

Committee on Law and Justice
Semi-annual Meeting
May 4, 2023

National Academy of Sciences Building, Room 125
2101 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

PUBLIC SESSION

Seminar: Innovative Approaches to Measuring Community Perspectives of Public Safety

Description: Consistent, rigorous measurement of community perceptions provides timely feedback regarding the performance of agencies primarily responsible for public safety such as police, prosecutors, courts, and city managers. It is an essential ingredient in building community trust in law enforcement. Accurate measurement of community views can inform the development of new and more effective strategies for improving both police-community relations and public safety, as well as provide important feedback related to changes in policy and practice.

Traditional methods for measuring community perceptions rely on community meetings, convenience sample-based citizen satisfaction surveys, or community-wide surveys. Each of these methods has well-known deficiencies. For example, people living where crime and police presence are most intense are less likely to participate in community meetings and fill out surveys. Community-wide probability surveys may not be representative of the experiences of people of color living in disadvantaged and marginalized communities. Additionally, community surveys can often be expensive, time-consuming, and unable to provide estimates at smaller geographies within municipalities or important subgroups (e.g., young men of color).

This seminar aims to explore potential methods or constellations of methods that would enable frequent, representative measures of community perceptions of public safety across small geographies and specific subgroups.

Guiding questions for the seminar:

- What do we know about measuring community perceptions of public safety? What are limitations to current models?
- How can we use the act of asking about community perceptions as part of an overall strategy to improve community perceptions/trust? Why is measuring community trust important for public safety?
- How do we improve response rates from respondents from underrepresented segments of the community (young people, people of color, people living in areas of concentrated disadvantage)?
- How do we evaluate the strength of a design that draws from multiple nonprobability samples, each designed to recruit a particular underrepresented group?
- When using nonprobability methods, how to better quantify the representativeness of the sample?

- How to develop sample frames that allow data collection from and estimates at smaller geographies?
- What strategies can be used to lower the cost of measuring community perceptions of public safety?
- How can qualitative work guide our measurement approaches?
- What kind of information can be obtained from ethnographic or qualitative work that moves beyond survey and big data?
- What are the barriers to high-quality ethnographic work? How can researchers access the relevant populations?
- From your own work, what have you learned about the populations you study and community perceptions?
- How can we work to increase building community trust?

10:30am – 11:15pm Introduction and Framing and Context Setting

*Moderator: Rod Brunson, member, Committee on Law and Justice
(University of Maryland)*

Tony Cheng, University of California, Irvine
Waverly Duck, University of California, Santa Barbara
Jocelyn Fontaine, Arnold Ventures

11:15am – 12:30pm Panel 1: Survey and Big Data Methodologies

*Moderator: William Sabol, member Committee on Law and Justice
(Georgia State University)*

Daniela Golinelli, Mathematica
Sunghee Lee, University of Michigan
John Roman, NORC
Michael Simon, Zencity
Clair Uding, University of Wyoming

12:30pm – 1:15pm LUNCH

1:15pm – 2:30pm Panel 2: Qualitative and Mixed Methods Approaches

*Moderator: Preeti Chauhan, member Committee on Law and Justice
(John Jay College of Criminal Justice)*

Megan Comfort, RTI
Kyle S. H. Dobson, University of Virginia
Victor Rios, University of California, Santa Barbara
Brian Wade, University of Pennsylvania Crime and Justice Policy Lab

2:30pm – 3:15pm Discussion: Path Forward

Facilitator: Nancy La Vigne, Director, NIJ

Guiding Questions for Discussion:

- What methods enable measuring community perceptions at small geographies and essential subgroups?
- How can each approach improve representativeness, reduce cost, and provide intra-city estimates?
- What approach or combination of approaches is most feasible for jurisdictions to implement in every city of the United States?

3:15pm – 3:30pm BREAK

Mark Kleiman Innovation for Public Policy Memorial Lecture

Description: Mark Kleiman was a policy analyst, teacher, and long-time member of the Committee on Law and Justice. This memorial lecture aims to preserve his legacy by awarding early career scholars who have innovative ideas for public policy.

3:30pm – 5:00pm Tasseli McKay, 2023 Lecturer (*Duke University*)

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