continued: (ID #8), “We need to make sure that [criminal justice professionals] understand culture differences and behaviors. This will help them communicate effectively [with their] clients and eliminate prejudices [due to] ignorance.” One student (ID #9) highlighted the importance for teachers to understand stereotypes so they know how to handle situations in and outside the classroom.

**Multicultural Knowledge**

The first goal for multicultural knowledge focuses on the ability to identify differences among groups. All students demonstrated knowledge on their exams. All but one student accurately described white privilege (McIntosh, 1998). The students’ examples included Band-Aids made for white colored skin, poor quality legal defense, and lack of availability of quality education. One student wrote: “Most white people do not even notice these privileges” (ID #8). On the exam students identified myths which they thought were true prior to taking this class.
For example, 11 students were surprised to learn that white collar crime can be more serious and cause greater harm than street crime. They originally thought white collar crime was much less damaging than street crime.

Seven students offered differences between the American and Asian culture, including academic pressure placed on Asians to succeed, the glass ceiling at work, and also high poverty and school drop-out rates, prevalence of drugs and gangs, strong extended family connections, and the norm to handle problems within the family rather than seeking professional assistance.

Four students described learning about social class; the lack of opportunities for many African Americans, and that prison serves middle class individuals, not only the poor.

The second goal concerning multicultural knowledge focuses on knowledge about the ways that cultural differences affect verbal and nonverbal communication. Ten students offered examples. The most frequently cited focused on Asians who avoid direct eye contact as a sign of respect, African Americans who place a higher value on emotional intensity when communicating than whites (Matthews & Marino, 2005), and females who compared to males are more likely to engage in relational aggression (Campbell, 1994). One (ID #19) student said: “I thought African Americans who speak more like whites were more intelligent. [I learned] how people speak does not reflect intelligence…this is relevant because people learn to speak through their culture and family and where they grow up, but does not directly reflect intelligence.”

The third goal focuses on the students’ understanding of the impact of history on minorities’ attitudes toward the criminal justice system. On the exam, students were asked to describe a historical perspective of policing as it related to multiculturalism. Subsequently, they were asked, “How do you think this historical perspective impacts, if at all, minorities’ views of the criminal justice system?” All but one of the students responded that minorities continue to experience a lack of trust in the criminal justice system. One (ID #19) shared, “Many minorities who lived through previous eras of discrimination and unfair policing pass their experience down to their children, and unless the police can prove themselves trustworthy… minorities will mistrust the police because of what happened in the past, and continues to happen today.” On their exams, students discussed recent policies that continue to contribute to a lack of trust in the criminal justice system, including the war on drugs, under policing and over policing, the aftermath of deindustrialization, and, the code of the street (Anderson, 2000). One student (ID #19) shared: “[I]n a white community if someone is robbed or assaulted, [the victim] will most likely call the police. In a minority community, however, where they do not trust the police to respond or solve the problem, victims may become the aggressors and retaliate, perpetuating the cycle of violence.” Students highlighted Eliot Liebow’s “mini murders” (2003), the daily harassment that African-Americans reportedly experience by the police.

The one student (ID #15) who disagreed that history impacts minorities’ views of the criminal justice system explained, “Personally I believe that black people still try to blame people for what happened over a hundred years ago… Minorities always say that they only get arrested because they are black and white people still just want to be in control.”

All students identified at least one obstacle to diversifying police departments: minorities lack interest in the profession because they negatively view the police (n=19), lack necessary
qualifications (n=13), have a police record (n=8), or are overlooked due to narrow hire searches (n=8). Several students (n=8) described the challenge for females to enter a male-dominated profession.

**Multicultural Skills**

Students’ exam responses demonstrated skill development or the intent to act in specific ways in the future. These data emerged from the following questions: “What is the most important thing you learned in this class over the course of the semester?” and “Did you learn anything in this class that will impact how you interact with the world around you?” A commonly reported skill (n=22) focused on openness and the intent to act without bias as professionals to bring about fair treatment in the criminal justice system. Students (n=7) reported learning to talk and listen in class about African-American and Asian-American cultures and interact cross-culturally within the classroom. They reported feeling skeptical at the start of the semester, as one reported (ID #1): “At first I questioned how smoothly class would actually go. I enjoyed how it went. When you take the time to listen you hear concerns…about who is different or who has opposing viewpoints. It was great to have a multi-cultured class with kids who have had…different experiences… [I]t lets everyone get an understanding of where they are coming from.” Two students offered examples of learning in class that translated to interpersonal skills outside the class; for example: “This class already has had an effect on me because I work with a lot of Asian-Americans and I am no longer afraid to approach them. I am happy I started to talk to those I chose not to approach in the past because I have made good friendships recently because of this. It has really paid off.”

Several comments illustrated the students’ ability to connect and empathize with individuals different from themselves, their feelings of comfort in talking in class, and development of a sense of belonging. After hearing presentations by two ex-offenders in this diversity class, most students expressed empathy for both offenders and favored rehabilitation. In addition, one student (ID #22) commented: “I was happy when people could understand my side of the discussion and how others interacted with me without the feeling of race as a taboo topic.” Another (#ID 25) said that “The open atmosphere of this course allowed me to express my views, hopefully changing any preconceived opinions the other students had about me [having to be] in a wheelchair.” These examples also illustrate the student’s ability to understand the position of others and connect with individuals who are different from themselves.

Three students reported an appreciation of learning about oneself. One (ID #15) reported that the most important point learned was “how to think for myself rather than basing information on the media or what others say” and another described gaining “a better understanding of myself” (ID #22). Another said (ID #24): “This class has helped me to answer questions that were hard to understand in my life when I was younger.”

From the professor’s perspective, several conversations illustrated open and honest discussion within the classroom. The first focused on an in-class experiential exercise “Backward Forward” (Kivel, 2002). After the activity, the class discussed the concept of equal opportunity and personal feelings associated with the exercise. A group of students shared feelings of discomfort and suggested to the professor not to include the exercise in future classes. As a class, we came up with a strategy for respecting students in future classes. Prior to the
activity, students would be informed that the exercise is voluntary and that no student would be required to participate. Also, if students decided to participate and felt uncomfortable, they could stop at any time or choose not to step forward or backward but remain still. The professor also decided to conduct this activity later in the semester after students and professor had achieved a higher level of comfort with each other.

Another example illustrates the openness of discussion focused on differences in communication patterns by gender and race/ethnicity. Before introducing academic readings, the professor’s style was to ask students’ opinions on the topic with the understanding that there are no correct or incorrect answers. In response to the professor’s inquiry about gender differences and use of aggression, one white male described his experience in the university cafeteria where the “black girls” seem “loud” and “disruptive.” The student spoke with honesty, respect, and frustration. The class listened intently. The professor used this student’s comment as a jumping off point to examine differences in communication patterns by race and culture. According to Matthews and Marino (2005), “Generally speaking, black culture more highly values emotional expressiveness, allowing a higher level of emotional intensity than white culture. Whites, on the other hand, are taught to control their emotions…so whites can interpret strong emotions as a negative” (p. 1). After our class discussions on this topic, the white male student who had broached the topic acknowledged that he had misunderstood the students felt comfortable approaching the girls and politely asking them to talk more softly.

**DISCUSSION**

Incorporating qualitative and quantitative research (albeit limited by the small sample size) allowed us to test for pre-post course differences for empathy (the only variable assessed quantitatively). Our quantitative finding that students’ empathy scores increased significantly is not consistent with past research. In a study of over 600 college students, West (2001) found that criminal justice majors did not increase their empathy scores compared with education majors whose scores did increase. Education majors are taught about empathy as part of their curriculum, which may explain the increase (West, 2001). This finding suggests that faculty should think strategically about how their curricula could help criminal justice majors to develop empathy. It could be that the pedagogical format based on class discussions (instead of teacher as expert) that fostered student participation in the construction of knowledge contributed to a sense of openness and empathy. Hence, the study of empathy and how it related to pedagogy requires further attention. This may be particularly important because previous research showed that criminal justice majors compared with others majors held more punitive attitudes toward crime, criminals, and the criminal justice system (Mackey & Courtright, 2000). The capacity for empathy is not only necessary for working within the criminal justice system, but its absence may foster apathy and self-centeredness among college students more generally (Holsinger, 2012, p. 57).

Our qualitative results also suggest that students developed empathy over the semester. It is notable that after hearing presentations by two ex-offenders, most students expressed empathy by supporting rehabilitation. Although half of the students were white, male, criminal justice majors, the diversity materials, presentations and opportunities for interaction provided the opportunity for the students to expand their preconceived viewpoints and appreciate their
classmates’ and the presenters’ perspectives. This pedagogical approach is consistent with critical and feminist perspectives, both of which encourage students to understand the world from their unique social position, which can translate into understanding the perspective of others. In this class, the content was closely related to the students’ own lives, which likely fostered student interest, understanding, and empathy (Holsinger, 2012).

Most criminal justice programs are not aimed at refuting myths (Williams & Robinson, 2004), yet our results show that, when the study of myths is intentionally integrated within the course, students learn to disentangle myth from reality. Most students went beyond identifying their own biases and reported their future intent to treat offenders with fairness and respect. Interestingly, the three students who reported no change in stereotypes did respond with an intention to act unbiased as professionals.

Findings on white collar crime point to the importance of including a comparison of white collar and street crime in a diversity course and a discussion of economic justice (see Cameron, 2002). Our students reportedly were surprised at the psychological, social, and economic costs of white collar crime, responses of the criminal justice system, and their preconceived view of the “typical offender” as an African-American, low-income male (rather than a white-collar criminal). Moreover, the study of white collar crime likely contributed to students’ understanding of white privilege. Likewise, students’ preconceived notions on the Asian model minority and lack of understanding of differences in communication styles between black and white individuals point to the importance of including such topics in criminal justice classes and trainings for criminal justice professionals.

This course also demonstrates the potential impact of using a critical theoretical approach to teaching. Class members listened to each other’s perspectives, shared their world views, and learned from their classmates’ backgrounds and experiences (Cameron, 2002; Holsinger, 2012). Several students described “not feeling so alone.” Others provided examples of applying their learning outside the classroom during interactions with friends and co-workers. As noted by Holsinger (2012), having students apply their learnings about social justice to their own lives, motivates them to participate in social change beyond the classroom. Students’ recognition of biases and change of behavior in their lives is a first step toward contributing to social change.

The setting of this university is characterized by urban poverty and violence and highlights important issues for criminal justice curriculum. Students at this university, for example, receive email alerts about local crime and observe around campus residents who are demographically different than themselves. This creates an additional challenge for our program to help students overcome any tendency to develop negative attitudes that they may potentially associate with the university setting. It is critical, therefore, that our criminal justice curriculum emphasizes empathy and cross-cultural understanding.

The course under investigation gave students the opportunity to engage in diversity and seems to have reduced their fear of talking about difficult topics. Tatum (2007) suggested that students’ learning is impeded because they fear discussing emotionally laden topics such as race and racism. Although this study did not permit measurement of behavioral change beyond the course, the students were able to challenge the status quo and to gain an understanding of the realities of the justice system and offenders from diverse groups. Future research is required to
assess more closely the processes by which awareness and knowledge contribute to attitude change and subsequent skill development in cultural competency.

**LIMITATIONS**

Our future work will address study limitations. The quantitative results should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size. Also, there may be self-report biases. A self-study by the professor of the class increases the risk of threats to reliability and validity. We attempted to increase reliability by having two independent coders (not the professor of the course) analyze the qualitative data. It is also questionable as to whether the students reported honestly on the quantitative survey and final exam. The classroom norm emphasizing respect and honesty may have minimized false reporting within the class and on the post-test survey. The results may be impacted by a self-selection bias of students who chose this diversity elective, thereby limiting the generalizability of results.

Our sample has limited generalizability to the larger university population. Compared to the university population, our study included a higher percentage of male (71% compared to 55%) and white students (83% compared to 70%). Fewer students (29%) in our study reported involvement in service activities compared to the university population (70%). This difference in service involvement may be explained by the finding that 58% of our sample had a job during the semester, with less time to devote to service. The criminal justice department tends to attract students who focus on the practical application of criminal justice, seek full-time employment within the criminal justice system post-graduation, and use the criminal justice degree as a stepping stone to a career, which may help to explain differences between our sample and other majors across the larger university. Collecting more detailed data on the students’ backgrounds and motivations for majoring in criminal justice would provide valuable information for designing effective diversity classes within the discipline of criminal justice.

Additionally, the absence of a control group and pre-post for the concepts assessed on the final exam precluded making statements about the impact of the program on student outcomes. Thus, as an extension of this study, we are continuing to collect data to obtain a larger sample size with a control group.

In the current sample, over half of the class members were seniors who expected to enter the criminal justice profession. It is important to introduce the study of diversity during the early college years so that students have the time necessary to grapple with complicated issues related to multiculturalism. This is particularly true of students who enter college with little experience interacting with individuals from diverse cultures. Several students shared that they were raised with biases, confirming the importance of integrating diversity courses early and throughout their college careers. The relevance of early exposure can be illustrated by one of the students who disagreed that history impacts minorities’ views. This student expressed that black people still try to blame white people for what happened over a hundred years ago. According to racial identity development, this student appears at the “Contact Stage,” characterized by a lack awareness of racism and white privilege. Individuals at this stage often base attitudes on stereotypes (Helms, 1990). Ongoing exposure to diversity courses may help students become more aware of the complexities of the history of racism. In addition, to respect the students’ varying backgrounds, it
would behoove professors to provide a balanced perspective (conservative versus liberal) (Holsinger, 2012, p. 114) and according to Arrigo (2008), act “even handed and fair” (Holsinger, 2012, p. 116).

Future study of this type of diversity class will include an introduction to the larger context of institutional norms of policing. These issues transcend the individual-level attitudes assessed in this paper, and include, for example, the militarization of law enforcement (Ivie & Garland, 2011; Shernock, 2015). This topic is relevant to a criminal justice diversity course, given the research findings concerning the impact of past military experience on police performance (e.g., see Shernock for a review). Shernock (2015) cites findings that officers with histories of combat have less empathy and tolerance for citizen complaints and more suspicion of citizens as a consequence of nationality (p. 5). Such findings highlight the importance of studying institutional norms in addition to individual attitudes.

Despite these identified limitations, this paper is one of the few that addresses the topic of diversity within a criminal justice class. Due to the paucity of multicultural research in the field of criminal justice pedagogy, it is essential to move forward with this line of research. Criminal justice as a major reaches a multitude of students who will serve as our future criminal justice professionals. Given that criminal justice remains one of the top 10 most popular university majors (Stockwell, 2014), and that 350,000 students major in criminal justice (Butterfield, 1998), our study offers a preliminary framework for future research.

In addition, our results point to the value of a multicultural approach. Most students experienced a decrease in their biases, described the importance of learning about cultural differences in a criminal justice class, identified differences by social position, acknowledged the impact of history on minorities’ attitudes toward the criminal justice system, identified obstacles to diversifying the system, and reported intent to serve as future criminal justice professionals with fairness. In a Pew report (2013), about twice as many blacks as whites (70%-37%) claim that “blacks are treated less fairly in their dealings with the police.” Diversity classes have the potential to reduce this by studying differences in worldviews among people of distinct cultures.

A recent Department of Justice (2015) analysis of policing in Ferguson, Missouri, as a consequence of the Michael Brown shooting, points to “unconstitutional policing…that inflicts unnecessary harm on the residents of Ferguson…practices that reflect and exacerbate racial disparities and stereotypes…and clear racial disparities that adversely impact African Americans and discriminatory intent” (p. 2). Although the findings in Ferguson are driven by complex factors (DOJ, 2015), ongoing diversity courses offered to university students (and those currently in policing) may contribute to reducing tensions between the community and police and consequently result in improved relations. Such tragic outcomes in Ferguson and beyond (Kindy, Fisher, Tate, & Jenkins, 2014) bolster Barak’s (1991) claim that using a multicultural perspective of crime will enhance criminological theory, methods of investigation, and policies. Improved understanding of diversity should help to obviate retaliatory actions by loners in the community, such as the shooting death of five police officers in Dallas, Texas, one week after fatal police shootings of black men in Minnesota and Louisiana (Fernandez, Perez-Pena, & Bromwich, 2016).
Our study was a first step toward providing students with an opportunity to examine the criminal justice system from varied, complex perspectives. The discipline of criminal justice has advanced regarding integration of diversity, but has a long way to go. Only 14% of institutions require a diversity class. Of the 67% that offer a diversity class as an elective, there are no data on how often those classes are actually taught (Pattern & Way, 2011). Often, courses listed in the university bulletin are infrequently taught (Holsinger, 2012). With further research and curriculum development, we can strive toward our goal for students to use their learning within the profession to foster practices of justice from complex perspectives and world views to reduce the incidents increasingly pandemic in the criminal justice system today.

REFERENCES


**Lori Simons** teaches courses in Multicultural Psychology, Educational Psychology, Addictive Behaviors and Counseling and Careers in Psychology. Dr. Simons serves as the Psychology Department's Practicum/Internship Coordinator and as the Co-Coordinator of the University's Academic Service-Learning Faculty Development Program. Dr. Simons has published in the area of academic-and cultural-based service-learning, diversity and experiential learning pedagogies, and student learning.

**Nancy Blank** teaches courses in Criminal Courts, Diversity in Criminal Justice and Criminal Justice Research. She serves as the Criminal Justice Department's Internship Coordinator. Dr. Blank has designed, implemented and evaluated literacy programs for youthful offenders and conducts research on experiential and active learning pedagogies.

**David Fernandez** was a Psychology major undergraduate student who served as a research assistant on this project.
The Deweyan Approach to Learning Victim Advocacy: Seeing Beyond Stigmas and Facilitating Second Chances

Ashley Peake Wellman
Sherri DioGuardi
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Abstract

Fundamentally, criminal justice practitioners are public safety promoters, yet safety can be compromised if a divide exists between them and the communities they serve. The best way to train future criminal justice practitioners may be found in the progressive education proposed by John Dewey in the early 20th-century. Dewey’s experiential approach, specifically service-learning, has gained traction as an effective teaching tool for broadening perspectives, deepening understanding of diverse populations, and fostering higher order reasoning, all of which are critical characteristics for criminal justice professionals as well as for all American citizens. Undergraduate students participated in service-learning during a semester-long honors course on victim advocacy, and this qualitative study used a phenomenological approach to explore whether their lived experiences, as revealed in reflective responses to open-ended questions, effectuated learning. Findings were that service-learning involvement generated community commitment and instilled a deeper sense of civic responsibility, both of which have the potential to better promote public safety.

Keywords: service-learning, community engagement, civic responsibility, education, criminal justice, John Dewey

INTRODUCTION

Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember.

Involve me, and I will understand.¹

Learning by doing is a concept universally understood. It is the basis for the scientific method and the emergence (and subsequent dominance) of empiricism during the Age of Enlightenment, which claims all knowledge is generated from experience (Locke, 1965). John Dewey (1938) formalized the concept of experiential learning in his educational philosophy, thus giving it a central place in academia. Dewey (1916) envisioned the benefits, however, to extend beyond the schoolhouse. For him, a primary purpose of education was to produce civic-minded, prosocial citizens for a better world and a safer society.

¹ While often attributed to Benjamin Franklin, this quote has also been attributed to Confucius Aristotle, Voltaire, and to a Native American proverb (Draper, 2013).
Dewey (1938), known for his progressive philosophy regarding education, first introduced the concept of experiential education in 1916. His approach was considered progressive as it veered away from the traditional classroom approach in which knowledge was transmitted to students solely through lectures. Dewey (1938) viewed the traditional model for teaching as a “cultural product of societies that assumed the future would be much like the past” (p. 19), and he was concerned because that approach did not allow for future changes. His vision for progressive teaching – and what he acknowledged would be a challenge to achieve – was that teachers would help students understand how “acquaintance with the past may be translated into a potent instrumentality for dealing effectively with the future” (p. 23). This presents challenges because every experience would need to be situated between, first, a firm foundation of established knowledge and, then afterwards, reflection time in which students would have ample opportunity to internally process all that they experienced firsthand. The quality of the experience would also need to be carefully considered as Dewey (1938) believed each new experience would have the potential to either retard growth or expand development; that it would be up to the teacher to plan the experience carefully to ensure students’ education was enhanced and not hindered. A worthwhile educational experience not only promotes knowledge and facilitates learning, but also allows students to recognize its relevance and to clearly see a broader significance (Dewey, 1938).

Based largely on Dewey’s educational philosophy, Kolb (1984) developed a 4-stage experiential learning cycle which models how information gained through experience is transformed into higher-level knowledge. In the first stage, students are immersed into the affective aspects of the experience; in the second stage, students reflect cognitively on the concrete experience, which then leads to the third stage where concrete concepts develop into abstract concepts; finally, in the last stage, students learn how broader concepts can be applied to new experiences. Kolb (1984) considered the last stage to be the active experimentation stage.

To guide student through Kolb’s 4-stage experiential learning cycle, it has been proposed that teachers need to provide students with three prompting questions: “What? So what? Now what?” (Burke & Bush, 2013, p. 58). This reflection-conceptualization-action process first articulated by Dewey (1938) and expanded upon by Kolb (1984) aligns with the four pillars of learning that have been identified by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2016) as being essential for promoting global peace and security. Those four pillars of learning are: (1) learning to know (cognition), learning to do (experiential), learning to live together (social), and learning to be (existential). These pillars expand beyond abstract knowledge and enable them to become more ‘community-minded’.

**IMPACT OF SERVICE-LEARNING**

Service-learning is being defined here as knowledge generated from direct experience with, and reflection resulting from, civic engagement and collaboration between students and community partners. Jacoby (1996) emphasized the role of faculty in designing and directing a structured partnership between students and community members so that community service goals will be met simultaneously with learning outcomes, which distinguishes service-learning from other experiential learning methods. Four key components have been identified as being essential for service-learning to be successful: (1) The service must meet a community need; (2)
the learning objectives of the course must align with the community service work being done; (3) there must be a reciprocal relationship between students and the community being served; and (4) the course must be designed so that, during and at the conclusion of the service work, there is ample time for reflection upon the experience (McCrea, 2004). In contrast to internships which allow students to work alongside a provider for career-specific training and preparation, service-learning is discipline-specific, embedded within curriculum, and designed for academic, intellectual, and civic growth (Jacoby, 1996; McCrea, 2004).

While theoretical discussions comprise much of the literature on service-learning (Madden, Davis, & Cronley, 2014), benefits have been found from self-report surveys of participants. Students report an improvement in subject matter comprehension (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002), an increased motivation to learn, an enhancement in cultural awareness, and a stronger connection to their communities (Lemieux & Allen, 2007; Maccio, 2011). Penn (2003) found that involvement in service-learning enhanced students’ ability to use deductive logic and apply prevailing theory to specific situations. Hirschinger-Blank and Markowitz (2006) reported a decrease in students’ stereotypical attitudes after being involved in service-learning. Strage (2004) compared students who participated in service-learning to students who had not participated and found that the service-learning students achieved higher exam scores. Another comparative study found that students who were involved in service-learning self-reported an increase in interpersonal skills, such as learning to work well with others and a broadening of their personal perspectives (Burke & Bush, 2013).

Madden et al., (2014) analyzed service-learning across two disciplines, social work and criminal justice, and found that service-learning was much less frequently offered as a component within criminal justice programs. Despite its rarity, there is a need and relevancy for service-learning in criminal justice, as these students frequently claim to have chosen their major because of a desire to help others and make a difference in the world (Dantzker, Kubin, & Stein, 1997; Krimmel & Tartaro, 1999). The current paper highlights the process of integrating service-learning into a victim advocacy course and uses feedback from student reflections to emphasize educational benefits, lessons, and challenges associated with service-learning within criminal justice related settings. Future recommendations and best practices are included to aid individuals wishing to design, execute, and evaluate a service-learning based curriculum.

CURRENT STUDY

This paper explores the impact of a 16-week victim advocacy course. Guided by Dewey’s model, the course incorporated service-learning by pairing students with five nonprofit organizations in the community and immersing them as direct service providers to at-risk clients. The sample was composed of 20 honor students across academic majors, 17 of whom completed the reflection component of this elective course.

Pre-Course (and Study) Preparation

Prior to the start of the semester, the instructor identified local nonprofits that included a component of victim advocacy in their mission and potential need for student support. Consistent with expectations set forth by Jacoby (1996) and Dewey (1938), she met one-on-one with several nonprofit leaders to ensure: (1) That students’ service to the organization would be meeting a
genuine need of that organization; (2) that the work the students would perform for the organization would align with what she perceived her course learning objectives would be; and, (3) that there would be a reciprocal relationship between the students and the organizational members (as this was not meant to be a one-sided ‘students give and organizations take’ type of scenario, there needed to be a willingness of the nonprofits to work in collaborative partnership with the students). The instructor also needed to verify that course objectives and organizations’ goals were realistic and feasible given the 16-week timeframe. To ensure that each nonprofit organization had adequate support and that students had a sufficient workload (responsibilities), the 20 students were paired with five organizations.

Several planning meetings were scheduled over the summer to bring those five organizations together to brainstorm the structure and goals of the course, thus allowing organization leaders to feel an investment and influence in the class structure. First priority was to have the organizations explicitly identify their needs and what their personal goals would be to ensure that their expectations would be achievable during the semester. Secondly, it was necessary to establish the level of involvement the organizations wanted to have. The course was scheduled for a 2-hour block, once a week over the semester. Collectively, the organizations expressed an interest to check-in with their groups twice a month to help guide their work. On days where the organizations visited, the first hour was devoted to class lecture while the second hour was comprised of group meetings with assigned organizations.

The instructor, cognizant of the pre-existing literature, prepared her students with the prompting questions recommended by McCrea (2004) for a successful service-learning experience. The following sets out the “what,” “so what,” and “now what” presented and discovered throughout the course.

The “What”

On the first day of class, students were asked why they were taking the course and what their expectations were. The students responded with various answers, such as: “I had heard you were a good teacher;” “I was interested in learning more about victim advocacy;” “it was the only class that fit my schedule.” Despite the fact that the course description noted this was a service-learning course with required student involvement in the community, all but one student stated that they expected a traditional format: having an assigned text, taking quizzes and exams, and perhaps participating in class discussions. The syllabus was then distributed to students detailing the unique course design, calendar, and requirements. One requirement was that students commit to a minimum of 10 hours in the field with their assigned organization. Any student who perceived this requirement as unattainable had the option to drop the course, but none of the students who registered for the course found this to be a problematic expectation. The five nonprofit groups that the students would partner with were described.

Students were then presented with the five nonprofit organizations and told they would be assigned to an education program that served at-risk juveniles in the inner city and run by a former felon or one of four organizations that (1) served crime victims, (2) worked with children impacted by homicide, (3) helped the homeless, or (4) focused on recovering drug addicts. There was an immediate level of discomfort displayed among the college students, many of whom had never been exposed to these population groups before. Course learning outcomes were reviewed in class, and students were told how each would align with the ‘what’ of the service work. The course learning objectives are set forth in the first column of Table 1.
Table 1. Course Learning Objectives and Alignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ALIGNMENTS WITH:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service-Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By course completion, students would:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By being assigned in groups to outside organization, students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO1 Broaden their personal definition of victims and advocacy</td>
<td>Were exposed to diverse array of victims and formed collaborative partnership with advocates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO2 Gain insight into the reality of victimization through volunteer opportunities with advocates and those in need</td>
<td>Experienced firsthand the issues facing populations in need of assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO3 Identify and develop their own personal strengths and talents to help others</td>
<td>Gained greater sense of self-awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO4 Experience personal growth and understanding of vulnerable populations</td>
<td>Pushed students beyond the textbook definitions and any initial stereotypes they had assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO5 Understand the challenges that victim service providers / recipients face</td>
<td>Exposed firsthand to problems and issues existing for organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO6 Articulate how their major/future career could be impacted/linked to victims</td>
<td>Required students to identify direct link between their future career goals and victim advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO7 Contribute directly to the growth of local nonprofits</td>
<td>Provided tangible / measurable outcomes of student labor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before the end of that first-class meeting, students were asked to rank the five organizations they would like to work with and to identify the skills they thought they could contribute and/or to identify the need areas in which they felt incapable of fulfilling. For example, a student may note that they are confident in public speaking, comfortable managing finances, strong in developing social media campaigns, passionate about fundraising, etc. Students’ rankings, interests, and skills were compared to organizational needs and paired accordingly. Students were then assigned to a nonprofit, introduced to their teammates, and dismissed from class.
Also involved in the “what” would be initial immersion into the affective aspects of the experience, as described by Kolb (1984). This immersion began during the second-class period when all five organizations were brought to campus. The organizational leaders shared their personal stories, their organization’s mission and values, and their needs and expectations. Students heard from a survivor of a kidnapping and sexual assault, from a former felon who had turned his life around on a path to help others, a mother who nearly lost her son to a drug overdose, a woman who lost her family to homicide, and a man who felt called to serve the homeless. The raw, personal nature of the evening provided an instant connection between the nonprofits and the students, allowing for immediate buy-in from the students to fulfill organizations’ needs, and generated excitement for both parties. One student described the emotional impact she personally felt from one of the leader’s introductory presentations and how that emotional bond strengthened over time: “I feel like he's been my best friend for ages, and I only met him three and-a-half months ago, when he made me cry telling me his life story” (ID#101).

This second session went beyond having students hear heart-wrenching stories from the organizational leaders. One nonprofit leader, whose organization fed the homeless, catered dinner for the entire class. This allowed organizational leaders to sit and eat dinner with their student team members. Over dinner, everyone began developing more personal, direct connections. The following is the ‘guiding’ concept that continually motivates the male organizational leader who serves the homeless, and his sentiment was infused into the classroom environment during this second session: Food brings people together and shows them they are valued and loved.

The “So What”

Once students were immersed in the affective domain, the instructor also led them into the cognitive learning domain. Butin (2005) identified this combination of affective and cognitive learning domains as the key component to effective service-learning. Course material exposed students to foundational knowledge on crime victimization. By using victim impact statements, interactive activities, and information from the text and scholarly articles, students developed a better understanding of the rates, challenges, treatments, and policies surrounding different types of victimization. Partnering and volunteering with the nonprofit organizations allowed the students to engage directly with the populations they were reading about in their texts and exposed them to the realities of advocacy work. While the texts and instructional content provided factual information to challenge students’ preconceptions, the social interactions with community members, crime victims, and those who had been labeled as felons and druggies allowed them to apply those principles to actual people and real-life situations.

By combining course material and service-learning, students learn how to become better critical thinkers (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985; Brookfield, 1990; Dewey, 1933; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Mezirow, 1991). This improvement in higher-level thinking might occur because students are confronted with a reality that contradicts a preconception in their service-learning work. For example, course content often uses statistics to provide information to students; and students may not always understand that statistics are created from aggregated data and may therefore accurately predict for overall group membership but cannot be used to predict for any single group member. While it is accurate to state that 76.6% of all prisoners released within the same period will recidivate within 5-years (Durose, Cooper & Snyder, 2014), it is inaccurate to
rephrase that to state that it is highly likely that so-and-so who has been released from prison this year will recidivate within 5-years. Why? Because there is no way of knowing which grouping that single selected prisoner will fall into, whether part of the 76.6% that will recidivate or part of the 23.4% that will not. Students often have trouble seeing any difference between the two statements, and this can lead to faulty assumptions or even harmful stereotyping. One of the student-respondents shared her preconception:

This was one of the first times that I experienced a person turn his life around after doing hard time in prison. I know that most offenders will repeat their acts or commit another crime once they get out that will send them right back to prison (ID#104).

Having the instructor lecture that 580,900 prisoners were released from state prison in 2015 (Carson & Anderson, 2016) and then informing her students how, using the oft-cited recidivism rate, that translates to 135,950 of those ex-prisoners never reoffending for five years was not as impactful as when students met one former felon face-to-face who had managed to turn his life around. As Dewey (1916) stated, “[P]ersonal participation brings home the import of the material and the problems which it conveys” (p. 273). Allowing students to work with a reformed ex-prisoner (who would fall within the 23.4% grouping) provided the potential to do one or more of the following three things: (1) create an ‘aha’ teaching moment; (2) shatter a stereotype; and/or (3) promote critical thinking.

The “Now What”

In addition to becoming affectively and cognitively engaged and gaining a deeper understanding of how their experiences with community work might be reflective of larger societal issues, students were also charged with the responsibility for envisioning how their major and career goals could provide a platform for victim advocacy in their future. The students were responsible for developing a presentation board to highlight how to directly include advocacy in their future career. For some, such as nursing and criminal justice students, this connection was easy. For others, such as aviation and construction management majors, the direct link between career and advocacy was one that required creativity and research into programming that included a civic connection.

Finally, at the end of the semester, a community celebration and presentation was held to allow students and the organization leaders to share their experiences, causes, prepared materials, events, and lessons learned through oral and written demonstrations. Students interacted directly with community leaders, family and school administrators, while practicing public speaking, networking with a variety of individuals, and learning from one another.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study resulted from a one-semester victim advocacy honors course in which seniors from various majors across a Midwestern 4-year university were enrolled. The course was capped at 20 enrollees, and 17 of the students completed a voluntary, anonymous final course reflection. This qualitative survey contained open-ended prompts/questions related to students’ course-required community service experiences during the preceding 16-week course (see Appendix). The 14 reflection items were derived from both the Service Learning Benefit (SELEB) scale (Toncar, Reid, Burns, Anderson, & Nguyen, 2006) and the Articulated Learning
(AL) approach as detailed by Ash and Clayton (2004). The SELEB scale emphasizes four dimensions of service-learning: practical skills, interpersonal skills, citizenship, and personal responsibility (Toncar et al., 2006), and the AL approach requires students to reflect deeply enough on their service-learning experience in order to articulate what was learned, how it was learned, why the learning is considered important, and how that learning might be further applied (Ash & Clayton, 2004). The AL approach presumes a positive learning experience and proposes that students be guided to recognize, through reflection, how their own lived experience led to academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility (Ash & Clayton, 2004).

After signing the IRB approved informed consent form, students responded to the 14 questions that asked them to reflect on their course expectations, personal experiences, and perceived impact. Responses were qualitatively analyzed by the two authors independently so as to capture the lived experience of the students. This was a phenomenological approach because the focus was solely on students’ subjective interpretations of their service-learning experiences. This approach is similar to how Berger and Luckmann (1967) defined the sociology of knowledge: “[It] is concerned with the relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises” (p. 4).

Students’ reflections were first reviewed for word repetitions within and across responses, and then systematically sifted through to capture contextual meaning. Charmaz (2008) identified at least two stages to the qualitative coding process: the initial coding stage and the focused coding stage. In this data analysis, once initial coding was accomplished, response data were scrutinized to determine whether one or more of the codes could be fit into broader conceptual categories. This thematic analysis was done systematically, as first described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), because the process started out inductively with a refined focus on the data itself. This was followed by checking, double-checking, and cross-checking of the data. After individual coding and thematic development, both researchers met to share their results and reconcile any differences in the thematic analyses. Any coding discrepancies were easily resolved, thus removing the need to bring in a third coder.

The analysis was inductive, as the concepts and themes were developed from the data (e.g., Frith & Gleeson, 2004). As the themes emerged, the researchers determined that many were able to be captured within competencies previously supported in the service-learning literature. Two additional broad classifications were created for the themes that did not fit naturally into these categories. The results are organized by competency, and inclusive themes are noted within each category.

**RESULTS**

It has been proposed that service-learning benefits students by allowing them to process learning socially, emotionally, cognitively, and multiculturally (Gardner 1993; 1999; Howard-Hamilton 2000; Simons & Cleary, 2006). Ideally these processes evolve to also become competencies for the students. Except for two major themes that emerged from student responses – ‘real world’/practical lessons and challenges – all other themes identified from the data could be encompassed within those four broad categories of learning competency. Therefore, this study’s qualitative analysis resulted in these six overarching, thematic categories: affective impact, cognitive impact, multicultural impact, real-world impact, social impact, and challenges.
Table 2 shows the frequency distributions across these categories. Each broad category captured several emergent themes, which are further detailed below.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution for Thematic Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Multicultural</th>
<th>Real-World</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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<td>22</td>
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</table>
Affective Impact

The nature of this class led to an emotional journey for many students and allowed participants to not only learn about others, but to learn about themselves. Emotional growth, newfound self-awareness, and life-changing experiences were thematic concepts found within the “affective impact” category.

Many students admitted to crying when they heard the personal stories from the organizational leaders. Some students, as indicated in this representative quote, revealed discomfort when recognizing their own privileged position in society: “I cried... a lot. This class was so moving, yet aggravating at times. It’s hard when learning about what victims are going through to separate yourself from it as privileged” (ID#101). Students reported many ways in which the course allowed them to become more self-aware. Responses revealed students learned powerful lessons in self-worth, reinforced talents, and better understood their potential impact on the world around them. One student noted that through the experience he learned “I have self-worth and my life has value” (ID #115).

Students also recognized developmental growth in the way they think and act by being less judgmental, becoming more caring, developing a sense of responsibility, and uncovering their personal power to make a difference. The following quotes capture this progression:

The most valuable thing that I took away was the ability to see victims as victims. I used to judge people, I’ll be the first to admit it. But after I took this class, I successfully changed the way I think, speak, and act about diverse, stigmatized groups (ID#114).

I think I have become more caring. I think that I’m more willing to help others now than I was before, especially since I’ve seen how difficult it is for some people to help others in need. It’s like part of me thinks it’s my job to help others now, which I think is pretty cool (ID#102)

The biggest success I experienced in this class was seeing how capable I am of making a difference. I never thought that I would be able to be a part of such an important cause. I am so proud of myself and everyone else for staying positive throughout any challenge that we faced (ID#105).

Three students (ID#101, #109, and #116) expressed the idea that their experience restored their faith in humanity and/or instilled within them faith in their own generation. Many expressed amazement, as well as a sense of fulfillment, from seeing the positive impact their individual actions (as well as the collective actions of the entire class) had on others firsthand. As the following responses reveal, students gained a sense of gratitude or a greater self-awareness of how fortunate they are in comparison to others: “The class was phenomenal! It showed me firsthand how much people really do struggle. I often take for granted the things I have and the life I live” (ID#111). “So if I had to take away one lesson, it’s appreciate the little things, because to some, they aren’t so little” (ID#101).

Students recognized that the lessons they learned throughout the course would have long-term impacts, noting “it turns out this class was life changing” (ID #106). The following student felt she had a moral obligation to help after she met the young children co-victimized by homicide, and that emotion is what is directing her toward a career choice. “Looking into the
face of the children affected by homicide rattled me to my bones. I felt an overwhelming sense of moral duty to spend my life mitigating gun-violence and socio-economic systems of oppression” (ID#107).

Cognitive Impact

While the class centered on victim advocacy, the goal was for students to learn beyond the textbook through exposure to victim advocacy organizations, leaders, and clients. The themes that fit within the cognitive domain were direct transfer of knowledge, thinking creatively, discovering talents, broadening perspectives, and seeing firsthand the necessity of second chances.

One student revealed being in the process of formulating a theory because of the service-learning experience: “Due to the revelations about my personal journey from the class, I am currently developing a theory of social-enterprise around philanthropic principles” (ID#107). Every student reached a higher level of cognitive competency, and there were 76 other instances (see Table 2) in which students identified an ability to apply newly gained knowledge elsewhere, reported personal perspectives being broadened, provided commentary on the consequences of second chances, or revealed how the service-learning experience forced them to think creatively to solve problems or reach their assigned organizational goals. The exact words chosen by the students to articulate their responses were analyzed carefully, especially the verbs, because certain verbs (i.e., ponder, weigh, determine) infer more in-depth thought processes. Some students, however, were very explicit in describing their own cognitive journey:

This class impacted my personality by making me become a more introspective person. I previously found myself often jumping to conclusions about people and not taking into consideration their whole life story. When a person meets another person, it is one's whole life that has shaped his or her personality and demeanor. While the circumstances of one day can often negatively change that, for the most part, the first impression that one gets of another should not be based on one meeting. It is the mindfulness of this idea that can make people more patient, tolerant, and accepting (ID#112).

The following two students recognized that the cognitive processing path was not always smooth: “A good learning experience is not just about all of the positives, but also about the struggles” (ID#109). “The uniqueness of this course was in itself a struggle because of the learning curve: everything we did, we had to learn to do” (ID#113). The following student described this learning process: “We had to figure out to help these nonprofits with little time, money, and resources. We had to get creative to help and overcome what people expected of us and what we thought we could do” (ID#117).

Some students (IDs#103, 105, 106, 110, 113, and 117) described their experience as being eye-opening. The following student explained how this educational experience changed the way news reports were being viewed: “I see myself looking at articles in the news and wondering about everyone that has been impacted” (ID#108).

While the course material covered rehabilitation and reintegration, these concepts remained abstract and somewhat meaningless for the students until they met and interacted with organizational agents and the clients they served. Students took information from the textbook and class lessons and could see them come to life as they engaged in service work with high-risk
individuals. Eighty-eight percent of students (n=15) reported that they better understood people that they may have originally prejudged or overlooked. The need for second chances became a palpable message within the students’ responses:

Every one of these organizations has helped me to understand people from different populations. After hearing Johnny speak, you can’t help but feel like prisoners should be given a second chance. It’s very hard to blame a drug addict when you are hearing their story from their hurt mother (ID#116).

Seeing my classmates pull together to make Johnnie’s dream a reality made me realize that everyone deserves a second chance. Knowing Johnnie’s story and witnessing his dreams come true gave me hope for so many other people in his position. [...] His story of second chances and hope inspires me to look at individuals who have made mistakes and know that they are human (ID#105).

I think that Johnnie taught me that second chances are necessary, and he showed us all how grateful he was to be a free man and to have a second chance every day we saw him. [...] Like I’ve said, Johnnie taught me a lot about second chances, and that’s a lesson I will carry with me forever and share with my kids and grandkids (ID#102).

This class has helped me realize that everyone deserves a second chance. More importantly though it has opened my eyes to the many different reasons that these people find themselves in these types of situations (ID#103).

The cognitive impact seen within the student responses illustrates how service-learning transports students beyond traditional learning environments, exposes them to a new way of processing information, and teaches lessons far beyond what definitions, figures, and statistics may allow them to understand. It is proposed that achieving this competency while still in school will better prepare those who plan on entering the criminal justice field.

**Multicultural Impact**

The various organizations dealt with a diverse clientele, thus exposing the majority of students to populations that were unfamiliar to them. Despite initial fears and hesitations, the direct exposure to these populations broadened their understanding of various groups, allowed them to understand the impact of stereotypes and preconceived ideas of victimhood, and encouraged students to find personal connections with and similarities to those originally viewed as “different” than themselves.

Once students were provided the opportunity to communicate directly with the populations the nonprofit organizations served, they noticed that victimization, addiction, and homelessness were not dispositions that only targeted a specific type of person. Many students recognized that, with just one rash decision or one random act, anybody or everybody could find themselves in a place of despair. Through the service-learning experience, the following students recognized the limitations of a small-town worldview:

Coming from a small community, I didn't really have much exposure to many diverse populations, but through this class I can better understand these groups and how they can be different from the perceived stereotypes (ID#110).
This class has improved my understanding of people from diverse populations exponentially. Being from a small town and having grown up in it my entire life, I had not experienced many people from different backgrounds. While I do not see this as a negative attribute, I do understand such a situation can easily lend itself to creating close minded people (ID#112).

The following demonstrates how one student achieved intellectual maturity to the extent that reparations were made to those who had been previously wronged:

This course had a very personal impact on my understanding of people from diverse and stigmatized populations. The things I learned actually caused me to seek out a few people in my life and apologize to them for the judgment that I had cast on them (ID#114).

Ninety percent of the students in this study (n=15) reported that they gained a greater understanding of diverse populations. This understanding was reached in large part by students discovering shared experiences and concerns. This was epitomized by the following student response: “It really has shown how people from all backgrounds and populations from every walk of life deal with similar problems” (ID#117).

The multicultural lessons learned in this class were monumental. Originally scared and hesitant to engage with those who were “different,” these students embraced the organizations and their diverse clients, were able to recognize “sameness,” and developed a strong desire to form relationships with those from various backgrounds.

Real-World Impact

At the beginning of class, students noted a concern that they did not have many skills to offer to an advocacy-related course, and they struggled to see how this course would relate to their major or future career. As the course progressed, students began to find individual passions, practical lessons, and career links to victim advocacy. Many students developed a moral obligation to help those in need. One student noted that the emotions she felt after meeting the young children co-victimized by homicide was directing her toward a career choice:

After beginning my research, I began to see the changes I could make that could one day potentially save an individual's life. Having the ability to make these connections between the class and my future profession was a major success for me (ID#103).

The class encouraged students to stretch beyond basic textbook understandings of advocacy and to develop concrete ways their careers could be impacted by and directly impact advocacy efforts. Students took notice that their experiences interacting with organizations had the potential to open doors for them in their future careers:

This course will be the course I talk about in every graduate, job, or other professional interview. The practical experience offers quantifiable data showing monetary and professional success among our non-profits (ID#107).
I got told by several of the people we worked with that I had possible references and internship opportunities. I know that when the time comes, I can count on the advocates we worked with to influence my future professional career (ID#101).

Other students noted the way this experience strengthened skills or behaviors needed to be successful in their professional lives: “This course has laid a pathway for me to someday use my communication skills to help others” (ID#105). “[I learned] to take initiative and not rely on other people handling everything for you. We really worked hard, and I will now have that additional experienced work ethic for my future career” (ID#109).

From aviation and construction management to social work and criminal justice, students’ majors ranged broadly. Another learning objective of the course was to encourage students to be creative and find direct links between their major and advocacy. Several students had never considered such a connection:

The biggest successes I had in this class was learning how to apply my major of communication to nonprofits. I learned that I could use what I learned in my class to help this nonprofit run smoothly and be affected. I really saw the value of my degree and how wide and diverse it was (ID#117).

This class also introduces me to the ways in which my field commonly gives back, and ways that I believe it could benefit even more which I most likely would have never came to that conclusion on my own (ID#113).

Regardless of career aspirations, through the various volunteer efforts, nonprofit activities, business developments, and individual research projects, students strengthened their professional link to advocacy efforts and civic responsibility.

Social Impact

The social impact competency encapsulated themes of team building, overcoming group challenges, and increasing social awareness. These are themes which remain relevant for criminal justice workers. Service-learning class projects give students the opportunity to work out issues on their own facilitating team-building:

I think the most challenging aspect of this class for me personally was getting all of the members in the group to be cooperative and work as a team. At times, each group member was going a completely different direction. I'm just glad that we figured out how to work as a team in the end, or I don't think that we would have been as successful as we were at the end of the semester (ID#102).

Some students identified how their group service-learning experience helped develop a personal skill. To illustrate, it served as a confidence booster for the following student: “I feel like this class made me more confident in talking with others because of the group work we did” (ID#108). Another student felt like she learned how to gauge the talents of her teammates: “I learned how to identify the strengths in others and work with them accordingly in a group project” (ID#112).
Diversity in both talents and personalities was recognized as a team asset by the end of the service-learning project; however, some students did not recognize the value of team member diversity when group assignments were first made at the start of the semester.

When I was first put into groups, I thought the variety of different people would set us back because we weren't on the same page. I was very wrong about this. The demographics in this class was what made it so successful (ID#116).

All students within each assigned group were required to collaboratively accomplish the goal of helping their nonprofit organization in a way that was outside each team member’s existing comfort zone:

The group work was definitely challenging. None of us had any experience in digital media production, and our task was to create brochures and a DVD for the nonprofit organization we were assigned. It took a collaborative effort from everyone in the group to accomplish the goals (ID#113).

In their responses, five students (ID#102, #104, #105, #106, and #107) claimed a newfound commitment to community outreach because of their service-learning experiences. Here are two representative responses:

My group was challenging. Everyone was always busy, motivation was lost, agreements couldn't be made, but in the end we figured it out. It was never about us anyway, it was always about helping those who cannot help themselves… I will continue to change lives even after this class (ID#106).

This class solidified my internal commitment to public service and philanthropy…Many underestimated the impact just a few committed people can have on the world, but I have watched 20 millennials led by a brilliant yet quirky homicide expert change thousands of lives with no money, limited time, and an abundance of strength and talent (ID#107)

Undoubtedly, the structure of the course and the required engagement pressed students to reevaluate themselves and others, thus progressing socially and discovering ways to successfully engage with their peers and their community.

Challenges

While survey items #10 and #11 asked students to identify challenges, some students responded by explaining how a problem was solved or an obstacle overcome, and these were categorized under the cognitive impact theme. In this category is where students identified challenges in terms of perceived negative experiences, both in response to #10 and #11 and in response to other survey items. There were 37 responses organized within this “challenges” theme because, despite the careful design of the course and the overwhelming growth and positivity ultimately experienced by the students, everything did not always run smoothly throughout the semester. The subcategories within this theme were: noncooperation by organization (whether because of illness, lack of communication, vague expectations, or otherwise), noncooperation by classmates, fear of failing, inadequate resources, and time constraints. A number of students identified personal struggles with time demands as the class required volunteer hours and event participation beyond the scheduled course block:
I think the biggest challenge I faced was time. I felt like this class was a consistent balancing act of time. I was busy with other class and work, so trying to find time to help my nonprofit and really commit to this class was hard (ID#117).

They also faced common hurdles that occur when placed within a group setting, including communication issues, difficulty in the division of responsibilities, and lack of initiative from classmates:

There weren’t really any personal challenges that I faced. The most challenges came from the group I worked with. The lack of motivation and enthusiasm from my team was really discouraging, and that had a slight impact on me because it’s hard to keep going and be positive when no one else that’s helping you has the same attitude (ID#106).

There were also challenges working directly with the organizations. Students felt some organizations struggled to provide communication or guidance, sent mixed messages of desires and expectations, and were sometimes difficult to reach for feedback:

One of the biggest challenges we had as a class was finding what the specific needs were for each of our organizations. Some of the organizations came in with a clearcut agenda for what they wanted to accomplish while other groups’ needs were more vague (ID#103).

Unexpected illnesses within two of the organizations also created unforeseen and unpreventable obstacles. These problems, however, allowed students to see firsthand how, in the real world, events can occur that are beyond anyone’s control. As one student put it, “More often than not, things do not go according to plan and that sometimes means you have to start all over” (ID#117).

**DISCUSSION**

Service-learning is rarely offered in criminal justice curriculum (Madden et al., 2014), despite the fact that many students express a desire to help others as their main reason for pursuing such a degree (Dantzker, Kubin, & Stein, 1997; Krimmel & Tartaro, 1999). The current sample noted that their isolated world-view initially made it difficult to relate to or understand concepts and populations related to victim advocacy. Student immersion with victims, at-risk youth, homeless individuals, addicts and their families, and former prisoners transformed the learning environment, taking students beyond the text and traditional course expectations.

The results demonstrate how service-learning benefits students by engaging them emotionally, cognitively, and socially. All students revealed an emotional aspect to their experience. Because emotion provides the motivation to learn and may help break down mental barriers or resistance to learning, previous literature has set forth the idea that all higher-level thinking may need to proceed from an affective domain platform (DioGuardi, 2016). Dewey (1934) himself considered emotion to be the force that fuels reflection, and it is reflection which elevates an experience to one in which cognitive domain learning occurs. Dewey (1910) described reflection as examining a topic so thoroughly that nothing important is being overlooked. Such degree of thoroughness would not occur without sufficient emotional investment; students need to be attentive and interested. “Emotion is the moving and cementing force. It selects what is congruous and dyes what is selected with its color, thereby giving qualitative unity to material externally disparate and dissimilar” (Dewey, 1934, p. 42).
For Dewey (1910), reflection itself is higher order thinking, which must be the goal of every worthwhile educational experience. Reflection provides students with “the ability to step back and ponder one’s own experience, to abstract from it some meaning or knowledge relevant to other experiences” (Hutchings & Witzorff, 1988, p. 15). Dewey (1910) made it clear that reflective thinking would rarely be easy; that, in fact, it would be a painful process; and the findings from this study reveal the discomfort students felt as they articulated their struggles in cognitively processing their experience.

Six of the students explicitly described their service-learning experience as being eye-opening, and Dewey (1916) claimed that, “Only gradually and with a widening of the area of vision through a growth of social sympathies does thinking develop to include what lies beyond our direct interests; a fact of great significance for education” (p. 142). Another student elaborated on how she cannot help but to look at every newspaper article differently as she wonders about the human impact hidden behind the headlines.

This research revealed the multicultural impact as students uncovered and examined their own implicit biases. Dewey (2016) described prejudices as being the product of a stubborn mind which has stopped developing, whereas “intellectual growth means constant expansion of horizons and consequent formation of new purposes and new responses” (p. 182). Findings confirm a myriad of service-learning research results, which found a decrease in stereotypical thinking, and an increase in understanding other cultures and races (e.g., Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999; and Giles & Eyler, 1994). Keen and Hall (2009) suggested that multicultural competence is reached not because of the service-learning, per se, but because of the ongoing dialogue that occurs between those providing the service and those being served. Students discovered similarities between people from different cultures and themselves through close interaction with the nonprofit organizations’ clients, which was a positive academic outcome also identified by Eyler and Giles (1999). This personal growth may be the greatest lesson for those entering the field of criminal justice.

In addition to the social impact (i.e., the service-learning experience strengthened the way students cooperated with and worked within their student groups), students also reported professional development outcomes that would aid their future careers. Traditionally, students have turned to internships as their sole exposure to the “real world,” but employers are looking for experiences beyond internships to set candidates apart (Burke & Bush, 2013; Hirschinger-Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Penn, 2003). The students in this course recognized that this opportunity enhanced their ability to network with professionals, made them more aware and confident of their skills, and provided an experience they could incorporate in future job interviews. Perhaps even more powerful than their professional development was how students now saw their future careers needing to include a component of civic responsibility and engagement, and prior research found a correlation between student volunteer work during college and later participation in community service (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999). Dewey believed that intelligence has an obligation to respect others as well as itself, and that educators have a responsibility to prepare students to fully participate in society and do their part to promote public welfare within their communities (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998). Dewey (1916) was concerned with the role of education in developing a progressive society, one in which the citizens would be bound “together in cooperative human pursuits and results” (p. 98).
There were challenges similar to what was found in prior service-learning literature (Rosing, Reed, Ferrari, & Bothne, 2010), but students in this honor course brainstormed with each other to find solutions to emerging problems and shared their ongoing struggles with each other. Both brainstorming and sharing were identified by Keen and Hall (2009) as being the most beneficial activities within a service-learning experience.

However, the simplest way to evaluate the success of this service-learning course is to explore the material contributions students made to their teams:

We as a class had success in helping these companies. We raised over four thousand dollars for our organizations. We created promotional materials for them. We were able to launch a nonprofit. We helped a nonprofit continue an event that they thought they would have to cancel. We gave these nonprofits hope and energy to continue helping people (ID#106).

The class created a multitude of creative marketing materials, including a DVD and press packet for the homeless food service organization, original branding, social media, and business materials for the public speaker, and a new logo, mission/vision statement, manual, and website for the addiction group. With funding being recognized as the major deficit for these groups, the class also raised $350 for the addiction leader to attend a conference in Washington, DC and another $600 from a Halloween run, raised over $4,000 for the crime victims’ unit through a social media site and dinner, and helped book the speaker with more than 10 paid speaking opportunities. Finally, the students contributed many hours feeding the homeless, organizing and hosting activity booths at the children’s Christmas party, and participating in community education events.

It should be noted that the course instructor recognized her own influence on the class, and that her role and leadership may have impacted study results as well as outcomes. One potential influence is that students may have altered their behavior because they knew they were being observed or measured on their performance, commonly known as the Hawthorne Effect (Kember, 2003). The possibility exists that the instructor’s own passion for victim advocacy might have fueled the students’ motivation. Additionally, her dual role of researcher and instructor may have influenced the way she interpreted students’ responses (Deeley, 2010). However, this latter conflict was somewhat mitigated by the second author (who is not actively involved in victim advocacy) blindly coding all responses and emergent themes independently.

This service-learning/victim advocacy course was a valuable education experience as students demonstrated an ability to relate their experience to course content as well as other venues both through their responses and through their presentation boards, and were also able to recognize the real-world relevance of the service-learning experience (Dewey, 1938). Many, and arguably all, demonstrated higher order thinking as they applied general principles to their personal observations and revealed an expanded awareness of community-wide and society-wide problems and issues. Perhaps the most important finding came from the “social impacts” because all students became more engaged in their communities, and most expressed the intention to continue with community outreach. Mendel-Reyes (1998) referred to service-learning as “pedagogy for citizenship” (p. 34), and the students who completed this 16-week course show all
indications that they will be the good citizens produced from a worthwhile education, as required by John Dewey.

**CONCLUSION**

Public safety is threatened when discord and divisiveness exist within society. Mutual trust and respect must be reestablished between the citizenry and criminal justice system. One starting point might involve walking down John Dewey’s educational pathway to foster civic-mindedness in aspiring criminal justice system workers and to rekindle a collaborative community spirit among all members of society. Effective service-learning can have a significant, long-term impact on students, including the way they learn, how they think and view the world around them, the manner in which they see themselves, and in how they define their role and purpose in their communities. Despite challenges, such as limited financial resources and time, this course is an example of how powerful service-learning can be, particularly in the criminal justice arena. The process requires a significant amount of work from the instructor as well as from students and participating organizations, but the reward creates a worthwhile experience for all parties involved. Given the current divide and distress within so many of our communities and the perceived disconnect between criminal justice practitioners and the clients they serve, direct exposure of students to vulnerable, at-risk populations has never been more important. This unique learning experience allows students to see we are all similar and can make a difference in the lives of others, thus potentially improving the future welfare of our society.

**REFERENCES**


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APPENDIX

HONR3000: Victim Advocacy Reflection

1. What were your expectations when you registered for this course?
2. How would you see this course as influencing your future professional career?
3. How did this class impact you personally?
4. How has this class improved your understanding of people from diverse populations (former prisoner, addicts, homeless individuals, crime victims)?
5. Describe your experience working within a group.
6. Describe your experience working with a nonprofit organization.
7. What did you learn about operating a nonprofit?
8. Which group/organization impacted you the most in a positive way? Why?
9. Overall, what challenges did you personally encounter in this class?
10. As a class what challenges did we face?
11. Overall, what successes did you personally experience in this class?
12. As a class, what successes did we experience?
13. If you have to pinpoint one specific lesson, life experience, or moment in this class, what would it be, and how did it influence you?
14. Is there any other message or reflection you would like to share? If so, please detail below!
Graffiti with a Purpose: Sexual Violence & Social Justice Conversations in University Bathroom Stalls

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Abstract
In 2014, our university began posting educational fliers in bathroom stalls across campus in order to share resources and policies on sexual violence, which spurred numerous forms of graffiti commentary about sexual violence prevention and response. Since some scholars have argued that bathroom graffiti can be a unique form of social commentary and even resistance facilitated by the tension of doing semi-private things in semi-public spaces, we examined 429 bathroom stall fliers across 11 heavily trafficked campus buildings, and a total of 177 graffiti comments/images. We then analyzed the relationships between comments in order to answer research questions about the content of messages, if symbolic

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support was provided therein, and whether these messages about sexual violence suggested a need for further structural change at the university level.

Keywords: campus sexual assault, graffiti, sexual violence, content analysis

INTRODUCTION

Although there is considerable debate about measurement of sexual assault, with some scholars arguing that the estimate of “1 in 5” college women is overstated (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007; Office of the Vice President & White House Council on Women and Girls, 2014), there remains strong consensus that sexual misconduct on college campuses is a significant and enduring problem for all genders, especially young women (Muehlenhard, Peterson, Humphreys, & Jozkowski, 2017). Such experiences with sexual violence are insidious, and can result in lasting trauma and negative health consequences (Widom, 2000), involvement in crime (Chesney-Lind, 1997), depression/anxiety (Au, Dickstein, Comer, Salters-Pedneault, & Litz, 2013), risky sexual behavior (Champion et al., 2004), increased vulnerability to future assaults (Gidycz, Coble, Latham, & Layman, 1993) and an upsurge in alcohol and substance abuse (Daly, 1992, 1994) among some survivors.

Both the incidence of campus sexual assault and its potential outcomes raise important questions about the responsibilities of educational institutions to prevent and respond to sexual violence when it occurs. For these reasons and many others, researchers, practitioners, and university administrators have increased their efforts to understand and prevent sexual assault and/or provide greater resources when it does occur. Despite these efforts, few survivors report incidences of sexual assault to universities, perhaps indicating a lack of trust or a perception of insufficient resources and social support (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012; Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher, 2006). In light of this long-standing problem, how university environments should optimally be constructed to provide safe and supportive physical and structural spaces, is still a matter of considerable debate. One potential site of social support emerged on our own campus in response to university educational fliers being posted as part of an institutional mandate to make Title IX required resources more readily available to students. We will argue here that a form of social support was discovered in conversations students were having via bathroom graffiti centered on these educational flyers. These bathroom graffiti conversations expressed both student frustrations around issues of sexual assault, as well as support for other students.

The current study investigates the spontaneous formation of this anonymous social support community, and an unconventional support system of disclosure and discussions about college sexual assault via graffiti messages in public bathroom stalls. We performed a content analysis of these graffiti messages to uncover whether their themes included supportive or critical messages around sexual assault and its prevention. Given that nearly 16% of undergraduate women and 2% of undergraduate men had experienced sexual violence prior to arriving on the campus being studied (Division of Student Affairs, 2015), this research makes an important contribution to understanding how discussions about sexual assault could serve to exacerbate or ameliorate trauma that many students have likely endured. While the goal of these flyers was to condemn sexual violence and advertise resources to respond to sexual violence if and when it did occur, we found that these flyers, in relation to the anonymity of the bathrooms’ “private” space, provided a unique forum insulating survivors from potential negative outcomes (such as victim-
blaming) that can occur when a survivor discloses their experiences of sexual violence (Ullman, 1996).

**Sexual Assault on College Campuses**

In 1972, the U.S. Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act prohibiting gender-based discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Lee & Won, 2015), such as college residential life programs, health services, and counseling. In recent years, investigations into campus compliance with Title IX have brought to the forefront an awareness and discussion of sexual misconduct of all forms in college settings. Despite these renewed discussions, the 2014 release of the *Not Alone* report by the U.S. White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault highlights a wide-reaching epidemic of sexual violence on college campuses throughout the country, with few manageable evidence-based solutions to date (Office of the Vice President & White House Council on Women and Girls, 2014).

At the time of this task force report, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) released a list of universities who were then under investigation for improper handling of college sexual violence and harassment complaints (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). By 2015, when our study began, OCR had begun 140 investigations at 124 universities. These investigations were not in response to an increased prevalence of sexual misconduct at specific institutions per se. Rather, they were launched in response to concerns that universities and local police were not properly handling the complaints or the needs and rights of students making them. For instance, among female students, only 20% of rape and sexual victimizations are estimated to be reported to police (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). Further, Belknap (2010) has found that several factors influence whether women report sexual assaults; primary concerns include whether police or prosecutors will believe them, as well as how they will be treated (Kaukinen & DeMaris, 2009; Orenstein, 2007). In principle, this effort would help reduce the barriers to reporting and prosecuting sexual violence.

Despite increased efforts by universities to encourage the reporting of sexual assault and to provide greater support, research has found that approximately two-thirds of women only disclose to family or friends (Ahrens, Campbell, Ternier-Thames, Wasco, & Sefl, 2007). This relative silence indicates that various non-institutional sources of social support (in addition to medical care and mental health services) are key for survivor response and recovery. However, research has also found that survivors encounter blaming statements, attempts at distraction, and other responses that negatively impact their recovery when they disclose sexual assault even to close family and friends (Ullman, 1996; Ullman & Filipas, 2001). Thus, although informal disclosures may be beneficial in terms of increasing the likelihood of adjudication (Paul et al., 2013), survivors are also likely aware of potentially negative reactions from family and friends, as well as law enforcement. Clearly there need to be “more supportive environments for victims in order to help address concerns such as beliefs that [assault] is a private matter [as well as] worry about being blamed, etc.” (Paul et al., 2013, p. 11). But how these environments should optimally be constructed remains contested among key stakeholders.

**Graffiti in Private Spaces**

Research has suggested that the content of graffiti—illicit writing and/or drawing on a public surface—varies depending on the intended audience and its location; for instance, whether the
graffiti is for a public audience, such as a crowded New York City subway train, or for a more private audience such as in a library book (Fisher & Radtke, 2014; Scott-Warren, 2010). As one such setting where graffiti has been documented, bathroom stalls are unique locations due to their liminal existence as both a public and a private space. To explain, bathrooms, particularly individual bathroom stalls, are a semi-public location—many people use them over the course of a day—but they are also a semi-private location—typically, only one person uses an individual partitioned stall at a time, and the enclosed space feels private even if others are using stalls only feet away.

In contrast, Rodriquez and Clair (1999, p. 2) define public graffiti as “anonymous inscriptions found on public spaces” such as sides of buildings, and describe private graffiti as “anonymous inscriptions found within buildings.” We adopt a narrower definition here by defining public graffiti as anonymous inscriptions found on public places and private graffiti as anonymous inscriptions found in private places intended to be read by only one person at a time. By this definition, the graffiti written in bathroom stalls would qualify as private graffiti even as, to some extent, it exists in a public place. Such an existence permits bathroom stalls to act as a public/private “whiteboard” where community members engage in conversation, share information and thoughts, comment on current events, and edit or critique others. In such a space, each contributor can comment anonymously and privately during his or her time alone in the stall, yet all contribute to a public conversation available to many.

The nature of graffiti conversations, whether public or private, is generally similar. They often have a predictable structure and are meant to be interactive. Wolff (2010) suggests that conversations often begin with graffitists commenting on the most intriguing comment or picture, which opens the door for dialogue. This initial comment can be negative (e.g., critical) or positive (e.g., encouraging). Sometimes, graffiti conversations can become overwhelming in response to an initial comment, with writing covering an entire stall. As a means of organizing this dialogue, there is often a predictable structure to these conversations that highlights an interactive intent. Rodriguez and Clair (1999) have found that arrows from one comment to another are often inserted to allow for outside readers (the intended audience) to follow the conversations more easily. Arrows also allow graffitists to clarify whether a comment is meant for one particular previous statement or for the sequence of messages as a whole. But in either case, the intent is for the readers and those who contributed to follow the dialogue. Arrows appear frequently in bathroom stall graffiti, making it thoroughly interactive, dynamic, and responsive to other individuals who read and choose to contribute to a given discussion. Add-ons to graffiti conversations further allow participants to more effectively communicate with one another and with their audience.

Several researchers have also commented on how graffiti can allow marginalized voices to participate in meaningful and purposeful conversations (Oliver, 2014; Waldner & Dobratz, 2013). Graffiti provides participants the opportunity to converse anonymously within a relatively known structure. Since most public bathrooms are still single-sex, anonymous contributors to this ‘whiteboard’ would expect only same-gendered people to read and engage in these conversations. Women in particular may be more forthcoming because they assume the only people seeing these comments are others of their gender, who, it may be assumed, are more likely to understand the experience of sexual violence and empathize with it. In this way, graffiti can be a way for marginalized individuals in particular to voice their opinions freely, despite the
fact that they may have felt uncomfortable or unable to publicly share their opinions (Rodriguez & Clair, 1999; Wolff, 2010).

Marginalization is, of course, a continuing concern for survivors of sexual violence. According to the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA [2014]), survivors of sexual assault frequently feel ostracized by universities and other large institutions. For instance, the findings of the CALCASA summit, argue that survivors on college campuses often feel unprepared to face their university justice system, stating that they are generally unaware of services available to them (California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 2014). Thus, settings like bathroom stalls can become one site of anonymous disclosure as well as a space used to express attitudes and emotions, and/or confront a dominant regime and ideology without fear. However, these spaces have also become a site for communicating official and institutional information on the part of the university to students about resources and interventions related to sexual assault, since bathrooms are frequented often by a wide variety of people and provide the opportunity to hold one’s attention for a period of time. Thus, many institutions have begun providing fliers with prevention strategies and sexual assault resources in highly-trafficked areas such as bathrooms.

Current Study

On our campus in particular—Indiana University, Bloomington (IUB)—student affairs administrators facilitated a sexual misconduct resource intervention that included posting fliers across campus with information about campus resources, tips for intervening, and the university’s Title IX definition of sexual violence (see Appendix). These fliers were placed in every bathroom stall in heavily-trafficked campus buildings. Almost immediately after these fliers were posted, graffiti conversations began to appear on and around them in the bathroom stalls. While there are many graffiti conversations in campus stalls each semester, we observed that a large number of these comments and conversations occurred directly in response to the educational fliers about sexual assault. Thus these sightings began our interest in the current project. The current study explores three specific research questions:

RQ 1: What messages does the graffiti convey? In particular, what type of content is included in the bathroom stall conversations engaging with the sexual assault resources fliers?

RQ 2: Does graffiti appear to provide social/emotional support for writers or readers?

RQ 3: Among the graffiti messages that focus on sexual assault, are they suggesting a need for change? If so, what type of change?

A strength of the current study is that, given that it is confined to university students, it occurs in locations that are visited by both men and women, across gender identities and sexual orientations, racial and ethnic categories, and across ages and personal experiences, including knowledge about, attitudes toward, and experiences with sexual misconduct. Further, the current study presents a novel and timely investigation into a topic that brings together the fields of criminology, gender, sexuality, and physical space.
METHODS

Data Collection

All data were collected in 2015. The 11 buildings on the IUB campus selected for data collection were those with the most student traffic, which included all classroom buildings and the largest dormitories. A male and female researcher visited every bathroom stall in each building and photographed all observed graffiti, even if unrelated to sexual assault. The male researcher visited 194 men’s stalls and photographed 52 graffiti comments. The female researcher visited 235 women’s stalls and photographed 127 graffiti comments. In total, 429 stalls were visited and 179 comments were photographed.

Target Campus

As noted earlier, IUB has undertaken a series of multi-level activities related to preventing and responding to sexual misconduct, including a resource awareness campaign. The IU Bloomington campus is the flagship and largest campus of the Indiana University system. The campus, located on approximately 2,000-acres in Southern Indiana (USA), is a large Midwestern public University that enrolls nearly 50,000 students in total (approximately 40,000 undergraduates). The ratio of male-to-female students is roughly equal, with a large proportion of the undergraduate student body identifying their race/ethnicity as white and deriving from the same state. The campus reports that students come from throughout the U.S. and the world, with over 125 countries represented in the student body, and roughly one in five students being a person of color. The campus is also home to approximately 12,000 staff of varying ages and demographic backgrounds.

Data Analysis

Graffiti was analyzed following the thematic analysis approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). In the absence of previous research on bathroom graffiti specifically related to social justice or sexual violence, themes were data-driven rather than theoretically-derived. Our themes were semantic in nature, describing the content of each graffiti comment in order to highlight overarching ideas and patterns. Themes were generated based on whether the graffiti comment was about sexual assault, sexual violence, or a related social justice issue; the valence of the comment; and whether and how the comment interacted with other comments in the same bathroom stall (i.e., whether graffiti contributors were conversing with one another with arrows or otherwise). We created 18 categories for the graffiti comments. Nine categories were objective descriptors of the graffiti comments (i.e., gender of the bathroom in which they were found, whether the graffiti was written on the flier or elsewhere). The remaining nine categories were focused on valence and specific content (i.e., attitude toward the flier, whether the graffiti related to sexual assault or sexual violence). See Table 1 for a listing of categories and specific codes within each.

To ensure adequate interrater reliability, two authors first coded a small subset (10%) of the comments across all 18 categories. Kappa estimates ranged from .73 to .99, with the average being .88. As this exceeded $k = .70$, the standard for interrater reliability, these authors proceeded in coding all graffiti comments individually and then met to discuss their choices and resolve discrepancies.
Table 1. Coding categories and schemes for graffiti comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Codes</th>
<th>Coding Scheme Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural/Descriptive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of the bathroom</td>
<td>0=Male; 1=Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether comment is in response to flier</td>
<td>0=No; 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether comment is written on flier</td>
<td>0=No; 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of interaction with words on flier</td>
<td>1=Strong (arrows, underlining, directly in response to specific phrase); 2=Mild but obviously related to flier; 3=None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valence/Content-Focused Codes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward flier/message</td>
<td>1=Positive; 2=Neutral; 3=Negative; 99=Unrelated to flier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether comment is related to sexual assault or sexual violence</td>
<td>0=No; 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content of comment</td>
<td>1=Reporting or exposing an assailant/assailant; 2=Recommendation for action or change; 3=Providing support; 4=Providing additional information; 5=Criticizing, critical, or disappointed; 6=Misc. comment or opinion; 7=Quote-like recommendation or advice; 8=Social commentary or quote on social problems (not sexual assault)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of comment</td>
<td>1=Race; 2=Sexual assault; 3=Mental health; 4=Sexual activity and relationships; 5=Misc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment is in response to another written comment</td>
<td>0=No; 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valence of opinion on how university handles sexual assault</td>
<td>1=Supportive; 2=Neutral; 3=Critical; 99=Unrelated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content of critique on how university handles sexual assault</td>
<td>1=Focuses on prevention; 2=Focuses on response; 3=Focuses on neither; 99=Unrelated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of additional markings</td>
<td>1=Underlining; 2=Crossed- or scratched-out word; 3=Non-sexual drawing (e.g., heart, smiley); 4=Arrow or line connecting comments; 5=Sexual drawing; 99= None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of additional markings to other comments</td>
<td>1=Reacting to another comment; 2=Reacting to writing on flier; 3=Reacting to commenter’s own words; 99= None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS

Summary Descriptors of Bathroom Stall Graffiti Comments

Of the 177 graffiti comments photographed, the majority (70%) came from women’s bathroom stalls. On average, graffiti comments were 1.6 sentences in length, and contained an average of eight words. Most comments were between one and ten words (70%), and included neither curse words (90.7%) nor additional markings (e.g., arrows, underlining; 58.8%). Of the 74 comments that did include additional markings, 18.1% of the markings were arrows or lines connecting one comment with another; 11.3% were non-sexual drawings (e.g., a heart or smiley face); 6.2% were crossing or scratching out another comment or word on the flier; 4.52% were underlining of another comment or word on the flier; and 1.7% were sexual drawings.

Content of Graffiti Comments

First, we examined the content of the comments and the types of messages being conveyed. Forty-five percent of all comments (79 of 177) were related to the content of the flier. Graffiti in men’s bathrooms were more likely to respond to sexual assault issues (50.9%) than graffiti in women’s bathrooms (41.9%). For example, we observed comments from men such as “Lies.” or “BULLSHIT” on the flier if responding negatively. Or, if responding positively, they might write, “Don’t sexually assault people.” Similarly, when positive, women wrote, “Don’t rape.” When negative, women would write, for example, “IU doesn’t care,” perhaps highlighting the more direct experience women on a campus may have had with both sexual assault and the process of reporting and adjudicating of sexual violence on campus.

Among all graffiti comments (177 comments), we identified five themes (see Table 2). In women’s bathroom stalls, the majority of graffiti comments were about sexual assault (41.9% of 124 comments). This was followed by comments about mental health (14.5%), sexual activity and relationships (11.3%), and race (9.7%). An additional 22.6% of women’s comments were coded as “miscellaneous.” These include comments that were unrelated to the flier or social issues (e.g., “Our butts have touched the same seat” or “Time goes by so fast. Live it up!”). In men’s bathroom stalls, approximately half (50.9%) of graffiti comments were about sexual assault. The remaining comments in men’s stalls were about other types of sexual activity (20.8%) or were miscellaneous (28.3%). Men did not discuss mental health topics via graffiti.
Table 2. Categories of graffiti themes, with examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Women’s Stalls (n=124 comments)</th>
<th>Men’s Stalls (n=53 comments)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*IF You DO NOT GET THAT THIS IS ABOUT RACE, YOU ARE AHISTORICAL. FERGUSON REBELS!! RIP &quot;MIKE MIKE&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Just don’t rape.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*You mean IU is actually doing something about sexual assault? That's new.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*I Need somebody to talk to…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Make an appt with CAPS! It always helps to talk to an unbiased professional, and doesn't mean you're anything less than strong, sane, or stable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*We support you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Activity and Relationships</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*My boyfriend of over 3 years ended our relationship. I am heartbroken. And I don't know what to do. I thought I was going to marry him.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*reading this stall makes my day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*unlearn internalized misogyny</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*How’s your poop going?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*A great band name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*I read this wall while I poop.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship of Graffiti Comments

We examined the relationship between the comments: Were comments isolated or were conversations taking place? Were the comments and/or conversations supportive, or something
else? We found that most graffiti comments did not include strong interaction with the information on the flier. That is, only 30.5% (68.5% in women’s stalls, 31.5% in men’s stalls) of the comments included underlining, arrows, or other markings that would pinpoint specific phrases or words indicating a conversation between writers about the flier itself. However, although comments were most often not in conversation format, there were notable examples of conversation and/or community occurring (see Table 3).

Table 3. Examples of Bathroom Stall Graffiti Conversations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men’s Bathroom Conversation</th>
<th>Women’s Bathroom Conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) RAPE IS FOR GDI’S! AND BOWLERS</td>
<td>(1) They’re getting investigated by the US Dept. of Education for this shit :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) That's fucked up. rape isn't for anyone to do, asshole.</td>
<td>(2) My friend was raped in her dorm room. Instead of sending her rapist to jail, IU just sent him to a different dorm. What about that? If you claim you're going to help us, IU; back it up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Our ancestors raped and pillaged the indians. So we are all descendents of rapists and murders. It's not entirely our fault. It's in our blood.</td>
<td>(3) That is not up to IU. Rape is a criminal matter and should have been taken to the Police department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Some of us are not white.</td>
<td>(4) My rapist works [on campus].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) yeah, you're right, whites are the only rapists</td>
<td>(5) Men can be raped, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) FUCKING IDIOT</td>
<td>(6) My rapist lives in the [apartment building name].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, we observed conversations that did provide some emotional and material support, even if not addressing sexual assault specifically. For example, this conversation in a women’s bathroom stall:

*When I leave class to pee, I actually come here to cut myself.*

*...darling you're not alone. let's stick together. School is rough, we're all on this struggle bus [heart image] love in you*

*You are loved, and those that love you would hate to see you hurt yourself. God made you valuable and worthy. He gave you life. Love yourself.*

*You have worth. You have a beautiful soul. Love yourself. Visit CAPS. They're great.*

Thus, although the majority of messages were not conversational, conversational messages were indeed present in bathroom stall graffiti.
Graffiti Messages about Sexual Assault

As the focus of this paper was on sexual assault, we examined in greater depth the 79 graffiti comments related specifically to some type of sexual violence. First, we examined valence of comments (positive, negative, neutral toned). In women’s bathroom stalls, the majority of comments related to sexual assault were negative (54.9%). For example, “You mean IU is actually doing something about sexual assault? That's new” and “Thanks for pretending to care, IU.” The remaining comments were neutral-toned (45.1%). For example, “OR Middle Way House (off-campus)” written as an addition to the resources listed on the poster. It is important to note that no comments related to sexual assault in the women’s stalls were positively valenced (e.g., encouraging sexual assault behavior). In men’s stalls, in contrast, the majority of comments were neutral-toned (59.3%). For example, “A great band name,” written to the right of “What Is Sexual Violence?” printed on the flier, and “Our ancestors raped and pillaged the indians. So we are all descendents [sic] of rapists and murders. It's not entirely our fault. It's in our blood.” The remaining comments were mostly negatively valenced toward the flier (37.0%) such as “BULL SHIT” accompanied by the author’s underlining of the inclusion of “sexual coercion” in the definition of sexual violence on the flier itself, and “If you make out with a chick at sports you're a rapist” accompanied by an arrow pointing to the word “impaired” in the definition of sexual violence on the flier itself. And one comment was positively valenced (3.7%), wherein the author crossed out a negatively valenced comment, “BULLSHIT,” and underlined the sentence on consent.

Next, we examined the content of the sexual assault related messages. Specifically, we examined whether women’s messages were focused on prevention or other responses to sexual assault. In women’s stalls, 17.7% of comments focused on preventing sexual assault:

Just don’t rape.

Don’t sexually assault other people.

Also, make sure you are always respecting other people's boundaries!

Lock men up at night! Problem solved.

An additional 9.8% of comments focused on appropriate ways to respond to sexual assault:

Demand Justice

My friend was raped in her dorm room. Instead of sending her rapist to jail, IU just sent him to a different dorm. What about that? If you claim you're going to help us, IU; back it up.

[Response to comment]: That is not up to IU, Rape is a criminal matter and should have been taken to the Police department

It is also worth noting that 38% of sexual assault graffiti commenters in women’s stalls engaged with other comments in women’s stalls, as conversation, providing a diverse array of opinions and information about sexual assault.
Next, we categorized sexual assault comments into themes. There were eight themes identified for content of sexual assault messages: expressing critical opinions, providing recommendations for change, offering advice, giving additional information, supporting survivors, reporting or naming an assailant, providing social commentary, and miscellaneous. Comments could be coded as multiple themes. Specifically, 17.4% expressed critical opinions about the treatment of sexual assault survivors or handling of sexual assault cases, while 15.3% provided recommendations for action or change in the handling and treatment of sexual assault-related issues, and 8.9% gave additional information about sexual assault on campus. Another 15.3% were providing support to others who had experienced sexual assault, while 1.6% of comments reported a sexual assault or named an assailant. The remaining comments provided social commentary on a related social problem (8.9%) or were coded as miscellaneous (25.8%).

In men’s stalls, only 3.8% of comments focused on preventing sexual assault (e.g., “Don’t sexually assault people”, “Don’t rape”, or other). Further, comments in men’s stalls were not as diverse in scope as were women’s, with the majority coded as miscellaneous (58.5%), with many of those comments discussing bodily functions, i.e. “How’s your poop going?...”, “I Peed...”, “I READ THIS WALL WHILE I POOP.”, “sit, all broken hearted your butt only farted are you retarded?”, or completely random, i.e. “GOD”, “KKK”, “Sad dey”, “wonder who you are”, “INDIGO.” The remaining comments were mostly expressing critical opinions about the handling of sexual assault cases (32.1%), while a few provided recommendations for action or change in handling sexual assault (3.8%), provided support for sexual assault survivors (1.9%), reported a sexual assault or named an assailant (1.9%), or provided social commentary on a related issue (1.9%).

Finally, we coded sexual assault comments in a separate category that examined whether the sexual assault-related comment addressed how the university specifically responds to sexual assault on campus. For example, are students expressing a need for change on campus? Of the 79 comments, 29% of those in women’s stalls and 22% of those in men’s stalls expressed negative or critical opinions about the university’s efforts.

Flier in women’s stall: *IUB does not tolerate acts of sexual violence.*

Graffiti: *Except when it does. Which is often.*

The majority of comments (71-78%) were neutral toned toward IU’s handling of sexual assault or completely unrelated to it, for example, in a men’s bathroom, this conversation:

*Suck my cock.*

*I’m trying to shit. Fuck off.*

*This is serious. Fuck you guys.*

*Looks like we have our next suspect.*

[Drawing of penis ejaculating onto first comment in conversation.]
In the above conversation, the third commenter attempts to focus the conversation and point out the serious nature of sexual assault, but does so without endorsing or criticizing the university. This is typically the tone of most comments addressing sexual assault. Despite concerted university efforts to respond to sexual violence and make resources more readily available to students, no comments expressed positive or supportive opinions of the university.

DISCUSSION

Adding to the research literature, we discovered five themes in the graffiti messages: sexual assault, mental health, sexual activity, race, and miscellaneous. Both men and women were most likely to post graffiti messages about sexual assault. Framed as an informational intervention, the flyers were successful in making the campus community aware of resources and in initiating dialogue about sexual assault. Consistent with previous research which has established that differences are likely to exist between the content and quantity of graffiti in men’s and women’s bathroom stalls, in our study, men were more likely to discuss sexual activity and less likely to discuss mental health. Alfred Kinsey and colleagues (Kinsey, Pomery, Martin, & Gebhardt, 1953, p. 69) predicted that women would produce less graffiti than men because of cultural expectations of feminine behavior, in this case manifesting in a higher respect for private property. The prediction was borne out when they found that “90% of men’s bathroom graffiti were erotic, with the majority containing homosexual references, while only 25% of women’s graffiti were sexual, and rarely homosexual” (c.f. Fisher & Radtke, 2014). In their study of both men’s and women’s graffiti, Fisher and Radtke (2014) also predicted that there would be differences of content, if not in quantity, between the graffiti in men’s and women’s bathrooms. After collecting data from Canadian restaurants and bars, the researchers found that women’s bathroom graffiti was indeed most often about love and heterosexual behavior, while men’s bathroom graffiti consisted most often of “tagging” a “person’s name/nickname, thought to indicate territoriality or a self-proclamation of status” or about heterosexual sex in general. Also consistent with our findings, Leong (2016) found some key differences between the graffiti in men’s and women’s college bathrooms and argued that far more of the women’s bathroom graffiti centered around relationships and support versus a more hegemonically masculine style of sexual bravado in the men’s bathrooms.

Because scholars have suggested that women use bathroom graffiti as a way to bond and provide mutual support in a community free from masculine influence (Bruner & Kelso, 1980; Cole, 1991; Rodriguez & Clair, 1999), we initially hypothesized that the bathroom graffiti messages and conversations in women’s bathrooms would reflect the emergence of a community of support or site for activism. Previous research has found, in contrast, that men are much less likely to use bathroom graffiti as a space to form a supportive community (Rodriguez & Clair, 1999). However, in their analyses of graffiti among both genders, researchers have often noted the impact of interpersonal graffiti dialogue, even as it differs in content, with dialogue between women writers strengthening a sense of communal support, and dialogue between men writers provoking retaliation, criticism, belittlement of women, or expressions of hyper-masculinity.

However, our findings suggest that while writers may indeed post with the expectation that others will read, and at times engage in conversations, this did not generally appear to be an anonymous correspondence community. Although there were notable examples of conversation and community occurring, this was by no means a predominant pattern. While the findings here cannot assert that all student commenters are seeking a community or university change – there
are certainly some students who are calling for such things. Further, we did observe some conversations that provided emotional and material support to others. Perhaps like community in other forms (e.g., Facebook, Reddit), bathroom stall conversations are another venue for fleeting exchanges posted on similar topics, but not necessarily engaging with others. The first poster, for instance, doesn’t know if he/she will be starting a conversation or whether their comment will stand alone; and the first commenter may never return to see responses to their comments.

Our third research question explored whether graffiti messages indicated a desire for change in how universities handle sexual assaults (e.g., prevention, responses, resources, and/or adjudication). While this appears to be a larger national sentiment in terms of public dialogue on the role of college campuses in responding to sexual violence, in the media, and among U.S. legislators, this was not necessarily represented in bathroom graffiti. We found that the majority of comments made by students (71-78%) did not criticize or endorse university efforts to address sexual assault. Obviously, creating community and/or reducing the incidence of sexual assault is not expected to result from institutional fliers alone, and several college campuses have instituted educational measures such as bystander intervention awareness and community of care rhetoric (Gidycz, Orchowski, & Berkowitz, 2011). Without minimizing these measures or exaggerating the effect of graffiti support, this study acknowledges that anonymous disclosure (such as in bathrooms) initiates at least some sense of community investment and involvement.

Findings of this study indicate that at least some students are paying attention to, and reacting with, information presented in bathroom stalls. This finding may suggest a greater need for official campus conversations, or conversation spaces, around sexual assault to occur on campuses, especially in anonymous conversation spaces. The absence of negative or critical comments about the university indicates students are receptive to university initiatives to address sexual violence. Further, extending knowledge gained from this study to other areas, universities could also post information that would similarly benefit students, e.g., on mental health or harmful behaviors like binge drinking, or topics for which students may be reluctant to discuss but could benefit from having information on. Further, such educational campaigns may signal to students and others on campus that bathrooms and the stalls will be the locations for presenting campus-wide policies or initiatives pertaining to the general welfare of the campus.

While our study provides novel and useful information, and highlights a naturalistic research method, it also has several limitations. The current data was limited to one university campus, which means our results may not be generalizable to campuses with significantly different demographics such as community colleges or urban campuses. Similarly, assessments across campus may also be able to account for differences in graffiti and other forms of student responses with respect to varying campus-specific sexual violence education and intervention programs. The findings of our study may be due, in part, to the type of information on the flier, and in what ways the initial graffitist specifically prompts subsequent responses. For example, a flier attempting to educate readers on the definition of consent may elicit different graffiti messages than a flier whose primary mission is to inform survivors of campus or local resources available to them. Fliers would have to be frequently monitored over time to more accurately assess the order of graffiti messages and the role of initial messages on shaping specific graffiti in particular locations/stalls. Finally, because graffiti is removed from bathrooms each term – walls painted over and fliers replaced as they are continually revised – there may not have been enough time for strong community to be established as the walls may have been whitewashed too quickly. These and other questions can be further explored in future research, either with a
similar naturalistic research design or with experimental bathroom stalls that let fliers and graffiti
remain for longer periods of time.

Despite these limitations, we believe our study makes a valuable contribution to the existing
literature. The thorough data collection effort in a large number of bathrooms creates a full
picture of graffiti messages present during that time on campus, and we are confident that there
were no themes left unidentified due to missing data/lack of coverage. Most importantly, our
research questions, bring together the fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology,
criminology, gender studies, and geography of place, have not been previously explored. Thus,
the study and its results serve to highlight contemporary discussions of sexual violence on
campus. Our findings also suggest several avenues ripe for future research. Due to the changing
nature of the messages on the fliers, how graffiti changes in response is worthy of investigation.
Last, like many campuses, IUB has been moving toward more accessible private/singular-use
unisex bathrooms in newer and remodeled buildings. This change in bathroom space structure
leaves a number of questions ripe for exploration, particularly the question of how the presence,
content, or relationship between graffiti writers will change.

In conclusion, several researchers have studied graffiti conversations and commentary,
acknowledging the uniqueness of bathroom graffiti as a space for written dialogue. Scholars have
argued that people may feel more comfortable being open about sexuality, romance, and other
sensitive topics when writing in bathroom stalls in part because of the tension of doing semi-
private things in semi-public spaces. However, little research focuses specifically on a textual
analysis of graffiti conversations about social issues. When in 2014, IUB placed fliers in
bathroom stalls across the campus to bring attention to campus sexual violence, they spurred
myriad forms of graffiti commentary, sparking conversations about sexual violence, prevention,
and response, as well as discussions of other social justice issues. The current findings suggest
that at least some students engage with the flier intervention, and many use graffiti in this
public–private space in a purposeful manner to discuss important and pressing social issues. We
suggest this highlights a need for continued education and resource interventions among efforts
of all kinds aimed at addressing the epidemic of sexual violence on college campuses.

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APPENDIX
Example original bathroom stall flier

Indiana University does not tolerate acts of sexual violence. As a community, we all have responsibility to prevent, support and respond.

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

- Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment and can include rape, sexual assault, sexual coercion and any sexual actions that violate another’s personal boundaries.
- Sex without consent is sexual assault. Consent cannot be given by someone who is impaired by alcohol, drugs or mental disability.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN DANGER, CALL 911.

HELP PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HOOKUPS THAT CROSS THE LINE:

- Make a check-in plan with friends before going out.
- Intervene when you see a problem or questionable behavior.
- Help your friends home safely, especially if they’ve been drinking.
- If you or a friend needs an emergency ride, call a cab or use IU’s Safety Escort: 812-855-7233.
- To speak confidentially with a sexual assault counselor, call the 24-hour Sexual Assault Crisis Service Line: 812-855-8900.

MAKE THE CALL. SAVE A LIFE.

Under Indiana’s Lifeline Law, people younger than 21 who are under the influence of alcohol will not be prosecuted for crimes such as possession, intoxication or consumption of alcohol if they call 911 for medical help for another person or in cases of sexual assault and cooperate with police.
A Qualitative Approach to Understanding Guardian Models of Policing

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Abstract

Since 2015, there has been a growing interest and controversy regarding the “warrior” versus “guardian” models of policing. This article discusses the concept of guardian policing and uses qualitative data from an evaluation of guardian-based training in a police academy to highlight guardian concepts as understood by the trainers. Results suggest that trainers generally exhibit a widespread level of support and commitment towards the guardian model and the priorities of guardian training, view the model as consistent with what has traditionally been considered “good policing,” and believe that critics do not understand the basic elements of the model itself, nor how it is presented. A common misunderstanding, for example, is that guardian policing is taught in place of “so-called” warrior policing. In reality, however, the guardian model encompasses several concepts of warrior policing. Since the concept of guardian policing is subject to continuing controversy and confusion in law enforcement, this qualitative analysis contributes a deeper understanding and clarification of how academy training staff understand guardian policing concepts.

Keywords: Guardian policing, procedural justice, police training, police academy

1 This study was funded by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission as part of a pilot evaluation of the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission’s “Warriors to Guardians” Cultural Shift and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training: Final Report. J. Helfgott, L. Atherley, J. Pollock, J. Vinson. Available: Seattle University, Department of Criminal Justice at: https://www.seattleu.edu/media/college-of-arts-and-sciences/departments/criminaljustice/documents/Helfgott-et-al_WSCJTC-Evaluation_FINALREPORT_WEB.docx#789.pdf. Thanks toWSCJTC Executive Director Sue Rahr, WSCJTC staff, and TAC officers who participated in the study and made this research possible. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jacqueline Helfgott, Seattle University, Department of Criminal Justice, 900 Broadway, Seattle, WA 98115 jhelfgot@seattleu.edu
INTRODUCTION

In 2014, high profile incidents of alleged police misconduct in Ferguson, MO, Staten Island, NY, and Cleveland, OH resulted in President Barack Obama’s formation of The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing. In early March 2015, the Task Force issued an interim report which included several recommendations for bridging the divide between some increasingly alienated communities and their police forces. Of the solutions recommended by the Task Force, several specifically identified the need for a cultural shift in policing and for law enforcement cultures to adopt a “guardian mindset” (President’s Taskforce, 2015, Recommendation 1, p. 1). Since 2015, there has been a rapid proliferation of references, criticisms, and debates pertaining to the “guardian” model of policing.

The guardian model originated at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC) when Director Sue Rahr assumed the task of affecting change in the police culture and curriculum of the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA). Newspaper articles began to appear in 2013 (e.g., Humphrey, 2013; Miletich, 2013) that described these changes and used the term “guardian” policing. In 2015, a seminal article was published in the Harvard Kennedy School’s “New Perspectives on Policing” series, wherein Rahr and criminologist Stephen Rice defined and described the guardian model approach in policing, contrasting it against the traditional and historical practices endorsed by the “warrior” model. Since this time, there has been a rapid proliferation of articles and references pertaining to the warrior and guardian models of policing (e.g., Brocklin, 2015; McGill, 2015).

The warrior philosophy symbolizes a militarized form of law enforcement, which has largely defined practices of modern policing. Within this model, police are portrayed as “warriors at war” against crime and illicit drugs, fighting to cleanse their hostile communities of dangerous persons and other perceived threats (Balko, 2013; Rahr and Rice, 2015). Warrior-trained officers are instructed to uphold verbal and physical control to protect their communities; citizens must comply with their authority or subject themselves to the risk of sanctions, violence, and potential injury (Stoughton, 2015). Although these methods are often considered standard practices in law enforcement, research suggests that reliance on these methods presents a heightened likelihood of police abusing their authority and may create strained relationships between police and the communities they serve (Forman, 2004; Helfgott et al., 2015).

In contrast to the paramilitary standards defining the warrior model, the guardian model emphasizes the use of communication techniques instead of commands, equity instead of authority, and tactical restraint instead of forceful measures (Stoughton, 2015). Designed as a conceptual hybrid of procedural justice and community policing, the guardian philosophy portrays law enforcement officers as agents of the community, working alongside the citizenry to preserve democracy and civil rights (Helfgott et al., 2015). Further, guardian teachings promote the formation and maintenance of community partnerships with aims to address specific social harms facing the community (Rahr & Rice, 2015). As the warrior and guardian models each promote vastly different aspects of the police role, academic discourse and popular media have begun to examine the strengths, weaknesses, and consequences of how these models work in practice (Asken et al., 2013; Helfgott et al., 2015; Rahr & Rice, 2015; Stoughton, 2015).
The debate between the warrior and guardian models has only recently permeated the national discussion of what changes should be affected to reduce the trust deficit between police and the communities they serve. However, minimal research exists to explain what the guardian model actually entails and how it can influence law enforcement practices (Helfgott et al., 2015). For this reason, a more detailed definition is needed to elucidate the concepts of the guardian model and its related components.

There also is a need to understand how law enforcement personnel perceive the guardian model. In fact, much of the current debate is between police officers themselves – those who advocate for guardian policing, and those who criticize it. For the guardian model to gain a greater level of widespread acceptance, it is crucial to examine police interpretations of guardian concepts and how the model has been implemented in their practices. Further, it is critically important to understand how the trainers interpret the guardian model as they provide the foundational teachings for the next generation of police officers and ultimately will, or will not, implement these concepts into their day-to-day police work.

This article reports results of qualitative interviews conducted in 2014 at the WSCJTC at the onset of a pilot evaluation of the BLEA training. The study investigates the degree to which trainers understand and support the guardian model; examines the views of academy training officers instructing a guardian-oriented curriculum; and evaluates trainer attitudes and beliefs towards the guardian model and guardian training content and goals.

The Emergence of the Warrior versus Guardian Debate

The WSCJTC provides all new police recruits in Washington State with initial training through the BLEA, with the exception of the Washington State Patrol. The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission also provides training courses for corrections staff, veteran officers, supervisors, and law enforcement leaders. The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission trains approximately 600 officers each year in cohorts of about 30 officers each. In April 2012, Sue Rahr, the former Sheriff of King County, WA, was hired as Executive Director of the WSCJTC. In 2013, Rahr began to implement a cultural shift away from a traditional, paramilitary warrior training model to adopt a training curriculum now recognized as the guardian approach to law enforcement.

In training, the guardian model includes the goal of instilling academy graduates with the ability to carry out traditional police objectives of crime control with an expanded mission of preserving democratic values, including the protection of civil rights (Miletich, 2013). In this new model, police training also includes a pronounced emphasis of procedural justice concepts. In 2011, prior to her appointment as Executive Director of WSCJTC, Rahr, as Sheriff of King County, instituted her vision for policing through a program designated as Listen and Explain with Equity and Dignity or L.E.E.D. Concepts and practices used in L.E.E.D. trainings were primarily derived from procedural justice studies (Tyler, 1990, 2003, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

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2 Rahr is quoted in a Seattle Times article (Miletich, 2013) explaining that the conceptual background of guardian policing originates from Plato’s “The Republic;” in this work, guardians are characterized as rulers who are “gentle with citizens but fierce against enemies.”
2003a, 2003b), which particularly emphasize how perceptions of procedural fairness affect police legitimacy. L.E.E.D.’s emphasis on communication and respect, combined with the softening of militaristic imagery and discipline in academy practices, provided the fundamental elements of a new model in law enforcement recognized as guardian policing.

At WSCJTC, the arrival of the guardian model signaled that some military protocols were to be abandoned, such as “bracing,” and using push-ups as punishment for recruits. In several articles published by Washington media outlets, quotes attributed to Rahr posit that these former academy practices (e.g., paramilitary model, humiliation as discipline) had not afforded the appropriate respect to recruits who had served as combat veterans; nor were effective in training recruits to interact with citizens in a professional and respectful manner (Belle, 2013; Humphrey, 2013; Miletich, 2013). Former emphases on warrior concepts of power, control, battle, and survival were exchanged for guardian concepts promoting the protection of both the law and the community, with attention to democratic values and the Constitution (Rahr & Rice, 2015). This transition to guardian practices also shifted training priorities, lending to a greater emphasis on social skills and de-escalation in the BLEA curriculum.

A spotlight was also placed on the warrior model in the 2013 media coverage of guardian policing, particularly in reference to Radley Balko’s notable book *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America’s Police Forces*. Balko’s text portrays the downside of increased reliance on military-style Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams and the increasing pervasiveness of military terminology, tools, training, and imagery in law enforcement. Although this position was predated by earlier research (Kraska, 1999, 2001, 2007; Kraska & Cubellis, 1997; Kraska & Kappeler, 1997), Balko’s (2013) contemporary research asserts that SWAT teams have proliferated dramatically over time, and are now subject to overuse in the field of law enforcement. Whereas SWAT units were initially implemented as a response to infrequent hostage and armed conflict situations, their recent use has been less discriminate, focusing on lesser offenses such as regulatory violations, small sums gambling, and doctors overprescribing pain medication (Balko, 2013a). According to Balko, the proliferation of SWAT teams and the increased use of military imagery and training in policing have blurred the lines between police officer and soldier roles, resulting in the warrior paradigm (Balko, 2013a, 2013b).

Moving forward to 2015, two seminal publications resulted in extensive coverage of the guardian model, bringing the discussion of this policing philosophy to a national audience. First, in March 2015, the interim report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing became available to the greater public. In this document, the Task Force promoted 21 recommendations for law enforcement policy and practice organized into “Pillars.” The first Pillar is identified as a means of “building trust and legitimacy” for law enforcement,

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3 “Bracing” refers to standing at attention with eyes forward whenever a superior officer approaches. In bracing, recruits are required to stand with their back against the nearest wall, with their hands clasped together in front of the abdomen. Rahr terminated the policy of bracing at the WSCJTC and replaced it with the requirement for cadets to greet superiors with eye-contact and a greeting such as “good morning, sir or ma’am” as practice for the type of social exchanges they are expected to perform on the street.

4 WSCJTC Director Sue Rahr served as a member of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.
and its first recommendation explicitly uses the term “guardian” to define a recommended model for policing:

Law enforcement culture should embrace a guardian mindset to build public trust and legitimacy. Toward that end, police and sheriff’s departments should adopt procedural justice as the guiding principle for internal and external policies and practices to guide their interactions with the citizens they serve. (President’s Task Force, 2015, p. 1; emphasis added).

Following this recommendation came a 2015 article by Rahr and Rice titled, “From Warriors to Guardians: Recommitting American Police Culture to Democratic Ideals.” In this article, Rahr and Rice (2015) asserted that modern police have all “the accouterments and weaponry of modern warfare” (p. 1), but the “missions and rules of engagement are completely different” (p. 5) between law enforcement and military infantry. The authors go on to describe the facets of L.E.E.D. training, noting that “…officers are trained to take the time to listen to people; explain what is going to happen and how the process works; explain why that decision was made so the equity of the decision is transparent; and leave the participants with their dignity intact” (Rahr & Rice, 2015, p. 3).

Rahr and Rice (2015) also note that paramilitary police training does not represent the experience of the officer on the street. Police officers are expected to conduct day-to-day patrol operations with a degree of autonomy and authority; however, lessons learned in paramilitary academy training may undermine both of these values. When the WSCJTC operated on a paramilitary training model, academy staff expected recruits to yield without question, to blindly comply with authority, and to endure verbal abuse and humiliation in front of fellow recruits when rule violations were addressed (Rahr & Rice, 2015, p. 4). However, Rahr and academy training staff recognized that modeling this behavior in police-citizen interactions may cause a breakdown in communications between officers and members of the community. To remedy this issue, Rahr and Rice (2015) posited, “…we need to significantly increase the level of training and importance placed on communication skills and human behavioral science if we truly care about the safety of our officers” (p. 5). Amongst their recommendations, Rahr and Rice (2015) also suggested that academy training should educate recruits on the role of police in a democracy, and as a change from previous practices, each recruit is now presented with a pocket-sized book containing the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence (Rahr & Rice, 2015).

Over a dozen supplementary 2015 and 2016 articles from The Nation, The Wall Street Journal, and other media sources track similar themes, comprising the same basic story: recognizing fractures in police-community relations, questioning whether police agencies have become too militarized and if training provides officers with sufficient skills in de-escalation and communication, and, finally, addressing the guardian model’s potential to make law enforcement cultures more conducive to community relations. Typically, Rahr and/or the WSCJTC have been mentioned in these articles; however, by year-end 2015, police agencies outside of Washington (e.g., Chicago, Los Angeles) had demonstrated support for guardian policing, and were in the process of implementing the guardian-based trainings in their respective jurisdictions (Mather, 2015a, 2015b).
Outside of popular media, academic articles have provided strong insights regarding the warrior and guardian models. In the *Harvard Law Review*, Stoughton (2015) argues that essential elements of the warrior are admirable (e.g., courage and tenacity in the face of adversity). However, he goes on to contend that the warrior model has expanded and mutated to become a mindset promoting that police face an omnipresent force of hostility, and their prime objective is survival – protecting themselves against imminent threat. According to Stoughton, a primary consequence of the warrior doctrine is that new officers are trained to see each interaction with the public as a potentially lethal encounter (2015). Stoughton (2015) identifies this mindset as a social barrier in establishing and maintaining productive relationships with community members, asserting that this policing philosophy may even contribute to conflict and violence, where none was necessary.

Between law enforcement journals, news media, and websites, there has generally been a mix of opinions on the guardian paradigm, offering some positive feedback (e.g., Brocklin, 2015)—but also, vehement criticism. For example, a *Washington Post* article (Kindy, 2015), recognized that some officers have accused Rahr’s methods of advocating a “hug-a-thug” mentality that could endanger police safety, and offered quotes from Rahr to suggest a majority of the police chiefs in Washington are skeptical of the training changes she had instituted. This skepticism aside, Kindy’s (2015) article goes on to ascribe the guardian model as a progressive response to the problem of police shootings that have taken place in Seattle and other major U.S. cities in recent history. An article featured on the officer.com website (Davis, 2015) provided another critique of the guardian model, arguing that no warrior mindset exists among police, nor are there undercurrents of “us versus them” in police cultures. He concluded that “cultural sensitivity” and “implicit bias” classes are useless to police, but recommended that “communication skills” and “confrontation simulation” training are valuable for law enforcement practices (Davis, 2015).5

As the warrior versus guardian debate is relatively new, we face a lack of empirical research to demonstrate the relationships between these conceptual models and officer safety. While the warrior model has led to militaristic police innovations intended to increase officer safety (e.g., SWAT teams, assault rifles), the guardian model seeks to decrease law enforcement’s reliance on these modernizations. As a departure from these methods, the guardian model endorses enhanced forms of officer accountability (e.g., body cameras, citizen review boards), and advanced training in communication skills—educating police to work effectively as problem solvers rather than soldiers (Balko, 2013). Although these changes to law enforcement philosophy and methods carry the potential to affect necessary change in police-citizen interactions, their divergence from traditional warrior values (e.g., militarism, forceful authority, authoritative presence) may impede the widespread acceptance of the guardian model in police cultures.

By 2016, guardian policing had become untethered from its origins at WSCJTC and integrated into national conversations on contemporary law enforcement practices. An emerging concern over police militarization, combined with a growing academic interest

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5 Communication skills are recognized as a primary component of the guardian approach; however, this critique does not address these components of guardian-training.
and popularization of procedural justice concepts, has shaped the “warrior versus guardian” debate into a fully formed, though confused discussion of the appropriate law enforcement priorities and professional imagery. Because guardian concepts have rapidly disseminated throughout academic, practitioner, and popular audiences, it is helpful to step back and reiterate the basic concepts which constitute guardian policing.

The Guardian Model at WSCJTC

The guardian model, as it was implemented at WSCJTC, continues to enforce high standards for physical performance, communication skills, and proficiency in defensive tactics and firearms. However, specific elements of the training curriculum related to the guardian model have evolved and changed since the inception of the changes in 2013. An updated WSCJTC curriculum now includes procedural justice concepts (through the L.E.E.D. training model), and new courses on how to protect against stress and burnout, emotional health and regulation, recognizing implicit biases, crisis intervention training, positive social interaction, and the importance of respect. Some of these curriculum elements occur in Blue Courage©, a proprietary training curriculum that educates recruits on the role of police in a democratic society, scientific research on stress and its effects, and approaches to avoid burnout.

Procedural justice concepts lay the groundwork for concepts later used to exemplify the guardian model. The primary components of procedural justice have been identified as: voice (allowing the citizen the chance to speak), neutrality (fairness in decisions), respect (using respectful language and not demeaning the citizen), and trustworthiness (the idea that the actions of the officer are for the public good) (Tyler & Huo, 2002; Tyler, 2006a). It is these components of procedural justice that were used by Rahr to design the model for L.E.E.D. training.

Conceptually, notions of procedural justice stem from early legal studies conducted by Thibaut and Walker (1975). This concept, which pertains to fairness perceived in procedural processes, was further elaborated upon by Tyler (1990) and colleagues (Lind & Tyler, 1988), developing measurement criteria and establishing the associations between procedural justice and perceptions of police “legitimacy” (Tyler, 1990, 2003, 2004, 2006a; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003a, 2003b). A growing body of research has established the relationships between law enforcement practices of procedural justice and citizens’ perceptions of police legitimacy, police fairness, and satisfaction with police services (Mastrofski et al., 1996; Tyler, 2001; Engel, 2005; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005; Elliott, Thomas, & Ogloff., 2011; Mazerolle et al., 2013). Results from these studies suggest that when individuals perceive fair treatment in procedural processes (e.g., police encounters), this communicates value and respect from the authority, which then encourages perceptions of legitimacy and the inclination to obey group rules and directives (Tyler, 2003; 2006b; Tyler & Wakslak, 2004). Because the guardian model attempts, in part, to promote police legitimacy and citizen satisfaction with police, this introduction of procedural justice into guardian training may offer a promising approach for the future of police-community interactions.
Police Training and Procedural Justice

The recognition that citizen perceptions of police legitimacy matter, and the evidence suggesting that procedural justice can positively impact perceptions of police legitimacy, have important implications for guardian-oriented academy curriculum. Currently, scholarship lacks a rich, comprehensive body of research on academy training in general; rarely has evaluative research on procedural justice or guardian model training been discussed in the literature (Skogan, Van Craen, & Hennessy, 2015). Overall, there have been relatively few evaluations of police academy training (Bradford & Pynes, 1999; Traut et al., 2000; Chappell, 2008, McCarty & Lawrence, 2014). Primarily, research in this area has focused on specific training topics (Storey et al., 2011), ways to enhance recruit learning (Shipton, 2009; Werth, 2011), identifying individual characteristics associated with academy performance (Caro, 2011; Henson et al., 2010), and examining how socialization processes in training can impact officer attitudes (Chappell & Lanza-Kanduce, 2010; Haarr, 2001).

Noting this dearth of literature, researchers have recognized the need to evaluate police academy training to ensure that officers are provided with the skills necessary to be effective officers, such as critical thinking, conflict resolution, self-directed learning, problem-solving, coping strategies, and analytical skills (Bradford & Pynes, 1999; McCarty & Lawrence, 2014; Werth, 2011). In one training evaluation, Skogan, et al. (2015) developed, implemented, and analyzed the effects of an 8-hour procedural justice training administered to Chicago police officers by academy trainers. To measure the conceptual learning from this training, a pre/post survey was developed to measure adherence to procedural justice concepts such as neutrality, voice, respect, and trust. Results suggested that officers who completed the training increased adherence to procedural justice concepts, with the exception of trust. Furthermore, these officers differently followed procedural justice concepts over time, compared to those who had not completed the training (Skogan et al., 2015).

Rosenbaum and Lawrence (2012; see also, Schuck & Rosenbaum, 2011) presented findings from an evaluation of the “Quality Interaction Program” at the Chicago Police Department. Working alongside training staff, researchers developed a 20-hour training curriculum for basic academy instruction, based primarily in procedural justice concepts. Applying a randomized control design, researchers evaluated two groups of recruits through the process of academy training using a pre/post quasi-experimental design. Prior to academy training, and following graduation, recruits were asked to fill out a survey and complete a video assessment. Both methods of evaluation were purposed with reflecting cadet attitudes towards citizen interactions. No training effects were observed in survey results that reflected how officers felt about respecting civilians and their attitudes towards procedural justice practices; however, improvements were observed in the video assessment between pre- and post- time periods, suggesting that some training effects had taken place to improve cadets’ aptitude at interacting with the public (Rosenbaum & Lawrence, 2012).

THE CURRENT STUDY

As the police are tasked with serving the public as agents of democracy, evaluation of procedural justice concepts in police training is necessary to determine best practices. While research to date has evaluated some effects of procedural justice training, studies have not
examined the impact of an entire academy focused on guardian-oriented policing as is the case at the WSCJTC. An important first step in any evaluation of academy training is to determine how instructors perceive the curriculum and their understandings of the teaching material. As part of a comprehensive pilot and longitudinal evaluation of guardian training at WSCJTC, a fidelity study was conducted to examine how trainers at a guardian-oriented academy understand, interpret, and evaluate the basic components of guardian training. Using a qualitative methodology, trainers’ perceptions and views of the guardian approach will be explicated, analyzed, and discussed.

**METHOD**

The current study examines 14 qualitative interviews conducted as part of a comprehensive pilot and longitudinal evaluation of the “warrior to guardian” paradigm shift at the WSCJTC. This preliminary qualitative study served as a fidelity and construct validity exercise to inform the design of the pilot instrumentation. Researchers conducted interviews with WSCJTC training staff to gather general insights into their views of the guardian model and curriculum and to confirm the constructs were understood and would be measured correctly by the instrument. Because academy trainers are largely instrumental in disseminating the mission and content of the guardian model, it was considered critical to meaningfully describe the views and understandings of guardian-oriented training among law enforcement personnel at WSCJTC.

In qualitative research, reliability is ensured by making sure the process and protocol used for data collection is done in such a way as to be accessible to peer researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While qualitative studies are sometimes criticized as subjective and difficult to replicate (Bryman, 2012), the collection of qualitative data is particularly appropriate in research which does not seek to “prove” causation or relationship between variables, but, rather, attempts to identify and meaningfully describe or explain phenomena (Tewksbury, 2009). While qualitative studies are often limited in their overall generalizability, this method is particularly helpful in developing concepts and meanings in exploratory research of a phenomena–in this case, guardian policing.

A strength of qualitative methodologies is that well-collected qualitative data can offer a “local groundedness” enabling researchers to understand context and non-obvious, latent, and complex issues, such as the meanings people attribute to events, processes, and structures (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013, p. 13). Qualitative data also helps to supplement, validate, and better understand data gathered from the same setting. Thus, the current study served a dual purpose of informing and supplementing the subsequent collection of quantitative data in the pilot and longitudinal evaluation of the WSCJTC BLEA.

**Participants**

In this study, because the population was so small and it was important to understand the ways in which all of the WSCJTC trainers understood the guardian philosophy, we interviewed all available subjects in our study population. Interviewees were 14 “TAC” officers (an acronym for Trainers, Advisors, Counselors) employed by the WSCJTC. While TAC officers are assigned to specific curriculum content responsibilities (e.g., firearms, defensive tactics, traffic stops), each is also responsible for a cohort of approximately 30 recruits. Each TAC officer represents a
local authority figure, and a “go to” person for academy recruits, providing a supportive professional relationship that often lasts beyond graduation. TAC officers employed by WSCJTC are seasoned law enforcement professionals “borrowed” from policing agencies throughout the state to teach at the academy. While there is a small contingent of permanent staff at the academy, a majority of instructors come from law enforcement agencies with contracts stipulating a limited period of employment. This “rotation model” means that TAC officers routinely cycle in and out of the academy, and back to their respective agencies.

Instruments

An interview protocol was developed to solicit TAC officers’ perceptions of the “warrior to guardian” curriculum shift at WSCJTC. Queries addressed trainers’ familiarity with the elements of Blue Courage©, the guardian model, and other curriculum components. Interview questions also addressed perceptions of pushback from peers and administration at the TAC officer’s home department, and views on what defines a “good officer.” Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol; beyond the initial questions, some deviation and additional discussions took place to further contextualize and elucidate our inquiry beyond the initial questions (Berg, 2007).

Procedure

Interviews were conducted in WSCJTC offices over a two-day period in September 2014. At the request of the researchers, WSCJTC command staff identified TAC officers working at the facility (N=16), and scheduled those available (n=14) to be interviewed.6 All human subjects protections were observed with full compliance of the principles of informed consent (purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary). All participants received a verbal brief and signed a written consent.

Two researchers conducted the interviews, which ranged from 15 to 45 minutes in length. The interviews followed a structured format to assure consistent responses. In this format, one researcher would facilitate the interview while the other researcher transcribed interview content, capturing general sentiments and selected, specific quotes. Final transcripts of all interviews were reviewed and edited by both interviewers, ensuring greater accuracy (Bryman, 2012). Following this protocol, each interview was coded to explore themes presented throughout the query.

The purpose of the interviews was to: (1) determine whether there was a shared consensus on what the Blue Courage© and guardian models represent; (2) identify what TAC officers recognized as the core elements of these training components; (3) explore TAC officers’ perceptions of the training content; (4) and determine how new training elements from the guardian model are perceived to support the qualities of “good policing.” These interviews served as a critical fidelity check, confirming homogeneity among the TAC group regarding their understanding and communication of the principles to be measured by the instrument.

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6 TAC officers unavailable for study participation (n=2) were away from the office on annual leave during the interview period.
Additionally, these interviews reviewed the researchers’ collective understanding of the principal components of the scales to be measured, which confirmed construct validity.\(^7\)

Data were coded manually, using printed transcripts from each staff interview. Interview data was analyzed by coding themes in training officers’ responses to the interview questions using modified grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). As the entire population consented to participate in the research, saturation was determined when all available WSCJTC trainers had been interviewed, thus offering all codes that could potentially be observed (Rijnsover, 2015).

Analysis of interview data moved through stages. First, an open coding process was used to analyze each interview transcript, identifying broad categories observed in the raw data. Analytic categories included: staff perceptions of guardian training elements, the role of training staff, and the ability of the trainer and the academy to shape police behaviors, particularly with regard to practices of “good policing.” Next, analysis proceeded to the identification of themes, using an inductive approach focused on identifying patterns and thematic codes within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Patterns and explanations were identified within the interview responses and organized into salient descriptive themes in an iterative process using data condensation and selective coding into themes. Themes observed within the data were used to communicate shared meanings amongst the study population with regard to training officers’ understandings and perceptions of the shift to the guardian-oriented training. Finally, these analytic themes were examined to ascertain verifications/conclusions from the data, which reflected the views and understandings of WSCJTC’s TAC officers concerning guardian training.

**FINDINGS**

The data for this study was taken from transcribed interviews with 14 TAC officers at WSCJTC during September 2014.\(^8\) Our predominant research question was, “How do trainers at an academy following a guardian model understand, interpret, and evaluate the basic elements of guardian training?” Primary themes and concepts were identified from each qualitative aspect of this query. No attempts were made to quantify primary themes, other than to denote topics of discussion that occurred most frequently throughout the interview process.

**Major Elements of Guardian Policing**

Washington State’s Criminal Justice Training Commission instituted Blue Courage© training during the shift to the guardian model, and interviewees saw the two as integrally related. The specific guardian curriculum content was delivered through Blue Courage© or other training blocks such as the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) component. Most TAC officers suggested that the guardian model was to be understood more as a philosophy or approach to

\(^7\) The quantitative elements were validated using a Principal Components Analysis (PCA), producing Cronbach’s Alpha between .8 and .9, indicating “good” to “very good” agreement (Helfgott et al., 2015)

\(^8\) The interviews were conducted prior to implementation of the pilot evaluation of the WSCJTC BLEA, which involved the administration of a pre/post instrument designed to measure the training effects of the guardian-elements in the BLEA, results of which are reported in the final pilot evaluation report (Helfgott et al., 2015) and will be reported in a subsequent paper. The preliminary interviews were used, in part, to inform the pilot evaluation and to ensure that the terminology and format of the survey instrument was appropriate for the study population.
policing. During the interview process, trainers revealed themes that reflected their perceptions of the guardian model.

**Training in the ability to communicate and be respectful to citizenry.** The interviewees identified the need to communicate with respect as the primary component of guardian policing, whether the person is a complainant, witness, suspect, or citizen. This concept of respectful communication is also recognized as the chief element of procedural justice. In the context of police work, respect involves the tone officers take, withholding preconceptions, and a willingness to listen and understand the individual’s point of view. Interviewees noted that the lack of respect officers may exhibit often comes from a place of fear, since it may take courage for an officer to enter a situation without having their defenses up—both figuratively, and literally.

Interviewees indicated that one of the most important aspects of Blue Courage© and guardian-oriented law enforcement is **courage**—the resolution to have open interactions with people, free of the “puffer fish mentality”\(^9\)

Trainers emphasized the importance of demonstrating respect in police-citizen interactions and endorsed promoting practices that demonstrate empathy, understanding, and treating people with dignity. As one trainer indicated, by “show[ing] up professionally and treating people with respect… it goes a long way.” This respect-effect was also recognized as by one TAC officer as, “one of our greatest tools… giving dignity to somebody who hasn’t had dignity.”

While warrior trainings emphasize that police should achieve verbal and physical control over their environment and assert public authority, guardian teachings advocate for the use of interpersonal communication instead of commands, and showing intentions of legitimacy in place of forceful authority. When interviewed, TAC officers generally viewed the use of effective communication as more likely to produce more positive outcomes than employing force in the majority of citizen encounters. As one trainer stated, “You can still treat drug dealers with a level of respect and be safe about it.” Others noted that police have a responsibility to be accountable for how they treat citizens, stating that, “people respond to how we treat them, so if we go someplace and treat somebody in a way that escalates things when we didn’t need to, that’s our fault.” When trust and respect are fractured or denied in citizen encounters, police are put at greater risk, and less optimal outcomes may result. As one interviewee put it, “If the public doesn’t trust the police… you cannot be effective.” By demonstrating these values common to both procedural justice and the guardian philosophy (e.g., trust, respect, accountability) in day-to-day policing, research shows that positive interactions with citizens may effectively work towards building institutional legitimacy, public trust, and a greater willingness to cooperate with police (Mazerolle et al., 2013).

Although guardian practices promote effective policing, the guardian model does not actually supplant the warrior model. Even with the implementation of guardian-oriented training, many warrior elements of law enforcement still prove necessary in practice. One interviewee suggested that officers have to have the "heart of a humanitarian and a fist of a warrior… You have to have

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\(^9\)“Puffer fish” mentality refers to the idea of coping with fear by “puffing” oneself up in terms of authority, or threat of violence.
both. Lose the warrior, and you're dead; lose the humanitarianism, and you're an asshole.”

Another stated, “There’s still a spot for the warrior, but the warrior is not all inclusive. The
guardian incorporates the warrior. At times we may need to pull the warrior out of the guardian
to address those issues.” Others postulated that officers will need to embrace warrior aspects of
policing, in certain situations; “…my concern is that when these recruits get out there, I want to
make sure that they can bring the warrior when [they] need to.” As one interviewee offered,
“You can be Andy [Griffith] and still be Charles Bronson”—suggesting that trainers wanted
recruits to be able to harness tactics of guardian and warrior models, depending on situation
context.

Providing the “why” of policing along with pride in the profession. Interviewees
considered it integral to the Blue Courage© and guardian training curriculum to impress upon
recruits that policing is a noble profession, rather than “just a job.” The interviewed TAC officers
expressed opinions that recruits should garner more than just the knowledge and skills of
policing during their academy experience; most believed that instilling recruits with the pride
and duty related to policing is also paramount to professional success. Training staff referred to
curriculum content as, “[we’re] getting back to the ‘why’ of policing,” regarded as the “‘honor’
and ‘pride’ of the profession.”

Other interviewees suggested that the core principals and the “why” of policing are
intrinsically tied to civic duty, and “having your heart in the right place.” Building on this theme,
training staff offered their beliefs that police should be recognized as “…caretakers of [the]
community, instead of enforcers of rules.” Through BLEA training, recruits are taught that they
are part of a larger community, and as police, their central responsibilities are to protect the
Constitution and share ownership and stakes in the communities they serve. Instead of relying on
tactics of heavy enforcement to raise community awareness, one TAC officer emphasized the
importance of protecting civil rights and building partnerships, asserting, “The mission is to
protect the rights of all people so they have freedom from fear, freedom of fear of the police
too!” Interviewees indicated that “it's important to focus on the constitutional aspects of the job,”
and “[Blue Courage] reinforces that message of ‘hey we're useless without the support of the
people.’” Trainers noted that recruits were encouraged to be enthusiastic, empathetic, honorable,
and prideful in serving their community

Reducing the use of force (but being able to use it when necessary). One primary
criticism of guardian policing has been that it does not prepare officer to use force when
considered necessary. However, trainers pointed out that less training is required to teach recruits
how to effectively use force than the training required to teach recruits to employ
communication skills and achieve peaceful resolutions in street-level incidents. TAC officers
shared a widespread agreement that self-defense and firearms training were essential aspects of
law enforcement. Furthermore, interviewees believed that additional time should be spent on
firearm and defensive tactics trainings, and maintained through in-service trainings to ensure that
officers feel confident in their ability to employ force when necessary.

Contrasting former and contemporary policing practices, one trainer commented, “You have
to be stronger as an individual to carry out this idea of Blue Courage; you have to be stronger, it
was easier with: ‘you do what I say’ – ‘ask—tell—make’ – that’s how I was trained (Ma’am,
please sit over there. Sit over there! And, then you make them); you know, “I’m the police, you
do what I say!” Whereas “ask—tell—make” procedures were considered a policing norm under warrior trainings, a new standard under the guardian model, L.E.E.D., suggests a practical use of learned communication skills to help de-escalate situations and resolve conflicts.

One training officer highlighted the reality that most people officers deal with in the community are law-abiding citizens, “There are outlaws and they get treated differently, but generally, you deal with average people who are having the worst day of their life… You show up and they are agitated, and you are in their living room, and [then] you throw them on the ground and put your knee on their neck – those are the people the guardian and Blue Courage training is all about.” As law enforcement has been particularly scrutinized for practices involving force in recent years, interviewees recognized that the warrior role needs to be deemphasized while building a new emphasis on relationships within the community. As one TAC officer commented, “We [aren’t] an occupying army… If you try to act like an occupying army [you may get killed]; we don’t have an army, we’re shitty light infantry. Cops get elevated opinions of ourselves, [and] we have to police with the consent of the policed.” In a discussion of how guardian-trained officers should present themselves, TAC officers offered that, “[Officers] should come from a place of confidence, a place of curiosity,” and, “If you don’t have confidence, you don’t have the ability to relate to the public.”

A clear theme emerged to suggest that guardian policing occurs when and if the officer is supremely confident in his/her ability to physically handle the situation, and has the skill and confidence to effectively use communication techniques, resorting to force only when necessary. One trainer emphasized that verbal communication should be the tactic employed first in police encounters stating, “When people don’t know how to communicate, they resort to force only when necessary. I tried this and it didn’t work out.” Interviewees perceived in-service agency trainings as lacking when it came to physical conditioning and self-defense; that is, officers gradually lose the physical and tactical skills learned in the academy as they settle further into their respective departments, which made communication skills learned in the academy all the more important.

On the other hand, there was concern among training staff that recruits may misinterpret the concepts of guardian policing and show hesitancy to use force, when necessary. Throughout the WSCJTC evaluation, this concern proved to be the primary issue raised from the critics of guardian policing. One trainer indicated that “[Mastery of skills] opens up communication options; if you are three steps ahead of the person and you have a bunch of different skills options, then you will let the situation play out.” Others emphasized the need for trainings to override the fears and insecurities that can arise from volatile situations officers may face. During interviews, trainers addressed these issues with statements such as, “When you grow weeds that aren’t there before, you create ‘weeds’ [bad situations] from your fear and insecurity,” and “You have to act like a puffer fish to get people to do what you want,” and, “You’re afraid because your skills are substandard… you look at a poodle and treat it like a Doberman, and you use too much force. The more fitness and skill training that you have, the more confidence [you will feel].” Generally, interviewed TAC officers expressed the belief that effective academy training should provide new officers with the ability to overcome their fears and present newfound confidence in their skills and physical abilities.

By using academy teachings to achieve mental and physical preparedness and professional confidence, trainers generally asserted that officers would be prepared for the best outcomes in
any encounter. One interviewee captures this idea, stating, “How fit you are when you show up makes a difference in what happens. I have confidence in my ability when people scream and yell because I am not afraid.” Trainers also noted the importance of using respect as a tool to avoid using force, but applying discretion and employing force when deemed necessary: “If you respect people, most will respect you, but there will be some you have to use force on.” Taken together, these statements suggest that trainers believe that officers should be physically and mentally prepared to use force, though only as a necessary measure when communication and de-escalation techniques are no longer effective in the situational context of the police encounter.

One TAC officer noted that guardian trainings may carry the potential to create the unintentional side-effect of making new officers too concerned about the consequences of using force: “I think that some people are afraid of using force now, in mock graded scenes … it could have been an issue with just that cohort, but the training shouldn’t make trainees be afraid to use measures of compliance.” Other interviewees suggested that even though guardian training emphasizes the use of de-escalation techniques, time on patrol after leaving the academy can potentially impact learned skills. One training officer addressed this problem directly, stating:

During the 5 months [in the academy] you keep in physical shape, we make you skilled, we make you practice, we test you on those skills, you’re fit, your mind is right when you leave here. But after you leave here, your fitness level goes down and you don’t practice your skills, physically you are not as fit as you were in the academy. Those two factors are no excuse for you to use force sooner; your skills aren’t as good, so you get scared [and] you’re quicker to use force on people.

Because some of these skills deteriorate over time, TAC officers have also endorsed the notion of using regularly scheduled in-service trainings to further hone officers’ de-escalation techniques.

**Counteracting the negative culture of policing.** Interviewees recognized that one important aspect of training was to counteract the negative elements of police culture that promote “us versus everyone else” attitudes. Interviewees recognized that this omnipresent divide often does present a problem, which is frequently further aggravated by social norms of policing cultures—“the [police] culture feeds into the defensive mentality,” and “most departments are going the wrong direction.” Trainers indicated that an important component addressed in guardian-oriented training was “[counteracting] the ‘us versus them,’” and suggested that “it’s important to combat dangerous attitudes”….“the culture feeds into the defensive mentality,” and that most departments are, “going the wrong direction.” One trainer suggested that police subculture had elements common to deviant subcultures, “Police are a culture like any other and we separate ourselves by dress… we have gang mentality.”

**Addressing the whole person (inoculating against burnout).** A primary element missing from the national conversations about how to “fix” policing is the recognition that police often face stress and trauma as part of the job. Trainers noted that the history and culture of policing discourages emotional catharsis; officers are socialized to act as if nothing bothers them. This “macho” persona may be particularly damaging in situations of stress or coping, as officers often see and experience traumas that may negatively affect their mental health lacking appropriate intervention. Law enforcement officers are also subjected to daily stressors rarely seen in other occupations as their jobs often entail interactions with intoxicated, angry, sick, injured, scared,
and troublesome individuals. Outcomes in the justice system may also provide a secondary source of stress as officers may fundamentally disagree with how their cases are handled by the judiciary (e.g., bail releases, plea bargains, short sentences).

Recognition of one’s emotions and learning skills to control them presents a crucial and often overlooked aspect of the guardian approach. These issues are identified in Pillar 6 of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, titled, “Officer Wellness and Safety” (2015, p. 61). Trainers indicated that cynicism acquired on the job has the potential to encourage arrogance, captured in statements such as, “If you lose that love for people, and why we’re doing this in the first place, you become cynical and arrogant… you start believing you’re the glue that’s holding society together,” and, “Police officers tend to get jaded; [it] leads to long stressful careers and ends in short retirements.” Others highlighted the importance of training officers to cope with frustrations caused by the justice system, stating; “…try to help officers deal with the job; it is overwhelming, so many sad stories, guy gets released, all your work is for nothing, encourage officers that what they are doing is still important.”

**Guardian training as role modeling.** As noted above, TAC officers often acknowledged how the adoption of guardian training had permeated the atmosphere of WSCJTC, even affecting the dynamics of trainer-recruit interactions. In the academy environment, training staff treated recruits as they would expect graduates to treat people during their interactions on patrol, thus modeling guardian concepts. This new dynamic sharply contrasts with WSCJTC’s former methods using paramilitary training where recruits might be humiliated—and some trainers seemed to take pleasure in abusing their power.

Since the advent of the guardian model, these byproducts of paramilitary training are no longer considered acceptable. As one trainer noted, “We don’t belittle them…we try to bring them along.” Trainers emphasized that, “hazing is out” and “[my academy training] did nothing to motivate me [and] made me want to be quiet about things.” They also indicated the importance of creating a safe and responsive learning environment for recruits: “We expect them to be respectful—we model respect. We try to make it a safe training so learning can happen…tailoring training] to the individual needs of the student.”

A secondary theme that emerged, however, was that trainers often felt they were undergoing a “balancing act” to eliminate humiliating aspects of the paramilitary model, while continuing to maintain the essential components of the academy training process. Trainers saw value in some former practices of group discipline because it created espirit de corps—feelings of pride, fellowship, and loyalty experienced between recruits, bonding them through the disciplinary experience. Some trainers shared a perception that abandoning the military elements may have created too much familiarity between recruits and trainers and/or less respect exhibited from recruits towards training staff emphasizing the importance of a culture that respects chain of command, order, and discipline. Some TAC officers made comments to reflect their feelings on this issue, such as, “There needs to be a little bit more of a balance; they get too relaxed,” “You’ve got to have each other’s back, it’s not only his fault, it’s your fault [explaining why trainers used group discipline],” and, “Some instructors were mean before; I think that needs to be gone, but new recruits [are] complaining about the hours, they bitch about the exams, the housing…they should be proud to be here…some of that is missing.”
Trainer’s commitment to guardian training and “push-back.”” For the most part, WSCJTC trainers heartily endorsed and agreed with the basic principles of the guardian model. However, in communications with their home agencies, most training staff also recognized “push-back” and some degree of resistance to the guardian model from their peers, supervisors, and agency administration. Comments relayed from TAC officers’ departments generally indicated a belief that the academy had “gone soft,” and new tactics were more in line with practices of social work than policing. In general, agency “push-back” was overwhelmingly negative. Agency representatives talked about guardian training as “bullshit,” and, “a passing fad,” in which “[police are] all drinking the Kool-Aid.” Commonly, home agencies would refer to guardian training with phrasing such as “hug-a-thug,” “teaching people to hug,” “hug you to death,” and “put the guns away and go out with a hug.” Effectively, these comments suggest that academy training is teaching officers to treat both criminals and citizenry with a kindness and gentleness unbecoming of a police officer, or what some referred to as the “touchy feely approach.” From these statements, it can also be inferred that WSCJTC TAC officers are facing an uphill battle to implement the guardian approach, as its primary values (e.g., communication, upholding civil liberties, community partnerships) may have the appearance of clashing against the warrior values (e.g., toughness, stoicism, authoritativeness) that have traditionally characterized police cultures.

Often, outright distaste for guardian values was exhibited by agency representatives who emphasized that a shift away from the warrior model would make police officers less effective at their duties. This theme was captured in comments expressing that guardian trainings will “cause us to be weak,” “new recruits are ‘pussified,’” and that “the academy is going soft.” Some TACs stated that other officers had taken this point even further, expressing that guardian training is “not the way it is on the street,” and “that shit is going to get you killed,” suggesting that the guardian trainings may even put officers in danger. Other agency representatives emphasized a direct approach in training discussions, making their opinions about the guardian model clear to TAC officers with statements such as, “we need warriors,” and, “go to the academy, and when you come back we’ll teach you how to do [policing].”

Interviewed TAC officers observed that much of the criticism directed towards the guardian model seemed to come from misinformation and a lack of conceptual understanding about the guardian model. Trainers suggested that veteran officers had often mischaracterized guardian concepts, which they articulated through statements such as, “I see them as not understanding what it is supposed to be,” and “nobody really understands what is changing.” Others characterized interactions explaining the guardian model to tenured officers as, “I wouldn’t call it pushback, but it is miscommunication,” and “they don’t understand what it means.” Training staff suggested that although veteran officers have often resisted the shift away from the warrior philosophy, they actually model their behaviors in ways consistent with the guardian model. In discussing this transition, one interviewee put it as, “cops say they aren't social workers… and then they act like them, after giving token resistance.”

Guardian policing as just “good policing.”” An important observation that emerged in the interviews was the differential views of what academy trainers believed guardian policing to be. Training staff noted that “new flavors” are consistently being forced into police training; however, as one trainer noted, “We’re not teaching them any wild concepts…” [guardian
policing] is nothing new.” While some officers saw guardian training as a paradigm shift in policing, others described this philosophy as “old school” police work; a defining property of what “good policing” has always been, and “it’s semantics--because [the guardian model represents] what being a ‘good officer’ is.”

This idea ties into another line of inquiry: What are the qualities of a “good officer?” This particular question netted a wide range of qualities; many interviewees could not limit their answer to a single characteristic. Interestingly, the quality of good officers most commonly mentioned by training staff was having mastery over a professional skillset. Other answers generally illustrated good officers as those possessing notable communication skills (e.g., approachability, active listening), integrity, respect, empathy, honesty, courage, accountability, safety-consciousness, and awareness. These qualities are also as essential components of the guardian model of policing.

Generally, good officers were also identified as individuals with a comprehensive understanding of agency policies, laws, defensive tactics, and the confidence to effectively use this knowledge in law enforcement. In addition to these “book smarts,” however, “good cops” were also considered to be hardworking officers with “street smarts.” TACs noted that the street smarts most often desired in policing were recognized as good “common sense,” and the ability to “make the right decisions for the right reasons.”

Emotional intelligence was also brought up as one of the most crucial aspects in the making of a good officer. As policing constitutes a high-stress occupation, officers need to rely on emotional intelligence to “handle stressful situations,” and keep a “cool head” at all times. Interviewed trainers expected graduating recruits to have control over their emotions, harnessing the ability to be objective and patient and hiding their emotional reactions when necessary. As one trainer expressed, good officers need to be able to “swim like a duck… on the surface very calm, [but] under the water, you’re paddling like hell.” Other qualities of the good officer mentioned by training staff included: officer presence, confidence, obedience, well-roundedness, dedication to service, maturity, sense of humor, loyalty, collegiality, interest in the “science of policing,” flexibility, decisiveness, and the ability to “act like you care and … make it believable.”

** Difficulty of implementation on the street. ** Ultimately, the test of guardian policing’s success in implementation will be if recruits are able to transfer skills learned in training into techniques used on patrol. Trainers interviewed were cautious in their predictions of how well recruits would implement the guardian model on duty. Interviewees often felt that later in post-academy phases of training, recruits will either get support for guardian policing—or sentiments such as, “forget what you heard at the academy.” As this latter option does present a clear possibility of occurring, trainers are faced with the difficulty of instituting meaningful change amongst the cadet population. While the academy is the logical place to begin, the possibility cannot be ignored that all recruits will eventually be socialized to norms and practices of their home agency.

To surmount this potential obstacle, trainers indicated that the guardian curriculum “[will need] buy-in from [field training officers] FTOs,” and that “FTOs in training for service will carry the values forward… some FTOs are in it for the money.” Because some agency cultures
may be incompatible with guardian teachings, socialization to these cultures after leaving the academy may present a key element in eroding aspects of academy training. One trainer perceived that the “hardest [part of retaining guardian teachings] is going back to a police department that doesn’t recognize those values. It made sense for me because my chief is huge on [the guardian philosophy], but departments that are more good old boys, that would be harder.” Another echoed a similar sentiment, stating that “[new officers] have difficulty [adhering to the guardian paradigm], but only because they are not supported by the department.”

**DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSION**

Guardian policing has become either the “flavor of the month” in law enforcement, or a potentially useful avenue to address serious trust deficits with community members. The notion that “words matter” (Brocklin, 2015), and the influential authority modeled by training staff suggests that the methods used by academy trainers to conceptualize and convey law enforcement training represent a critical and under-explored area of study. The results presented here provide further insight into the ways WSCJTC training officers conceptualize and disseminate key components of guardian-based police training. The trainers interviewed in this study are the linchpins for the cultural transmission of guardian policing, so the study is an important step in determining their understandings, concerns, and reservations pertaining to the collective elements that make up guardian policing.

The current research contributes to the academic literature by examining how training staff at a guardian-oriented police academy present their attitudes and beliefs pertaining to the guardian model of policing. As a primary function of their occupation, these trainers are tasked with purveying the guardian message to incoming police recruits: The manner in which recruits are trained, and how well the training material is “sold” or conveyed may constitute a significant difference in how well the next generation of police adheres to this new model of policing. The views of academy TAC officers play a central component in the training process, teaching, advising, and counseling recruits throughout their academy experience. Thus, to ensure best practices, it is of paramount importance that TACs develop a thorough understanding of the course material to accurately impart this knowledge to their students.

Analysis of the TAC officers’ comments indicates that trainers’ understanding of the guardian model is consistent with concepts promulgated in academic articles. Furthermore, the trainers’ abilities to articulate and scrutinize the concepts of guardian policing were sophisticated and astute. Interviewed subjects promoted a widespread level of buy-in and commitment to Blue Courage© and guardian principles—especially trainers who had received advanced training, and therefore had greater familiarity with the content. However, for guardian training to make a successful impact in law enforcement, the officers themselves are responsible for implementing the knowledge learned at the academy, and personally investing in this new direction in policing (Lurigio & Skogan, 1994; Rosenbaum & Lurigio, 1994). Without the backing of policing cultures to push for guardian-oriented tactics and policy, the guardian paradigm may have much more ground to cover before gaining widespread acceptance amongst law enforcement personnel.

Training staff also acknowledged difficulties presented by the guardian curriculum, including the perceived problem of widespread in-service training deficiencies that may lead to officers...
being less physically capable following academy training, thus making them less comfortable in their ability to control potentially dangerous situations. As interviewees generally supported the notion that defensive tactics training was even more necessary as a component of guardian policing, some proposed the solution of requiring law enforcement agencies to institute mandatory trainings in defensive tactics to remedy this problem. Furthermore, trainers believed that the curriculum for defensive tactics should be expanded and improved in BLEA training so that future officers could feel more comfortable in their ability to control civilian encounters without resorting to violence. While communications classes may endow recruits with the skills to effectively defuse and deescalate many hostile situations, recruits should also be prepared for any eventuality, with an understanding of how to effectively employ force if necessary.

Another conceptually important finding that emerged from the interview process suggested that guardian policing was just “good policing.” One of the most important qualities of a good officer was identified as the ability to communicate effectively. Because skillful communication is recognized as a central tenet of the guardian model, interviewees expressed confusion as to how critics could misinterpret guardian policing to be anything other than “good policing.” Furthermore, other qualities mentioned as central to the guardian role (e.g., emotional intelligence, integrity, respect, honesty, courage) are not different from what society expects from “good” law enforcement. As police are granted with the social authority to maintain order, restrict liberties, and use force in protection of person and property, perhaps these guardian qualities should be expected of law enforcement officers when interacting with the citizenry they serve (Sanders, 2003; Schulenberg et al., 2015).

As a final thought, several interviewees shared the perception that a considerable amount of guardian training occurred through the relationship with the TAC officer rather than the actual content of training. What they meant was that the trainer modeled guardian principles in the way he or she interacted with recruits, other instructors, and the public at large. As TAC officers assume the responsibilities of teaching, advising, and counseling the student body, they serve as valuable role models to recruits throughout the academy experience. From the trainer’s statements on this topic, we might be able to infer that some trainers are more effective at imparting guardian principles to students because of who they are, how they do police work, and how they are viewed by their recruits. This assumption may present a valuable avenue for future research, as scholarship has not yet examined the individual and academy-related factors that may influence police adherence to guardian policing following academy graduation.

Our findings suggest that cultural expectations and interactions with ranking officers, FTOs, and peers in police agencies may significantly affect how recruits adhere to the tenets of the guardian model over time. However, findings also suggest that officers trained outside of the guardian curriculum are often misinformed about what the guardian model actually signifies, and how it relates to law enforcement practices. As officer peers and agency leadership may offer little support and/or knowledge of the guardian model, mandated in-service trainings should be considered to educate all agency personnel. By implementing this additional measure, WSCJTC may better promote understandings between agencies of how the guardian philosophy can be useful to the profession of policing, thus increasing their chances of success in disseminating the message of guardian policing to new officers.
As trainers expressed a belief that the majority of opposition to guardian training is caused by misinformation about what guardian training actually represents, mandating remedial guardian trainings offered through WSCJTC for officers previously trained under the warrior model has the potential to mitigate conceptual confusion about what guardian training is for officers who graduated from the academy before the philosophical shift. By educating law enforcement on the principles WSJCTC is using to shape the next era of policing in Washington, the guardian philosophy may achieve higher regard amongst its intended audience.

Limitations of this study include those often presented within qualitative research. Although a small number of interviews was utilized for analysis, this was not a sample, but, rather, almost the entire population of WSCJTC TAC instructors. Potentially, representativeness may pose a greater issue for the limitations of this study. Because WSCJTC employs a “rotation model,” TAC officers interviewed for this study may have already returned to their home agencies at present time. These findings may or may not be subject to replication at another academy adopting a guardian training model, or even at this academy, as new instructors may already be in place of those interviewed.

While these limitations are notable, we maintain that these findings are valuable to provide a greater understanding of how trainers in one academy understand and interpret guardian concepts. Our research question explored whether instructors employed by an academy at the ground-zero of guardian policing understood and/or agreed with the concepts endorsed by the guardian curriculum. Further, we were interested in how trainers perceived the emerging criticism regarding guardian training. Findings in this study indicate that training staff fully recognized these criticisms, and also understood the potential issues of socialization and acculturation recruits faced after returning to their hiring agencies. We believe that this qualitative approach, using outside researchers, may exhibit value when undertaking curriculum and/or philosophical changes in training venues.

Guardian policing was derived from the principles of procedural justice and pronounced concern over the militarization of policing. As a new foundation for police training, the guardian model was incubated at the WSCJTC, disseminated via the President’s Task Force on 21st Century policing, and has now become a buzzword amongst media outlets and politicians looking to improve police-community relations through new approaches. What is needed next is a more concerted effort to identify and evaluate the specific training components that comprise guardian policing, and an examination of how guardian training translates to the behaviors exhibited by officers on duty.

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10 Two instructors were unavailable for interview during the research period.


Jacqueline B. Helfgott, Ph.D. is Professor and Chair of the Seattle University Department of Criminal Justice has published works including *Criminal Behavior: Theories, Typologies, and Criminal Justice, Criminal Psychology, Volumes 1-4*, and *Offender Reentry: Beyond Crime and Punishment* and has published journal articles in the areas of criminal behavior, offender reentry, restorative and community justice, and crisis intervention in law enforcement. She has conducted applied research with the Seattle Police Department, the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, and the Washington State Department of Corrections, is co-editor of the journal *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society, and* has consulted as an expert witness on cases involving correctional supervision and the prediction of dangerousness.

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Book Review: 
Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art, Jeffrey Ian Ross (Editor) 

Routledge, 2016; 491 pages 
ISBN 97804158792937 

Reviewed by: Andrew C. Gray, University of Delaware, USA 

Expressing oneself by depicting images on public surfaces for others to view is a system of communication that has been around since the earliest societies formed and developed their own languages. This tradition of public communication has continued into the present in the form of graffiti and street art. The development of contemporary graffiti and street art is often attributed to the scenes in Philadelphia and New York City, which arose during the 1970s. In fact, it has been contended that these art forms spread to and mixed with graffiti/street art scenes across the globe due to NYC’s status as a “world city” with international influence (Austin; chapter 17). It is also important to note that throughout time, the subject matter depicted (i.e. symbols, icons, etc.), techniques used, and locations chosen by artists/writers, as well as who actually participates in graffiti and street art, have been highly variable. 

It was not until the past several decades that the issues surrounding graffiti and street art were defined and scholarship began to consider them, despite this long history of public illustration. The factors contributing to this focus include the association of graffiti/street art with crime and urban violence, especially when related to gang-activity, but these art forms have also been viewed as symbolic of urban decay. These negative views of graffiti and street art have been purported by various social institutions (i.e. politics, law enforcement, news media, etc.) which has led to legal statutes condemning graffiti/street art and even the militarization of responses to them (Ross, chapter 29). While many use the association with gang-activity to vilify graffiti/street art, this is only a small portion of the art being created. Instead, many artists/writers of graffiti and street art are just seeking to express their creativity in alternative manners. 

Thus, graffiti and street are highly complex subjects built on contradictions including definitional disputes. For instance, graffiti and street art have most frequently been considered through “four interrelated contextual axes” (p.1). This includes some researchers focusing on the illegality of graffiti and street art; that is, debates of criminal versus the artistic and commercial aspects. Alternatively, some have considered graffiti/street art’s content, composition, and aesthetic; while others have considered the dynamics of who defines what constitutes graffiti/street art and its practitioners. 

Coinciding with these growing, negative views of graffiti/street art and the inherent definitional contradictions, scholarly attention began to focus on graffiti/street art in the 1980s. However, this area of research has remained relatively obscure and has had varying levels of subjective-ness, methodological rigor, and social scientific focus. What has been missing, until now, is a reference book that encompasses a wide assortment of research, theory, and ideas considering graffiti and street art. The Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art is a comprehensive attempt to fill this knowledge void by providing reviews of the causes, reactions to, and the challenges surrounding graffiti/street art throughout history and around the world. While it is impossible to discuss every type and all the research pertaining to graffiti and street
art, this assortment covers a wide-range of topics and approaches in studying graffiti/street art. Ultimately, the Handbook provides a collection of objective, theoretically, and social scientifically-focused chapters improving on previous graffiti and street art literature.

Included in the Handbook are 35 chapters arranged into four overarching thematic parts focusing on history, the artists/writers involved, and types of graffiti/street art; theoretical approaches and causal questions; variations across place; and the reactions to graffiti/street art, which have been overlooked in much of the literature. The chapters featured draw from a range of areas of study: art history and theory, communications, criminology and criminal justice, urban sociology, subculture theory, and youth studies to name several. These chapters were written by scholars and experts from around the world (more than half of the contributors are from countries outside the United States and United Kingdom). Additionally, some of the authors have participated or still actively participate in graffiti and street art scenes.

While each chapter could stand on its own, together they form an indispensable wealth of knowledge regarding the study of graffiti and street art. While an exhaustive review of everything enclosed is beyond the scope of this review, there are significant contributions this collection makes that are important to note. First, several chapters wrestle with the complexities and contradictions inherent to graffiti and street art by highlighting reactions to graffiti/street art, but also how these art forms have been appropriated and commodified. For example, chapters discuss how graffiti/street art have progressed closer to contemporary art (Brighenti, chapter 12) and where it fits into art history and theory (Schacter, chapter 11); how they have been embraced and celebrated for tourism and city branding (Evans, chapter 13); “legal”/permitted graffiti and street art (Kramer, chapter 9); and issues surrounding copyright law for the artists/writers and the preservation of their creations (Schwender, chapter 34). Second, chapters draw attention to several examples of graffiti/street art being highly variable (not just gang-related) regarding types, who participates, and why they participate. Some of the chapters highlighting these variabilities include discussions of the use of graffiti as it related to the American railroad system and hobo subculture (Lennon, chapter 2; Weide, chapter 3), graffiti in public restrooms – termed “latrinalia” – (Trahan, chapter 7), a recently developed type of graffiti/street art known as “yarn bombing” (Haveri, chapter 8), the use of graffiti/street art as a political tool in Chile (Palmer, chapter 20), and why marginalized adolescents are drawn to joining graffiti/street art subcultures (Taylor, Pooley, & Carragher, chapter 15).

In short, the Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art is a one of a kind collection of scholarly chapters devoted to the study of a complex, urban phenomenon. Graffiti and street art are as old as civilization and communication itself, but it was not until the last several decades that research began to tackle this phenomenon. While it is unable to cover every aspect of graffiti and street art, the Handbook is an immensely important contribution to an area of research that is still developing. At the outset of this collection, Editor Jeffrey Ian Ross notes, “perhaps no other contemporary predominantly urban phenomenon is as misunderstood as graffiti and street art” (p.3). In addressing this point, the chapters collected here effectively illuminate the complexities and contradictions surrounding graffiti/street art while dispelling commonly held, inaccurate beliefs about them and their artists/writers. This Handbook provides an accessible tool that will likely be a staple in the study of graffiti and street art for years to come whether that be in the classroom or for one’s own research interests.
Book Review:
Criminal Genius: A Portrait of High-IQ Offenders, James C. Oleson

University of California Press, 2016, 335 pages
ISBN: 9780520282421

Reviewed by: Allen Copenhaver, Lindsey Wilson College, USA

Criminology has a long history of attempting to discover and explain what some researchers claim are links between biological characteristics and criminal behavior. More specifically, some criminologists have explored the potential linkages between IQ and criminal behavior (i.e. see the work of Lombroso, Beaver, and Hirschi, among others). James C. Oleson continues this line of research with his 2016 book Criminal Genius: A Portrait of High-IQ Offenders. Oleson’s work is unique in that it is the first attempt to systematically examine the potential links between individuals with high IQs and criminal behavior. To accomplish this, Oleson uses a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative methods in the form of surveys of highly intelligent individuals as to their criminal activity and qualitative interviews designed to tease out more detailed information on such criminal activity. This review will provide a chapter-by-chapter overview to highlight the most important sections of the book, will then provide a limitations section on the research, and will then provide a discussion of the overall worth of the text. But first, however, Oleson’s text must be discussed regarding the ontological underpinnings from which he presents his argument; as such an understanding is key to understanding the purpose and direction of the book.

It is no secret that there is a great division among criminologists who adhere to biological explanations of crime and those who do not. Such criminologists who reject biocriminology understand the causes of crime to lie in factors of social class, sex, race, in social institutions, or accept a more critical approach to understanding crime and believe crime is a product of conflict among various groups in society. While classical positivist explanations of criminal behavior (especially those grounded in biological explanations of crime) have been criticized and dismissed by many criminologists for many reasons (including methodological flaws in study designs, study implementation, and potential policy implications, among others), biocriminological research is still conducted today. Biological criminology exists today in the form of biosocial criminology, a branch of criminology which aims to bridge biological explanations of crime with environmental explanations [i.e. personality traits like impulsivity have been found to be influenced by genetic factors across different groups of individuals, (University of Cincinnati, 2018)].

Oleson takes a unique approach to his study of high IQ offenders. He specifically states in the text that his aim is to understand the crimes of intelligent individuals by bridging the theoretical lenses of those in the biosocial camp and the critical camp. In doing so, Oleson absolutely identifies statistically significant associations between intelligence and crime, but he couches such an understanding in a critique of how western societies understand and react to the crimes of the highly intelligent, which is designed to appeal to critical criminologists. To make such an argument, Oleson starts the Introduction of the book by inviting the reader to explore our fascination with geniuses, both real [i.e. Theodore Kaczynski (a.k.a. the unabomber)] and
imagined (i.e. Walter White from Breaking Bad). He continues into Chapter 1 by discussing both the scientific definition of genius and traces the development of the idea of genius and IQ over time, stressing the importance many societies have placed on intelligence, tying intelligence to both eminence and infallibility. This is important, as he relates the way we treat the most intelligent people in modern society as incapable of committing crime (see also, Dugdale, 1910; Goddard 1912; and Goddard, 1914). This is assuming that, as Oleson points out, we are even able to get a glimpse into the lives of the most intelligent people of our society, who are often inaccessible, as they have achieved the means to create barriers between themselves and those whom could detect their crimes. Oleson’s major finding of the book is that there is a positive curvilinear relationship between both low IQ and high IQ and the crime categories used by Oleson in his research. Oleson further relates this finding to Reiman’s (2013) message in his *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice* that if we want to appreciate and understand some of the most significant crime problems we must look “up” the social class ladder instead of “down”.

Oleson then dedicates Chapter 2 to discussing how he went about setting up his study, discussing how he sampled individuals from three index groups, one from a high IQ society group, one from a prison, and one from elite universities, and one control group from a large urban university. Oleson then discusses how he then performed additional purposive sampling to identify high IQ individuals with criminal backgrounds for qualitative interview sessions. Chapter Three breaks down demographic and personality characteristics of survey respondents, Chapter Four demonstrates the index group's had significantly higher rates of property offenses, white-collar crimes, and professional misconduct (in addition to the fact that for seven of nine crime offense types, the index groups showed higher lifetime prevalence rates), and Chapter Five shows that after analyzing high IQ offender arrest and conviction rates, there is ample support for what has been coined the “differential detection and differential reaction hypotheses” towards high IQ offenders.

In Chapter 6 Oleson provides the results of his interviews with 44 high IQ offenders and uses this data to offer an explanation for high IQ offending. The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face, via telephone, email, or written correspondence. He also gathered what he terms “additional qualitative data” in the form of e-mails, letters, poetry, and other various documents from the interview participants. He then used NVivo qualitative document analysis software to collate the interview transcripts and other documents against the elements of Hirschi’s (1969) model of social bonds. Oleson claims that by testing whether the themes of his interviews and other documents mesh with the four elements of the social bond (attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief), that he can theoretically test as to what explains high IQ crime. Such a deductive approach to qualitative research is problematic because it does not allow the researcher to dig deep into the data before formulating ideas as to what explanations might emerge from the lived experiences of research participants. While theory testing of qualitative data is performed, it can be argued that such efforts are misguided, as qualitative data is not meant to be understood in terms of cause-and-effect, as is quantitative data. Additionally, some of the theories that Oleson himself discusses as emerging from the interviews are completely separate theories than that of social bond theory. In fact, he cites examples of where techniques of neutralization and rational choice theory were used by research participants. Ultimately, he argues that high IQ serves as a risk factor for crime because it interferes with the mechanisms through which social bonds help to control individuals. Perhaps if the data were
analyzed as per traditional qualitative data analysis techniques (i.e. identifying themes and further investigating patterns among those themes) then results would likely be different. Oleson himself discusses 12 potential limitations of the study (most of which are related to the quantitative aspect of the study (i.e. low response rate, the personality inventory was not distributed to the control group, etc.). Oleson identifies several problems with the qualitative aspect of the research. He notes specifically that control group participants were not included in the interviews, that there was a lack of standardization of the qualitative research due to the hodgepodge of documents used in analysis and the methods used to conduct interviews, as well as the fact that this book was written 20 years after the data was originally collected.

Overall, Oleson provides an interesting look into a previously, rarely explored area of criminological inquiry. Oleson is able to shed light on the existence of high crime rates among some of the most intelligent members of US society, and as such, the relationship between crime and IQ is largely curvilinear (although differential trends exist based on individual crime categories, of course). Olson’s mixed methods approach works from a quantitative perspective, however, the qualitative aspect of his work suffers for those reasons mentioned above. One cannot fit theoretical explanations into predetermined typologies without first digging into the data. However, despite such flaws, Oleson does raise serious questions related to research on the crimes committed by high IQ individuals. How do we go about further exploring the relationships between crime and high IQ and what causes high IQ individuals to commit crime when such individuals are largely inaccessible? If further research works to establish strong linkages between high IQ and crime then how does that work from a legal standpoint considering our criminal law exists based on the assumption that individuals engage in rational thought (with certain exceptions of course)? And finally, if high IQ individuals exist along an intelligence continuum an equal number of standard deviations from “normal”, then should high IQ individuals be afforded the same legal protections as intellectually disabled individuals?

REFERENCES


Book Review:

ISBN: 9781594600319

Reviewed by: Aneesa A. Baboolal, University of Delaware, USA

In *Across the Spectrum of Women and Crime: Theories, Offending, and the Criminal Justice System*, edited by Susan F. Sharp (The University of Oklahoma), Susan Marcus-Mendoza (The University of Oklahoma), Kathleen A. Cameron (Pittsburg State University), and Elycia S. Daniel-Roberson (Texas Southern University), interdisciplinary perspectives that examine multiple dimensions of women’s offending grounded in feminist theory are presented across three sections of the book. This edited volume first focuses on theoretical perspectives of women and crime including addressing intersectional social locations related to gender, race, class, and sexual orientation. The second section examines a variety of female offenders including understudied women such as drug traffickers and terrorists. The third and final section focuses on systemic and societal responses to offenders, including wrongful convictions, women’s experiences of incarceration, as well as recidivism and reintegration into society.

In the first section, Theorizing about Crime and Women, the authors of each chapter examines women as offenders theoretically but also focuses on the intersections of victimization, systemic issues, and the effect of multiple marginalizations. Van Gundy-Yoder applies Broidy and Agnew’s gender-specific approach to General Strain Theory in Chapter 1 to examine the cases of two female offenders, Andrea Yates and Lisa Montgomery to explain their crimes by identifying strains and behavioral impact. Chapter 2, written by Smith and Klepfer, explores intimate partner victimization and women as offenders. The focus on failures of the system highlights the barriers faced by women who offend by utilizing Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. In Chapter 3, Sharp’s case study of Wanda Jean Allen, the first African American woman executed in the United States since the 1950’s, and the first woman executed in the state of Oklahoma, sheds light on how multiple intersecting identities, including gender, race, education level, mental health, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation can result in excessive punishments for women offenders. In the last chapter in this section, Durfee examines arrests teens for dating violence, including the specific intersections of gender and race with a focus on mandatory and pro-arrest laws using NIBRS data as African American girls are more likely to be victimized and arrested for dating violence.

Moving away from theoretical approaches, the next section centers around a variety of female offenses including interesting and understudied topics such as filicide, women in the legal sex work industry such dancers, strippers and escorts, women involved with drugs as sellers, traders and dealers, and finally, female terrorists, specifically suicide bombers. In Chapter 5, Dragon, Oberman and Meyer use a mixed methods approach to examine women’s relationships with partners in relation to domestic violence among women who kill their children and subsequently, how gendered expectations of motherhood influences their punishment. In Chapter
6. Caputo examines drug use among legal sex workers by connecting childhood poverty and abuse to women’s experiences within various types of legal and illegal sex work. Using a gendered pathways framework, in Chapter 7, Jenkot seeks to understand women’s motivations to trade and sell illegal drugs through in-depth interviews. In the final chapter of this section (8), Markovic explores the understudied topic of personal and organizational motivation of female suicide bombers in Nigeria.

The third section of the book shifts to examine how the criminal justice system responds to women including through convictions, imprisonment, access to treatment and concludes with societal reintegration. In Chapter 9 on wrongful convictions, Fox examines five cases in the US and Japan that explores the embedded misogyny of the system against women who are unjustly convicted of murder. In Chapter 10, on women’s experiences of imprisonment, Lawson explores the impact of pre-prison trauma including women’s interactions with coercive men, while also giving voice to incarcerated women as she demonstrates resistance in prison settings. In Chapter 11, McGee, Williams, Strickland, Dobson-Brown and Foreman discuss racial inequalities related to substance abuse and medical treatment of imprisoned mothers. Compounded by the unequal treatment available, the medical neglect of women drug offenders who are in dire need of substance abuse, mental and physical health treatment are met with limited programs and resources. In Chapter 12, Kerrison and Bachman provide an optimistic look at the prosocial lives women offenders who have desisted from crime and drugs as their renewed identity as grandparent contributes to desistance. Finally, in Chapter 13, Sharp and Ortiz provides a qualitative analysis of women prisoners’ recidivism and reintegration. The chapter authors examine the experiences of women who recidivate as a result of lacking access to resources, support, and the belief that they would not be able to thrive in society post-prison, as well as those who achieve successful societal reintegration.

The book concludes with a brief section entitled ‘Total System Failure’ by Marcus-Mendoza where the author highlights how women and girls are failed on various societal and institutional levels, by family, social services, schools, religious organizations, medical/mental health providers, and in halfway houses, juvenile detention centers, prisons, jails, parole and probation however, she points out that this anthology is not just about how the system fails women through lack of intervention, access, distrust, and victim dismissal, but also about the complexity of marginalization, how racial/ethnic minority women and girls are more likely to be turned from victim to offender and not receive much-needed assistance, and how blame and punishment shapes women’s experiences. Ultimately, the inconsistencies at the community, state, national and organizational level direly needs transformation and Marcus-Mendoza calls for that through creating structures of support that centers the voices of women impacted by social and systemic inadequacies.

Overall, Across the Spectrum of Women and Crime provides an insightful look into women and the criminal justice system beyond an introductory reference. It includes specific pieces that enriches the overall understanding of gender from various perspectives and intersections, including incorporating race and socioeconomic status into analyses, while also utilizing a plethora of methods to address the issues, including case studies, qualitative interviews, and quantitative analyses of state and national data sets. Furthermore, it can be used in a variety of courses at the advanced undergraduate or graduate level as it incorporates exhaustive references at the end of each chapter. Additionally, a brief section with chapter-specific discussion
questions (beginning on page 281) also makes the book an excellent classroom reader for gender and crime, criminological theory application, and sociology. It’s contribution to criminology, criminal justice, sociology, gender and crime is especially critical in terms of under-researched topics including expanding knowledge of legal sex workers, as well as women involved in the drug trade and terrorism. This text begins to fill gaps surrounding not just the need of creating supportive structures for women offenders in the US but also how to do so from the perspectives of those most impacted. It would have been interesting to include a transnational criminological perspective to have more insight regarding international initiatives and solutions that can also contribute to a better understanding of how interventions, access, trust and support are working to support women globally, or even a more concrete conclusive acknowledgment of how these types of programs are implemented in the US however, this may also be best left to evaluation. Ultimately, this edited volume is a critical contribution to understanding women and crime, and specifically broadening our understanding of the inadequacies in both the criminal justice system, as well as societal responses to women’s experiences as offenders at various marginalized intersections.