TO DO:

* KP to share examples of missing black male indicators
* Elly interested in linkage methodology

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NNIPCamp Los Angeles, October 18, 2018

Session 2 – Criminal Justice Issues

Led by Dean Obermark - Urban Institute

Notes by Kathy Pettit

Attended: Rania Ahmed, Mark Abraham, Gerardo Mares, Jenna Losh, Elly Schoen, Phyllis Resnick

Dean shared criminal justice project list.

Resource List:

* [Three Models of Community-Based Participatory Research](https://ldi.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/IssueBrief18_5.pdf)

Update on the criminal justice project – conducted survey NNIP partners. Dean was surprised that the level of involvement is high – 50% had at least 1 projects, 30% had 1+ projects.

Partners are positioned well to do more in this space. They have deep neighborhood relationships – like Oakland. They can go beyond collaborating with the police department.

What kind of supports do Partners need? Data documentation for criminal justice data sources – knowing where there is potential bias within the data.

KP – how do we support partners not in the space & how to go deeper.

Rania – We have a lot of challenges. One of them is reaching out to a community other than black. We are already connecting with black communities. Most of the [non-black] communities are scared because of immigration issues. They don’t want to be connected with any police projects. We tried to say it is anonymous, confidential, but still a challenge to other communities who do not feel safe with the police. We are a coalition – we are not doing our job if we are not reaching out to diverse communities. We offered interviews in different languages and ease one barrier – at least that it is available in your own language. But that didn’t ease the fear. We are almost done with data collection. By November, we should be reporting out.

A second challenge is incidents under-reported by police. We don’t just want to use law enforcement sources. We looked at sources like public health – like CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children). We know gun violence is over-reported. Domestic violence and CSEC are underreported.

Dean – certain types of crime under-reported. Trying to get buy-in from immigrant communities, did you engage other partners? This is what we do at Urban to get local credibility.

Rania – We have three approaches. 1) Before hiring the fellows, we asked– do you have connections beyond your racial/ethnic background? So they could be ambassadors to other communities. 2) We are partnering with organizations who provide services (people who experienced CSEC felt safer with focus groups, rather than one-on-one interviews.) 3) We also partnered with the Asian Community Center. It was successful – we had more racial/ethnic diversity than in the first phase of the project. The coalition and city council members are ok with it because Oakland is heavily black. But we want to represent the other voices. We have four phases of qualitative work. Early phase was 99% black, and then later phase was 80% black. The biggest challenges was to recruit fellows. It required 3 trainings and we had a time frame. We had 27 fellows: 5 are youth, 50% male, 2 Hispanic, 1 Asian, 1 middle-eastern, 1 white (who left), and 17 were black.

Mark – when neighborhoods do projects – we want a designer from the neighborhood. With the immigrant population, we are working with groups that directly serve those neighborhoods. The community group took our survey and used some of our survey questions so we could get comparable data. They do not have a data person, but we can help. They can survey people with informal economy jobs.

Rania - We do CSEC with a group that does healing practices with victims of CSEC – those are the ones that preferred focus groups.

Dean - how do you cultivate the relationships in the first place?

Mark – Our community foundation funds the local nonprofits, so they have the local relationships.

Gerardo – are there consulates in your cities? They are great advocates in working with the communities.

In Milwaukee, there is a consulate from Mexico. There are some advocate organizations for defending civil rights – they tend to focus more on helping individuals get an education. Others are more oriented as service providers. Some advocacy groups could be fomenting fear – others providing services. They have different approaches and outcomes. Milwaukee has an officer community engagement unit and have developed really good relationships with advocate groups. Even if the officers aren’t the ones showing up at the meetings, they have good relationships.

Dean – does anyone work on criminal justice system and have results that are unfavorable results for police system? How do you navigate around doing work that may be critical against organizations, but maintain relationships?

Rania - We are providing them with themes. In the design process of the interview questions, we address the themes of services. What should the city of Oakland do to reduce violence? We would communicate to them in a qualitative way, in stories.

Easy for us to be critical of the police – but they take it more seriously if is coming from residents or the mayor.

Gerardo – we had a lot of MOUs to share data externally [when he worked at Milwaukee police department]– executive command liked it when researchers would send them an update to keep them in the loop & get a preview of what was coming. Then they could prepare a public statement, or do a deeper dive into the findings.

PR – did they put a spin on the findings to complicate your messaging?

Gerardo – Let’s say there were a lot of use of force incidents – they had time to get a better understanding with the precinct involved to see what was going on.

Mark – We were not sure how to use pre-trial bond data –it is released in real-time. We didn’t put a lot of time into figuring out how a local community might use it. Bail project was scraping it with a student and real-time. The groups wanted to know when someone went into the system to help them.

Jenna – NOLA has just started talking with state about developing MOU to get incarceration data by parish. There’s a couple of different directions. The data is collection through system called Criminal and Justice Unified Network (CAJUN) – the data is entered totally manually so it is up to the warden on how it is reported. It varies from prison to prison. One step involves faxing. They spent millions of dollars on a new system and it didn’t work, so they went back to the old one.

How do we know if it [the data] is even close to accurate? What is usually accurate is race/sex. The state just did a report on it, and, for a given person in prison, the state doesn’t know where they are for an average of 32 days per year. How are we going to use the data? How to frame it? Most of people in jail are black men. We are looking at demographics of NOLA by race/gender. For every 100 black NOLA women, there are 80 black men.

Mark – Could frame in terms of effect on workforce- if you look at workforce and training. The economic impacts of removing so many people from the workforce and separating families. In participatory research, they hire women of color for resident-led research.

You could also speak with organizations trying to do reentry work – share results with them up front and get their advice on possible framings. They would have better ideas for how to share it publicly in a way that supports those affected by incarceration and incarceration’s collateral consequences.

KP – NNIP had a [re-entry project](https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/issue-area/68) and you could take a look at that for some possible frames.

Examples: Urban blog: <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/lets-capture-more-accurate-picture-americas-missing-black-men> (in reaction to NYT article: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/04/20/upshot/missing-black-men.html>)

Elly – Prop. 47 saved a lot through decreasing incarceration, and [LA (and the state) is redirecting 70% of savings](https://www.lamayor.org/mayor-garcetti-announces-6-million-state-grant-support-city-reentry-programs) to reentry projects.

Jenna – we are in the early stages in MOU process. It is the state person’s first agreement. They want extremely specific things from us. We want to frame it as they will give us everything. They want to know the story and how it will be presented – they are very wary.

Dean – are criminal justice entities harder when it comes to MOUs and data access?

Mark – they are under pressure to share data. Match Department of Corrections records with health and vital stats – to look at how people are affected.

Project with Health Information Exchange – integrated system for EMR records. They want health equity use cases. There is a master patient index. We won’t touch the data – we are the intermediary. They want to know about the experiences of people who are released – physician visits, etc. And things like Medicaid.

Elly: How do they do the linkages?

Gerardo – I often give friends and colleagues advice. It takes some time to figure out how violence is defined by the police. I suggest using the [manual for Uniform Crime Reports](https://ucr.fbi.gov/nibrs/summary-reporting-system-srs-user-manual). It is very frustrating getting requests from researchers asking for “assaults,” which is not clear. The manual is a good resource. They update the definitions too and give the definitions over time. For example, there was a definitional change for rape in 2012.

Dean – The data are confusing, and the documentation is bad.

Gerardo – I can help if anyone needs it – my entire background is in criminology. I’d also caution people not to go directly to open source. The data they are putting out there is preliminary. The burglary could be transferred to a robbery. I was with Milwaukee police department for 4 years.

Mark – I am curious about local funders – criminal justice is not on the top of the list. How to pitch this to them?

Rania – The NNIP email list very reliable. Maybe we should do some subgroups of the list? Smaller groups focused on different areas. I might ask different questions of different groups.

Mark – I noticed some groups are working with Vera.

Jenna – When we were working with the Legal reform project, we talked with Vera. They asked about things that were expressed by community members. When Vera approached us to give us the survey, residents asked “How much $ are you going to give us? It was frustrating that they weren’t compensating the community members.

We had a meeting with the new Executive Director. This is an issue – you are using their [the residents’ expertise]. Paying them a $100 for years of experience. We requested that they hire people from the community for long-term staff positions. We will see what happens. It is interesting coming into it for me – it is fresh for me. There is this old-stodge way of doing things. What is better language, better approaches? For example, using public safety vs. crime.

Dean – we talk about this at Urban – not to extract from the communities.

If you look at our reports from 10 years ago, the language we know is problematic. For example, how we talk about police – we accepted their perspective automatically. We do evaluation work – take federal funds - we are there in a community for a few weeks per year. I feel dissatisfied with that. There is community based participatory research – community as co-researchers/co-investigators. The Oakland project is what we aim to do.

Emily Wong– run “Transitions clinic network” nationally.

Justice one – share it – did a blog on it.

Dean - At JPC, some of this shift was thinking about how the language we used in publications/conversations/etc was stigmatizing. Before I started, we made a commitment to use better language and be more thoughtful in general: https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/people-first-changing-way-we-talk-about-those-touched-criminal-justice-system

Mark – We had 30 people on community-based participatory research committee – but there is 3000 faculty. We jokingly called ourselves the 1% because CBPR is so rare there.

Jenna – How do we give back to communities?

Dean – regarding sharing of resources for communities involved in research, federal contracts and funding can makes the subgrants or sharing resources hard. Even small survey incentives from NIJ are hard to approve. There’s no easy or one-size-fits-all answer for making research valuable to a community.

Group: CBPR is one lead. Balancing CBPR and funder expectations can be hard. Some people worry about rigor. Protection of data also comes up.

Dean: There are many examples among NNIP matters of doing different kinds of research that aims to give back to communities.

Kathy – we could prioritize in the stories we write up ones that involve the residents more deeply.

Dean – We just had a center wide email chain about this. In proposal planning, this should be part of the dissemination – going back to where we did the research to present the result, along with the groups that helped us. That sounds like a basic thing, but it is a new shift.

Dean – what resources we will build are still up in the air. As you do work related to criminal justice or even explore criminal justice issues, please reach out with anything you need. The blocks you run into are probably common and your needs will inform what we ultimately make in terms of resources.