



The JC Glossary

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The Justice Collaboratory is dedicated to the thoughtful and deliberate use of language. In our commitment to maximize *The Notebook's* impact and accessibility, we have identified and defined key terms found primarily in the publication's pages as well as in the work of the JC at large. Each definition allows the reader—layperson, practitioner, or scholar—to better grasp an essential concept explored by one of the authors. We believe that this promotes a richer understanding and deeper connection with each piece. By ensuring that *The Notebook* can reach the broadest possible audience, the JC takes a fundamental step in promoting community vitality: ensuring resource availability. This guide is composed of current working definitions, while acknowledging that, as usage and thought continue to develop, so will meanings and applications. Thus, this tool is a dynamic, living composition of words and phrases most consequential to our theory-driven work. Additionally, the definitions here consider both the contexts of each individual piece that include the specific entries as well as broader criminal legal usage. We invite you to turn to this glossary as you read the articles, and in your conversations about the criminal legal system.

A

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Traumatic or distressing events children may face during their formative years (0-17). These experiences include physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction such as substance abuse and parental incarceration. Research has found ACEs to have significant and long-lasting effects on an individual's physical, mental, and emotional well-being, thus increasing the risk of various health issues, behavioral problems, and social challenges later in life. These negative impacts are exacerbated by the combination of multiple ACEs, and multiple less severe ACEs may have an equivalent impact as a single, more severe ACE.

C

Carceral Refers to matters related to the prison or correctional system, including punitive policies, practices, institutions, and the broader societal impact of incarceration. This encompasses conditions, regulations, and consequences associated with confinement and control of individuals.

Cash Bail The system in which a judge may deem it necessary for a defendant to pay a sum of money to the court before and during their trial on the condition that it will be returned only if the defendant appears at all mandated court sessions. This system has been shown to have a disproportionate, adverse impact on people of color and those of lower socioeconomic statuses.

Collective Unconscious Carl Jung's concept that refers to a part of the deepest unconscious mind that is inherited through genetics rather than shaped by personal experiences, and it is common to all humans, influencing beliefs and instincts such as spirituality and fear. It is expressed through universal symbols called archetypes, shaping our thoughts, behaviors, and dreams.

Commutation The process by which incarcerated individuals may apply to have their sentences reduced, either in number of years, e.g., from 20 to 15 years in total sentence length, or from life in prison to a lesser term. This request is rarely accepted.

Community-based Interventions An intervention framework that involves implementing programs and strategies within a local community that address

social issues, rehabilitate individuals, and provide support services. It is considered a better alternative to incarceration as it emphasizes rehabilitation over punishment, aiming to reduce system involvement by addressing root issues and offering counseling, mental health services, and job training. These interventions are more cost-effective, promote community integration, and avoid stigmatization, thereby fostering a compassionate and humane approach to social challenges while creating a safer and more inclusive society.

Community-based Organizations (CBOs) Non-profit, grassroots entities that operate at the local level to address specific needs and issues within a community. These organizations are typically formed and led by members of the community they serve and may focus on various domains, such as social services, education, healthcare, environment, or advocacy. CBOs are crucial in mobilizing resources, providing support and services, and empowering the community they serve.

Community-based Mentors Individuals who voluntarily offer guidance and support within a specific community for a determined period of time. They spend one-on-one time with community members and share their expertise, offer advice, and help them navigate challenges in both social-emotional and academic domains.

Community-based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) A research framework whose driving ethos is the inclusion of the most impacted individuals at the center of the respective issue being addressed. Community member inclusion may take on many forms—examples include being involved in developing research questions, data collection and analysis, and interpretation. These community members offer unique expertise and invaluable insight into the issues that the studied community is facing, which enhances the real-world implications and applicability of this research.

Community Justice A justice framework that encompasses a diverse set of crime prevention and justice initiatives that openly involve the community in their procedures and aim to improve quality of life. These initiatives include community crime prevention, community policing, community defense, community prosecution, community courts, and restorative justice sanctioning systems. Together, they focus on solving problems at the community level, restoring victims and communities, and successfully integrating individuals impacted by the legal system.

Community Violence Intervention (CVI) A comprehensive and collaborative approach to reducing violence and promoting community safety. It involves various evidence-based strategies and programs that aim to prevent and respond to acts of violence, especially gun violence, through community engagement and targeted interventions. Community members,

law enforcement, social service organizations, and other stakeholders work together to identify individuals at high risk of involvement in violence and provide them with support, resources, and opportunities to change their behaviors. These interventions often include conflict mediation, mentorship programs, job training, and access to social services to address the root causes of violence and create a safer environment for everyone in the community.

Community Vitality Community vitality is the holistic state of well-being, which includes economic strength, social cohesion, and public safety, which impacts both individuals and the collective. This concept serves as the bedrock for fostering a just society, in which the strength of communities directly correlates with their safety, health, and prosperity.

Criminal Legal System An advantageous alternative to "criminal justice system," "criminal legal system" acknowledges inherent biases and flaws within the system. The term "criminal justice system" may imply an idealized notion of fairness and equity, which can overlook the disproportionate impacts and injustices marginalized communities face. Using "criminal legal system," we recognize the need to address structural issues and work towards a more just and equitable system that upholds the principles of justice for all.

D

Decarceration An idea and strategy to reduce the number of people held in prisons and correctional facilities. It involves implementing policies and practices that prioritize alternatives to incarceration and focus on addressing the root causes of crime.

Dehumanization The psychological process of portraying or treating individuals or groups as less than human, often with the intention of justifying mistreatment, discrimination, or violence against them. It involves denying the fundamental qualities, rights, and dignity inherent to being human, leading to the objectification and degradation of the targeted individuals or groups. Dehumanization can take various forms, including derogatory language, stereotypes, or propaganda portraying the targeted individuals as subhuman, unworthy, or dangerous. This process is often employed in situations of conflict, oppression, or discrimination, and it can have severe and long-lasting consequences on the affected individuals and societies, perpetuating cycles of violence and injustice.

E

Empirical Research Qualitative or quantitative research that relies upon observation, description, or measurement of real-world phenomena, in contrast to pure theory.

F

Fair Chance Hiring A policy that seeks to give justice-impacted individuals more equal employment opportunities to those who have not been impacted by the legal system. Typically, this policy states that employers may inquire about a candidate's history in the legal system only after thoroughly considering the candidate's qualifications relevant to the position and extending a conditional offer. If a background check of a candidate reveals a history of involvement in the legal system, then employers are urged to consider the nature of the history, the time passed since this history, and the nature of the position in which they have proved qualified.

Family Regulation System The extreme surveillance and regulation of families by government agencies and courts. Central to its operation is the view that parents pose as potential sources of threat and danger to their children and that the most effective way to protect them is separation. This strategy fails to acknowledge its outsized harm done on children and families, and it further fails to address the significant issues—housing, income, or health—that families may be facing.

Focused Deterrence A crime prevention strategy that aims to reduce criminal behavior and violence by intervening in the actions of specific high-risk individuals, groups, and areas while employing a mix of law enforcement, community engagement, and social services. An intervention meeting, or “call-in,” is often the first step in the process, where at-risk persons are informed of the repercussions of their behavior and given incentives to stop.

G

Gatekeeping The practice of individuals or groups in positions of power controlling and limiting access to certain resources, opportunities, or information.

Generative Dialogue A form of constructive and collaborative communication to foster creativity, mutual understanding, and innovative problem-solving among participants. In a generative dialogue, individuals engage in open and respectful discussions where they actively listen to one another's perspectives, share ideas, and explore diverse viewpoints without judgment or defensiveness. The emphasis is placed on creating a safe and inclusive space that encourages exchanging ideas and insights, leading to new possibilities and shared understanding. This type of dialogue encourages collective learning and empowers participants to co-create solutions that transcend individual perspectives, contributing to positive change.

Government Oversight Often referred to as Congressional oversight, it is the process by which legislative

bodies review, monitor, and supervise government agencies, programs, and policy implementation. This oversight holds the government accountable, ensures transparency, and evaluates various programs' efficiency. Methods of oversight include committee hearings, investigations, reports, audits, and budgetary control.

I

Implicit Bias Individuals' unconscious attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes towards certain groups. These biases can influence how people perceive, interact with, and make judgments about others, even if they consciously hold egalitarian values. Implicit biases are formed through repeated exposure to cultural messages and societal norms, and they can affect decision-making processes in various domains, including hiring, education, law enforcement, and healthcare.

J

Justice-impacted Individuals Individuals who have been incarcerated or detained in a prison, immigration detention facility, local jail, juvenile detention facility, or any other carceral setting, as well as those who have been charged but not proven guilty, those who have been arrested, and those on parole and probation, are all considered justice-impacted individuals. Additionally, “justice-impacted individuals” is a non-stigmatizing language alternative for terms such as “criminals,” “offenders,” or “convicts.”

L

Legitimacy The perception of how rightful and justified an authority is to govern, make decisions, or take actions aligned with accepted norms, laws, or principles within a given context. Legitimacy is a crucial element in maintaining social order, stability, and trust in governance and leadership, as it ensures that power is exercised fairly and in the best interest of the community or society at large.

M

Mass Incarceration Refers to the deliberate and disproportionate imprisonment of a large portion of a population, often due to inequitable criminal legal policies, including mandatory sentencing, three-strikes laws, and the War on Drugs. This term is frequently used to describe the phenomenon of an abnormally high number of individuals, particularly from marginalized communities, being incarcerated for various offenses, perpetuating the dehumanization of people of color and long-term social and economic consequences.

Mandated Supporting An advantageous alternative to mandatory reporting. Professionals who are mandated reporters must notify their state's respective Child Protective Services (CPS) organization of any suspicions of child maltreatment or abuse. While in some situations children are legitimately at risk and must be removed for their own safety, other times keeping children with their families while providing meaningful support, services, and resources to the struggling caregivers better prevents harms that families endure as a consequence of a CPS complaint.

Melting Pot A metaphor intended to describe the American ethos of oneness, imagining the U.S. as a land in which a variety of cultures and peoples “melt” together, or assimilate to one another, to form a unified, homogenous group. Superficially, this ideal has its merits in its promotion of community values. However, recent scrutiny of the concept has pointed to its disregarding of the unique characteristics, contributions, and challenges that individual groups have despite being a part of the greater American society. The artwork by Mr. Katsaros plays off of the concept of a “melting-pot,” or more precisely, an “anti-melting pot.”

O

Othering The act of treating certain individuals or groups as outsiders (us vs. them), often based on factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, or socioeconomic status, which can lead to stigmatization, marginalization, unfair treatment, and exclusion of these individuals or groups.

P

Principle of Normality An approach used by the Norwegian Correctional Service in which punishment is considered the restriction of freedom and no additional rights are removed by the court. As a result, the detained person is entitled to the same rights as any other Norwegian citizen, including the right to an education. The convicted individual must be put in the lowest security regime feasible, and no one shall serve their sentence under more stringent conditions than are essential for the community's protection. Ultimately, life inside should match life outside as closely as possible while a person is serving their sentence.

Place-based Policing A research-backed alternative to person-based policing. Place-based policing focuses on areas where crimes are concentrated and assumes that something about a location makes crimes more likely to occur there. Place-based policing offers a method that, in terms of allocating police resources, is more effective than person-based policing.

Procedural Justice (PJ) The idea of fair processes. This theory highlights that people's perception of fairness is

strongly influenced by their experiential quality, not just final outcomes. The perception of fairness is determined by four key factors: (1) whether the individual was treated with dignity and respect, (2) given a chance to voice their concerns, (3) dealt with by impartial and transparent decision-makers, and (4) felt that the motives behind the decision were trustworthy.

Prosocial Behavior Refers to behavior that benefits or helps others, constructively contributing to individuals' or groups' well-being, cooperation, and social harmony.

Public Safety Collective measures and initiatives undertaken by governments and communities to safeguard the well-being and security of the community. It involves a wide range of efforts, such as law enforcement activities, emergency response, and community engagement programs.

Punitive Justice A justice framework that emphasizes punishment as the primary method of deterring future harm and incapacitating “evil” people. This approach narrowly focuses on the individual and their criminal actions, which does not holistically address or resolve the root causes leading to their behavioral issues.

R

Racial Bias The conscious or unconscious tendency or inclination of individuals or institutions to hold prejudiced attitudes, beliefs, or stereotypes that can lead to unfair and discriminatory treatment based on a person's race or ethnicity. Racial bias can manifest in various ways, such as racial profiling, unequal opportunities, discriminatory practices, and negative perceptions or assumptions about individuals based on race. It is essential to recognize and address racial bias to promote equality, social justice, and a more inclusive society that respects and values the diversity of its members.

Recidivism Crisis A characterization of the alarming rates of recidivism, the phenomenon of reentry into the criminal legal system after an initial arrest. Based on a report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, within 5 years of one's arrest, there is a 76.6% chance that one will be rearrested and a 55.1% chance that one will be reimprisoned. Experts point to a lack of access to housing, employment, education, and substance-abuse rehabilitation programs post-release as some of the variety of factors that contribute to this pattern.

Reparation A goal and call to action for current systems of power to make amends with the past's injustices, particularly for Black Americans impacted by slavery and the country's subsequent history of racism. Reparation itself may take on many forms, ranging from state-funded social programs that aim to address certain issues facing particular populations to direct monetary compensation.

Reparative Public Goods A specific category of public goods aimed at addressing historical injustices, systemic inequalities, and social disparities. Reparative public goods center on the idea of redress and reparation, seeking to go beyond what has traditionally been considered “universal” public goods. Instead of merely providing services to the general population, reparative public goods are intentionally designed to target and benefit marginalized or disadvantaged communities that have been affected by discrimination and exclusion. These goods are envisioned as essential components of a world where social housing, healthcare, education, art, meaningful work, and a life free from violence and material deprivation are prioritized.

Reintegration A process of welcoming individuals who have been marginalized, excluded, or alienated back into society, communities, or mainstream life. It most often applies to individuals who have experienced social or legal challenges, such as former incarceration. It involves providing resources, support, and opportunities like education, job training, and counseling to prevent future exclusion and promote a sense of belonging.

Restorative Justice (RJ) A legal framework that seeks to heal victims and ameliorate harms with a focus on the inclusion of all parties related to an offense, including the actor who caused the harm, victims, bystanders, witnesses, governing agencies, and law enforcement. RJ’s theoretical impetus is that by ensuring that all parties are able to communicate their perspectives, the individual who caused the harm may better understand the negative impacts of their behavior and take responsibility for their actions in order to disrupt the cycle of harm. This communication may take on many forms, but one example is moderated meetings that aim to establish understanding, accountability, and the most beneficial steps forward.

S

School-to-prison Pipeline The disproportionate trend of minors and young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds becoming incarcerated. This phenomenon stems from the implementation of increasingly harsh school and municipal policies and educational inequality in the U.S. Experts have identified several contributing factors to this pipeline, including school disturbance laws, zero-tolerance policies and practices, and the presence of police in schools. These elements collectively create the “pipeline” effect, channeling vulnerable individuals towards the criminal legal system.

Stigmatizing Language Words, phrases, or expressions perpetuating negative stereotypes, prejudice, or discrimination against individuals or groups based on specific characteristics, identities, or involvement in the legal system. For instance, using terms such as “criminals,” “offenders,” or “convicts” to describe

individuals who have been accused or convicted of crimes can dehumanize them and perpetuate inequitable treatment. Such language may reinforce societal biases and hinder the reintegration and rehabilitation of justice-involved individuals. Adopting non-stigmatizing language, such as referring to individuals as “justice-involved persons” or “people with past legal involvement,” promotes a more respectful and empathetic environment, recognizing the dignity and humanity of all individuals.

T

Transitional Justice (TJ) A framework containing measures and processes that societies undertake to address past human rights abuses, widespread violence, or mass atrocities in periods of political transition or after conflict. It aims to promote accountability, justice, reconciliation, and healing for victims and affected communities, thereby facilitating the transition to a more stable and democratic society. Transitional justice mechanisms can include trials for perpetrators, truth commissions to uncover and document past abuses, reparations for victims, institutional reforms, and other initiatives to address the legacies of violence and ensure that such atrocities do not recur. Transitional justice aims to balance addressing past injustices and building sustainable peace for the future.

Trauma-informed Intervention An intervention approach that acknowledges the widespread impact of trauma on individuals’ lives, focusing on creating a safe, empowering, and understanding environment. It acknowledges the significance of the effects of past traumas on emotional, physical, and psychological well-being, actively avoiding retraumatization, and fostering healing and resilience through trust, choice, collaboration, and sensitivity to unique needs. By integrating trauma-informed practices into their work, legal professionals can create a safe and supportive environment. This can be done by utilizing communication styles sensitive to trauma survivors, offering choices and control whenever possible, and collaborating with mental health experts when necessary, thereby fostering greater understanding, empathy, and healing. Ultimately, this approach promotes more just and equitable outcomes in the legal system.

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