

Translational Criminology and Politics

Presentation Outline for the Justice Research and Statistics Association's (JRSA) Virtual Training

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Presentation Outline

- I. Introduction**
- II. Early Criminology and the Quest for Scientific Legitimacy**
- III. Beyond Mass Incarceration in the 2000s and the Rise of Making a Difference Movement through Evidence-Based Criminal Justice Policies and Practices**
- IV. Emergence of Researcher-Policymaker-Practitioner Partnerships in Translational Criminology**
- V. Conclusion**
- VI. Questions**



I - Introduction

- The purposes of the presentation are to (1) trace the development of criminology/criminal justice research culminating in the current translational criminology movement, and (2) assess the necessary and combined role of Researcher-Policymaker-Practitioner Partnerships and “Champions” in successfully translating research into evidence-based criminal justice policies and practices.



II - Early Criminology and the Quest for Scientific Legitimacy

- 1900 – 1960s: 20th Century Rehabilitative Ideal and criminology’s search for the causes of criminal offender behavior.
- 1960s – 1970s: Shift in focus from the criminal offender to the criminal justice system and its role in crime. *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* and the decentralization of criminal justice.
- 1980s – 1990s: “Nothing Works” in offender treatment leading to get tough on crime exemplified by the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 and continuation of mass incarceration.



III - Beyond Mass Incarceration in the 2000s and the Rise of Making a Difference Movement through Evidence-Based Criminal Justice Policies and Practices

- The goal underlying the making a difference movement was not the determination of ‘x’ causes ‘y’ goal of many criminologists, but rather the application of current and best available research knowledge to policy-relevant questions.
- The application of current and best available research has three policy objectives: (1) to directly intervene, (2) to more effectively ameliorate the alterable conditions of the problem in questions rather than eliminating its uncertain causes, and (3) to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed policy/practice intervention.
- Examples: juvenile justice education, prevention of financial exploitation of aging adults, and school shootings.



IV - Emergence of Researcher-Policymaker-Practitioner Partnerships in Translational Criminology

- Examples: county and state criminal justice agencies (i.e., Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission, Florida Department of Education, Florida Department of Corrections, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice).
- Advances have been made, but major challenges and impediments remain, namely “politics.”



V - Conclusion

- The role of “Champions” in confronting politics in translation criminology and associate strategies.
- Promising future of evidence-based policies and practices in criminal justice with the involvement of “Champions.”
- Building translational criminology with patience!



VI – Questions