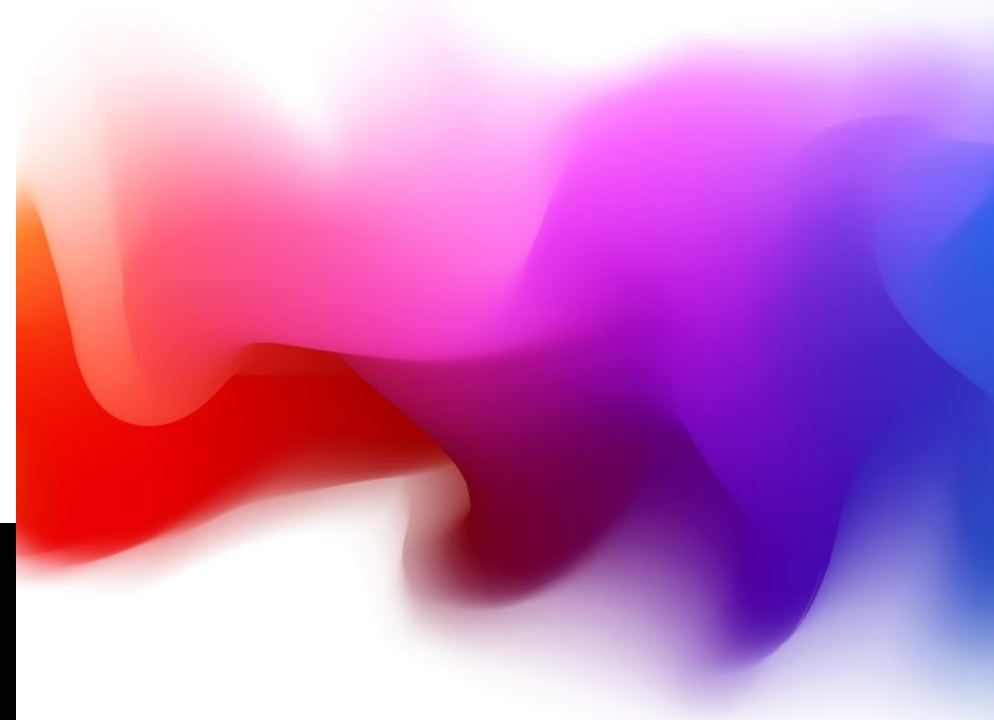


REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

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COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

- Research – Zora Neale Hurston “Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”
- So “research” can come from anywhere and anyone.
- Different names:
 - Community-based participatory research
 - (Youth) Participatory Action Research (Y/PAR)
 - Feminist Methodologies
- Community based research requires partnership but there is variation

THE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

- **Co-developed interview guide and did training on qualitative interviewing**
- **Blackroots Alliance took the lead in recruitment and scheduling**
- **One Blackroots Alliance, one PD in interview**
- **Northwestern did coding, analysis, and writing with iterative feedback from team**

THE PEOPLE

Table 1. Reimagining Public Safety Participants (N=103)

Race

Black or African American 91%

Other 9%

Average Age

48 years old

Gender Pronouns

She/her 52%

He/him 19%

They/them 7%

No answer 7%

Other 15%

Housing tenure

Renter 65%

Owner 21%

Other 13%

Has children

70%

Employment

Employed 34%

Informal work 10%

Retired 18%

Disability/Caregiving 9%

Unemployed 20%

Other 9%

Education

Less than HS degree 16%

HS/GED 30%

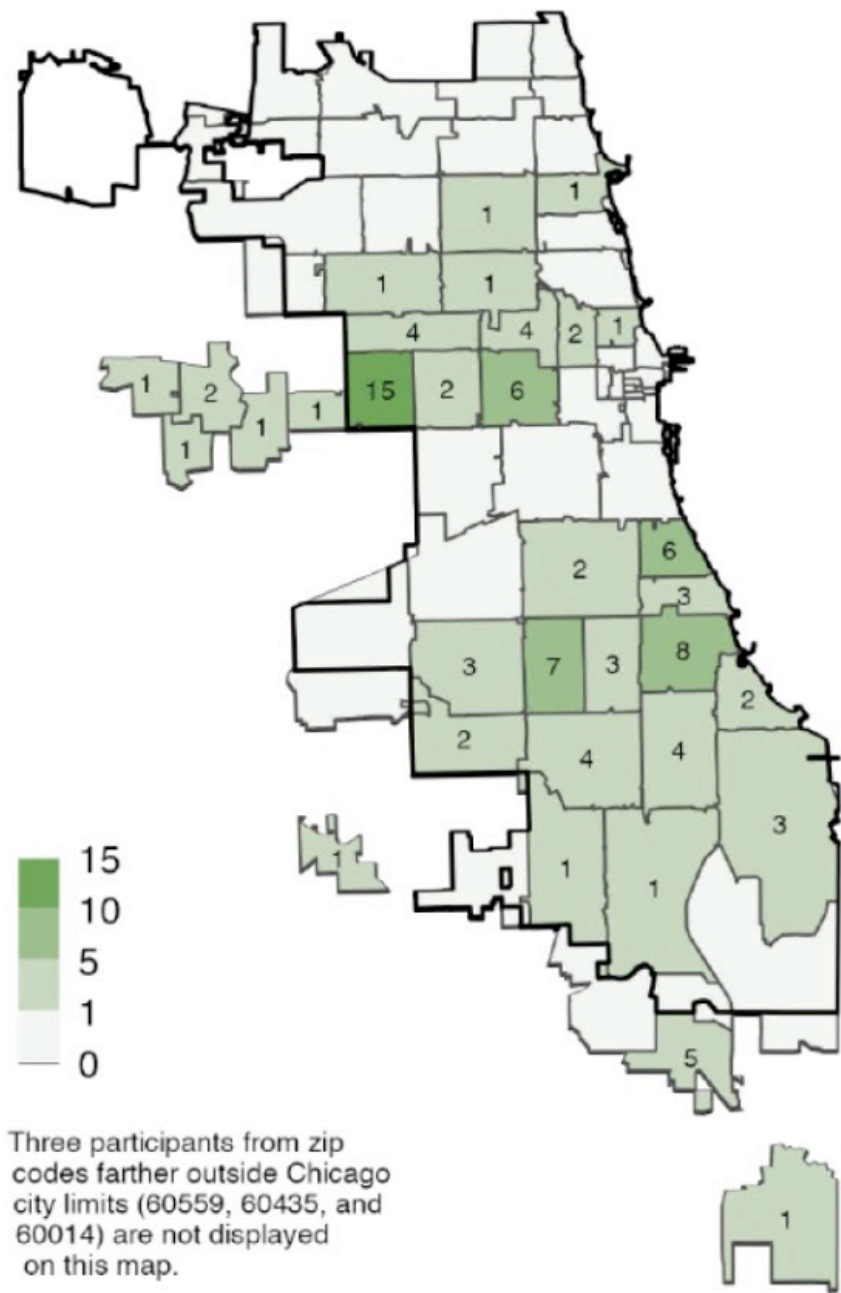
Some college 32%

College degree 16%

Graduate or prof. degree 7%

THE PLACES

Figure 1: Community Participants across Chicagoland Zip Codes



THE TOPICS

- 1. Getting to Know You**
- 2. Safety**
- 3. Crime**
- 4. Criminal Legal System**
- 5. Black Futures**

12 INSIGHTS

1. Safety = freedom, comfort, peace
2. Safety = family, home, friends
3. Unsafety = outside, police
4. Unsafety → hypervigilance, avoidance
5. Strengthening community → more safety
6. Improving well-being → more safety

12 INSIGHTS

7. Reimagining safety = reimagining police
8. Public defenders receive critique
9. Ideas to improve community-defender relations
10. Black Chicagoans are hopeful despite challenges
11. Black Futures = sharing, caring, building
12. This work *today* is the solution

SAFETY

Safety is...

- “...not having to worry about coming and going out of the house and if something’s going to happen. It’s just peace of mind.”
- “...how freely I can move through my space.”
- “to feel comfortable, to feel relaxed in a sense. To be able to let your guard down is how I feel safe, no matter where you are, who you are with.”

WELL- BEING

Health, Education, Jobs, Housing

- “Well, if these things was added into the neighborhoods like you're supposed to, safety wouldn't be no issue because I'm getting what I'm supposed to get... If it was divided up equally like it's supposed to be, we wouldn't have these problems because what a person don't have, they do to whatever means is necessary to get what they need.”

IDEAS FOR PDS

Ways to improve

- Advice for improving community-defender relations included
 - increasing familiarity and interaction across the two groups;
 - improving case investigations and knowledge of clients' specific case;
 - improving communications so that clients better understand their legal options.

IDEAS FOR PDS

Case investigations and explanations

- “I feel like [public defenders] should investigate the crimes more and find out what really happened and don’t just assume that it’s always that person’s fault because they caught that case. Because sometimes it don’t even be their fault, they was just in the wrong place at the wrong time or with a person and they got locked up for the other person doing some stupid shit and they didn’t even know the person was going to do something stupid.”
- “He came in there talking about ‘State’s offer.’...I’m like damn bruh, you ain’t even say hi.”

BLACK FUTURES

Wielding a magic wand

- “Putting each person in my circle in their spots that they want to be in when they see themselves in the future.”
- “I just want to make sure that if I could just help one person, then it'll be an impact.”
- “Make it to where we we're not suffering financially. I can bless people. No homelessness. No mental health. And I want to be where our communities are thriving.””

THE LEARNING

PDs and BA heard new things

- **PD:** “I learned Black people are different, we’re not the same. We have different backgrounds and upbringing so that we have different needs and perceptions of what we need. We don’t fit in a box.”
- **BA:** “Content wise, you could NOT predict what you were going to hear.”

CONCLUSION

The Answer: We need unity. We need more of this happening.

The Question: When you say this, what are you referring to?

The Answer: The forums where you're sitting down here talking to people to find out what they want in their communities to make it better.

The Question: Has anyone ever sat you down and asked you questions like these directly?

The Answer: No.

The Question: Do you find that odd?

The Answer: No. I think it's about time.

EXTRA SLIDES

PDS

Public Defenders

- Despite some positive attitudes toward public defenders, three main critiques and stereotypes characterized participants' responses:
 - 1) public defenders do not put enough care and investment into their cases,
 - 2) Public defenders are complicit in a system that just wants to lock up Black people, and
 - 3) public defenders encourage their clients to take unwanted plea deals.

PDS DON'T CARE

- “I think that they can help more with cases. I just think that they don't.”
- “They don't come in well-prepared.”
- “Most public defenders don't even care about you. [They act like] ‘Who cares? Whatever. Just take this time,’ and ‘It's better than going to trial’.”
- “Some of them, most of the public defenders I had, they didn't want to fight, didn't want to fight for you. But I did run across one or two that did.”

PDS ARE COMPLICIT

- *“They’re in bed with the court. You know what I’m saying? So, the less people that comes through there, it’s like they’re all kind of depending on each other. So, they need kind of bodies, as messed up as that sounds.”*
- “I didn’t trust them anyway because they eating lunch with the state’s attorney.”

PDS AND PLEAS

- *“Some public defenders they’ll like, “Oh you could just take this time or no,” but when you know, “Nah, I know in my mind I didn’t do this. I’m not [guilty],” why would I take this time? Why would you be trying to make me take this time? You not even worried about trying to win the case. You are basically telling me already that I lost.”*
- *“Because their thing is, as soon as you come in, they don’t ask you what happened. They ask you what “You plead this right here, and you’ll get this much time.” They ain’t ask me what happened or the details of the case. They said, “If you plead guilty, this is how much time you’ll get.”*