

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: EXPLORING THE NATURE AND SUCCESS OF AN
EMBEDDED CRIMINOLOGIST PARTNERSHIP

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Embedded criminologist partnerships are one of the suggested vehicles toward translating scientific evidence into policy and practice. Previous empirical research on embedded criminologist partnerships consists of reflective accounts of researchers who have served the role, but has not systematically evaluated the utility of these collaborations. The present case study utilizes multiple data sources to systematically describe and evaluate a single embedded criminologist partnership between an academic researcher and a state corrections agency. Specific attention is given to the factors associated with success and the ways that research was translated into agency policies and practices. All parties deemed the collaborative effort successful and the majority of the initial goals were fully met. However, these successes are not surprising given the ideal circumstances under which the collaboration originated. Embedded criminologist partnerships formed under less favorable conditions may incur additional challenges that may marginalize the impact of these collaborations on a broader scale.

EXPLORING THE NATURE AND SUCCESS OF AN EMBEDDED
CRIMINOLOGIST PARTNERSHIP

by

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Part I: Introduction

Within criminology¹ there is a widespread belief that research² should have policy and practical relevance. Many criminologists would argue that empirical evidence should inform policy and practical decisions toward enhancing the effectiveness, fairness, and efficiency of criminal justice agencies (Blumstein, 2013; Petersilia, 1991; Sampson, Winship, & Knight, 2013). The desire for research to improve decision-making is not limited to criminology, as it is pervasive throughout the social sciences. In light of recent budget constraints, implementing policies and practices that are “evidence based” and cost effective is particularly pertinent (Haskins & Margolis, 2014). Despite the conviction that research evidence *should* guide policy and practical decisions, criminologists and other social scientists acknowledge that scientific evidence is often not a prominent consideration of most policy makers or practitioners (National Research Council, 2012; Tonry, 2010).

The recognition that empirical evidence has not directly impacted policy and practice prompted investigation as to why this is the case (Huberman, 1994; Rich, 1991; Tseng, 2012; Weiss, 1979). The extant literature investigating research utilization³ reveals added complexity for the task of informing policy and practice with scientific evidence; this is particularly relevant in a criminal justice context where public fears, limited budgets, moral concerns, and the media play a large role in the policies that are

¹ Throughout this paper I will refer to criminology as the study of crime, its causes, and the criminal justice system response. Criminology includes the study of police, courts, and corrections, and is not meant to be limited to theoretical inquiry. Similarly, criminologists are any individuals who study any or all of these topics.

² The phrases research, research evidence, scientific evidence, and empirical evidence are used interchangeably. Each of these terms refers to findings or results of research employing systematic methodological designs

³ The terms research utilization and research translation are used interchangeably. Both refer to empirical evidence influencing the decision-making of policy makers or practitioners and the institution of evidence based policy or practice.

enacted (National Research Council, 2012; Tonry, 2010; Tseng, 2012; Uggen & Inderbitzen, 2010). Despite the growing literature in this area, a more nuanced understanding of how research is used in policy and practice decision-making is still needed to employ effective translation strategies moving forward.

The National Academy of Sciences has made understanding how empirical evidence is used in decision-making a prominent goal. In 2012, the National Research Council (NRC) issued a report urging the academic community, particularly social scientists, to investigate the conditions that promote and inhibit research utilization by practitioners and policy makers (NRC, 2012). Each year the government funds criminal justice and social science research in the hope that it will improve policy and practice. Financing social science research without adequately understanding how that research leads to new and modified policy and practice is concerning. As the report highlights, it is problematic that basic questions including if and how research evidence is translated into policy and practice remain unanswered (NRC, 2012).

To this end, the National Institute of Justice currently funds multiple projects to address research utilization in criminal justice agencies. Under the 2014 translational criminology solicitation, four awards (three grants and one fellowship) were funded in an effort to cultivate strategies to better understand and improve the use of research in criminal justice decision-making (National Institute of Justice, 2014). The recipients will address topics including dissemination efforts and the social networks through which empirical evidence are passed (Award number 2014-IJ-CX-0033), cross-sector research utilization (Award number 2014-IJ-CX-0032), the impact of collaboration between researchers and policy makers on research utilization (Award number 2014-IJ-CX-0035),

and the process of defining and implementing evidence-based policies (Award number 2014-IJ-CX-0034). A second solicitation for research on the translation process was issued in 2015 (NIJ, 2015). Similarly, private institutions such as the William T. Grant Foundation have taken an interest in how research evidence is used to inform education and juvenile justice policies (Nutley et al., 2007; Tseng, 2007; Tseng 2012). The interest in research translation from notable research organizations and the federal government reflects the critical importance of discerning the nature of the decision-making process and the role of research evidence within it.

Encouraging partnerships between researchers and practitioners is one proposed method to increase the impact of research in policy and practice decision-making (Alpert, Rojek, & Hansen, 2013). Traditionally, collaboration between researchers and practitioners is uncommon; there is a history of skepticism between both parties. Practitioners have argued that researchers lack an understanding of agency constraints and conduct irrelevant research, while researchers believe that practitioners often devalue the importance of rigorous research designs and ignore scientific findings (Caplan, 1979). Collaboration of researchers and practitioners toward completing research projects and program evaluations can promote mutual understanding between the two parties and facilitate a potential willingness to appreciate one another's priorities (Boba, 2010). Collaboration may also foster an environment wherein criminal justice practitioners are more likely to consider scientific evidence in policy and practical decisions (Sullivan et al., 2013). However, considering that there are many variants of researcher-practitioner partnerships, it remains unclear exactly how, and under what conditions, different types of partnerships enable research use by policy makers and practitioners.

An embedded researcher is an extension of a traditional researcher-practitioner partnership (Reiter-Theil, 2004). Being an embedded researcher involves immersion within a practitioner organization and full understanding of its routines. Within criminology, an embedded criminologist partnership is a relatively recent concept (Petersilia, 2008). According to the few researchers who have served this role, an embedded criminologist works directly with a criminal justice agency providing objective scientific research and advising on decision-making (Braga, 2013; Petersilia, 2008; Taniguchi & Bueermann, 2012). While the role of an embedded criminologist has not been formally defined, the few accounts of researchers' experiences as embedded criminologists suggest that there are many benefits and that these partnerships are an effective way to translate research into policy and practice (see Braga, 2013; Jenness, 2008; Taniguchi & Bueermann, 2012; Petersilia, 2008).

As embedded criminologist partnerships gain popularity, and in light of the recent shift toward implementing evidence-based practices, it becomes essential to assess the impact of these collaborations. This task will involve defining an embedded criminologist partnership and the embedding process, determining how to evaluate an embedded criminologist partnership as successful, and assessing whether using a researcher in this capacity is a feasible strategy toward integrating scientific evidence into criminal justice decision-making.

The present study focuses on the concept of an embedded criminologist collaboration. The goals of this research are three-fold. The first is to present a systematic description of an embedded criminologist partnership with a state corrections agency and outline the benefits and challenges inherent in that endeavor. Second, this research

provides an independent evaluation of the collaboration using multiple criteria to determine success. Finally, the mechanisms behind research translation and the institution of evidence-based policies within the corrections agency are explored.

In pursuit of these goals, multiple questions motivate the present study: What does it mean to embed a researcher in an agency setting and what does the process of embedding look like? Was the collaboration deemed a success and if so, by what standards? What factors led to success or failure? Specific attention will also be paid to the factors pertaining to how (or how not) the embedded criminologist facilitated research use and the processes involved in translating scientific evidence to practice.

These questions are answered by examining a single case of an embedded criminologist in a state corrections agency. In 2012, a federal agency funded a one-year collaboration between a university professor at an east coast criminology department and an east coast state corrections agency, wherein the researcher was to be “embedded” in that corrections agency. This collaborative effort provides a unique opportunity to conduct a systematic, in-depth assessment of an embedded criminologist partnership. There are no independent assessments of embedded criminologists currently available, only reflective accounts written by those who have served the role (see Braga, 2013 or Petersilia, 2008). The current study improves upon this existing literature by systematically detailing an embedded criminologist partnership from the perspective of all relevant stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, and the funding agency. The present assessment also contributes to the growing body of literature on research utilization by exploring the capacity of an embedded criminologist to influence practitioner decision-making and attempting to provide insight into the potential

mechanisms underlying *how* research was translated into policies and practice in this instance.

The rest of this document is oriented as follows: I first discuss the idea of an embedded criminologist partnership and its potential to facilitate research use. Next, I examine the existing literature on research utilization and discuss the limitations and gaps that need to be addressed. The present case study is then described in detail including the multiple data sources, data collection procedures, and analytic techniques. A presentation of the findings follows next; the findings are organized into two distinct sections: a description of the specific embedded criminologist partnership under examination and a collection of supplemental findings. Finally, I acknowledge the limitations of the current approach, identify areas for future research, and offer a series of conclusions.

Part II: Literature Review

Embedded Criminologist Partnerships

In recent years, numerous strategies have been offered to facilitate the integration of scientific findings into policy and practice. Embedded criminologist partnerships are one proposed vehicle to achieve this translation. Coined by Joan Petersilia in 2008, the term embedded criminologist partnership references a mutually beneficial relationship between a criminologist and a criminal justice organization. According to Petersilia, an embedded criminologist works on-site within a criminal justice agency providing research expertise to enable research use. As noted above, there is currently no formal definition of this type of collaboration, only a handful of anecdotal accounts that describe criminologists' experiences of being embedded within criminal justice agencies. More instances of embedded criminologists may exist, but without a formal definition of an embedded criminologist partnership one is unable to distinguish these collaborations from other types of researcher-practitioner partnerships unless a researcher self-identifies as an embedded criminologist. The literature examined below is limited to accounts wherein a researcher is labeled an embedded criminologist.

In an article entitled "Influencing public policy: An embedded criminologist reflects on California prison reform," Joan Petersilia details her experiences working closely with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). In 2004, California's Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Petersilia as the "special advisor for policy, planning, and research" (Petersilia, 2008). She had an office within the CDCR and spent time on-site at their headquarters in Sacramento. As an embedded criminologist Petersilia supported the agency in numerous ways; she attended weekly

meetings with staff and administrators, met with lobbyists, gave expert testimony to legislators, spoke at CDCR retreats, and served as the liaison to the media (Petersilia, 2008). Petersilia describes how she was embraced as part of the staff and became fully immersed in the policy world of the CDCR.

While serving as an embedded criminologist at CDCR, Petersilia re-established a division of research, provided insight as to which programs should be implemented, and succeeded in changing the organization's name to reflect an agency-wide commitment to the philosophy of rehabilitation (Petersilia, 2008). Her detailed reflection suggests that serving as an embedded criminologist is a highly effective mechanism to achieve research utilization in a criminal justice setting. She also depicts the experience as illuminating and personally rewarding (Petersilia, 2008).

The CDCR has supported multiple embedded researchers within different levels of the organization. While Petersilia was embedded at the executive level of CDCR, sociologist Valerie Jenness worked within CDCR prisons and interacted with wardens, inmates and correctional staff (Jenness, 2008). Though Jenness was embedded in a different level of CDCR, her account mirrors Petersilia's with respect to the roles an embedded researcher takes, the value a researcher brings to an agency setting, and the ability to influence policies. However, Jenness's experience diverges from Petersilia's in an important way; Jenness was more directly involved in designing and executing research for the agency; she collected data, and performed analyses for the CDCR (Jenness, 2008). Jenness maintains that conducting this research was an important vehicle to influencing decision-making, while it appears that Petersilia was able to influence policy and decision-making without such direct involvement in research projects.

Policing scholars have also served as embedded criminologists within police departments. Taniguchi & Bueermann (2012) characterize an embedded researcher within a police agency as a criminologist who specializes in policing research and works as part of a police agency's executive staff. According to Taniguchi & Bueerman, it is the responsibility of the embedded criminologist to acquire and interpret relevant research for decision makers, advocate for and implement evidence-based policies, provide an expert opinion on decisions, and to pursue alternate funding opportunities. By this definition, it is the explicit job of an embedded criminologist to facilitate research utilization and provide evidence to guide policy and practical decisions.

Anthony Braga (2013) offers insight about his experience as an embedded criminologist within the Boston Police Department. Braga served as the "chief policy advisor" for the Boston Police and provided research expertise on hot spots (e.g., areas of a city or region with the highest crime rates) and crime mapping techniques (Braga, 2013). While embedded, he frequently interacted with police officers and executives and became a trusted source of knowledge for all agency members. Braga's role was not limited to research related tasks; he also attended weekly meetings, spoke with media sources, aided in speech writing, and met with lobbyists and legislators (Braga, 2013).

Braga (2013) argues that agencies participating in embedded criminologist partnerships benefit in numerous ways. Criminologists have specialized analytic and theoretical skills and that can improve the agency's capacity to identify and solve problems. Researchers can also conduct rigorous program evaluations and interpret research findings pertaining to the immediate needs of that agency (Braga, 2013).

Furthermore, embedded criminologist partnerships also benefit the researcher. Serving as an embedded criminologist provides the researcher with an intricate understanding of a criminal justice organization (Braga, 2013; Jenness, 2008; Petersilia, 2008). This is a rare opportunity for academic researchers. Familiarity with the pressing issues facing an agency and an agency's routine responses can enhance a researcher's career in policy relevant research (Braga, 2013). Finally, seeing firsthand how research is applied in a practical setting or how scientific knowledge improves an agency can be personally rewarding (Petersilia, 2008).

While embedded criminologist collaborations have several benefits to the parties involved, they can also present challenges. Practitioners may be hesitant to allow researchers access to their agency and data (Bradley & Nixon, 2009) or may fail to see the value of research toward informing and enhancing decision-making. Additionally, embedded researchers may face a cultural hostility towards researchers, a lack of organizational support for the collaborative effort, or limited resources for research (Taniguchi & Bueermann, 2012). These challenges may impede research translation and marginalize the impact of an embedded criminologist in a criminal justice setting if not accounted for and combatted early on.

Though recently introduced in the field of criminology, the concept of embedding a researcher within practitioner agencies existed previously in other disciplines, including health care sciences, education, business, and medical sciences. In health care organizations, the "researcher-in-residence" model refers to a collaborative endeavor wherein a health care researcher works directly with health care service providers evaluating daily operational problems (Marshall et al., 2014). Those who have

undertaken the role of “researcher-in-residence” describe it is as a way to negotiate the knowledge of a researcher with the knowledge of practitioners to facilitate shared learning. Additionally, researchers might “reside” in different levels of the health care organization by working directly with service providers in clinics or with executive and administrative staff. This concept is labeled as a promising strategy to achieve evidence integration in the health care sciences, regardless of the level of the organization that the researcher is embedded (Marshall et al., 2014).

Similar accounts of an embedded researcher are offered in the medical sciences. In examining a case of a researcher gathering data on how doctors make end of life decisions, Reiter-Theil (2004) argues that in a clinical environment, an embedded researcher offers advice on how practices may be improved by remaining “independent from, but familiar with” the organizational environment. As an example in the field of education, the Value-Added Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison embeds researchers in Milwaukee schools. Embedded researchers have developed an “early warning indicator” to identify students at risk of dropping out or who may have difficulty transitioning into high school (Carl et al., 2013).

As the concept of an embedded researcher is implemented more frequently, it becomes crucial to evaluate the utility of this form of collaboration. The existing accounts of embedded researchers reveal numerous benefits, regardless of the discipline. It also appears that embedded criminologist partnerships are vehicles toward the translation of research into policy and practice. What remains to be seen is *how* an embedded criminologist partnership facilitates research utilization. More systematic research is needed to elucidate the mechanisms underlying research translation in criminal justice

agencies when a researcher is embedded. The following section explores the existing literature on research utilization.

Research Utilization: What is Known about Translating Scientific Evidence into Policy and Practice?

Investigations of the mechanisms underlying the translation of research into policy and practice have increased in recent years, however this line of inquiry is not new. In the 1970's, scholars outside of criminology devoted substantial attention to the study of research utilization in an attempt to influence decision-making, but with little success (Henry & Mark, 2003; Tseng, 2012).⁴ In 1978 the National Research Council (NRC) issued a report that concluded social science research had no substantial or clear influence on policy and practice. This NRC report highlighted the complexities inherent in translating research into an applied setting, and underscored the need to interrogate these processes more thoroughly (NRC, 1978).

Scholars have offered numerous frameworks to outline the research utilization process. Acknowledging the complexities alluded to in the 1978 NRC report, Weiss (1979) developed a typology of research use that identifies a variety of ways that empirical evidence might be translated into policy and practice. *Instrumental research use* occurs if research findings are directly applied to decision-making. Instrumental use is linear and simple; if a decision maker is aware of a relevant empirical finding, a decision will be made that is consistent with the scientific evidence. Under the premise of *conceptual research use*, empirical evidence shapes the way that decision makers think about practical problems and policy issues. Conceptual use marks a perspective change in decision makers that can carry over across multiple situations. *Tactical research use*

⁴ The literature on research utilization has developed primarily in the fields of public health and education. One can draw parallels between criminology and these fields, particularly education because both criminal justice and educational systems in the U.S. are decentralized. Although more research on research utilization within criminal justice agencies is needed, the findings on research utilization in these fields may be applicable in a criminal justice context.

occurs when research findings are used to support or refute a predetermined position, for example in a political debate. Some see tactical use as a distortion of objective research (Weiss, 2000). Furthermore, research evidence can inform policy and practical decisions through *imposed research use* when funding agencies require applicants to provide scientific evidence to justify a proposal or only allot funding to programs that are empirically supported. Tseng (2012) extends Weiss's work by adding *process research use*, which involves practitioners or policy makers learning about research and develop technical skills through active participation in a research project.

Another proposed framework to describe the research utilization process is knowledge transfer. The idea of knowledge transfer is akin to Weiss's (1979) instrumental research use. In essence, if decision makers are aware of empirical evidence, they will use it in decision-making and enact a program or policy that is evidence based (Alpert, Rojek, & Hansen, 2013; Green et al., 2009). One can imagine a situation wherein a researcher evaluates an agency's program and the agency decides to increase or cut funding for that program depending on the results of the evaluation. Under the knowledge transfer framework, researchers must simply improve dissemination of research findings in order to influence decision-making.

Within criminology, the recent evidence-based policy and practice movement embodies the knowledge transfer framework. Through numerous program evaluations and meta-analyses, criminologists have identified programs and policies that consistently produce desired outcomes (Sherman, Farrington, Welsh, & MacKenzie, 2002, p. xiii). In an effort to expand the institution of effective programs and policies, online databases such as CrimeSolutions.gov, Blueprints, or the Model Programs Guide have developed.

These sources increase awareness of evidence-based practices and make empirical evidence readily available for practitioner use (Petrosino et al., 2001).

A critical weakness of the knowledge transfer framework and the evidence-based policy movement is that they are unidirectional and simplistic. Knowledge transfer implies that decision-makers are passive consumers in the process of utilizing research (Sparrow, 2011). Other investigations of the research utilization process reveal that when practitioners and policy makers consider research evidence in decision-making it does not occur in this linear fashion (NRC, 2012; Tseng, 2012). The inadequacy of the knowledge transfer framework can be seen in the modest impact of the evidence based policy movement; although there has been a spike in research publications on programs and policies that are “effective”, there is not a concurrent increase in the adoption of these programs and policies (Boba, 2010; Bradley & Nixon, 2009; Fyfe & Wilson, 2012; Tonry, 2010).

The translation of research findings from the academic community to applied or practical settings is a dynamic, complex process that occurs in several stages (Tonry, 2010; Tseng, 2012). The decision-maker must encounter a research finding, comprehend it, evaluate it as credible and relevant, and then implement a decision consistent with the finding. A breakdown at any stage can potentially hinder translation. Moreover, decision-making occurs within an organizational setting where many diverse considerations are taken into account. Some of these considerations may include budget constraints, political opinions, stakeholder preferences, voter preferences, opinions of advocacy groups, media coverage, and practitioner knowledge (Huberman, 1994; NRC, 2012; Tseng, 2012). Policy makers and practitioners must weigh these and potentially

other factors throughout decision-making, making it challenging to discern the precise role of scientific evidence.

Acknowledging the stages of the research utilization process and the numerous factors that decision-makers consider, it becomes more apparent that the knowledge transfer framework may not adequately account for such a complex and dynamic process. Lavis and colleagues (2006) offer a potential solution toward accounting for the intricate nature of research translation in the *knowledge exchange* framework. The knowledge exchange framework captures a more collaborative process by which researchers and practitioners combine their skillsets to approach a problem together. Researchers expose practitioners to scientific findings and explain their relevance to a particular problem. In exchange, practitioners offer insight about the population under study and the logistical capability of the agency to implement certain policies or programs, which can inform future research. Under knowledge exchange, researchers and practitioners communicate frequently and provide bidirectional feedback, resulting in a mutually beneficial relationship that encourages research utilization (Lavis et al., 2006). Researcher-practitioner partnerships embody the knowledge exchange framework. The literature suggests that a knowledge exchange framework is more likely to induce research driven decision-making than a knowledge transfer framework (Alpert, Rojek, & Hansen, 2013; Lavis et al., 2006; Sullivan et al., 2013).

Consistent with the knowledge exchange framework, scholars have recently highlighted the importance of social networks and relationships in using research evidence (Lubeinski, DeBray, & Scott, 2014; Palinkas et al., 2011; Tseng, 2012). Policy makers and practitioners have trusted sources that they consult when faced with a

difficult decision. These sources may include other practitioners, advocacy groups, think tank research organizations, or some other external source. Relationships with other colleagues or institutions are essential to acquiring and interpreting scientific evidence (Lubeinski, DeBray, & Scott, 2014; NRC, 2012; Tseng, 2012). Understanding the role of relationships and social networks in utilizing research may allow for the development of strategies to translate research into policy and practice on a broader scale.

Research Utilization: What is Unknown?

Though scholars have attempted to outline the processes of research utilization and devise general descriptive frameworks, the *mechanisms* underlying *how* scientific evidence is acquired, interpreted and translated into evidence-based decision-making remain elusive. Notable agencies such as the National Institute of Justice, National Academy of Sciences, and the William T. Grant Foundation emphasize the importance of uncovering the specific mechanisms underlying research translation, particularly in light of the renewed interest in evidence based programs and policies (Haskins & Margolis, 2014). Developing proactive strategies to successfully implement and sustain evidence based policies and practices requires a cogent understanding of the translation process, which prior research has failed to provide (Tseng, 2012).

Recognizing this limitation of the existing literature, the National Research Council urges scholars to pursue studies that will clarify the processes behind research translation. In a recent report, the NRC pinpoints four urgent tasks for social scientists to address: understanding why there is a disconnect between scientific evidence and decision-making, identifying the barriers that obstruct research utilization, examining the quality of research that is used in decision-making, and assessing practitioners and policy

makers' receptivity to research evidence (NRC, 2012). Similarly, the William T. Grant Foundation has launched several efforts to understand how research is utilized in education and youth service settings, including case studies, cross sectional research, and longitudinal assessments of the translation process (Tseng, 2012). Findings from these projects imply that researcher-practitioner collaboration is highly important for research utilization (Palinkas et al., 2011; Tseng, 2013).

Very few of the studies and frameworks referenced in the previous section are specifically intended to describe research utilization in a criminal justice context. The philosophy of translational criminology, which seeks to understand how evidence-based criminal justice policies and practices are instituted, may address this issue. Translational criminology provides a research agenda that calls for a systematic study of how criminological research is generated, disseminated, understood and used by criminal justice practitioners and policy makers (Laub, 2012). Using rigorous science, criminologists are tasked to uncover the ways that empirical evidence enter policy discussions and elucidate the mechanisms underlying the translation of scientific findings into criminal justice policies and practices (Laub, 2012; Laub, 2013; Sampson, Winship, & Knight, 2013).

Translational criminology also urges researchers and practitioner to work together as equal partners in the research process to forge a common forum among the academic, practitioner and policy maker communities (Laub, 2012). To this end, translational criminology encourages researcher-practitioner partnerships and evaluating their utility toward understanding successful research translation in criminal justice settings. This line

of inquiry is necessary toward improving criminal justice policies and expanding evidence-based criminal justice practices (Laub, 2012).

Without a detailed understanding of *how* and *why* research utilization successfully occurs, it is unclear how the gap between scientific evidence and decision-making can be closed (Tseng, 2012). A primary concern is that it is uncertain what role researchers should have in the research translation process. The literature seems to indicate that the knowledge exchange framework is more promising than the knowledge transfer framework for achieving research utilization, but it is unclear how a more collaborative effort can facilitate research use (Green et al., 2009; Lavis et al., 2006; NRC, 2012). Focusing specifically on the field of criminology, does the literature imply that more researcher-practitioner partnerships are needed to increase the use of scientific evidence in decision-making? Should criminologists take an advisor role to practitioner or policy agencies? Should criminologists work directly within agencies to facilitate utilization, as in the case of an embedded criminologist? A better understanding of the process by which scientific evidence is used in criminal justice decision-making is needed to answer these questions. Systematic research evaluating different types of researcher-practitioner partnerships is also needed to understand if and how these endeavors successfully bridge the gap between research and practice and result in the integration of evidence into decision-making. The present study explores how research translation occurred in one relatively new type of researcher practitioner-collaboration: the embedded criminologist partnership. The following section reviews the present study in detail.

Part III: The Present Study

This study offers a systematic, independent analysis of an embedded criminologist collaboration. The current study evaluates a single partnership between a university professor in an east coast criminology department and an east coast corrections agency. This collaboration was funded by a federal organization between 2012 and 2013. The three parties or stakeholder groups involved in this collaboration were the embedded criminologist, the department of corrections, and the funding agency. The unit of analysis under study is the working relationship between the embedded criminologist and the department of corrections.

Prior research has not captured the views of practitioners or funding agencies regarding embedded criminologist partnerships and has also failed to overtly evaluate the success of these collaborations. Considering these gaps, a primary goal of the present study is to clarify the role and impact of an embedded criminologist in a state corrections agency by providing a thorough account of the collaboration from the perspective of all stakeholders. Accomplishing this task requires an understanding of how the relationship was formed, what substantive meaning the term “embedded criminologist” has for each party, and depicting the regular tasks and routines of the embedded criminologist. This study also evaluates the degree to which the collaborative effort was a success, based on the perceptions of those involved, the fulfillment of the initial goals, and the degree to which the partnership facilitated research utilization in the corrections agency. The interpersonal, situational, and institutional factors contributing to success are also discussed.

In examining the specific embedded criminologist partnership, attention is given to the translation of research evidence into practice and the process of policy making in the department of corrections. Policy-making is sometimes referred to as a black box wherein very few individuals understand how policy decisions are made or the complexities of the process (Kothari, McLean, & Edwards, 2009; NRC, 2012). Consistent with the research agenda specified by translational criminology, the current study shines a light into that black box and delivers a nuanced portrayal of policy making in a specific context in which an embedded criminologist was present. By ascertaining detailed descriptions of instances when research evidence was (or was not) used in decision-making, it is possible to uncover the factors that enable and inhibit research use as well as to determine how an embedded criminologist can facilitate this process, if at all.

A secondary goal of the current study is to explore subjects' general views of embedded criminologist collaborations outside of the specific partnership. In particular, I compare how interview subjects generally conceptualize embedded criminologist partnerships to their descriptions of the specific case. The alignment between these accounts speaks to the degree to which subjects associate the specific partnership with more global views of embedded criminologist collaborations. Both the description of the specific case and the general treatment of embedded criminologist partnerships can advance discussion in the field regarding these topics and prompt additional research.

Through a comprehensive review of several documents, a field observation, and detailed interviews with all stakeholders, a concrete illustration of the embedded criminologist partnership is offered. Additionally, by interrogating the ways in which

research utilization did and did not occur, potential mechanisms underlying *how* research is translated into practical changes are discussed, along with the potential role of the embedded criminologist in the translation process. The following sections offer a detailed discussion of the methodological approach, characteristics of the sample, data collection procedures, and analytical strategy.

Case Study Methodology

Case studies are a form of qualitative research designed to holistically understand and describe complex social processes or relationships (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).⁵ A case study can provide an understanding of “how” and “why” social processes occur, questions that quantitative methods often cannot adequately address. When a researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of the individuals under study and when the distinction between the phenomenon and the context in which it occurs is unclear, a case study is often appropriate (Stake, 1995). An advantage of a case study is that it allows the researcher to examine a phenomenon within its real-world context as opposed to a contrived scenario that may neither generalize nor be applicable to the practical setting upon which the scenario was based (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

A significant element of case study methodology is the use of multiple data sources to understand the single case (Yin, 2003). The present study utilized open-ended interviews with representatives for each of the key stakeholder groups, a comprehensive review of multiple documents, and an observation component as data sources. These sources can be employed through triangulation; identifying instances where information

⁵ The present study is a case study that uses qualitative data sources. A truly qualitative methodological approach could not be employed with a single case.

converges or diverges increases the rigor of the case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003).

The present research can be characterized as a single, descriptive, and exploratory case study in that it aims to describe several social processes within a particular context.⁶ The present study does not claim to uncover causal mechanisms but only to describe the nature of the working relationship between the embedded criminologist and department of corrections and the processes surrounding embedding and research translation.

This research can also be classified as an intrinsic case study (see Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995). Since a prominent goal of this study is to build an accurate and nuanced understanding of one relationship and the processes related to its success, the present work prioritizes collecting detailed, informative data on the case over external validity. Only one relationship is under evaluation, therefore it would be inappropriate to generalize the descriptive findings to embedded criminologist collaborations broadly, or in different practitioner settings. As such, it is appropriate to label this research as an intrinsic case study.

Case Selection

This particular instance of an embedded criminologist in a state corrections agency was selected because it is one of the few existing examples of an embedded criminologist partnership. As there is no formal definition of an embedded criminologist, case selection was restricted to collaborations where a researcher was explicitly identified as an embedded criminologist. This case was also selected out of convenience, as the

⁶ In 2014, the National Institute of Justice funded four studies examining research dissemination, interpretation and utilization. In order to identify the mechanisms behind translation and utilization, three of the four studies have proposed to use case study methodology, highlighting the appropriateness of this approach to answer the present research questions (National Institute of Justice, 2014).

embedded criminologist, department of corrections, and funding agency are located on the east coast of the United States. Due to the location of the parties involved, I was able to travel to conduct in-person interviews and observation with relative ease.⁷ Furthermore, this partnership was selected because the respective parties are still collaborating, and I was able to directly observe the working relationship.

Sampling

Sampling of interview subjects began with a purposive sample of the primary stakeholders in the collaboration; namely, the embedded criminologist, the department of corrections' director of research who served as the embedded criminologist's primary agency contact, and the grant monitor from the funding agency. These individuals were selected for their intimate knowledge of and direct involvement in the embedded criminologist partnership under examination. The initial purposive sample of the primary stakeholders facilitated further snowball sampling. Each of the primary stakeholders were asked to identify other individuals that worked closely with the embedded criminologist or who could provide additional information on the partnership. The referenced individuals were then solicited for interviews. All parties identified through the snowball sample completed one interview; there were no refusals.

In total, ten individuals completed interviews and two engaged in follow-up sessions. Interview subjects can be classified into three stakeholder groups: academics from the embedded criminologist's university, practitioners from the department of corrections, and representatives from the funding agency. Two academics were interviewed: the embedded criminologist and a graduate student that worked closely with

⁷ Not all interviews were in-person. Subjects from the funding agency were interviewed by phone, and one follow-up interview was conducted by phone. In my view, this did not affect the quality of the responses.

the embedded criminologist and the department of corrections. Additionally, four practitioners from the department of corrections participated in interviews: the director of research, the chief of research and evaluation, the secretary of corrections, and the director of research for the state's parole board. Finally, four representatives from the funding agency were interviewed, including the grant monitor and three additional members.

Interview subjects can also be distinguished by how intimately involved they were in the working relationship. Those with more experience working with the embedded criminologist are considered primary informants.⁸ Primary informants included the primary stakeholders identified in the purposive sample; the embedded criminologist, the director of research at the department of corrections, and the grant monitor. Subjects identified through the snowball sample who had less exposure to the working relationship were deemed secondary informants. Secondary informants included the graduate student, the secretary of corrections, the chief of research and evaluation, the research director in state's the parole agency, and three additional representatives from the funding agency.

Data Collection Procedures: Interviews⁹

Open-ended interviews were conducted with each subject identified in the purposive and snowball samples. Prior to each session, an interview guide was

⁸ The distinction between primary and secondary stakeholders is most important in the description of the specific embedded criminologist partnership presented in Part IV. These individuals had the most intimate understanding of that collaboration. In Part V when the supplemental findings are presented, I do not reference the primary informants as they do not provide additional insight on these topics.

⁹ Prior to any of the interviews, all subjects signed a consent form indicating their voluntary participation in the study. The consent form described the broad purpose of the study and outlined the interview procedures. The potential harms of participation and measures taken to ensure confidentiality was also included. The consent form is provided in *Appendix A*. Subjects had the opportunity to ask questions about the study to ensure that they understood what was required for their participation.

constructed to outline potential questions and provide a rubric for conversation. Interview guides contained multiple open-ended questions asking participants to detail their experiences working as or with the embedded criminologist, embedded criminologist partnerships generally, and their experiences with policymaking and evidence based practices. Each guide was specifically tailored to the individual being interviewed.¹⁰ Interview guides for each subject are presented in *Appendix B*.

Out of convenience, subjects chose the location of interviews. The embedded criminologist was interviewed at the university, three of the practitioners and the graduate student were interviewed at the corrections agency, and representatives from the funding agency and one practitioner were interviewed by phone. The length of interviews varied greatly from thirty minutes to two hours; interviews with primary informants tended to last longer. Both the embedded criminologist and the director of research at the department of corrections also participated in one-hour follow-up interview sessions.

With one exception, subjects were interviewed individually; during in-person interviews I was the only person present in the room with the respective subjects.¹¹ Subjects from the funding agency and one practitioner participated in phone interviews from private offices. I administered each interview to minimize differences across sessions and reduce interviewer effects (Patton, 1990; Silverman, 2001). As each subject

¹⁰ Since the goal of this study is to explore an understudied phenomenon, this research is necessarily inductive. Following an inductive approach, conversation during interviews was natural and the content was driven by subjects rather than rigidly outlined by the interview guides. New concepts of interest emerged in each interview session and I was able to ask interview subjects to explain certain experiences. Also, interview guides were modified based on the responses of other subjects and questions were tailored to explore themes. As such, there was an interplay between data collection and analysis.

¹¹ Two representatives from the funding agency were interviewed by phone at one time. They resided in a private office for the duration of the interview and only the two interview subjects were present in the room. This departure from typical interview protocol was not anticipated but could not be avoided. Responses from these subjects may have been biased in that the two subjects may have been more likely to agree with one another than express unique opinions.

provided consent to be audio-recorded, each interview was transcribed verbatim immediately following the respective session.¹² Recording the interviews preserved the exact wording of each subject and allowed for a more detailed analysis of their responses.

Data Collection Procedures: Document Review

The nature of the specific embedded criminologist collaboration was also appraised through an analysis of several documents. It was clear from the beginning of this project that certain documents contained valuable information about the collaboration and were necessary for my analysis. These original documents included the grant solicitation that the embedded criminologist and corrections agency responded to, the proposal submitted to obtain funding, and the award announcement posted by the funding agency. These documents provided information about the initial purposes of the collaboration and the process of establishing an embedded criminologist in the department of corrections.

A comprehensive search of the Internet for media or news discussing the collaboration was also conducted. Key terms such as “embedded criminologist” and the names of the stakeholders were used to locate any online sources discussing the partnership. This search yielded two additional documents including a recidivism report produced by the department of corrections and an electronic press release made by the department of corrections announcing that funding was secured toward embedding a researcher within the agency.

In addition, several items for the document review were obtained as a result of snowball sampling. During interview sessions, subjects often referred to a report,

¹² The audio files and transcripts of interviews are stored in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Maryland and on password protected computers.

presentation, or document that contained information about the partnership. When this occurred, I asked the subject for a copy of that document for my review. From interviewees I obtained included email correspondence between the embedded criminologist, director of research at the corrections agency, and a mutual connection, progress reports submitted to the funding agency, power-point presentations given at conferences wherein the parties described the embedded criminologist partnership or research that resulted from their collaboration, and a copy of a presentation that the embedded criminologist's gave to the state's parole board. Additionally, the embedded criminologist gave me a link to a website with video footage of a budget hearing wherein the embedded criminologist's research was mentioned.

Data Collection Procedures: Observation

To supplement data derived from interviews and documents, I observed the current working relationship first hand. On one occasion, I joined the embedded criminologist and corrections agency's director of research on a visit to the site of one of their joint projects. Following the site visit, I attended an informal meeting wherein they discussed potential research ideas, upcoming policy changes for the organization, and began to design a research project. I took detailed notes regarding the subjects' behavior, their interactions, the content of conversations, and other aspects of the setting and experience. I transcribed my notes immediately following the observation. I also created a separate log of my opinions and assumptions regarding what I had just observed.

Observing the case in its natural setting was valuable as it allowed me to view an outcome of the embedded criminologist partnership first hand; namely the continued collaboration between parties. Shadowing the embedded criminologist served as an

opportunity to view the case directly, but as an outsider who is not intimately involved in the collaborative effort. This added a degree of objectivity to the analysis, as conclusions were not based solely on the perceptions of individuals involved in the collaboration or on information officially recorded in documents. Though the observational data are distinct from stakeholder perceptions of the collaboration, they are not perfectly objective as subjects may have filtered their behavior because I was present. Moreover, because I observed the parties two years after grant funding ended, the observational data only represent the continued collaboration between parties and do not reflect the nature of the partnership during the funding period.

Analytic Strategy

The analytical strategy employed was principally inductive. Through continual and in-depth scrutiny of the data, I identified emergent patterns and themes directly and tested them within the data. As Patton (1990) writes, qualitative research requires “long hours of careful work going over notes, organizing the data, looking for patterns, checking emergent patterns against the data, cross-validating data sources and findings, and making linkages among the various parts of the data and the emergent dimensions of the analysis” (p. 379). This description served as guidance for the present analysis.

Transcribing interviews proved to be a valuable way for me to become familiar with the raw data. In the process of transcribing each interview session, I took detailed notes that documented potential themes in the data along with my preliminary interpretations and impressions. Interview guides also served as a starting point for identifying themes because they were designed to tap into the certain constructs and gather similar data from each party. A list of emergent themes was created to focus

deeper analyses of each data source. A coding scheme was developed from this list to label the raw data and more easily identify examples of themes or patterns.

Once all of the interviews were transcribed, a basic content analysis of each transcript, document, and the observational data was performed wherein I identified and coded patterns (Patton, 1990, p. 381). Using the initial coding scheme I focused my attention on how each subject defined the role of an embedded criminologist, what they believed the benefits and challenges to using a researcher in this capacity to be, how they described the process behind embedding a researcher the agency, and whether or not they believe that embedding a criminologist within this particular agency was successful. I also paid close attention to discussions of policy-making, research translation, and evidence based policies.

Following a basic content analysis, I engaged in careful, continual readings of each interview transcript, document, and the observational data to further explore the themes within each. Through many iterations of reading and coding, I developed detailed profiles that characterized the data provided by each data source. For subjects that engaged in follow-up interviews, responses from all sessions were integrated into a single profile that represents the full perspective of that individual. I also constructed a profile to organize the observational data. By developing profiles for each interview subject, document, and the observational data, I was able to systematically organize the raw data by theme across data sources. This organization facilitated comparison in later stages of the analysis.

With detailed profiles for each subject or document, I employed a layered case approach to facilitate a deeper, more systematic analysis (Patton, 1990). Recall that the

unit of analysis under study is the working relationship between the embedded criminologist and the state corrections agency (n=1). This single case can be divided into subunits that consist of groups of stakeholders (n=3) such as researchers, practitioners, and representatives from the funding agency. The stakeholder groups can be further broken down by individual interview subjects (n=10). The profiles for each interview subject served as the first layer of data. Next, the profiles were organized into groups of stakeholders. Profiles for each group of stakeholders were developed to reflect the general themes common to stakeholder groups and to detect intra-group variation. Inter-group patterns were also discerned. The profiles representing groups of stakeholders served as the second layer of data

Profiles of individuals and groups of stakeholders were combined with the document profiles and observational data accumulated to create the third layer of data. Together these sources provide a detailed and holistic description of the working relationship between the embedded criminologist and the state corrections agency.

The findings from this analysis are presented in two separate parts. Part IV offers a comprehensive description of the specific case of the working relationship between the embedded criminologist and the department of corrections. Part V offers supplemental conclusions about embedded criminologist partnerships more broadly and discusses evidence based policies.

Part IV: A Detailed Portrayal of an Embedded Criminologist Collaboration¹³

The purpose of this section is to provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the working relationship between the embedded criminologist and state corrections agency under investigation. Specific attention is given to the origin of the collaboration, initial goals, and outcomes. The nature of the interactions between parties and the benefits and challenges they faced are also explored. Additionally, the success of this collaborative endeavor is evaluated according to several metrics. I close this section with an investigation of the mechanisms behind research use within the department of corrections and a discussion of the embedded criminologist's role in policy-making.

Origins of the Collaboration

All primary informants indicated that the working relationship was established through a mutual connection between the research director at the state corrections agency and the embedded criminologist. Both individuals attained graduate degrees¹⁴ from the same institution and were mentored by the same faculty member, an esteemed criminologist. In January 2011 the research director reached out to this professor and explained that the agency was looking for a partner to serve as an embedded criminologist. The professor identified the embedded criminologist as a potential candidate and communication between the embedded criminologist and the department of corrections began. Email documentation of the research director's initial communication

¹³ Throughout this section I often reference the number of subjects who agreed with certain statements. In instances when I state that only a portion of the ten interview subjects relayed a piece of information, this generally indicates that the remaining subjects did not address that topic during an interviews. Any opposing opinions are presented.

¹⁴ The embedded criminologist completed a doctoral degree at this university and the director of research earned a master's degree. They attended the university at different times.

with that professor served to verify that a mutual connection between the embedded criminologist and the research director prompted the collaborative effort.

With an introduction and support from a credible mutual connection, both the embedded criminologist and research director from the department of corrections implicitly trusted one another. Moreover, when the partnership was first forming, the director of research was a doctoral student studying criminology in the university where the embedded criminologist was a faculty member. Though they did not know one another prior to being introduced through their professor, this additional connection engendered trust and interest in pursuing a working relationship. Prior to seeking funding, they held several phone conversations to discuss future research projects and the possibility of engaging in a formal partnership. After several discussions and visits to the department of corrections, the research director suggested applying for a grant to fund a one-year collaboration to engage in mutually beneficial research.

The embedded criminologist and director of research worked together to quickly craft the grant proposal, which they submitted to the funding agency in March of 2011. The grant required applicants to propose a single research project to attain funding. The embedded criminologist and director of research selected a topic could inform state correctional policies and on which the embedded criminologist was an expert; the proposed research would investigate the nature of parolee recidivism to inform early discharge policies. The embedded criminologist was listed as the principal investigator for this project. Both parties revealed that they would work together in some capacity regardless of whether they were awarded funding.

A review of the solicitation that the parties responded to revealed that preference was given to proposals wherein a researcher works on-site within a criminal justice agency. Both the embedded criminologist and the director of research at the corrections agency confirmed that the funding opportunity encouraged them to develop a partnership where the researcher would work on-site, closely with staff. Furthermore, both parties indicated that they were familiar with Joan Petersilia's experience as an embedded criminologist in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Her reflections on working with CDCR sparked their interest and served as guidance when establishing the current collaborative effort.

Although grant funding formalized the collaboration between the embedded criminologist and the corrections agency, the details of how parties would interact throughout the funding period were left open-ended. The proposal lists several tasks that the embedded criminologist would perform for the corrections agency including arranging data sets, conducting statistical analyses, disseminating the results of research to academic and practitioner communities, and providing progress reports to the funding agency and corrections department as requested. The proposal also states that the embedded criminologist would work closely with the department of correction's research director toward completing the proposed research and any additional projects. Beyond these specifications, there was not formal memorandum or contract explicating exactly what privileges the embedded criminologist would or would not be granted or projects the embedded criminologist would work on with the corrections agency. These details were negotiated between parties once funding began.

Initial Goals

At the start of the collaboration, all parties had specific aspirations for the partnership and what would be accomplished. Many of these original goals were outlined in the grant proposal and confirmed by interview subjects. First, the embedded criminologist and department of corrections would complete a mutually beneficial research project addressing parolee recidivism, as outlined in the grant proposal. The proposal detailed the methodological approach that the partners developed and also provided a timeline for the various steps of this project. (Grant Proposal, p. 16). All three primary informants confirmed that an initial goal of the collaboration was the joint completion of this research.

The embedded criminologist and the corrections agency planned to work together on multiple projects in addition to the research proposed for the grant. Across stakeholder groups, all interview subjects confirmed that another goal of the partnership was to conduct high quality, methodologically sophisticated research that addressed concrete policy issues facing the agency. An electronic press release from the department of corrections articulated that the embedded criminologist would “apply academic work to real world policy issues” and the grant proposal indicated that the researcher would provide “scientific expertise to inform day to day policy issues at a high level” (Press Release, 2011; Grant Proposal, p. 3). Five interview subjects described this particular grant as “open-ended,” in that the terms of the grant were flexible and parties were not limited to the single research endeavor being funded. A review of the solicitation reveals no language restricting the parties to only work on the proposed research.

This collaborative effort was intended produce research to inform policy and practice within the corrections agency. The grant proposal indicated that the embedded criminologist would work with the department of corrections “to develop scientifically driven policy options” to address agency concerns (Grant proposal, p. 2). For example, referencing the research project outlined in the grant proposal, the award announcement posted by the funding agency indicated that “the objective [was] to develop early discharge policies that would eliminate returns to incarceration late in maximum sentence terms” (Award Announcement, 2011). Three interview subjects validated that additional research projects were expected to aid in the development of evidence based solutions to agency problems and practical changes.

All interviewees anticipated that a highly interactive partnership where the researcher worked on-site, “embedded” in the corrections agency. One practitioner stated that the agency “wanted to take a researcher from academia and place [the researcher] directly in our agency.” In addition, the grant proposal references the “goal of utilizing an embedded criminologist model,” lending support to the notion that an initial objective was to immerse a researcher in a practitioner setting (Grant Proposal, p. 3). The grant solicitation did not mention the term “embedded” specifically; however, “priority consideration [was] given to applications that [included] a placement at the criminal justice practice-based organization,” which may be interpreted as supportive of embedding (Grant Solicitation, p. 5)

From the start, most parties hoped that the collaboration would develop into a long-term partnership wherein the embedded criminologist and corrections department would continue to engage in mutually beneficial research. All interview subjects

affiliated with the funding agency and corrections agency expressed that an important goal of the grant was to establish a quality working relationship would extend beyond the funding period. Members of the funding agency made it clear that the award was intended to fund a relationship rather than a single research project. The grant solicitation verified that “the program [would] establish new criminal justice researcher-practitioner partnerships that can continue throughout the career of the researcher” (Grant Solicitation, p. 4). One practitioner declared forming a longstanding working relationship with the embedded criminologist as the “number one purpose of the partnership.” The embedded criminologist was admittedly more reticent at the outset of the collaboration and did not know whether the partnership would continue after grant funding. In spite of this uncertainty, the majority of stakeholders expressly intended to develop a long-term collaboration.

Beyond developing a long term working relationship between the embedded criminologist and the corrections agency, the grant proposal rendered “sustaining the partnership at an institutional level” a long-term objective (Grant Proposal, p. 3). Three of the four practitioners, the embedded criminologist, and the grant monitor hoped that the collaboration would cultivate a larger network of mutually beneficial partnerships between the department of corrections and researchers from the embedded criminologist’s university. The grant solicitation reiterated the formation of additional working relationships as a goal of the collaboration (Grant Solicitation, p. 4).

The Nature of the Embedded Criminologist Collaboration

With the initial goals outlined, I now turn to the specific nature of this embedded criminologist partnership.¹⁵ Prior to officially obtaining grant funding, the embedded criminologist and director of research had several conversations to negotiate their future working relationship and discuss potential research ideas. Just before the funding period began, the research director at the department of corrections sent out an email to staff introducing the embedded criminologist as an internal resource for the department. The email explained how the embedded criminologist would work directly with research staff and would have complete access to the agency's databases and facilities. Staff members were also encouraged to treat the embedded criminologist like an employee and reach out if they had research related questions.

Once the grant started, the embedded criminologist worked on-site at the corrections agency two days per week. While on-site, the embedded criminologist was afforded the same privileges as agency personnel. The department of corrections provided the embedded criminologist with an office, computer, email address, and access badge. In addition, the embedded criminologist received security clearance and credentials to freely access the agency's data systems.

Originally, the embedded criminologist worked closely with the corrections agency's director of research. As a doctoral student in criminology, the director of research served as a bridge between academia and the policy environment of the corrections agency for the embedded criminologist. Due to their common backgrounds, there was a certain level of trust and understanding between these two individuals from

¹⁵ Although parties are still collaborating, this description is focused primarily upon the nature of the collaboration during the period of active grant funding between 2012 and 2013.

the start; this foundation enabled the formation of a productive working relationship. The director of research acted as a mentor, ensuring that the embedded criminologist was well acclimated to the department and felt comfortable working on-site. They frequently met to consider how the placement was going and discuss research projects. The research director also facilitated numerous introductions with other departmental staff and provided guidance on agency routines and data practices.

The embedded criminologist learned about various aspects of the corrections department through face-to-face interactions and asking questions of staff in different departments. For example, if the embedded criminologist and director of researcher were discussing drug treatment programs, they would walk downstairs to the treatment services bureau and inquire about current practices with the staff in that office. The embedded criminologists noted that “being there and having my questions answered was crucial to learning.” All parties acknowledge that by spending substantial time in the agency, the embedded criminologist developed an intimate understanding of the inner-workings of the corrections department and built strong relationships with agency staff.

The embedded criminologist also attended various meetings within the research department and was invited to attend executive staff meetings and legislative hearings. One practitioner emphasized “there was nothing we kept from [the embedded criminologist] in terms of internal meetings.” All four practitioners noted that granting an outsider this type of access to data and meetings is an uncommon practice in the corrections agency. Working with more agency personnel and participating in day-to-day routines immersed the researcher in the agency environment. Seven of the ten interview subjects believed that this immersion afforded the embedded criminologist a

comprehensive understanding of the agency's priorities and goals, as well as any practical and political constraints facing the agency.

Importantly, an understanding of the agency's routines and priorities allowed the embedded criminologist to aid the agency's research efforts. Six of the ten interview subjects, including the three primary informants, relayed that the embedded criminologist provided agency's research staff with an expert opinion on research designs, data collection, measurement, and analytical techniques. At first, the embedded criminologist primarily assisted the research staff with ongoing research projects. Developing an intricate understanding of the agency and its priorities allowed the embedded criminologist to propose new projects of direct interest to the agency and subsequently become more involved in research efforts.

The embedded criminologist described the role in research projects as follows: "I'm not directly involved with actually running the project, but I'm the kind of, go-to [person] if they have some kind of research related questions." This description highlights that the embedded criminologist principally advised research projects rather than directly collecting or analyzing data. A formal report published by the agency confirms this claim by naming the embedded criminologist "a general advisor to all scientific endeavors" (Recidivism Report, 2013).

When asked to discuss the research that the embedded criminologist engaged in, interview subjects listed the following projects:

1. A randomized control trial assessing the impact of relocating ex-prisoners on recidivism
2. An instrumental variable analysis gauging the effect of prison visits on recidivism
3. A comprehensive report documenting the state's recidivism rates
4. A rigorous evaluation of the state's community corrections centers using propensity score matching

5. The development of contracts to hold community corrections facilities accountable for offender recidivism
6. An analysis of social ties among inmates and reoffending
7. A study assessing the neighborhood level determinants of parolee recidivism
8. The initial project proposed in the grant: An assessment of parolee supervision and early discharge

The embedded criminologist oversaw each of these projects and provided regular insight on technical issues as they arose. At least three graduate students from the embedded criminologist's university, including one that was interviewed, also aided in the completion of several of these research projects. Document confirmed that these projects were joint research endeavors. Many of the projects listed above resulted in presentations at professional conferences. Conference programs named the embedded criminologist, graduate students, and members from the corrections agency as co-presenters on numerous occasions, indicating that they collaborated toward the completion of that research. Additionally, the investigation of state recidivism rates referenced in project three above resulted in a formal report that the embedded criminologist co-authored with research staff from the department of corrections (Recidivism Report, 2013).

All interviewees characterized these joint research projects as mutually beneficial. A representative from the funding agency denoted mutually beneficial research as follows: "every research that they designed together ... was relevant to both of them. And by that I mean that the studies contributed to the literature but also to the agency's understanding of their own policies." The embedded criminologist worked with the research staff in the corrections agency to collectively produce research that not only advanced scholarship in criminology, but also addressed concrete issues facing the agency.

Proposing and engaging in mutually beneficial research projects often required compromise between the priorities of the embedded criminologist and the corrections agency. The embedded criminologist demonstrated an investment in the agency's priorities and constraints by designing research to improve the corrections department and that was responsive to the issues they faced. This dedication to improving the agency rather than being solely focused on peer-reviewed publications fostered trust between the embedded criminologist and the staff within the department of corrections. In return, the department of corrections supported research using innovative designs, such as randomized experiments, and were willing to consider conducting research that was theoretically rather than practically motivated.

The embedded criminologist also contributed to the agency's research efforts by participating in "brainstorming session" with members of the research and executive staff. Brainstorming sessions consisted of long, informal conversations about potential research ideas, different types of data to collect, and the progress of existing projects. Participation in these sessions was a central aspect of the embedded criminologist's role within the corrections agency. According to interview subjects, several of the projects listed above started as research questions proposed in these sessions.

As part of the observational component of this case study, I was able to directly witness a brainstorming session between the embedded criminologist and the department of correction's research director. The principal topic of discussion during the session was a pilot study to assess the effectiveness of responding to parole violations with graduated sanctions. The corrections department was interested in moving the whole state to a graduated sanction system, however they wanted to test its impact in a single parole

district prior to full implementation. During the session, the interactions between the embedded criminologist and the director of research are best described as a back and forth information exchange. Both individuals posed questions and potential solutions, and together they discussed the strengths and weaknesses of addressing their research question in different ways. The embedded criminologist primarily asked questions about the current parole practices and the legal constraints to various alternatives. Conversely, the research director asked questions regarding the extant literature on various topics and how the generalizability of findings would change with modifications to the research design. Over the course of the 90 minute brainstorm session, it became clear that the embedded criminologist and the research director were experts in different realms; the research director was proficient in agency policies, logistical constraints, and relevant legal statutes, while the embedded criminologist afforded knowledge on criminological literature, data collection, and research designs. Furthermore, these meetings seemed to serve as a vehicle for each individual to learn the needs, priorities, and skills of the other party, which may ultimately result in the development of a mutually beneficial project.

Seven of the ten interviewees argued that brainstorming sessions also served as a forum for the embedded criminologist to provide insight on policy issues facing the department of corrections. Moreover, research projects generated in brainstorm sessions were considered in the agency's policy discussions. The embedded criminologist's precise contributions to agency policy are more fully discussed in a later section focused on the success of this collaboration and policymaking within the department of corrections. Next, I turn to the process by which the researcher was embedded with the corrections agency.

The Process of Embedding

To elucidate the processes behind embedding the researcher within the department of corrections, I asked interview subjects to define what it means to be embedded and *how* the researcher became embedded in the agency. All ten interview subjects relayed that being “embedded” was akin to working on-site in the corrections agency. Becoming “embedded” also implied that the researcher developed an intimate understanding of the agency environment including its routines, needs, and constraints. According to seven of the ten interview subjects, “embedded” also meant that the researcher became one of the agency staff.

All ten interviewees concluded that becoming embedded was essentially a learning process for the researcher. The notion that embedding resembled a learning process clearly resonates in the following statement from a practitioner: “There was work that needed to be done to educate the researcher. [The embedded criminologist] had knowledge on the specific topics that [the embedded criminologist] worked on, but not necessarily on the specific programmatic and agency specific information. So there was some education and training that needed to take place in order to get [the embedded criminologist] up to speed and understand what [the embedded criminologist] was dealing with.” Another practitioner remarked “there was just so much for [the embedded criminologist] to learn in terms of data, programs, everything.” Nine of the ten interview subjects indicated that working directly with staff on-site expedited this learning process. The embedded criminologist confirmed that “I was there all the time, so I learned the system faster.”

Embedding can also be viewed as an “intense and gradual” process of relationship building. Developing strong working relationships based in mutual benefit required that both the embedded criminologist and staff at the department of corrections learned and appreciated the others’ skills and priorities over time. Five of the interview subjects including the three primary informants explained that feeling like a part of the agency, and building trust with staff complemented the learning process previously described.

The embedding process took time but did not have clearly defined boundaries. None of the interviewees reported a time frame or a requisite level of knowledge of the agency as indicators that the researcher was embedded. The embedded criminologist confirms that there was no threshold that determined when embedding officially took place: “Initially I was sort of a visitor, but at some point I was treated like more of a part of their agency. It became more of an insider feel... Like I had gained enough insight as to how their system worked... I can’t say it was six months or something, There’s no kind of jump, I think. Its kind of a gradual process and after some point I felt comfortable.”

According to the three primary informants, the embedding process was largely a matter of logistics. As noted previously, the agency provided the researcher with an office, computer, an identification badge to enter headquarters, and credentials to access and utilize their data systems. As one funding agency representative stressed, “without access to the agency and its data, the research and learning cannot be done.” The embedded criminologist also believed that these privileges made it easier for him to become embedded: “from the DOC side, they worked on the details of getting me embedded. They gave me access... they made it easier for me to move within the

system.” Six interview subjects asserted these privileges were indicative of becoming a part of the agency. Though on the surface they may seem trivial, it appears that logistical elements were central to the embedding process.

According to seven of the interview subjects, the process of embedding the researcher was facilitated through the grant. The embedded criminologist explained that grant funding was used to “buy out teaching time and then I could be physically embedded within the agency to speed up learning.” External funding allowed the embedded criminologist to spend substantial time in the department of corrections without taking time away from other responsibilities. Six interview subjects also relayed that the grant funding facilitated the researcher becoming embedded by subsidizing travel expenses.

Benefits and Challenges to the Embedded Criminologist Collaboration

The partnership that developed as a result of the embedding process had advantages for both the embedded criminologist and the department of corrections. Eight of the ten interview subjects relayed that the embedded criminologist benefitted from the unique opportunity to gain an intricate understanding of the corrections agency. Through this collaborative effort, multiple graduate students were also exposed to the agency environment and had a chance to work directly with the department of corrections. Providing graduate students with this experience also allowed the embedded criminologist to fulfill a responsibility to the university to mentor future researchers. As academic researchers, this hands-on experience in a practical setting was invaluable because it served as a chance to learn about pertinent issues in corrections practice; knowledge which may inform future research agendas of policy relevant work.

The embedded criminologist and other researchers also benefitted from access to the corrections agency's databases. The embedded criminologist describes "unrestricted access to a correctional agency's databases and the related databases in the state" as "a treasure" that opened the possibility for innovative research projects. Researchers typically do not have access to such rich, comprehensive data sets. According to six of the interviewees, the embedded criminologist could use this data to address numerous research questions on topics that have not been previously studied due to data constraints, which may lead to journal publications.

For the department of corrections, the principal advantage of this partnership was direct access to an expert researcher to advise and improve the agency's research efforts. The embedded criminologist also approached research differently than many of the agency's staff. As an academic researcher, the embedded criminologist was focused on conducting the most rigorous research possible with the agency's available data and resources. All four practitioners noted that the embedded criminologist's knowledge of the agency setting and of research designs, analytical techniques, and the extant criminological literature led to tangible improvement in the agency's research. Both researchers contended that the agency also benefitted from the creation of datasets that may be used to answer future policy questions.

Rather than focusing on how a certain research project could impact practice in the agency, the embedded criminologist also considered the broader implications of answering certain questions and the impact that such research could have on the field of criminology. With academic training and knowledge of criminological theory the embedded criminologist also informed the corrections agency of the potential collateral

consequences that may be associated with certain policy decisions, which the agency may not have considered otherwise. With external funding, this research expertise came at no cost to the agency.

Any researcher with advanced training, including agency staff with doctoral degrees, could have enhanced the agency's research efforts in similar ways. A unique advantage to working with a university faculty member was that the embedded criminologist served as an independent source to provide a fresh look at agency practices. In an effort to learn the agency environment, the embedded criminologist frequently asked questions about why the department of corrections operated in a certain ways. In answering these questions agency staff were forced to critically assess and justify their current practices and routines. This was rare for the department of corrections because insiders rarely question traditional practices. Agency staff found it valuable to examine their routines and identify areas where the agency could potentially improve.

The notion of mutual benefit permeated discussions of this collaboration. Six interviewees reported that in working together, bi-directional learning occurred and both the embedded criminologist and practitioners at the corrections agency gained an understanding of the others' priorities. All three primary informants stressed that this shared understanding of the other's position facilitated better communication between parties and a more productive working relationship. Furthermore, as I previously mentioned, the research produced as a result of the collaboration was mutually beneficial in that it advanced both the field of criminology and the agency in understanding and addressing practical problems.

Although the benefits to both parties involved in the embedded criminologist partnership were numerous, this collaboration was not immune to difficulty. A common challenge to both the embedded criminologist and the practitioners at the department of corrections was the considerable time commitment that the collaboration required. Both parties articulated that they invested substantial time in building a quality relationship that was mutually beneficial. One of the practitioners noted, “I think the biggest challenge would be the investment of time... So it’s kind of like a dating relationship. You have to invest time from both sides and that’s hard to do.” For the embedded criminologist, spending two days per week at the department of corrections was a large but necessary investment toward learning the agency environment. Practitioners viewed brainstorming sessions as an additional step in conducting research. Beyond the time commitment, interviewees did not identify any additional challenges.

Outcomes of the Collaboration

Discussions about the outcomes of this embedded criminologist partnership mirrored conversations of its benefits.¹⁶ There was a high degree of convergence in the responses of interview subjects regarding the collaboration’s outcomes. The following list summarizes outcomes mentioned by the majority of subjects.¹⁷

1. *Mutually beneficial research projects*: As outlined above, interviewees unanimously agreed that the research projects resulting from this collaboration served to benefit the corrections agency and the embedded criminologist, as well as the field

¹⁶ There was considerable overlap between reported benefits, outcomes and success measures for this partnership, which suggests that these constructs were conflated by interview subjects. This limitation is discussed in greater detail in Part VI.

¹⁷ Outcomes included in this list were mentioned by at least 6 of the ten interview subjects and included one respondent from each stakeholder group. All of these outcomes were evidenced in documents as well, with the exception of mutual benefit (number six).

of criminology. Documents revealed that multiple research projects were presented at both academic and practitioner conferences, lending credence to the notion that projects were relevant to be researchers and practitioners.

2. *High quality research*: The working relationship between the DOC and embedded criminologist led to methodologically sophisticated research. According to interview subjects, the embedded criminologist aided in designing and interpreting propensity score matching and instrumental variable analyses, which are rigorous statistical techniques not typically employed by the agency. The agency also implemented a randomized experiment which is currently ongoing.

3. *Innovative research*: Traditionally, most corrections agencies conduct research to satisfy basic reporting requirements such as population reports or simple program evaluations. Through the embedded criminologist collaboration, the department of corrections was able to conduct research that extended beyond what is typically required and answered important questions about their existing policies and inmate populations. An example of the innovative research that resulted from this partnership is the study addressing the social ties between inmates and their effects on post-prison offending.

4. *Publications and presentations*: Related to the previous three points, the research generated as a result of the collaborative effort was presented at multiple professional and academic conferences. Additionally, a formal recidivism report was produced and at least one academic article was submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

5. *Policy changes*: The working relationship between the embedded criminologist and the state corrections agency impacted policies within the agency. The embedded

criminologist highlights this point in stating “our partnership shaped some of the actual policies that the DOC is implementing or thinking about implementing.” For example, as a direct result of one of the informal brainstorming sessions, a new contracting policy was developed and instituted in evaluating community corrections centers. This project is fully discussed in the next section regarding the collaboration’s success.

6. *Mutual Understanding*: In working together under the embedded criminologist model, the embedded criminologist and practitioners developed an appreciation of the skills, priorities, and constraints each retained. Understanding the perspective of the other party facilitated a more productive working relationship.

7. *Continued collaboration*: The embedded criminologist and the corrections agency are currently working on several new research projects, despite the conclusion of the grant funding.¹⁸ According to the primary informants, they plan to continue working together into the future. Recently, the embedded criminologist was asked to serve on a transition team as the department of corrections undergoes organizational changes.

8. *Institutional relationships*: The original partnership between the embedded criminologist and the corrections agency has expanded to include graduate students from the embedded criminologist’s university. The embedded criminologist stated: “to some extent this partnership became a little more institutionalized between DOC and [my] department because so many of us are involved in the partnership now.”

Two additional outcomes were identified within specific stakeholder groups. The two researchers articulated that an important result of this collaboration was the creation

¹⁸ It is worth noting that the grant is technically still active. In expectation that additional research products will be submitted to the funding agency, the grant is on a “no cost extension” and has not been officially terminated.

of new datasets. Data from the corrections agency, parole board, and other state agencies were cleaned and combined into comprehensive sets. The researchers argued that converting raw data into a usable form is an important outcome as it may facilitate future research projects.

Moreover, practitioners uniformly emphasized that drawing publicity to the partnership and the embedded criminologist model of collaboration was a valuable outcome of the partnership. The corrections agency's director of research presented the embedded criminologist model at several conferences. A review of the power point slides used in these presentations revealed that material covered included the advantages of having an expert researcher within a corrections department and examples of potential research questions or policy issues to address (Powerpoint Presentation A). Audiences included the Association of State Corrections Administrators, the American Correctional Association, and the National Institute of Justice.

Evaluating the Collaboration's Success

Considering the previous description of the embedded criminologist partnership and its benefits, challenges, and outcomes, one is left to question if this collaboration was a success. Answering this question is complicated by the fact that there is no formal measure of a successful embedded criminologist partnership in the extant literature. Anecdotal accounts of embedded criminologists discuss collaborations favorably, which implies success, but have not offered a concrete metric. Similarly, the extant literature on researcher-practitioner partnerships fails to reach consensus in defining what constitutes a successful collaboration. Some studies rely on the perceptions of the individuals involved in the collaboration, others look to whether collaboration extended beyond a single

project, and others still use metrics including the creation of evidence-based practices, joint publications, or whether the partnership achieved the initial goals. For the present purposes, I define the success of this embedded criminologist partnership based on the perceptions of the individuals involved, the fulfillment of the initial goals, and the degree to which research was translated into policy and practice.

Perceptions of Interview Subjects

I asked each interview subject whether they *believed* the embedded criminologist partnership was successful and why. Subjects unanimously agreed the collaboration was successful. The majority of subjects defined success in similar ways, which were intimately related to the benefits and outcomes of the collaboration stated in previous sections. For example, common measures of success expressed by at least six interviewees included mutually beneficial research projects, high quality research projects, research products including presentations and publications, concrete policy changes, continued collaboration, and a greater appreciation for the skills of their partner. Due to this overlap, I will highlight a collection of findings where definitions of success varied among stakeholder groups.

Individuals in the practitioner stakeholder group were more likely to define this collaboration as successful because it increased awareness of embedded partnerships and their utility among other practitioners. Specifically, three of the four practitioners I interviewed expressed that success could be inferred through presentations to various practitioner associations regarding the benefits of having an embedded researcher. They argued that other practitioners' interest in the embedded criminologist model of collaboration and researcher-practitioner partnerships generally served as a broader

impact of the collaboration and should be considered in the partnership's success. With the exception of the grant monitor, no other interviewee mentioned this when discussing success.

Individuals from the corrections agency also defined the collaboration as a success simply because the researcher was embedded in the agency. Embedding was not referenced as a success measure by any researchers or funding agency representatives. Openness to granting an outsider full access to the agency was described by practitioners as a "bold move" or "a leap of faith" that indicated success. One practitioner proclaimed, "we gave this [person] the keys to the kingdom and the sky didn't fall down. That's a win in my book."

The two researchers identified quality relationships between the other university researchers and the corrections agency as evidence of success. They emphasized that at least three graduate students completed dissertations using the corrections agency's data. They also expressed that exposing the graduate students to an agency environment constituted a unique learning opportunity for graduate students, which signified success.

Informants from the funding agency defined success by the degree to which the parties involved were satisfied with the collaboration. Three of the four funding agency representatives referenced personal conversations with the embedded criminologist or the secretary of corrections wherein they revealed they were pleased with the progress of the collaboration. Neither the researchers nor practitioners interviewed defined success by the satisfaction of other parties.

Initial Goals

Another way to demonstrate the collaboration's success is to assess whether or not the initial goals were fully or partially met, and according to what standards. The three stakeholder groups involved in this collaboration had an interest in its success; however their diverse priorities in a general sense may lead them to define success differently. For example, publications in peer-reviewed journals or a deep understanding of a criminal justice agency would constitute success for an academic researcher. Conducting rigorous research that can be practically applied and improve the agency may mark success for members of a corrections department. Furthermore, a funding agency may define success as sustained collaboration, mutually beneficial research or receiving final reports of how the funds were spent.

Below I list each of the initial goals for the collaboration and discuss the degree to which each was fulfilled. When appropriate, I distinguish how the goals could be fulfilled from the general perspective of an academic researcher, a corrections agency, and a funding agency. In order to qualify as "fully met," there can be no evidence in interviews, documents, or the observational data suggesting that the goal was not met from the perspective of any party.

1. *Completion of the Initial Research Outlined in the Grant:* This goal was partially met. Progress reports submitted to the funding agency indicated that the original research project is in its final stages. A PowerPoint presentation reveals that the embedded criminologist shared preliminary results from this work with the parole board (PowerPoint Presentation B), however this project is still ongoing and the grant was placed on a no-cost extension. An extension was needed because the initial

research question changed part way through the project and new analyses were performed in order to provide the parole board with results they could use in practice. From an academic perspective, peer reviewed publications would constitute the completion of a research project, however no articles have been published to date. In addition, since the grant is on a no-cost extension until the project is completed, it seems that this goal is not fulfilled from the perspective of the funding agency because a final report was not submitted within the pre-determined timeframe of one year. In contrast however, this goal was met from the perspective of the corrections agency because the results of the initial research were disseminated to the parole board and the original research question modified so that the results could be implemented in a practical setting.

2. *Conduct multiple rigorous research projects*: The embedded criminologist oversaw and participated in numerous policy relevant research projects that utilized the corrections agency's data and rigorous methodological designs. Most of this research is ongoing rather than completed. Only one study regarding the state's recidivism rates was officially completed and resulted in a formal report. However, preliminary results from several of these projects were presented at academic and practitioner conferences such as the American Society of Criminology, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, and the American Corrections Association. For the corrections agency, numerous projects addressing specific agency concerns marks success. In particular, the research employed advanced methodology and the results can eventually be used to improve agency policy or practice. From a funding agency perspective, the agency financed numerous projects to advance both the field of

criminology and correctional practices rather than a single study, illustrating success. Presenting the preliminary work at academic conferences would mark success for an academic researcher, however none of these projects have resulted in a peer-reviewed publication to date. Based on this evidence, the goal of completing rigorous research in addition to the initial grant project was partially met.

3. *Development of scientifically-driven policies*: The collaboration resulted in one concrete policy change that was based on scientific evidence. In response to an unfavorable evaluation of the state's community corrections centers, the embedded criminologist and the corrections agency staff developed a new contracting policy to incentivize recidivism reductions in all privately run community corrections centers across the state. Early evaluations show preliminary evidence of reduced recidivism. Despite this example of a scientifically based policy change, the majority of research produced by the embedded criminologist and corrections agency has not yet influenced agency practice. For example, the research on parolee recidivism outlined in the grant proposal was expressly intended to inform early discharge policies, however this has not occurred. Therefore, the initial objective for the research generated as a result of the collaboration to influence agency policy and practice was partially met.

4. *Embedding a researcher in the agency*: The goal of embedding a researcher within the corrections agency was fully achieved. There is no evidence to suggest that the researcher was not embedded within the department of corrections. Interview subjects specifically identified the researcher as an "embedded criminologist" and uniformly believed that the collaborative effort was more intensive and interactive than

traditional researcher-practitioner partnerships, marking success. The embedded criminologist bought out teaching time from the university in order to work on-site at the corrections agency two days per week and was treated like an employee.

According to all interviewees, working on-site and treated like an employee are central elements of successful embedding. The opportunity to gain understanding a criminal justice agency constitutes success from an academic perspective. Though it is not possible to objectively determine how well the embedded criminologist understood the agency environment, when I shadowed the embedded criminologist at the department of corrections, it was clear that the researcher was comfortable in the agency, had access to the facilities and data, and was familiar with the agency's practices.

5. *Continued Collaboration*: Two years after grant funding ended, the embedded criminologist and the department of corrections are currently working on multiple research projects. They hold regular phone calls and are actively coming up with new research ideas to collectively pursue. Neither party has indicated any intention of ending the collaboration. Furthermore, the embedded criminologist was recently asked to join an agency transition team tasked with merging the state corrections agency and parole board. The embedded criminologist will represent academic researchers and provide an opinion on how the merge may affect future collaborative efforts. It is clear that this objective was fully met in that the parties have sustained the partnership in the absence of grant funding.

6. *Institutional Partnerships*: Several graduate students are working on projects with the department of corrections. The graduate student I interviewed developed a

working relationship with the corrections agency independent of the embedded criminologist and is working on numerous projects with members of the agency's research staff. Additionally, three graduate students have collaborated with the department of corrections to complete their doctoral dissertations and other students at the embedded criminologist's university are beginning new projects. Practitioners at the corrections agency also reported collaborating with other graduates student and faculty at the embedded criminologist's university. These relationships serve as evidence that that the initial goal of cultivating long lasting, institutional partnerships was fully achieved.

Research Translation

The success of this collaboration can also be evaluated by considering the degree to which research was translated into policy and practice in the corrections agency. In light of the recent focus on using research evidence in policy and practice decisions, the ways in which this embedded criminologist partnership facilitated research translation deserve special attention. Accordingly, this section is devoted to exploring when and how the department of corrections used the research conducted as a part of this collaboration.

Before research translation and the underlying mechanisms are discussed, it is essential to define what I mean by successful translation. The extensive literature on research utilization fails to reach a consensus on what constitutes success in translational activities. As such, I asked interview subjects to share their views as to what represents successful research translation. Seven of the ten interview subjects described success as the direct application of an empirical finding to a practical issue. Four interviewees argued that successful research translation could take the form of providing practitioners

with knowledge that could be used to inform future decisions and change how they view and approach practical problems. Additionally, one representative from the funding agency defined successful research translation as “the application of the scientific method to new questions...teaching practitioners how to be their own researchers.” Based on these responses, I will define successful research utilization as instrumental, conceptual, or process research use for the purposes of the present discussion (See Weiss, 1979; Tseng, 2012).

As I mentioned in the previous discussion of the collaboration’s initial goals, this embedded criminologist partnership resulted in one example of instrumental research use; a new contracting policy for community corrections centers was developed in response to a rigorous program evaluation conducted by the embedded criminologist and the agency’s research staff. The evaluation indicated that community corrections centers may be criminogenic. To ameliorate this unfavorable situation, the department of corrections crafted a new contract policy wherein community corrections centers were held responsible for the recidivism of their residents. A new, validated measure of recidivism that took into account both new offenses and technical violations was also developed and integrated into the contracts.

This example of instrumental research use suggests that conducting research that is responsive to agency needs may be a vehicle toward translation. The evaluation that prompted the creation of the new policy was specifically tailored to address recidivism of a certain population of offenders in the state. Furthermore, the replacement policy was developed with attention to the agency’s goal of reducing recidivism in community

corrections centers, but also took into account the political and financial constraints upon the corrections agency.

This example of instrumental research use also highlights that communication between the embedded criminologist and agency personnel may serve as an important mechanism underlying the translation of research into policy and practice. Through conversations regarding potential solutions to the high recidivism rates in community corrections centers, the embedded criminologist and agency staff devised multiple drafts of a new contract policy. Drafts were edited with assistance from members from the agency's research unit and staff from other agency departments such as the legal team and budget office. The final, unique policy was a result of the bidirectional communication between these parties. Their numerous iterative conversations also resulted in the construction of the new recidivism measure for the contracts.

In addition to this example of instrumental research use, the embedded criminologist's research on parolee recidivism outlined in the grant proposal was intended to directly inform parole policy. Three practitioners and the embedded criminologist emphasized that the parole board has not made any policy changes based on this research. An investigation as to why this is the case revealed that legal constraints prohibited the parole board from using the research findings directly in decision-making. The embedded criminologist's research suggested ending parole supervision early for certain offenders, however the board was not able to terminate supervision prior to an individual's maximum sentence date. This barrier highlights the importance of conducting research specifically tailored for the agency so that results generated can be feasibly implemented by that agency. Conversations between the embedded criminologist and

parole board members have resulted in a revision of the initial research question to address changing supervision level, which the board has control over, rather than the length of supervision. This modification may produce findings that the board can implement, but the research is ongoing and no changes have been made to date. Had these conversations occurred prior to the research being conducted, instrumental research use may have occurred. As such, it can be seen that communication between researchers and practitioners was vital to conducting research that can be translated into policy and practice

Though the research outlined in the grant proposal was not directly translated into policy and practice within the corrections agency, it would appear that conceptual research use did occur. The chairman of the probation and parole board recently stated the following on the record at a Senate budget hearing: “This could be a little controversial but research would indicate after, perhaps two or three years, that a lot of offenders if they’re doing really well might be able to have their supervision truncated, if you will. We would require legislation to do that. But that would be another way, perhaps, to reduce recidivism” (Budget Hearing, 2015). This statement about a potential policy change implies the embedded criminologist’s research shaped the chairman’s view of policy options, demonstrating conceptual research use.

This perspective shift likely resulted from the embedded criminologist presenting the research findings directly to the parole board. The presentation slides revealed that the embedded criminologist spent ample time explaining how the findings could be applied in a practical setting to reduce recidivism and the workload of parole offices (PowerPoint Presentation B). These conversations reasonably could have shifted the perspective of the

parole board members and fostered openness to various research based policy options. In addition to this example of conceptual research use, other corrections agency staff reported that conversations with the embedded criminologist informed their views of recidivism and reentry. For example, one practitioner admitted: “By talking to [the embedded criminologist] I started to look at recidivism differently. It’s not so straightforward,” marking a perspective change. As such, communication between researcher and practitioners was crucial to conceptual research use.

The embedded criminologist partnership also facilitated process research use. At a quarterly research seminar in corrections agency, the embedded criminologist presented the research outlined in the grant proposal, some of the statistical methods to be applied, and a brief summary of the criminological literature on parole and reentry. Staff from the research office and other departments within the agency attended this session and reported gaining knowledge of research on reentry. Moreover, one practitioner relayed that the embedded criminologist “brought the methods” to the corrections department and offered guidance on advanced statistical techniques that the agency is now using in other studies. Two additional practitioners mentioned they became more comfortable with advanced research designs as a result of working with the embedded criminologist on various projects. These examples accentuate the technical skills practitioners acquired through the partnership and exemplify process research use.

The importance of communication is also highlighted when investigating the mechanisms behind process research use. The completion of joint research projects allowed the embedded criminologist to advise practitioners on data collection and/or explain the advantages and basic premises of certain research designs and statistical

techniques. Through communication and interaction with the embedded criminologist, practitioners gained an understanding of those designs. This new skillset may be translated into future research projects.

Quality relationships marked by trust and mutual respect served as another vehicle toward all three types of research translation mentioned above. These relationships fostered an environment that was conducive to generating mutually beneficial research that was sensitive to the needs of the agency and is more likely to be integrated into decision-making. Trust and mutual respect also enabled effective communication between the embedded criminologist agency staff. Furthermore, research translation would not have been possible unless the agency staff trusted and respected the embedded criminologist as a reliable source of information.

In addition, all interview subjects defined this department of corrections as uniquely supportive of research and receptive to using research in decision-making. One practitioner stated “if we have a problem, we always start with what the research suggests.” The director of research reported that the research office is included in almost all policy discussions within the agency and research evidence is consulted in most of the agency’s decisions. This motivation to use research in decision-making is not a mechanism per se, but plausibly increased the likelihood that scientific evidence was translated into policy and practice within this corrections agency.

In short, this embedded criminologist partnership facilitated all three types of research translation. Although research utilization occurred in the corrections agency, translating research into policy and practice was not a salient metric of the collaboration’s success for interview subjects; they more commonly defined success by other measures

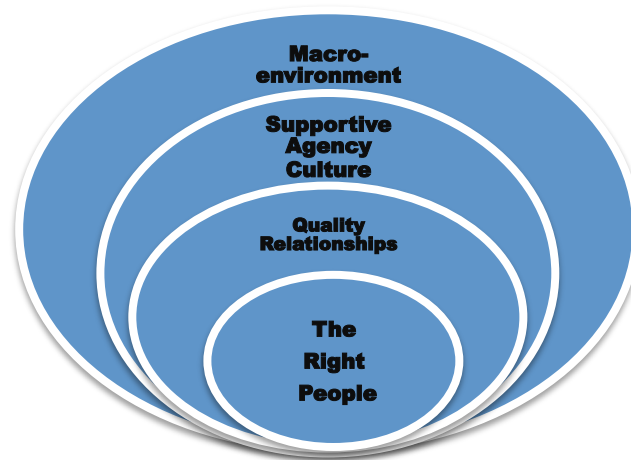
presented in the previous sections. Furthermore, the amount of translation that occurred seems relatively modest considering the amount and variety of research that the partners engaged in. This disconnect may exist because much of the research that the embedded criminologist engaged in with the corrections agency is ongoing and final results are not available yet. Therefore, a discussion of research translation may be premature at this point in time. Still, it would appear that based on the three success measures collectively, this partnership can be considered successful. I now turn to a discussion of the factors that are associated with these successes.

Factors Associated with Success

Upon classifying this embedded criminologist partnership as a successful endeavor, it then becomes important to identify what factors may have contributed to this success. After describing the reasons why the embedded criminologist model was a success, interview subjects were asked to identify factors that were associated with that success. As depicted in Figure 1, the majority of factors contributing to the success of this embedded criminologist partnership can be categorized into four levels: characteristics of individuals involved in the collaboration, characteristics of relationships between individuals, the culture of the corrections agency, and contextual factors.¹⁹ A few of the factors that facilitated research translation were described in the previous section. The factors presented here are associated with at least one of the three measures of success presented in the previous section.

¹⁹ External funding is excluded from this model. Subjects universally agreed funding contributed to the success of this embedded criminologist partnership. The researcher used grant money for course buy-outs and travel expenses, which allowed the researcher to “create time” to work on-site at the agency and learn the environment.

Figure 1. Factors Associated with the Success of the Embedded Criminologist Partnership



Level 1: Characteristics of Individual Partners

In short, as one subject said, “people matter.” Seven of the ten interview subjects indicated that the success of this collaboration was contingent upon having the right people involved. Both the embedded criminologist and members of the corrections agency staff were highly invested in the partnership and set aside time for idea generation and research projects. Not all people are willing or able to make this time, but the dedication of partners to the collaboration was seen as an important element of success. Additionally, individuals needed to be open to learning from one another and appreciating the others’ diverse skills and priorities. As one practitioner stated “you just have to be open and really try to learn their perspective and learn how to be helpful to them in order for this to work.”

Seven interview participants emphasized that the success of the partnership was contingent upon having an individual within the agency to serve as mentor for the embedded criminologist. This individual can be thought of as what one practitioner defined as a “research liaison.” Interviewees felt it was crucial that the corrections agency

had a staff member with academic training who was devoted to training the embedded criminologist on agency routines and data and facilitated introductions with other employees. In this case, the director of research in the department of corrections served as the research liaison. The director of research essentially serves as a bridge between the world of academia and the policy environment of the agency. Five interview subjects directly named the research director when asked about the success of the collaboration.

A supportive secretary of corrections was also a crucial player in the partnership's success. Seven interview subjects emphasized that the support of the secretary of corrections was essential because the secretary authorized research projects and approved requests to grant the researcher access to facilities and data. Additionally, the secretary of corrections had considerable leverage over the policies implemented in the agency, which may have translated into scientifically based policy changes.

Level Two: Characteristics of Relationships between Individuals

Relationships also mattered. Not only was the success of the collaboration contingent upon the right people, the way they interacted with one another was also crucial. It was essential that the working relationship between the embedded criminologist and the department of corrections be grounded in mutual respect and trust. To ensure that the working relationship was productive and that all parties were benefiting, practitioners reported that they provided concrete research projects for the embedded criminologist to participate in while on-site. In addition, the embedded criminologist reported censoring the research question posed to agency staff so as not to waste their time with inquiries that were not policy relevant. The working relationship

was characterized by a mutual respect for the other party's time, which facilitated engagement in several mutually beneficial research projects.

The notion of trust was also implicit in the description of this collaboration. Trust was required to allow the embedded criminologist full access to the agency and its data. The continued collaboration of the parties implies that trust was built and maintained, and I would also expect that trust between parties facilitated mutual understanding of each others' skills and perspectives. I found it surprising that none of the interview subjects explicitly mentioned trust in discussions of the partnership's success of because as an outsider it seems crucial.

All three primary informants indicated that the relationship between the secretary of corrections and the research director also enabled success. Due to the organizational structure of this department of corrections, the secretary directly oversees the research director. This direct link was essential to gaining approval for joint research projects and access to meetings where the embedded criminologist could learn about the agency and/or participate in policy discussions. Furthermore, this relationship was also a direct avenue to communicate findings from joint research projects to the person who was in a position to make policy changes.

Spatial relationships between parties also mattered. Geographic proximity of the partners was a key factor associated with success. Six interview subjects indicated that the relatively short distance between the embedded criminologist's university and the corrections agency allowed the embedded criminologist to spend considerable time on-site, which enabled many of the successes described above.

Level Three: Agency Culture

In the present case, the department of corrections was extremely supportive of research. The culture of the corrections agency was commonly described by interviewees as “receptive to research,” “research friendly,” and “innovative.” All interview participants expressed that this receptivity and support of research is rare among corrections departments, but not new to the agency under study. If the agency did not see the value of research and was not committed to using scientific evidence, it is unlikely that the organization would open its doors to an academic researcher or listen to his or her suggestions, and the partnership may never have formed.

Objectively, it is difficult to disentangle this cultural piece from the individuals in charge of decision-making within the agency and relationships between individuals. However, every interview subject made reference to this department of corrections’ unique agency “culture” or “environment.” Though it cannot be verified by the present study, the data appear to support the existence of such a culture.

Level Four: Macro-Environmental Factors

This embedded criminologist partnership was situated within the larger context of criminal justice policy. Seven of the ten interviewees articulated that limited resources to maintain high levels of incarceration in state and federal prisons urged corrections officials to consider innovative policies that would reduce prison size without jeopardizing public safety. This was possible in part because at the time of the collaboration, crime rates were relatively low and crime policy less politicized. In pursuit of effective policy options, corrections agencies invested in research. Five interview subjects reported that these contextual factors led to the creation of this embedded

criminologist partnership and contributed to the continued collaboration between parties, two of the aforementioned success metrics. The grant proposal also references these contextual factors as motivation for seeking out an academic partner to address the agency's policy issues (Grant Proposal, p. 3).

The four levels of this model are interdependent. For example, four interviewees noted the possibility that contextual factors may have shaped the agency culture to be more receptive and supportive of research. In addition, having the right people involved in the partnership likely led to the formation of quality relationships between parties. Three interview subjects also argued that both individuals and quality relationships contributed to a research friendly culture.

The vast majority of evidence presented above implies that this embedded criminologist partnership was successful on multiple dimensions. I did not find this evidence of success surprising because the partnership formed under seemingly ideal conditions. For example, the embedded criminologist and director of research at the corrections agency were introduced by a mutual connection, an esteemed criminologist, who encouraged their collaboration. Having the support and guidance of a credible source may have increased the willingness of the corrections agency to partner with this particular researcher. This professor was also listed as a consultant for the partnership on the grant proposal, which may have helped secure funding. Financial support for the partnership was a critical impetus for success because it allowed the researcher to buy out teaching time and work on-site at the corrections agency.

Moreover, this particular corrections agency seems to be an ideal setting for an embedded criminologist collaboration. Prior to the entry of the embedded criminologist

the corrections agency was described as research-oriented and motivated to conduct innovative, high quality research. The organizational structure, namely the direct avenue of communication between the director of research and secretary of corrections, allowed the embedded criminologist and research staff to gain approval for multiple projects with relative ease. They could also to communicate the results of their research to an individual in a position to make changes to policy and practice. Finally, while working at the department of corrections, the director of research attained a doctoral degree at the university where the embedded criminologist served on the faculty. This additional connection likely enhanced the parties' commitment to the partnership's success.

Given the personal connections and the institutional and organizational factors that gave rise to this partnership, it is difficult to imagine how this collaboration could have failed. It is important to note that the fact that this partnership seems to have been set up for success does not undermine the accomplishments of the parties involved or the fact that the parties benefitted in numerous ways. However, one can question whether an embedded criminologist collaboration that was formed under less favorable circumstances would attain the same level of successes.

Policy Making in the Corrections Agency

In addition to discussing the partnership's success, I also inquired about the process of policymaking with the corrections agency in an effort to shed light on how decisions are made. When asked how policies are made within the department of corrections, three of the four practitioners and the embedded criminologist relayed that the agency's policy needs are identified by the executive staff. Two other practitioners confirmed that the research staff is solicited to investigate certain policy issues that are

identified by agency leadership. Much of the research conducted by the research office responds to an executive directive.

Once a need is identified, committees or working groups made up of relevant individuals within the different offices in the department of corrections convene to discuss policy options. One of the practitioners shared the following “that’s how a lot of policies get drafted, it is through committees that are tasked with dealing with certain issues. Committees of relevant people throughout the department.” Crafting policies within these committees is an iterative process described by one practitioner as a “constant back-and-forth.” Another practitioner described the process as follows: “a working group drafts up the language for a potential policy. And so then these policies and procedures would be shared with a senior staff member to review for comments and changes. Then it would come back to the working group. And we re-draft. And eventually it gets signed off and it would be posted in a bulletin with an effective date of whenever.” Two important features are captured in this statement: the iterative nature of crafting new policies and the fact that agency executives must approve a decision before it becomes official agency practice.

Role of the Embedded Criminologist within the Agency’s Policy Making

I asked interview subjects if and how the embedded criminologist contributed to the department of corrections’ policy decision-making. All four practitioners remarked that the embedded criminologist’s role was to offer an academic’s perspective on the topics discussed in committee meetings. As one practitioner notes, the embedded criminologist served as a “sounding board to bounce ideas off and [ask] questions or [make] suggestions from an academic’s perspective that enrich the discussion.”

According to another practitioner, “[the embedded criminologist’s] main contribution to policy making was asking the right questions to figure out a) what data we could use to answer our questions and b) what were the best methods to answer our questions.”

As an academic, the embedded criminologist was also familiar with how other agencies may have effectively responded to similar policy issues and used knowledge of criminological theory and research to inform policy discussions. The embedded criminologist was also aware of the most recent publications and innovative policy options. One practitioner offers the following description of an embedded criminologist’s role in policy discussion: “an embedded criminologist directs the discussion to what the research says. To tell us what is and isn’t supported.” Moreover, three representatives from the funding agency argued an embedded criminologist improved agency policy by providing technical research expertise to improve the quality of agency research and evaluations.

The embedded criminologist conveyed the role in agency policymaking as consisting of asking and answering questions. To elaborate, in many cases members of the corrections agency identified a policy question that required empirical research to answer. In these cases an embedded criminologist responded to requests from an agency regarding a specific, predetermined issue by appraising the extant literature, conducting a program evaluation, or designing a pilot study to test the effectiveness of a new policy. At other times the embedded criminologist identified certain policy questions for the agency to consider. Six interview subjects also verified that the embedded criminologist recommended new policy questions for the agency to explore.

Whether providing novel insight and research questions, arguing for evidence based policies, or offering technical expertise on research designs, all parties agreed that the embedded criminologist played supported the corrections agency's policy-making efforts in several ways. An implicit link among the responses of stakeholders is the idea of improvement. The accounts uniformly suggest that the embedded criminologist added value to policy discussions and positively contributed to policy-making.

Part V: Supplemental Findings

The previous section served to carefully describe a specific instance of an embedded criminologist partnership between an academic researcher and a state corrections agency. In addition to attaining this holistic view of the specific collaborative effort, I assessed interview subjects' general understandings of embedded criminologist collaborations and the potential benefits and challenges to such endeavors. Ascertaining more global views of embedded criminologist partnerships facilitated comparison with the specific case under study and revealed the degree to which interview subjects associated the specific collaboration under study with the broader concept.

This section focuses on the correspondence and divergence between the general and specific descriptions regarding embedded criminologist collaborations. The findings presented here are predominately drawn from responses to a specific set of interview questions aimed to capture the subjects' views of embedded criminologist partnerships without priming the particular case described above.²⁰ A series of remarks on "evidence based" policies and practices conclude the presentation of findings.

²⁰ Very few documents contained information pertaining to the embedded criminologist model generally. One exception is a PowerPoint presentation containing information on the benefits of embedded criminologist collaborations developed for a practitioner audience (PowerPoint Presentation B). Additionally, the grant proposal, which was written prior to the onset of the specific partnership described above, contains subject's general views of embedded criminologist collaborations. Data from these documents are integrated into the findings presented in this section. However, the majority of documents that I collected exclusively contained information about the specific case presented in part IV, and therefore are not included. Data from the field observation is similarly not included, as I was only able to observe the specific case.

Embedded Criminologist Collaborations²¹

Prior to answering any questions about the specific case or their own experiences working with or as an embedded criminologist, interview subjects were asked to discuss what an embedded criminologist is and the potential benefits and challenges to embedded criminologist partnerships.²² Asking these questions before mentioning the specific case was a purposeful decision to decrease the likelihood of priming subjects' broader understanding of embedded criminologist partnerships with their personal experiences. The resulting information represented how subjects conceptualized embedded criminologist partnerships and their inherent benefits and challenges ideally independent of the specific case.²³

In appraising subjects' global views of these constructs, there were extensive similarities with the description of the specific partnership presented in Part IV. For example, subjects' *general* definition of an embedded criminologist contained five distinct features that are clearly articulated in the description of the specific embedded criminologist presented above: an embedded criminologist is an academic researcher, works closely with staff on-site in a criminal justice agency, has access to the agency's facilities and data, understands the agency's routine practices, and conducts or advises on research projects of interest to the agency. This correspondence between subjects' general view of embedded criminologists and the specific case serves as evidence that the subjects attached the specific collaborative effort under study to the broader construct of

²¹ It should be noted that from the data collected, it is unclear how common embedded criminologists are within criminal justice agencies. With two exceptions, all subjects that embedded criminologist partnerships in criminal justice agencies are rare. In contrast, two representatives from the funding agency argued that embedded criminologists "are not new" and that agencies have engaged in this practice for years without giving it a formal name.

²² These questions are presented in the interview guides in *Appendix B*.

²³ The degree to which efforts to avoid priming were successful is explored in the limitations section in Part VI.

an embedded criminologist partnership. The large degree of alignment can also be seen as another metric of success, as an initial objective of the partnership was to invoke the embedded criminologist model of collaboration.

With the extensive overlap between the specific case and subjects' general perspectives on embedded criminologist collaborations, a full discussion of the findings regarding these general views would reiterate the majority of the discussion presented in Part IV. As such, I now focus on instances where the accounts diverge. These departures are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Unique Findings from the Specific Case and General Views of Embedded Criminologist Partnerships

| Specific Embedded Criminologist Partnership | Global Views of Embedded Criminologist Partnerships |
|---|--|
| Definition of Embedded Criminologist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treated like an agency employee • Participated in brainstorming sessions | Potential Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded criminologist connects a criminal justice agency to other academics Potential Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward structure in academia • Skepticism and distrust between parties |

In the specific case of the embedded criminologist in the state corrections agency, the embedded criminologist was treated like a staff member in the department of corrections. Integration of a researcher into the routines of the agency was an essential component to subjects' general views of embedded criminologist partnership, but they did not expressly mention that it was necessary to treat the researcher like an employee. This unique element of the specific collaboration underscores the highly interactive nature of the partnership and the degree of trust fostered between parties.

In addition, interview subjects proclaimed that the embedded criminologist contributed substantially to the corrections agency's research efforts through participation in brainstorming sessions. Brainstorming sessions constituted one way for the embedded criminologist to provide advice on agency research and indirectly this may lead to improved policies and practices. While general views of embedded criminologist collaborations touched upon conducting and advising research for a criminal justice agency, participation in brainstorming sessions with agency staff was a distinct component of the present case. Participation in these sessions along with agency personnel represents the complete integration of the embedded criminologist into the agency environment and likely facilitated the embedded criminologist being viewed and treated as an agency staff member.

In discussing embedded criminologist partnerships generally, interview subjects posited that an embedded criminologist can serve as an intermediary between the practitioner agency and other academic criminologists. According to two practitioners and two members of the funding agency, an embedded criminologist has connections to other academics who he or she can solicit for advice if needed. One practitioner offered: "an agency benefits greatly from the researcher's academic connections. If something comes up in the agency that they aren't familiar with, the researcher knows who the experts in that area are and reaches out to them in order to get answers." If this is the case, a criminal justice agency may benefit from an embedded criminologist partnership by gaining access to an entire field of experts rather than just one. It is not clear whether this occurred in the specific case; the embedded criminologist may have served as an intermediary but interview subjects did not mention this aspect of the embedded

criminologist's role. However, this particular partnership expanded beyond the initial dyad into a larger network of relationships involving graduate students and faculty. This network is distinct from the embedded criminologist serving as an intermediary to other academic researchers because the network involves cultivating relationships rather than simply leveraging one's professional connections.

Embedded criminologist partnerships, though advantageous to both researchers and practitioners, are not exempt from challenges. Two additional obstacles were identified in general discussions of embedded criminologist partnerships that did not materialize in the specific case I examined: the reward structure within academia and the insular nature of criminal justice agencies. These cultural barriers may marginalize the success of embedded criminologist partnerships on a broad scale or prevent them from ever forming in the first place.

The reward structure within academia poses inherent difficulty toward implementing embedded criminologist partnerships broadly. Six interviewees emphasized that there is a lack of incentives for researchers to engage in this type of partnership. Academic researchers are not praised or rewarded in tenure and promotion decisions for collaborating with practitioners, unless the experience results in peer reviewed publications in top-tier journals. One practitioner disclosed, "academic criminologists can advance without doing anything like this, ever. And there's no real encouragement or incentive to do it." Criminologists may be discouraged from taking the role of embedded criminologist if they believe it will not enhance an academic career. In the specific partnership mentioned previously, the parties involved were motivated to collaborate and acknowledged long term benefits to the partnership in spite of an

academic culture that does not directly reward this type of service to practitioners. Two of the three primary informants revealed that after the first year of collaboration, they had not produced many tangible products even though they had started numerous research projects. The academic reward structure is a considerable obstacle to embedded criminologist partnerships, particularly in light of the time commitment required of academic researchers to learn an agency setting, become successfully embedded, and complete research projects.

Four interviewees across stakeholder groups also noted skepticism of outside researchers and the insular nature of criminal justice agencies as potential barriers to implementing embedded criminologist partnerships. The tradition of distrust between criminologists and criminal justice agencies has been documented at length (for an exploration of the origins of this tradition see Bradley & Nixon, 2009). This potential obstacle is clearly illustrated in a statement from a practitioner: “I think there is an inherent level of distrust that we have of the outside. So in some agencies, putting up assurances up front that they’re not going to get burned by the process could be a challenge. And I would say that probably would be the norm.” It is possible that only a small portion of criminal justice agencies would be willing to engage in embedded criminologist collaborations. As one researcher remarked “we still have a long way to go and a lot of work to do before this can spread.” Interestingly, the belief that distrust and skepticism of academics may impede the wide adoption of embedded criminologist partnerships was juxtaposed by reports that the specific embedded criminologist became a part of the corrections agency staff. This contrast confirms that any initial skepticism between parties was overcome in the specific case.

These potential obstacles need to be considered in the success of embedded criminologist partnerships. The cultures of academia and criminal justice agencies are at odds. Initiating an embedded criminologist partnership in the first place is a indication of success. Collaborations that form in spite of these barriers must consistently balance the priorities of academic researchers and practitioners so that all parties can benefit from the endeavor. Given these challenges, it is exceptional that the individuals in the specific case I examined were so dedicated to the collaboration, and that it resulted in numerous successes. Taken together, the divergences between descriptions of the specific case and interviewees' general views of embedded criminologist partnerships are additional evidence of the specific collaboration's success. Along with circumventing potential barriers, the departures in the descriptions of the specific case reveal that the researcher was truly trusted and integrated into the corrections agency staff. That interviewees did not identify the particular embedded criminologist as an intermediary between the corrections department and other academics is inconsequential; the agency clearly benefitted from collaborating with the embedded criminologist in numerous other ways.

“Evidence Based” Policy and Practice

In discussions of the specific embedded criminologist partnership and general views of embedded criminologist collaborations, I asked interview subjects how an embedded criminologist may enable the institution of “evidence based” policies or practices. Subjects' responses caught me by surprise: in answering my question, all interview participants expressed dislike for the terms “evidence based” policy or “evidence based” practice. This finding was perplexing given that most interviewees

strongly advocated for the inclusion of scientific evidence in criminal justice policy and practice.

For the majority of interview subjects, this dislike stemmed from a belief that the term “evidence based” holds no meaning or can be misleading. Eight interviewees expressed that without formal criteria or a single standard of scientific evidence, any program or policy can be called “evidence based.” A representative from the funding agency articulated this sentiment in pronouncing that “everyone is talking about a term that no one has yet to define. We’re all talking about this high standard of evidence but the field has not yet defined ‘here’s what we mean and here is the standard.’”

The term “evidence based” loses value because without a single standard of formal criteria, programs and policies with weaker empirical support are grouped under the same title as those that are strongly supported by rigorous science. Five of the ten interviewees argued that the majority of programs or policies labeled as “evidence based” are only supported by low quality research. One practitioner asserted that “when you actually look at the evidence behind so-called “evidence based” practices, a lot of it is pretty weak, and methodologically weak, using varied populations.” This statement corresponds with the notion that the term “evidence based” can be misleading.

Five of the interviewees across stakeholder groups stressed that the term “evidence based” may also be used as a political tool to garner support for a program or policy. They believed that the labeling of a program as “evidence based” allows decision-makers to justify spending regardless of whether the program is empirically supported or cost-effective. Underscoring this notion, one practitioner remarked: “once you label

something as evidence based, who can argue with that? There's a big political motivation for someone to label a policy evidence based."

Interestingly, two representatives from the funding agency argued the focus on "evidence based" policy and practice forces a dichotomy between effective or ineffective programs. Many believe the term "evidence based" suggests that a program is effective in absolute terms. However, research rarely comes to such a definitive conclusion about an intervention's effectiveness. One of the funding agency representatives remarked, "people assume that if something is called 'evidence based' it will automatically work. They put faith in the label. But it's never that simple. There are so many contextual factors." Implementation challenges add complexity to the task of defining a program or policy as "evidence based." Even if a program is supported by multiple rigorous studies, this does not guarantee effectiveness in different settings, with different populations, or as time passes. The need to balance internal and external validity is ever present.

In light of the ostensible dislike for the term "evidence based," I asked interview subjects to provide an appropriate standard of scientific evidence that should be used in classifying programs and policies as "evidence based." Their responses were focused almost exclusively on research designs and replication. With respect to methodology, there was no consensus among interview subjects as to what should constitute "evidence." Four of the ten interviewees argued that a program should be labeled "evidence based" *only* if it has been deemed effective by a randomized experiment. Three subjects claimed that a randomized control trial should be used as evidence if possible, but other quasi-experimental studies could qualify a program as "evidence based." The remaining three interview subjects expressed that an evidence-based policy should be

based on research that is as rigorous as the circumstances allow, without referencing any particular methodology. Interestingly, there was wide variation between and within stakeholder groups with regard to how this question was answered, making it difficult to discern distinct patterns of responses between groups.

A member of the funding agency declared, “science needs to be replicated in order to be valid.” Four other interviewees concurred. One practitioner elaborated, “effectiveness needs to be replicated. Not just once on the same population, but on different populations, and over time.” The two researchers interviewed also considered replication in different populations or jurisdictions as essential in defining a policy as “evidence based.”

A common concern among interview subjects was the feasibility of implementing “evidence based” practices in different locations. This uncertainty underscores the need to consider contextual variations in a discussion of “evidence based” policies. However, when defining the standards for “evidence based” programs and policies, implementation challenges were less central to interviewees’ responses compared to methodological rigor and replication. All interview subjects acknowledged research designs and replication as elements of this standard, while only four of ten discussed implementation.

Part VI: Limitations

The findings presented in Parts IV and V contain several limitations that must be acknowledged. The primary limitation of the present case study is its lack of generalizable findings. Reduced generalizability stems from the fact that only a single case of an embedded criminologist partnership was examined and all of the data collected are intimately linked to the single case. Interview participants had at least some knowledge of the same embedded criminologist partnership; documents contain information pertaining almost exclusively to that partnership; and observational data can similarly only reveal information about the specific working relationship. As such, descriptions of the specific embedded criminologist partnership in Part IV and general findings presented in Part V only reflect the views of interview subjects and cannot be generalized beyond this study.

All findings presented in Part V were based on responses to a limited number of interview questions designed to elicit information about embedded criminologist partnerships without referencing the specific case. Unfortunately, it is uncertain how successful efforts to avoid priming were. Immediately before each interview began subjects read and signed a consent form that mentions the specific partnership and the parties involved. It is possible that reading this form oriented interview subjects toward the specific embedded criminologist partnership. If this occurred, then responses to questions regarding the general embedded criminologist model are conflated with the specific case.

Another limitation of this study is the reliance on stakeholder impressions of the collaboration rather than objective criteria to describe the partnership. The use of

perceptual measures is, in some respects, a strength of this study because they capture how the working relationship was viewed and received by those involved, which is valuable on its own. However, without objective criteria, there is no way to verify that the descriptions of the partnership provided by interview subjects reflect what truly occurred. Descriptions of the specific embedded criminologist partnership could be authenticated to some degree by documents and observational data; however, documents consisted mostly of research products produced by the partnership and did not provide insight on the nature of interactions between parties. In addition, I was able to observe an interaction between the embedded criminologist and the primary point of contact at the practitioner agency, however this occurred roughly two years after the grant funding ended. It is therefore uncertain that what I observed reflects the nature of the partnership during the funding period.

Due to confidentiality restrictions, other researchers were not solicited to code and analyze the data to check the validity of the conclusions that I drew. The findings are potentially biased because I conducted all of the data collection and analysis. Without an inter-rater reliability check, it is possible that my intimate involvement with the data resulted in an inaccurate portrayal. However, I made considerable effort to reduce investigator bias. First, I kept a log of my opinions and initial insights separate from the raw data to avoid imposing my own views onto the data (see Bosk, 1979). When constructing profiles to organize the responses of interview subjects and stakeholder groups, I preserved the initial data by rearranging direct quotes from interviews and documents (see Becker, 1996). I also solicited the advice of the interview subjects to determine if my findings were consistent with their experiences.

As a final limitation, there was substantial overlap between many of the concepts examined. Initially I believed that the benefits, outcomes, and ways to measure success in an embedded criminologist partnership were independent constructs. As the interview guides reveal, subjects were asked about these topics separately. In spite of the distinction that I made in between the concepts, the data collected from these questions are nearly identical, suggesting that these concepts are interrelated. This research cannot determine if the benefits, outcomes, and success measures of an embedded criminologist collaboration are truly independent constructs that interviewees could not differentiate or if they are one in the same. It is possible that conflation resulted from some feature of the interview guide or my interviewing technique because I asked all interview subjects similar questions regarding these topics.

Part VII: Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should concentrate on constructing formal definitions of the key concepts examined in this study. It is critically important to develop uniform ways to categorize collaborations between researchers and practitioners as embedded criminologist partnerships. A formal definition may widen the pool of potential cases to examine by objectively classifying partnerships under this title rather than expecting researchers to be labeled as embedded criminologists. The description of the partnership provided in Part IV could serve as a starting point for conversations regarding the formal definition of an embedded criminologist collaboration. Future research can test the applicability of those findings at other sites and see how accounts of embedded criminologist collaborations correspond or diverge from the information presented here.

To determine the effectiveness of the embedded criminologist strategy, future research should employ multi-site evaluations of embedded criminologist partnerships rather than relying on single case studies. To advance scholarship on research translation, I recommend using research utilization as a metric of success in these multi-site evaluations; but the field would also benefit from other formally defined success measures. In addition, future research should utilize multi-site evaluations to determine how the mechanisms behind research translation vary between embedded criminologist partnerships. Appraising this variation may underscore how much of research translation is linked to idiosyncratic elements of specific partnerships or if general mechanisms are common between collaborations.

It would also be beneficial to compare embedded criminologist collaborations to more traditional forms of researcher-practitioner partnerships. Given the time

commitment required of the parties involved, it is crucial to determine whether there are additional benefits to an embedded criminologist collaboration. Furthermore, additional research can discern whether researchers impact on policy making in distinct ways depending on the type of collaboration, or if research is translated differently. Future research should continue to explore the mechanisms underlying research utilization and the process of policy-making with multi-site evaluations to yield more widely applicable findings. In depth analyses of specific policy environments when a researcher is and is not present can elucidate precisely how decisions are made in particular settings.

Finally, in light of the apparent dislike of the terms “evidence based” policy or practice, it is essential for criminologists to use a single standard to classify policies as “evidence based.” Research on “evidence based” policies should also attend to implementation challenges and potential heterogeneity in treatment effects toward identifying not just “what works,” but rather “what works for whom, and under what conditions?”

Part VIII: Conclusions

Embedding an academic criminologist within a criminal justice organization is a relatively new and understudied concept. The literature on embedded criminologist partnerships is limited to a few anecdotal accounts written by researchers who have served the role and no appraisals of how criminal justice practitioners view these partnerships have been offered. The present study provides the first systematic description of an embedded criminologist partnership, according to all parties involved. This study serves as the first independent evaluation of an embedded criminologist partnership and investigates the factors associated with its successes. The present research was also conducted in an effort to discern translational processes in a criminal justice context and corresponds with the research agenda outlined by translational criminology.

Based on the interview data, embedded criminologist partnerships can have multiple benefits. In the case I examined, the embedded criminologist partnership resulted in rigorous research projects that could potentially improve policy and practice within the corrections agency. The corrections agency gained access to an academic researcher with methodological and theoretical expertise, as well as an independent observer to question agency practices and prompt possible improvement. The embedded criminologist was afforded unrestricted access to a state level corrections department, its databases, and a unique opportunity to learn its goals, priorities, and constraints. Both parties reported the additional benefit of appreciating the perspective and skills of their collaborator.

In addition to these benefits, this collaboration represents a successful embedded criminologist partnership. Regardless of stakeholder group, the individuals involved uniformly confirm its success, and the most initial goals of the partnership were fulfilled. The partnership also facilitated at least one example of instrumental, conceptual, and process research use in the corrections agency. Given the amount of policy relevant research that the embedded criminologist has participated in, the amount of translation that has occurred since the onset of the collaboration is relatively modest. It appears that translating research into policies and practices takes time. Since the collaboration began the parties involved have focused on building a quality relationship based in trust and mutual respect, along with conducting research. Much of the aforementioned research is ongoing. Now that the relationship is established and the researcher is familiar with the corrections agency and its data, more effort can be devoted to research tasks. Because I evaluated the partnership only a few years after it began, it is possible that I was only able to discern the first stages of success. Additional examples of success may surface as the collaboration continues, studies are completed, and research is integrated into agency decision-making. Still, it would appear that in this case, an embedded criminologist partnership was a vehicle toward translation and closing the gap between research and practice.

Partnerships between researchers and practitioners exist on a continuum. An embedded criminologist collaboration is a highly interactive partnership that requires a sizeable investment from the parties involved. The descriptions of the possible advantages and obstacles to embedded criminologist collaborations provided in this document can promote discussion among scholars regarding their overall utility.

It should also be noted that one of the reasons I was aware of this particular embedded criminologist partnership was because the parties involved are still collaborating after the grant funding ended. As a sustained working relationship was one metric of success, the case was selected in part based on the dependent variable. As mentioned above, this partnership was formed under essentially ideal conditions and should not be viewed as a typical collaborative endeavor. The results presented in this document should be interpreted with caution as they may have been biased towards success. While there is much to be gained from embedding a researcher within a criminal justice agency, partnerships formed between less dedicated parties or without mutual connections and funding may incur additional challenges. Among these challenges are a systematic lack of incentives for academic researchers, considerable time commitments, and skepticism of criminal justice practitioners. It is uncertain whether one can expect the same level of success from collaborations in other settings.

Over the course of conducting this case study, I faced a recurring the obstacle of a lack of formally defined constructs. Embedded criminologist, successful partnerships, successful research translation, and evidence based practice are central concepts in the present study but have not been formally defined by the field. This oversight was partly expected because embedded criminologist partnerships are a relatively new innovation. However, research translation and the notion of collaboration between researchers and practitioners have received substantial attention from scholars across many fields. Efforts to draw conclusions from these existing literatures are hindered by a lack of consensus in defining these important constructs; namely embedded criminologist, success in

embedded criminologist collaborations, successful translation of scientific evidence, and evidence based policy.

Formal definitions of these concepts are necessary to facilitate meaningful discussion regarding the utility of embedded criminologist collaborations. Based on the findings presented above, I offer definitions of these constructs to conclude the present case study. An **embedded criminologist** is an academic researcher who works on-site in a criminal justice agency. An embedded criminologist is immersed in the day-to-day functioning of the agency, works directly with the staff, and develops a holistic understanding of the problems facing the agency as well as the agency's priorities and goals. This understanding of the agency environment allows an embedded criminologist to conduct rigorous research with sensitivity to the agency's needs and constraints. An embedded criminologist also has access to the agency's facilities and data.

The **success** of an embedded criminologist partnership can be defined as the degree to which the collaborative endeavor resulted in the translation of scientific evidence into policy and practice. Since an embedded criminologist has been offered as one vehicle to bridge the gap between research and practice, it seems appropriate that the degree to which these collaborations facilitate research translation be used as a metric of success. **Translation** can be measured by instrumental, conceptual, or process research use (see Weiss, 1979; Tseng, 2012).

Translating research into practice is also discussed in terms of the institution of an "evidence based" policy or practice. Interviewees uniformly expressed dislike for the term "evidence based" and argued that a formal set of standards was needed to classify programs as evidence based or not. Based on their views, an **"evidence based" program**

or practice is a program or practice that has been shown to elicit desired outcomes when tested by a randomized control trial or rigorous quasi-experimental design. In order to be “evidence based” the effectiveness of the program must be demonstrated through replication on different populations and across time. It would also be helpful to develop implementation guides to combat contextual challenges to programs and policies denoted as “evidence based.”

Future research is encouraged to challenge and improve upon the definitions offered here. These definitions are provided in an attempt to spark discourse in the field regarding embedded criminologist collaborations and the process of research translation. These discussions are timely; with limited resources and political focus on evidence-based initiatives, research translation is particularly relevant to policy-making. It is essential to capitalize on this window of opportunity and discover effective methods to integrate scientific evidence into policy and practice. I hope that with additional research and discussion, the capacity of an embedded criminologist to promote the translation of scientific evidence into policy and practice is realized.

Appendix A: Consent Forms

An Embedded Criminologist as a Vehicle for Research Utilization: A Case Study of A Researcher's Impact in a State Corrections Agency- Interviews

This research will be undertaken by a graduate student, Nicole Frisch, under the supervision of Dr. John Laub at the University of Maryland at College Park. This study involves research on the [REDACTED] funded collaboration between [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] between 2012 and 2013. You are invited to participate in this research because of your knowledge and involvement in the working relationship between these parties. The purpose of this study is to describe the collaboration between [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] with a specific focus on the ways in which scientific evidence was translated and utilized in policy and practice decision-making. Specific attention will be given to the process of embedding a researcher in an agency setting, whether or not this endeavor is viewed as a success, and the factors that inhibit and promote successfully embedding a researcher within an agency setting.

The procedures involve a series of open-ended interviews. The first interview will take between thirty and ninety minutes to complete. You will be asked about your experiences regarding the previously mentioned collaborative effort. For example, you may be asked how the working relationship between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] began. Audio recording is optional. If you consent to being recorded, your responses will be transcribed verbatim at a later time. If you prefer not to have the session recorded please let me know, and I will take notes during our sessions. You will also be contacted up to five times for follow-up questions after the first interview is conducted. Follow-up questioning should not exceed 90 minutes in total.

There may be some risks from participating in this research study; for example, there is the potential for breach of confidentiality. The risk of breaches in confidentiality will be mitigated by keeping all interview data on password protected computers or in locked filing cabinets within locked offices that only the principal investigator has access to. Once the data analysis is complete, all field notes and transcripts will be destroyed. Additionally, your name and institutional affiliation will not be included in any publications or presentations resulting from this research.

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about embedding a researcher in an agency setting and the benefits of using a researcher in this capacity. The knowledge gained from this research will contribute in understanding how scientific evidence is translated into policies and practices and how researchers can best achieve this goal.

Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing field notes, transcripts, and obtained documents in locked filing cabinets within locked offices or on password protected computers. Only the principal investigator will have access to these data.

If a report or article about this research project is written, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your name and institutional affiliation will not be used in any published documents or presentations related to this research. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you are a [REDACTED] employee or student, your employment status or academic standing at [REDACTED] will not be affected by your participation or non-participation in this study. If you are an employee of [REDACTED], your employment status will not be affected by your participation or non-participation in this study.

If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:

Nicole Frisch
University of Maryland College Park
2220 LeFrak Hall
College Park, Maryland, 20740
Telephone: 978-766-1755
Email: nfrisch@umd.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:

University of Maryland College Park
Institutional Review Board Office
1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, Maryland, 20742
E-mail: irb@umd.edu
Telephone: 301-405-0678

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.

If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

Date: _____

An Embedded Criminologist as a Vehicle for Research Utilization: A Case Study of A
Researcher's Impact in a State Corrections Agency- Observation

This research will be conducted by a graduate student, Nicole Frisch, under the supervision of Dr. John Laub at the University of Maryland at College Park. This study involves research on the [REDACTED] funded collaboration between [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) between 2012 and 2013. You are invited to participate in this research because of your knowledge and involvement in the working relationship between these parties. The purpose of this study is to describe the collaboration between [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] with a specific focus on the ways in which scientific evidence was translated and utilized in policy and practice decision-making. Specific attention will be given to the process of embedding a researcher in an agency setting, whether or not this endeavor is viewed as a success, and the factors that inhibit and promote successfully embedding a researcher within an agency setting.

The procedures involve the investigator observing the interactions of individuals involved in the partnership. This may include attending conference calls with agency personnel or shadowing a visit to the [REDACTED]. The investigator will take notes during the period of observation, but will not interfere.

There may be some risks from participating in this research study; for example, there is the potential for breach of confidentiality. The risk of breaches in confidentiality will be mitigated by keeping all notes from observations on password protected computers or in locked filing cabinets within locked offices that only the principal investigator has access to. Once the data analysis is complete, all field notes and transcripts will be destroyed. Additionally, your name and institutional affiliation will not be included in any publications or presentations resulting from this research.

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about embedding a researcher in an agency setting and the benefits of using a researcher in this capacity. The knowledge gained from this research will contribute in understanding how scientific evidence is translated into policies and practices and how researchers can best achieve this goal.

Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing field notes, transcripts, and obtained documents in locked filing cabinets within locked offices or on password protected computers. Only the principal investigator will have access to these data.

If a report or article about this research project is written, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your name and institutional affiliation will not be used in any published documents or presentations related to this research. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you are a [REDACTED] employee or student, your employment status or academic standing at [REDACTED] will not be affected by your participation or non-participation in this study. If you are an employee of the [REDACTED], your employment status will not be affected by your participation or non-participation in this study.

If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:

Nicole Frisch
University of Maryland College Park
2220 LeFrak Hall
College Park, Maryland, 20740
Email: nfrisch@umd.edu
Telephone: 978-766-1755

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:

University of Maryland College Park
Institutional Review Board Office
1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, Maryland, 20742
E-mail: irb@umd.edu
Telephone: 301-405-0678

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.

If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

Date: _____

Appendix B: Interview Guides²⁴

Interview Guide: Embedded Criminologist

- In your own words, what is an embedded criminologist?
 - Purpose
- Suppose that I wanted to serve as an embedded criminologist in a criminal justice agency. What advice would you give me before I take this role?
 - What could I expect to benefit from taking this role?
 - What challenges should I be aware of/ anticipate?
 - Prompt: time demand?
 - What skills should I possess?
 - How can I assist the agency?
- How would you define embedded criminologist partnerships as successful?
- Could you please describe your current working relationship with [REDACTED]?

I would now like you to think specifically about your working relationship with [REDACTED] during the period of [REDACTED] funding between 2012 and 2013.

- Please describe your working relationship with [REDACTED] during that time period.
 - Frequency of communication/travel, projects you worked on, etc.
- What were the initial goals of this endeavor ([REDACTED] grant)?
- What do you consider the outcomes of the [REDACTED] award?
- Do you consider the collaboration (during funding period) a success? Please explain why or why not.
 - What factors lead to the success you just described?
- How has the working relationship changed since the termination of [REDACTED] funding?

I will now ask you a few questions specifically about serving as an embedded criminologist within [REDACTED] during the [REDACTED] funding period.

²⁴ The guides provided here served as a starting point for discussions in interview sessions. Questions were not read from the guides verbatim. Topics of conversation depended on the information raised by interviewees.

- Please describe a typical day working at [REDACTED] as an embedded criminologist.
- I would like you to think about the process by which you became an embedded researcher within [REDACTED]. What factors were important in facilitating your entry to the agency as an embedded researcher?
 - What did [REDACTED] do to make this possible? [REDACTED]?
 - Potential Prompt/ Clarification: What institutional factors facilitated your entry as an embedded criminologist at [REDACTED]?
- As an embedded criminologist, you must work closely with the agency ([REDACTED]) on projects as well as uphold your responsibilities as a university professor. This is essentially taking on two roles. How did you balance the responsibilities of each of these roles?
- As an embedded criminologist, how would you describe your role in [REDACTED] policy and programmatic decisions?

I have asked about what it means to work with/as an embedded criminologist. Before we move on to discuss evidence-based policies and policymaking broadly, is there anything else you'd like to share regarding embedded criminologists?

- Please describe the process by which policies are made/implemented within [REDACTED].
 - What factors makes implementing evidence based policies more likely?
 - What challenges inhibit the institution of evidence-based practices?
- There is frequent discussion of “evidence based policies” and implementing programs that “work” in the field of criminal justice and more broadly within social sciences. In your own words, what constitutes an evidence-based policy?
- Can you provide a specific example of when/how the organization implemented an evidence based program or policy?
- In your opinion, what constitutes evidence that can inform evidence-based practices?
- The grant proposal submitted to [REDACTED] references a project to examine parolee recidivism and identify redemption points as motivation for collaborating with [REDACTED]. How has this investigation shaped policy discussions within [REDACTED]?
 - Please describe any modification to discharge policies.

- When you obtained results on this project, how did you inform others within your agency?
- How did the results of this investigation enter policy discussions? (Who was citing this research?)
- Who else should I interview to get a larger or different perspective on this collaboration? Could you please provide me with their contact information?

Interview Guide: Graduate Student

- In your own words, what is an embedded criminologist?
 - Purpose
- As someone with research training, would you consider working as an embedded criminologist?
 - How do you think you might benefit from an experience like this?
 - What would you hope to achieve from taking this role?
 - Would you have any initial concerns or anticipate any challenges?
- How is an embedded criminologist partnership classified as successful?
- Please describe your current working relationship with the agency.
 - Potential Prompts: current projects, frequency of communication
- How did you first form a relationship with the [REDACTED]?

I would now like you to think specifically about the working relationship between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] during the period of [REDACTED] funding (between 2012 and 2013).

- Please describe the working relationship between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] under [REDACTED] funding?
 - What is your understanding of the purpose of that award?
 - Projects they worked on?
 - Policies that changed?
- What do you consider the outcomes of that [REDACTED] award?
- How did you benefit from the collaboration between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]?

- Do you consider the collaboration (during funding period) a success? Please explain why or why not.
 - What factors lead to the success you just described?

I have asked about what it means to work with/as an embedded criminologist. Before we move on to discuss evidence-based policies and policymaking broadly, is there anything else you'd like to share regarding embedded criminologists?

- There is frequent discussion of “evidence based policies” and implementing programs that “work” in the field of criminal justice and more broadly within social sciences. In your own words, what constitutes an evidence-based policy?
- Can you provide a specific example of when/how [REDACTED] implemented an evidence based program or policy?
- In your opinion, what constitutes evidence that can inform evidence-based practices?
- What forms of research and/or evidence, if any, do you think are typically consult when policy or practical decisions are made?
 - What other factors (non-scientific) are considered during this process? For example: budget constraints or political considerations.

Interview Guide: Agency Personnel

- What is your current role within [REDACTED]?
 - On a typical day at [REDACTED], what tasks do you complete?
- In your own words, what is an embedded criminologist?
 - Purpose
- Suppose that I am working for a CJ agency (for example a state corrections agency similar in size to [REDACTED], a state court, or a police department). How would you advise me if I was looking to work with an embedded criminologist?
 - What should I look for in a candidate?
 - How could I expect my agency to benefit from an embedded criminologist?
 - Is there any challenges or concerns that I should be aware of beforehand?
- How does one determine whether an embedded criminologist collaboration is successful?

- How did you first establish a relationship with [REDACTED]?
- Please describe your current working relationship with [REDACTED].
 - Potential Prompts: Current Projects? How often do you communicate? How often does [REDACTED] travel to [REDACTED]?

I would now like you to think specifically about your working relationship with [REDACTED] during the period of [REDACTED] funding between 2012 and 2013.

- Please describe your relationship with [REDACTED] during that time period.
 - How was this working relationship different than what you described previously as your working relationship at present?
- What were the initial goals of this endeavor?
- What do you consider the outcomes of the [REDACTED] award?
- Do you consider the collaboration (during funding period) a success? Please explain why or why not.
 - What factors lead to the success you just described?
- Thinking back to when [REDACTED] was an embedded criminologist, on a normal day at [REDACTED], what would [REDACTED] accomplish/ what tasks would you ask [REDACTED] to complete?
- I would like you to think about how [REDACTED] became embedded within [REDACTED]. Can you describe the important factors that facilitated [REDACTED] entry as an embedded researcher?
 - What did [REDACTED] do to make this possible? [REDACTED]?
 - Potential Prompt/Clarification: What institutional factors facilitated [REDACTED] entry as an embedded criminologist at [REDACTED]?
- What role did the embedded criminologist have in [REDACTED] policy or programmatic decisions?

I have asked about what it means to work with/as an embedded criminologist. Before we move on to discuss evidence-based policies and policymaking broadly, is there anything else you'd like to share regarding embedded criminologists?

- Please describe the process by which policies are made/implemented within [REDACTED].

- What factors makes implementing evidence based policies more likely?
- What challenges inhibit the institution of evidence-based practices?
- How do you perceive your role in policy making at [REDACTED]?
- In your opinion, what constitutes evidence that can inform evidence-based practices?
- Can you provide a specific example of when/how the organization implemented an evidence based program or policy?
- What forms of research and/or evidence, if any, do you (or others in the agency) typically consult when making a decision about implementing a program or policy?
 - What other factors (non-scientific) are considered during this process? For example: budget constraints or political considerations.
- How has the project to examine parolee recidivism and identify redemption points shaped policy discussions within [REDACTED]?
- Who else should I interview to get a larger or different perspective on this collaboration? Could you please provide me with their contact information?

Interview Guide- Practitioner- Parole

- What is your role on the board of [REDACTED]?
 - What kind of research does your office do?
- Are you familiar with the term embedded criminologist? If so, please provide a definition.
- In your time working with Parole, have you had an EC? If so, please describe.
- Would you consider having an embedded criminologist work within your research unit?
 - If you did, what would you expect to benefit
 - How could a researcher benefit from being an EC in your agency?
 - Are there any challenges you'd anticipate?
- How would you determine whether having an embedded criminologist in your agency was a success?

- Describe your working relationships/the interactions you had with [REDACTED].
- Please describe your knowledge of the working relationship between [REDACTED] & [REDACTED].
 - What did [REDACTED] do / why was [REDACTED] there?
 - How did [REDACTED] help your agency and DOC?
 - How did the collaboration initiate?
- Is the parole board using the results from [REDACTED]'s research in any way. Has it shaped your thinking or policy decisions?
 - If so, how did this occur? If not, why hasn't the board used those findings?
- Based on what you know about the collaboration between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and what you have experienced, would you define that collaborative effort as successful?
 - Why?
 - What made the success you just described possible?
- Please describe the process by which parole policies are made.
- How do you perceive your role as research director in policy-making?
- There is frequent discussion of evidence-based policies within criminal justice and social science. In your opinion, what constitutes evidence to inform these policies?
 - Ideally, what SHOULD constitute evidence to inform policies?
 - What forms of research and/or evidence does you or your agency consult when making a program or policy decision?
- What other factors (non-scientific) are considered during the decision-making process ?
- How is research produced by your office relevant to policy and practice decisions?
 - How does it drive those decisions?
 - What factors makes implementing evidence based policies more likely?

- What challenges inhibit the institution of evidence-based practices?

Interview Guide: Agency Executive

- In your own words, what is an embedded criminologist?
 - Purpose
 - What are the benefits to an agency?
 - Benefits to researcher?
 - Challenges?
- How are embedded criminologist partnerships deemed successful?
- What do you believe were the benefits of having [REDACTED] as an embedded criminologist within your agency?
 - What projects did [REDACTED] work on as an embedded criminologist?
 - Have any of those projects resulted in program or policies changes?
- Do you consider the collaboration (and implementation of the EC model) a success? Please explain why or why not.
 - What factors lead to the success you just described?
- To your knowledge, how many corrections agencies have embedded criminologists?
 - Why do you think there are fewer organizations that use a researcher in this way?
- There is frequent discussion of “evidence based policies” and implementing programs that “work” in the field of criminal justice and more broadly within social sciences. In your own words, what constitutes an evidence-based policy?
- Please describe the process by which policies are made/implemented within [REDACTED].
 - What factors makes implementing evidence based policies more likely?
 - What challenges inhibit the institution of evidence-based practices?

- What forms of research and/or evidence, if any, do you (or others in the agency) typically consult when making a decision about implementing a program or policy?
- What other factors (non-scientific) are considered during this process? For example: budget constraints or political considerations.
- How do you perceive your role in policy making at [REDACTED]?
- Do you believe that [REDACTED] is different in any ways from other correctional departments in the US?
 - What differentiates [REDACTED]?
- [REDACTED] seems to have fostered an environment that is conducive to producing high quality, innovative research. What contributes to this amenability to research and using research to inform policy and programmatic decisions?
- What can other state agencies do in order to use research more effectively?
 - How would you advise other agencies toward creating an agency culture that is research-friendly and produces high quality research products?

Interview Guide: Funding Agency²⁵

- In your own words, please define an “embedded criminologist”.
 - Different from other researcher practitioner partnerships?
 - How do researchers benefit from serving as embedded criminologists?
 - How do criminal justice agencies benefit from these collaborations?
- What would you consider a successful embedded criminologist partnership?
- [REDACTED] makes express efforts to fund and encourage researcher practitioner partnerships. Are you aware of how long that grant has been out?
 - What does [REDACTED] hope to achieve in funding these collaborations?
- The solicitation for the [REDACTED] award mentions that preference will be given to proposals in which the researcher

²⁵ Questions from this interview guide were adapted for other members of the funding agency. Several questions pertaining specifically to the grant monitor were not asked of other funding agency representatives.

is working on-site with the practitioner agency. What is the benefit of having a researcher work on-site?

- In your opinion, does this language specifically encourage more embedded criminologist partnerships?
- Other than the partnership between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], are you aware if [REDACTED] has funded any other embedded criminologists?

I would now like to discuss an award that you oversaw given to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in 2012.

- Please describe your understanding of the working relationship between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] during the award period.
 - Are you aware of any of the projects they worked on during the grant? Can you please describe?
- How often did you communicate with the awardees?
 - Did you speak primarily with one party or equally with both?
 - Are you still in communication with them now? How often?
- How would you characterize your role in the partnership?
 - Advisory/oversee? Help with research?
- How did [REDACTED] become “embedded” within [REDACTED]?
- Based on the experiences of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] that you observed, what are the benefits of embedding a criminologist in a criminal justice agency?
- What challenges do agencies face in working with an embedded criminologist?
- Do you (and [REDACTED]) believe that the collaborative effort between these two parties was successful?
 - In what ways was it a success?
 - What factors contributed to the success you just described?
- [REDACTED] mentioned that the grant is still on extension. Could you please explain to me what this means?

- Roughly how many [REDACTED] grants have you overseen?
 - Is there anything that distinguishes this partnership from others?
- Did the awardees submit any reports that describe their partnership and its progression?
 - Am I able to get a copy of that for my document analysis?

Before we move on to the next segment of the interview, is there anything else you would like to share about the award, the awardees, or your views of embedded criminologists more generally?

I would now like to ask you about your experiences with the [REDACTED] more broadly and about policy making and research translation.

- What kinds of efforts does [REDACTED] make to translate research into policy and practice?
- In your opinion, what constitutes “successful” research translation?
- What are the biggest challenges to translating research into policies and practices?
 - Can researcher-practitioner partnerships address/overcome some of these challenges. If so, how?
- Please describe the processes by which policies are enacted.
- There is frequent discussion of “evidence based policies” and implementing programs that “work” in the field of criminal justice and more broadly within social sciences. In your own words, what constitutes an evidence-based policy?
 - What kinds of evidence should be used to inform these EBP?
 - What factors facilitate the institution of evidence based policies?
- In your experience, how is [REDACTED] research used to shape policy decisions?
 - Can you provide a specific example of evidence integration?
 - What factors inhibit evidence from being a consideration in policy decisions?

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