



# **Qualitative Fieldwork Contributions to the Study of Evidence-Based Practices**

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**Center for  
Evidenced-Based  
Crime Policy  
(CEBCP)**



**Center for Advancing  
Correctional Excellence  
(ACE!)**



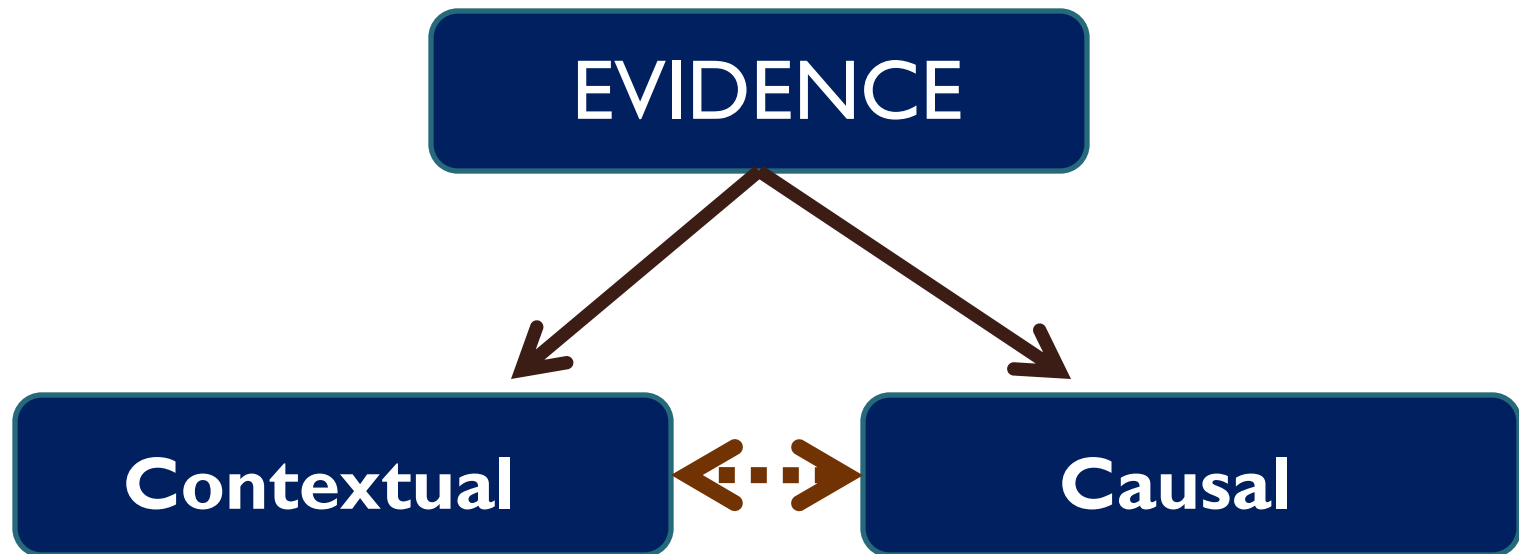
# The Revitalization of Qualitative Methods in Criminology?

- **Why?**

- Following trends in medical/health research
- Increased emphasis on diffusion (advancing practice/policy)
- Rise in EBP's means researchers have to make a point others will hear and one that can be immediately useful and translatable to practitioners

# Qualitative contributions

- **Why is it important?**
  - Causal explanations: “why” and “how”; theory building
  - External & Internal Validity
  - Future directions; research plan



# Evidence

- Evidence is generally much more simply defined as the product or outcome of a scientifically designed study/method.
- *“The conclusions of scientists are based on evidence, and the evidence remains for all to see. Scientists know that their ideas must stand the scrutiny of other scientists, who may not share their preconceptions. The best way to do this is to make the case strong enough on the basis of the evidence so that preconceptions do not matter. And scientists themselves condemn preconceptions when they see them”.*

# **REQUIRING** **TRANSPARENCY & RIGOR**

Overcoming perceived qualitative methodological weaknesses with explicit transparent detail increases acceptance of qualitative evidence.

# Qualitative Methods for Evidence-Gathering

- Ethnography
- Direct/Participant Observation
- Narrative Analysis
- Conversational Analysis
- Interviews
- Network Mapping
- Content Analysis
- Focus Groups

Depth

High Intensity



Low Intensity

# Qualitative Warrants

- Police cultures/subcultures
- Prisons & Corrections Systems/Processes
- Gang structure & (sub) cultures
- Courtroom Processes



# Evidence has...

- Generalizability
- Freedom from bias
- Reliability
- Fidelity/Adherence
- Validity

**RIGOR**

also...

*Robustness*

*Reasonableness*

*Variance*

# Verification, Validation, & Validity

- Building in mechanisms to grow, correct, and develop throughout the qualitative process
- Iterative, rather than linear process
- Strategies:
  - methodological coherence;
  - appropriate sample;
  - collecting and analyzing data concurrently;
  - thinking theoretically, and
  - theory development.

# *Enhancing Rigor in Qualitative Research Methods*

- Purposive sampling combined with constant comparative method
- Truth in Grounded Theory (ish)
- Divergent & transparent collaborative coding
- Complex and diversified triangulation
- Project-specific respondent validation

# Integrated vs. Add-On Qual. Methods

## ADD-ON

- “Interviews to supplement”
- “Focus groups to better understand”
- Limited qualitative methodological detail
- Tosses around checklist of qualitative terms: triangulation, interactions, grounded theory
- Little if any discussion of coding &/or analysis plan

## INTEGRATED

- Research questions extend or expand upon hypotheses
- Ethnographic design
- Attention to validity including appropriate sample, constant comparative method, reflexivity, and theory development
- Skilled/trained qualitative researchers
- Attention to coding & analysis strategy

# Useful outcomes & implementable products

- **Research Program**
- **Multiple Project Analysis**
  - Meta-synthesis
  - Meta-analysis
- **Verifying by implementation**
  - Assessment Guides
  - Adapted Qualitative Outcome Analysis (QOA)
  - Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)



Thank you!

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