‘THE REAL DATA SET’: A CASE OF CHALLENGING POWER DYNAMICS AND QUESTIONING THE BOUNDARIES OF RESEARCH PRODUCTION

Rachel Wells and Victoria Copeland

Abstract

While the co-production of knowledge through community-engaged research is intended to be a reciprocally beneficial process, academic institutions have often devalued community expertise by treating community organizations as subjects rather than co-creators of knowledge. Drawing from Black Feminist Epistemology, this ethnographic study examines how one community-based organization, Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), partners with academic researchers, including their discourse around partnerships and how they challenged power dynamics between community and their university partners. This paper discusses key themes from their partnerships, including centering community members’ expertise through their lived experience and forming long-term mutual relationships rooted in abolition and the Black Radical Tradition. Drawing on an analysis of LA CAN’s organizing and research processes with academic partners, we discuss how the centering of community expertise and forming relationships with academics aligned on these values can help to challenge the traditional power dynamics in community-university partnerships, resulting in different ways of knowing or what LA CAN referred to as “the real data set.”

Pow.er- (n) The ability to define phenomena; the ability to make these phenomena act in a desired manner.
- Huey P. Newton, Text on the front of the Los Angeles Community Action Network T-shirt

The co-production of knowledge in community-engaged research is intended to be an ethical and mutually beneficial process that engages researchers from multiple perspectives. However, this history of research production includes examples of unethical practices and power dynamics largely benefiting the academy (e.g., London et al., 2022). While research on service-learning and community engagement offer examples of partnerships grounded

in trust and shared power (e.g., Reardon, 2006; Strand et al., 2003), university processes can place barriers on more equitable approaches to research. For example, academic processes, such as the Institutional Review Board, often fail to acknowledge community members as researchers, reinforcing the idea of community members as subjects and adding to this power hierarchy (Fouche & Chubb, 2017). Academic researchers from decolonial, post-colonial, participatory, and feminist thought highlight the need to critically engage with and dismantle these power dynamics within community-engaged research (Askins & Pain, 2011; Chatterton, 2006; Collins, 2013; Ritterbusch, 2019). Researchers in academic institutions must reflect on the ways that we uphold these power structures within engaged research, both intentionally and unintentionally. Drawing from McKittrick's (2021) discussions on challenging hegemonic epistemologies and rethinking knowledge production, we focus on one community-based organization (CBO) that has challenged traditional power dynamics between community and their university partners.

This ethnographic study of Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) examines core aspects of their approach to partnerships with academic institutions and how their orientation to partnerships shapes knowledge creation and theory. First, we discuss how academic institutions and epistemologies have traditionally focused more on university expertise and neglect community expertise. We discuss scholarship on community engaged research that challenge these ideas and power dynamics, as well as barriers due to university processes and assumptions. We then present approaches that we have used in our research and how our approaches guide our work with community partners and led us to this study. We draw from an ethnographic study with LA CAN, discussing LA CAN's approach to partnerships with academics. This includes discourse that emphasizes the role of community members as experts and equal partners in knowledge creation and long-term relationships with their academic partners rooted in shared value systems. Using McKittrick's (2021) framework "that sharing stories is creative rigorous radical theory" (p. 73), LA CAN's process of generating theory, which included interpreting problems and defining solutions, is deeply rooted in the Black Radical Tradition, using lived experiences to analyze and push back against institutions working against Black wellbeing and liberation. Moving from doing research *on* communities to doing research *with* communities requires us to de-center academic researchers as sole creators of knowledge, and instead build long-term mutual relationships with community researchers and theorists. This paper helps to show how shifting power dynamics can lead to new forms of knowledge production.

Literature Review: Epistemological Frameworks and Knowledge Production Within the Academy

The co-production of knowledge through community-engaged research faces many barriers due to using academia as a research partner. Academic institutions bring a set of common ideologies or values that drive academic research and have an impact on research processes with communities (Collins, 2000; McKittrick, 2021; Stockdill & Danico, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2019), When thinking about community-engaged research, McKittrick urges researchers to examine how we come to know what we know, and where we know from. Academic institutions

in the United States context have normalized a largely positivist and objectivist standard that treats "subjective" ways of knowing through experience as less rigorous (Collins). Knowledge produced by those who have been categorized as "other" have been largely ignored and often rendered insignificant or unreliable (Collins; Tuck & Yang). In contrast, McKittrick describes radical theory-making that occurs outside of existing systems of knowledge. This includes the "act of sharing stories as the theory and the methodology" for radical theory generation (p. 73) and imagining new ways of being. The role of epistemology, or the ways in which we "assess knowledge or why we believe what we believe to be true" thus becomes essential for how we value knowledge from community sources (Collins, p. 328).

Patricia Hill Collins (2000), in Black Feminist Epistemology, writes about how normalized hegemonic practices have been perpetuated by the academy. She states that "White men control Western structures of knowledge validation, their interests pervade the themes, paradigms, and epistemologies of traditional scholarship" (Collins, p.328). She adds that "in the United States, the social institutions that legitimate knowledge as well as the Western or Eurocentric epistemologies that they uphold constitute two interrelated parts of the dominant knowledge validation processes" (Collins, p. 330). Because of this, research in the Western context has created and perpetuated barriers to conducting research that deviates from the Western, Eurocentric knowledge validation process. The prioritization and categorization of certain sources of knowledge are also fueled by academic and institutional processes such as the academic institutional review board (IRB) process. In this paper, we look at a specific type of knowledge creation that seeks to challenge these hierarchies—knowledge co-created with communities through community-engaged research.

In contrast to power hierarchies often present within academic research, principles within Participatory Action Research (PAR) require discussing and addressing power relations within research processes (Tuck & Yang, 2019). This is an "ethical praxis of care" that prioritizes working with communities and ongoing negotiation between research collaborators (Cahill, 2007, p.3). This is not only part of Participatory Action Research, but Tuck and Yang describe how other methods such as critical ethnography, public science, or community mapping also seek to deconstruct these power dynamics. In addition, service-learning and community engagement literature discuss the importance of challenging power dynamics, such as when they discuss the importance of shared power where campus and community partners are equal partners in decision-making (Strand et al., 2003) and a trusting relationship that will develop over time (Reardon, 2006). These relationships include a longer-term commitment and an understanding that relationships may not develop over a set timeline in order to be open to unexpected developments (Enos & Morton, 2003) and include ongoing communication and negotiation (Nelson et al., 2015).

While scholars that discuss PAR and other community-engaged research highlight mutuality and shared power, this contrasts with a biomedical research model of researcher-subject dichotomies, including assumptions about research that are within the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. Research methods such as PAR consider community members as research collaborators while IRB processes often treat community members solely as subjects of research (Fouche & Chubb, 2017; Wood, 2017). IRB protocols such as selection of subjects do not account for how relationships are built over time without a pre-imposed agenda (as described by

Enos & Morton, 2003) or how research protocols are co-created. In addition to devaluing community members expertise, the focus on a researcher's relationships with individual subjects within IRB processes does not consider liability and risks at the community level (Tamariz et al., 2015; Wood, 2017). Wood argues that Belmont principles that are seen as central to ethics in research on human subjects are not sufficient for community-engaged research as they do not account for these community-level risks and view community members solely as subjects. In addition, this focus on what Sabati (2019) calls "decontextualized" cases of ethical violations, rather than attention to a larger complex history of ethical violations, maintains harmful research processes. Ethics in community-engaged research includes not only a commitment to care, but also a commitment to challenging the institutional foundations that have built up racial hierarchies (Cahill, 2007).

The IRB is one example of academic processes that are rooted in long-standing attachments to biomedical frameworks. In addition, outside agencies often prioritize and recognize academic institutions as the main sources of knowledge, so community members are often not recognized as a source of knowledge production (London et al., 2022). Community partners recognized that their knowledge was seen as less credible by policy makers and identified an epistemic injustice where knowledge had more weight when it was coming from the university (London et al.). University partners can also bring assumptions about expertise and the role of the university when working with community members. Even in partnerships that emphasized mutual relationships, academics still faced challenges in letting go of the idea that they were supposed to "fix things" (Morton & Bergbauer, 2015; p. 28). Bortolin (2011) describes how discourse around partnerships can still emphasize the universities' role and see communities as a more passive recipient. To address these logics that prioritize university knowledge, McKittrick's (2021) critical reflection on understanding how and where we generate knowledge calls us to address how our epistemological frameworks brought us to this work. We discuss how we ground ourselves in Black Feminist Epistemology and in Critical Theory and Critical Poverty Studies and then how our collective frameworks informed this paper.

Black Feminist Epistemology—Victoria Copeland

As a Black and Filipino researcher, I am highly influenced by Black Feminist Epistemology. Patricia Hill Collins' conceptualization of Black Feminist Epistemology offers several tenets for conducting research, including an ethos of caring, an ethos of personal accountability, considering lived experiences as criterion of meaning, and use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims (Collins, 2000). Many of these ethics intersect with PAR praxis, decolonial thought, and abolitionist praxis. Black feminist epistemology has afforded me a way to consider and use a wide array of "non-normative" methodologies. In working from this epistemological framework, in contrast to views that treat community members as research subjects, I am reminded about how both academic and community researchers provide unique contributions to knowledge creation (Collins). These unique contributions not only include perspectives but also emotions that arise through co-producing knowledge. Acknowledging the emotions requires an understanding that emotion, ethics, and reason are all interconnected which simultaneously calls for personal accountability within the research process.

In discussing lived experiences as criteria of meaning, Collins (2000) further expands on a distinction between knowledge and wisdom. She refers to knowledge as adequate for those who are usually in power, but insufficient for those who have been impacted by structures of oppression and violence. She states that wisdom is a way to think about knowledge that can only be gained through lived experience (Collins). In addition to lived experience as a criterion of meaning, I also constantly think about the ways in which dialogue provides essential knowledge validation through community and connectedness. Dialogues, as described by Collins, are a way that individuals can interact harmoniously and are a form of collective empowerment. This ethic emphasizes the relationality of research and research practices. As stated by McKittrick (2021), we need to be suspicious of "how we come to know, where we know from, and the ways in which many academic methodologies refuse black life and relational thinking" (p. 120). She adds, that:

> part of our intellectual task then, is to work out how different kinds and types of texts, voice, and geographies relate to each other and open up unexpected and surprising ways to talk about liberation, knowledge, history, race, gender, narrative, and blackness (McKittrick, p.121).

Critical Theory and Critical Poverty Studies—Rachel Wells

As a white woman coming to this research after nonprofit experiences, I have drawn from critical ethnography and critical poverty studies in order to examine how power and inequality are maintained, question surface assumptions and ideas of neutrality in social welfare, and to develop research that contributes to social change (Madison, 2011). Critical poverty studies also include an awareness that one cannot separate our research from relationships of power that are often the subject of this research (Crane, 2015). Through experiences working at nonprofit organizations, I was concerned with how community members' ideas were not given the same weight as nonprofit professionals. This led to interest in this topic and in critical theory, specifically critical ethnography. This type of ethnography strives to give community members more authority throughout the research process, while also recognizing how a researcher's positionality shapes this research (Creswell, 2013). With this framework, I was mindful of my role and how I worked with community members in collecting data and theorizing. I was entering spaces led by Black and Latinx community members and an organization that described their work as rooted in the Black Radical Tradition, and I feel that I gained trust with community members and formed friendships. I also identified as a member of LA CAN after my time as part of multiple committees but I still had an outsider's perspective as a white woman who had not experienced houselessness or faced eviction. Information was shared with me when I was actively involved with the organization, but as I spent more time writing, I was less involved with the organization. I write from this mixed LA CAN member/outsider position.

Within this role as an insider/outsider, I used Angen's concept (2000) of ethical validation, which considers the ethical aspects of the research process, from the methods chosen to how findings will be used. As part of ethical validation, I examined political implications of publishing my findings and how findings could affect

relationships. LA CAN had an explicit political orientation, so I considered how my representations and descriptions were aligned with this orientation. This research was not Participatory Action Research as we did not co-create research questions. However, I formed deep relationships and served as an active member, including assisting with community-led research. While I assisted with community-led research focused on action, as part of ethical validation, I reflected on how ethnographic research that was more theoretical could also lead to action. I have a deep appreciation for the time that staff and community members spent with me during this research, but interactions could be in unequal relationships. In some settings, I was also interacting with community members in a vulnerable moment. Through data analysis and writing, I am still interpreting their experiences. I aimed to be thoughtful in how I developed themes and findings with their experiences, but I must still reflect on questions of expertise and directions of knowledge production.

A Praxis of Relationality

Victoria's roots in Black Feminist Epistemology and Rachel's resonance with critical poverty studies provided a unique collective perspective and framework for this study. There were several parallels between both researchers' value systems and foundational principles. Black Feminist epistemology and critical poverty studies both include a general understanding that researchers cannot separate themselves from the research. In acknowledging the embeddedness of researchers within the research process, we also understand the necessity of considering power dynamics. This acknowledgement of power and the role of the researchers is relevant to all aspects of the research process, including research design, utilization or creation of theory, collection of data, production of knowledge, and dissemination of findings. In addition, both Black Feminist Epistemology and the ethical validation process call attention to how we practice accountability. This call for accountability includes a reflection on shared value systems, which encourages the building of relationships between all researchers within the project.

The similarities between our shared value systems, and how we come to know what we know, is relevant to this study. We learn from one community-based organization, Los Angeles Community Action Network, that has challenged traditional power dynamics through their partnerships with academic researchers. Using data from a larger ethnographic study, we asked what were their key principles for partnerships and how did they view the ideas of power, expertise, and knowledge creation through these partnerships. Through these two research questions, we looked at how LA CAN's shifting power dynamics helps to center community expertise and uplift CBOs as movement researchers.

Methodology

This case is from a larger ethnographic study on two CBOs that combine community organizing and service provision within the city of Los Angeles in order to examine this approach to working with community members and how community-based organizations (CBOs) can challenge dominant narratives of poverty. Ethnography was chosen as an ideal method for understanding the context or setting for this frontline work. The multiple

methods and ongoing interactions that are part of ethnography also help to develop a complex, detailed understanding (Creswell, 2013). This paper focuses on one of the CBOs, Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN). LA CAN was selected for the larger study due to their combination of services and organizing and their critique of traditional service provision. Through data collection, LA CAN was identified as having a distinct approach to partnerships and language that emphasized community expertise, leading to the research questions for this paper. From its founding, LA CAN has described an important connection to the Black Radical Tradition. Robinson and Robinson (2017) discuss how traditions of Black radicalism emerged from the combination of African culture, beliefs, and enslavement and that from this conjuncture "were powerful impulses to escape enslavement" (p. 16) and a tradition of resistance shaped by this history. As discussed later in the findings, LA CAN saw their work as grounded in this tradition, which shaped partnerships and discourse. Thus, we identified LA CAN as illustrative of ways in which power dynamics can be challenged, along with the different forms of knowledge that result from this shift. In addition, documents from LA CAN described long-term relationships with researchers from several Los Angeles academic institutions, so this was an opportunity to see how one CBO partnered with researchers from multiple universities. We focus not on a specific partnership, but instead on LA CAN's broader approach to partnerships.

Los Angeles Community Action Network

Located in the Skid Row neighborhood in the city of Los Angeles, LA CAN is focused on community organizing and power building among low-income community members. At the time of data collection, LA CAN's twitter bio referred to "Fighting for Human Rights from the epicenter of Human Rights violations, Skid Row U.S.A." The Skid Row neighborhood is a social service hub where community members face threats of over-policing and displacement. This neighborhood has a high concentration of unhoused residents[1], both residents living in mega-shelters and unsheltered residents living in tents, as well as low-income tenants living in residential hotels or single-room occupancy (SRO) units. Due to downtown's proximity to Skid Row, downtown business interests have formed partnerships with the police. As a result, residents in Skid Row have experienced a high police presence (e.g., Blasi, 2007).

LA CAN's structure includes multiple committees where community members can get involved in organizing, including the housing committee, human and civil rights committee, food and wellness collaborative, and Downtown Women's Action Coalition (DWAC). While LA CAN describes organizing as the core of their work, the LA CAN organizing model also includes community services and community building in support of their organizing, such as how their legal clinic was created to "remove the barriers to involvement that our members and constituents are facing on a daily basis." This hybrid combination of services and community organizing is a way to respond to their political environment and conditions for community members (Gates, 2014; Hyde,

1 As opposed to using the term homeless, LA CAN preferred the terms houseless or unhoused. As an LA CAN staff member described, for some people, their tent was their home, but they did not have a house. Thus, we use the term unhoused or houseless in this paper.

1992). In this model, services can enhance organizing and political strategies, such as the Black Panther free breakfast program that highlighted contradictions of the state (Heynen, 2009). LA CAN drew from this model, with both services and organizing as part of efforts for social change.

As an organization in the "epicenter of human rights violations," LA CAN operates with the idea that community members who have faced structural racism and state violence should be the ones determining solutions. Through this approach, they follow principles that Sen (2003) described as new organizing. Unlike earlier organizing models that prioritized "winning issues" over the concerns of the most marginalized communities, this model centers the concerns of community members who have been marginalized. This approach includes political education (Sen, 2003) and this political education happens through the long-term relationships and leadership development that are central to organizing (Han, 2014) and the support and care for community members.

Methods of Data Collection

For this paper, we draw from participant observation and document review primarily collected between 2018 and 2019 and then additional social media posts from March–June 2020. Data was collected and analyzed by the first author as part of the larger study. As partnerships with universities arose as a distinctive characteristic, the first author conducted additional analysis and then findings were refined through conversations between both authors.

Participant Observation. Participant observation for the larger study primarily focused on frontline events and activities that included interactions with community members—such as community events, public actions, and organizing meetings with community members—during a 15-month period. This included a routine presence at the weekly housing committee meetings, where low-income tenants met to plan tenant outreach and housing justice campaigns, and a semi-regular presence at bi-monthly resident organizing meetings. Participant observation included public actions and events for both community residents and the larger public. The relationship with LA CAN extended beyond events that were observed for research, so field notes were not collected for events when there was no consent.

Document Review. Documents for this study include organizational websites and social media posts. While a full social media review was not feasible, social media related to events helped to capture additional perspectives on participant observation. Primary data collection was completed by January 2020, but we also include social media posts from March 15–June 1, 2020 to document their posts during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic. LA CAN was active in supporting community members during the COVID-19 pandemic and calling out government failures and inequities. Through this work, LA CAN maintained their distinctive approach to partnerships.

Analysis. As an ethnographic study, multiple methods of analysis—including memos, mapping, and identifying key events and examples that illustrated themes—happened concurrently (Fetterman, 2010). The first step of analysis included close reading of field notes and interview transcripts and ongoing memo writing to document patterns. Memo-writing included memos of emergent findings and initial patterns from ongoing

field work; memos that recorded impressions and key themes from interviews; and integrative memos that made connections between fieldnotes and interview excerpts and emerging findings (Emerson et al., 2011). Memos provided an opportunity to identify key events or examples that illustrated themes (Fetterman, 2010). As these themes emerged, the first author completed additional rounds of analysis to document additional instances in the data and compare across them. Through this process, LA CAN's approach to partnerships and their discourse around partnerships arose as a distinct characteristic, so additional rounds of analysis documented key relationships with academic partners and compared LA CAN's relationships with their academic partners to their discussion of the university as a whole. As part of ongoing analysis, we examined how LA CAN's connection to Black radical thought and their abolitionist framework shaped their overall work and partnerships. Findings were refined through ongoing discussions among the two authors. These ongoing discussions also included discussing our positionalities and epistemological frameworks, as well as our individual relationships to LA CAN.

As an academic study, this study was collected in accordance to IRB protocols; however, we acknowledge that IRB principles are not sufficient for ethical community-engaged research (e.g., Wood, 2017) and additional conversations and relationships are key to ethical research. Before beginning research, staff shared expectations for researchers based on prior experiences with doctoral students completing dissertations, and discussed the importance of volunteering first before any research conversations. The first author then served as an active volunteer for nine months before beginning research. During participant observation, the first author shared emerging findings and communicated potential papers with staff as part of transparency, and also looked for ways to support the organization as part of reciprocity. The first author discussed confidentiality with the Executive Director, Pete White, before beginning data collection. Due to the public role and how comments were often in a public setting, White gave permission to use his name when writing up findings along with permission to name the organization. The participation and responses are confidential for all other participants, so we do not refer to the names of other participants in this study.

Findings

We identified two core aspects of LA CAN's approach to partnerships with universities—their discourse that centered community expertise and partnerships through long-term relationships. These two themes—centering community expertise and long-term mutual relationships—were shaped by LA CAN's overarching commitment to Black liberation and abolitionist praxis. Before describing these themes, we first present an event: LA CAN's celebration for Fela Kuti's birthday in October 2018, to introduce LA CAN's approach to partnerships and knowledge.

In 2018, LA CAN partnered with activists and artists to host Los Angeles' celebration for Fela Kuti's birthday. Fela Kuti was a musician and activist who launched a musical style, Afrobeat. The Facebook post advertising the event described Fela Kuti's importance and the goals of this event:

> This will be a night of culture, creation and community, held together with sounds from the motherland, in honor and celebration of the father of Afro-beat and pioneer of Pan Africanism, Fela Anikulapo Kuti and serve as a reminder that our struggle has seen us create the most fierce and beautiful forms of resistance.

Before the panel of community activists and artists, the Executive Director of LA CAN, Pete White, introduced a professor who then discussed the connection between social movements and music. After the talk, White commented that as this professor was speaking, one panelist was nodding. White described how community members, or event panelists in this case, were validating or approving of what faculty were saying. He commented that "usually academia will tell us about community." He contrasted these traditional methods to this event where "here community members were able to speak truth to what academia is saying."

Through this discussion, White contrasted their view from the usual approach of "academics telling us." Instead, in this partnership, White centered community members' contributions and he emphasized the role of community members providing the knowledge validation for what academics were staying. This reversed the direction of expertise and power so that the experiences of community members were able to provide the expertise and be the source of approval for academic information. This event also highlighted organizing and partnerships rooted in struggles for liberation when the social media posting highlighted a "reminder that our struggle has seen us create the most fierce and beautiful forms of resistance."

To understand how LA CAN developed partnerships where community members were "speaking truth" as opposed to the traditional approach of "academics telling us," we discuss the two themes—discourse that centers community members' expertise and long-term mutual relationships—with each theme drawing from events and social media postings, and then how their overarching liberatory praxis underlies their approach.

"The Real Data Set:" Discourse that Centering Community Expertise

LA CAN's mission includes "serving as a vehicle to ensure we have voice, power & opinion in the decisions that are directly affecting us" and this mission influences their philosophy of knowledge creation. Similar to the event discussed above, LA CAN frequently emphasized how community members were experts and producers of knowledge who held authority over external decision-making. This message was shared with community members through multiple meetings and events to emphasize their expertise. In 2019, community residents and active volunteers gathered for team leader training for an upcoming survey for a community-driven research project. LA CAN was working with university partners to collect surveys, but LA CAN members were leading the survey project. In his introduction to community members, White referred to this future survey data as "our stories, our truths." He compared LA CAN's community-driven survey to more traditional academic projects. White commented that based on the community members' experiences and strengths, "we could get better data" (compared to academics). He was not referring to the metrics used by academics, but similar to how Collins (2000) described wisdom from lived experience, survey questions were informed by the experiences that community

members lived with each day. He described how the community was often used as a petri dish by academia, but this survey was designed with community knowledge to "interrogate and fix." White differentiated how community members would use this data, commenting that "In academia, they call them recommendations, but we call them action steps." In addition to being experts, community members' knowledge also included a vision of what should happen and was more likely to lead to actionable change.

LA CAN emphasized their core ideas about expertise and knowledge creation to multiple audiences, including policymakers and academic researchers. Both the preparation meeting and then a 2019 town hall about that year's Homeless Count with Skid Row community members and the head of the Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority (LAHSA) shows how they emphasized this message to multiple audiences. The 2019 Homeless Count documented an increase in Los Angeles City and County's unhoused population. Shortly after the count was released, staff discussed the results of the homeless count at an organizing meeting with community members. A staff member asked each participant to share their reaction to the Homeless Count results. After each person shared, the staff member commented that "our own eyes told us it didn't sit well" as community members thought that numbers were even higher than the report mentioned. Drawing on community members' personal experiences, staff asked community members what LA CAN should do as an organization and prepared them for a town hall where they could ask questions of government officials and offer their expertise, with the goal that this knowledge and expertise would lead to action.

After this meeting to prepare, LA CAN subsequently held a town hall in June to discuss the results of this count that included a presentation by LAHSA, a panel featuring community members who were part of the Downtown Women's Action Coalition (DWAC), poetry, and a video. Before introducing this panel of DWAC members, White referred to different types of data and how this panel of community members sharing their experiences included data that is rich, "data that jumps off the page, in this case, data that jumps off the stage" (referring to the stage that panelists were on). After this event, LA CAN used social media to highlight community members' testimony. LA CAN's twitter post about this event showed a picture of DWAC members speaking and commented, "DWAC Respondents panel, this presentation is flawless, it's the real data set." This "real dataset" that drew from community member experiences and their visions for change contrasted with the recent homeless count data. These posts highlighted the strength of community members as well as the importance of data from community knowledge. This language emphasized how this data showed a rich, full picture, highlighting community knowledge as "the real data set."

Long Term Mutual Relationships: Highlighting a Different Type of Partnership

LA CAN's belief that community expertise should drive critical decisions was threaded through their long-term relationships with academic partners. LA CAN formed partnerships with researchers from multiple universities but each relationship was built upon shared values, including abolitionist praxis, their mission that community members should be the decision-makers, the recognition of community expertise as described above.

Relationships were not set up for one-time projects but for long-term projects. For example, as the first author met to talk about prospective dissertation research, staff shared expectations of first being an active volunteer and active participant. The intent was to establish a long-term relationship that could lay the groundwork for research. LA CAN identified partners in line with their core values and who were committed to these longer-term goals. Partnerships included researchers from multiple universities, but larger audiences, including other members of that same university, did not always adopt these narratives. The following example shows how LA CAN formed a long-term relationship with researchers from the University of Southern California (USC), and then LA CAN challenged partnership descriptions from that same university that overlooked community members' contributions.

As concerns were increasing over the new COVID-19 pandemic in late February and early March 2020, LA CAN highlighted problems with access to hygiene and water for unhoused residents. Public health agencies were emphasizing the importance of washing hands, but many unhoused residents did not have access to water. LA CAN had been partnering with researchers from the USC Annenberg School for Journalism and Communication to create portable phone charging stations for a collaboration called Skid Row Power. Due to increasing concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, this collaboration shifted their efforts to developing handwashing stations. Because the city was not maintaining or refilling the existing stations, the Skid Row Power collaboration focused on hand washing stations that could be refilled or maintained by community residents.

As a result of their efforts, USC's Annenberg Media posted an article on how USC students were working with LA CAN. This article focused largely on the work of USC, leading LA CAN to respond on social media in order to reframe this portrayal. Using the Facebook feature to add an emotion and location, they started their post with "Feeling annoyed at Skid Row" and then stated:

> We were pleased to see our Handwashing Stations Campaign covered by Annenberg Media. We really appreciate the spotlight it shines on the hard work of our USC allies.
> We were also annoyed… so allow us to vent a little.
> The framing of the article, as often happens, casts the academic side of our partnership as 'saviors', bringing their skills to bear on problems that plague less fortunate folks. In fact, our work is rooted from the start in deep collaboration between grassroots organizations and academics. The community partners' expertise and ideas are just as critical to the project's success as the academics' expertise. Neither side could do it without the other.
> So when COVID-19 hit the streets, we were ready to hit the ground running.

LA CAN then described this partnership as a long-term partnership.

> This particular collaboration did not emerge out of the blue. LA CAN and USC researchers have been working together for many years, in settings ranging from research/action projects and classes to interdisciplinary collaboratives. Together, we engage in participatory action research, leveraging co-design

> practices and wisdom from years of grassroots organizing... Any journalist out there interested in telling that story? We'd be happy to talk to you.

They called out this portrayal where academics were seen as "fixing things" (as discussed by Morton & Bergbauer, 2015) or were seen as 'saviors' and instead offered a different narrative.

Nine days later, LA CAN worked with their USC partners on an article that was more in line with their approach, highlighting the long-term mutual relationship where both sides brought expertise, titled "How can the houseless fight the coronavirus? A community organization partners with academics to create a grassroots hand-washing infrastructure." LA CAN's new Facebook post described this article:

> You may remember that we weren't exactly thrilled by the way an article portrayed our handwashing campaign partnership with a USC class. We vented a bit, but then just decided to write the story ourselves...It tells the story of our community/academic collaboration over the past few weeks, explaining that "to create lasting change, we believe grassroots organizations and academics must work together to understand obstacles, design and test practical solutions, and develop community practices around those solutions."

In addition to calling out larger university practices, LA CAN responded by focusing on their strong partnerships with researchers. Here, relationships between academic partners and community groups did not focus on a single project or research aim, but that this was a long-term relationship. Even if media outlets described it differently, LA CAN identified partners with similar views on expertise and sharing power. This project focused on providing hand-washing stations, but partnerships were not bound to a single project. As LA CAN described "leveraging the wisdom from years of grassroots organizing," this social media post also discussed how this wisdom resulted in new knowledge and solutions. In their partnerships with academics, LA CAN centered community members' ideas and uplifted their key role in creating actionable change.

LA CAN partnered with researchers at the University of Southern California (USC) for specific projects, but LA CAN also had an analysis of the larger University's role in their neighborhood. USC was located in Historic South Central, a historically Black neighborhood and now primarily Latinx and Black neighborhood where housing costs were increasing. USC's student body did not reflect the neighborhood demographics and increasing development associated with USC further increased concerns about gentrification. At the town hall about the 2019 Homeless Count discussed previously, USC and their role in the larger survey for the Homeless Count came up during discussions. When the acronym USC was mentioned, White referred to data "from the University of South Central, as we used to call it." As White referred to USC as University of South Central instead of its name of University of Southern California, he emphasized their location within a Black and Latinx community. The audience was not necessarily university administration for this town hall, but rather he offered this critique and reminder to community members and government staff.

Partnerships Rooted in an Abolitionist Framework and the Black Radical Tradition

LA CAN recognized their foundational and ongoing work as rooted in the Black Radical Tradition. In contrast to solely a utopian vision, Black radicalism includes striving for freedom alongside an understanding of the importance of struggles for liberation (Robinson & Robinson, 2017). This description can be seen in the earlier discussion of the Fela Kuti celebration where LA CAN's Facebook post commented that "our struggle has seen us create the most fierce and beautiful forms of resistance." In a neighborhood where residents have dealt with the effects of structural racism, this connection was a critical part of their mission. As White described in an article with the Los Angeles Sentinel, "If Black folks aren't picked up, lifted up, no one else will be." (Quoted in Muhammed, 2017). In this article, White also described how this framework shaped their relationships.

> We've been unapologetically Black from the get go, and because we sort of focus on the work on the ethos of the Black radical tradition, even when we have non-Black people, allies, accomplices and other members, they also understand that we're moving and moved by the Black experience (Quoted in Muhammed).

White referred to how allies and accomplices understood "that we're moving and moved by the Black experience," and this included their relationships with academic partners. While a larger discussion of how this orientation shaped their day-to-day work and organizing strategies is outside the scope of this paper, we discuss how this commitment shaped their partnerships and emphasis on community knowledge.

The Black Radical Tradition and abolitionist praxis shaped LA CAN's values of community expertise and collaborative knowledge creation. LA CAN's abolitionist orientation was reiterated when a staff member described their stance towards policing methods at a March 2019 press conference: "We don't want to reform, we want to abolish, we are not looking for kinder, gentler racism." LA CAN approached research projects with an intent for action and to change the conditions of communities that were abandoned and harmed by the state. They recognized institutional racism that led to these conditions and did not want a "kinder, gentler racism" when addressing these issues. This value system was carried through in language that they used to demonstrate community expertise. In a 2019 event on housing justice that brought together academic researchers and community activists, White welcomed participants to this space. He described the history of LA CAN and the community members who came together to organize. In a community affected by structural racism and "organized abandonment" (Gilmore, as referenced by LA CAN staff), he described how community members were leading efforts: "We were canaries in the coal mine, but canaries with teeth." Here, White recognized how community members bore the brunt of government decisions, but they were also drawing from community knowledge and fighting back.

This orientation also shaped their view on power and on knowledge. In the quote on the front of LA CAN's t-shirt described at the beginning of this paper, LA CAN referenced Huey P. Newton, a Black revolutionary who helped found the Black Panther Party. In this quote, they expressed ideas on power as both "the ability to

define phenomenon" and the "ability to make the phenomenon act in a desired manner." Power was connected to defining the situation, and LA CAN's commitment to community-centered expertise helped to define phenomena. In addition to emphasizing community knowledge, LA CAN recognized that being able to act on this knowledge was critical. While they had a critique of the larger university and their use of knowledge as "recommendations," they formed partnerships with academics that recognized both aspects of this definition of power.

LA CAN formed partnerships with academics who shared this orientation, but then with their emphasis on long-term relationships, they continued to deepen relationships around this commitment. At the annual member retreat in December 2019, staff presented a document with principles for engagement. Guiding principles included "Power is within our communities," "Our struggles are interconnected," and "Commitment to Black liberation." After presenting these principles, staff asked for feedback, and one person reflected that "to abide by this, we need to know each other better." Relationships were critical for following these principles and for questioning systemic racism. While this meeting primarily included community members, they carried this same perspective into their relationships with academics. These values created a foundation for collaborations with academic partners, allowing for relationships to form upon a common goal. Additionally, this commitment ensured that future relationships and research prioritized the knowledge of individuals who were most affected by the multiple forms of oppression. This prioritizing of community expertise and setting terms around partnerships diminished power hierarchies that are often within research partnerships.

Discussion

This paper highlights LA CAN's approach to knowledge production and power within partnerships, and can offer lessons for academic researchers. As McKittrick (2019) states, part of the work in seeking liberation and "reimagining our world" is thinking with and across "knowledge systems" with the intention of "recalibrating who and what we are and what they think we are" (p. 243). LA CAN's orientation to research ethics and partnerships was inextricably tied to intentional collective action and goals of creating change for and with community. LA CAN's research was often a direct response to the social and political context that individuals live in. Drawing from the idea of community wisdom from lived experience and knowledge validation through community as described by Collins (2000), research at LA CAN was a product of multiple voices and collective imaginations. As a result, they described how they "could get better data." Transforming the larger university was not their focus or priority, but rather this paper discusses how LA CAN focused on partnerships that challenged traditional academic-community relationships. The findings from LA CAN's approach to partnerships offer lessons for community-engaged research.

The Real Data Set: Centering Community Expertise

As opposed to universities as the expert or provider of knowledge, we identified how LA CAN reframed partnerships where community members are "speaking truth." This contrasts with assumptions such as in IRB

processes where academics are the experts and community members are seen as subjects. Even within some community partnerships aimed to be reciprocal, academics struggled with letting go of the idea that they were there to "fix things" (Morton & Bergbauer, 2015; also described in Bortolin, 2011). Instead, the phrase "the real data-set" as used by LA CAN emphasizes the central role of communities as changemakers, creators, and experts. This challenges academics to relinquish attachments to claiming "expertise" and their role as 'saviors' that are antithetical to relational research practices. Moreover, it raises questions about research ownership. Driven by countering racism and years of violence, LA CAN reiterated the importance of communities leading research. This expertise and lived experience led not only to "the real data set," but this community expertise also led to "action steps" or data that would result in change.

Mutual Long-term Relationships for Collective Action

In addition to the language that LA CAN uses, we also found that partnerships included long-term relationships and action. Nelson et al. (2015) discuss how these relationships included a two-way exchange and ongoing communication and examining power within relationships (also in Reardon, 2006). This is similar to discussions of relationships within service-learning literature that emphasize a deeper commitment or openness to unanticipated developments (Enos & Morton, 2003) or the emphasis on slow strategic relationships that Avila (2023) describes as part of community organizing. We also identified the importance of this two-way exchange and how that was key to building trust. In addition, this paper shows the importance of shared values to establishing these reciprocal relationships between academic and community researchers. In their social media posts, LA CAN described how researchers and grassroots organizations worked together for many years "in deep collaboration." Lanz et al. (2021), who also describe a LA CAN research partnership, argue that the process and interactions were just as important as the end product. These relationships and mutual learning were themselves an outcome.

This process of mutual learning and establishing trust is not something that can be bound within biomedical models of research, and does not often fit into standardized timelines or justifications. These challenges are also discussed in literature on slow scholarship based on a feminist ethics of care. Wahab, Mehotra, and Myers (2021) describe how slow scholarship centers relationships and considers this time required to cultivate relationships as part of knowledge production (also in Mountz et al., 2015). Here, slow is not just about time and building relationships, but also about examining power and inequality (Mountz et al.). As a result, the collaborative form of knowledge production that happens through slow scholarship is then a counter narrative to dominant forms of knowledge production (Wahab, Mehotra, & Myers). In this paper, LA CAN's relationships with researchers were personal, committed to care and action, and extended beyond a single project, and they used their relationships and actions as a counter narrative. While some projects had IRB approval, as researchers are working within an academic context, they first formed relationships outside of IRB and worked together on additional projects, such as supporting events and joint organizing and activism.

Key Values and Principles as Foundations of Relationships

From this study, we identified that relationships between researchers across various organizations and institutions were based upon trust, care, reflection, and a shared-value system. Due to these relationships often being formed in the context of various social injustices and violences, they require empathy and understanding as well as shared commitment to a collective purpose (Ritterbusch, 2019). We also identified a shared understanding, such as the description of how allies, including academic partners, understood that they "were moving and moved by the Black experience." We found that LA CAN's commitment to abolitionist praxis and Black liberation created standards and expectations for partnerships, and they chose to partner with academic researchers who were aligned ethically and ideologically. Vakil et al. (2016) describe this as a politicized trust between academic and community partners that is an ongoing process, which includes examining racialized tensions and power hierarchies present within partnerships. As LA CAN described principles for engagement, including that "to abide by this, we must get to know each other better," LA CAN also included this politicized trust and ongoing work in their long-term relationships.

When the larger universities did not share this commitment, LA CAN identified researchers with these values and offered a counter narrative through their work and discourse. As London et al. (2022) discuss, community organizations recognized that their knowledge is often not seen as legitimate and that many institutional practices and logics reinforce this epistemic injustice. London et al. argue that much needs to be done to challenge these practices and logics. Through their discourse that was shared with community members as well with larger audiences, LA CAN called out the injustices that were identified by London et al. LA CAN has advanced these ideas at the community level and through the relationships described in this paper; researchers who are also committed to these goals can carry out these tasks within the university.

Limitations and Conclusion

This study has some limitations that can affect transferability of findings. LA CAN is a unique organization with powerful examples of discourse and a dynamic Executive Director. While Pete White was the only person referred to by name due to IRB requirements, many quotes come from his discourse during public events. The uniqueness of LA CAN could affect how findings transfer to other partnerships. However, LA CAN provides a model for what long-term relationships can look like when they are rooted in a shared understanding and when an organization has strong examples of discourse, whether through an event or social media. Literature on service-learning and civic-engagement highlight the importance of a central office or university support for thoughtful community-engaged research (e.g., Enos & Morton, 2003; Strand et al., 2003). Because we examine this from the community partner's side and look at their relationship with individual researchers, we cannot speak to the role of institutional support for the academics who partnered with LA CAN. Instead of examining partnerships from the university's perspective, this provides a different view by examining multiple partnerships through the lens of a community organization. While this study draws from events from a specific period of data

collection, relationships extended beyond data collection. For example, speakers from LA CAN have been guest speakers at courses, and authors were involved in smaller ways after data collection finished. We hope that relationships continue after research, so we cannot separate data collection from these relationships. We do not see these relationships as limitations as they are an important part of accountability, but we acknowledge that they shape data collection and analysis.

Despite limitations, the examples provided in this paper, guided by our collective epistemological frameworks, offer lessons for community-engaged research. While this specific study and the larger ethnography is not PAR, we write and analyze data with their core principles and ethics in mind and share findings as part of ongoing conversations. The example of LA CAN helps to compare their community-driven research to research projects that center academic expertise and adhere to more positivist standards. Following the ethics drawn out by LA CAN as well as Black Feminist epistemology and PAR research praxis, we highlight the importance of engaging in discussion and taking personal accountability throughout the entire research process. Further, we consider how academic researchers can follow community-driven research projects and assist in a reciprocal way. LA CAN exemplified the importance of centering community voices through long-term reciprocal research relationships that had shared value systems and action-oriented purposes. In addition to emphasizing community expertise, LA CAN challenged portrayals that identified academics as the primary experts. Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of being grounded in a Black Radical liberatory and abolitionist praxis that underlies their research endeavors and partnerships. Community-engaged research that happens through relationships aligned on core principles can result in a different type of knowledge production, where community members can "speak truth" to research and help to define the phenomenon and determine how research should be used for change. While the idea of "learning from the community" or "asking the community" can feel like a hollow phrase at times, LA CAN offers a different way of approaching community knowledge and key principles for partnerships.

References

Angen, M. J. (2000). Evaluating interpretive inquiry: Reviewing the validity debate and opening the dialogue. *Qualitative Health Research*, *10*(4), 378–395. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973230001000308

Askins, K., & Pain, R. (2011). Contact zones: Participation, materiality, and the messiness of interaction. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 29*(5), 803–821. https://doi.org/10.1068/d11109

Avila, M. (2023). *Transformative civic engagement through community organizing*. Taylor & Francis.

Blasi, G. (2007). *Policing our way out of homelessness: The first year of the safer cities initiative on skid row*. Los Angeles, CA: USC Center for Sustainable Cities.

Bortolin, K. (2011). Serving ourselves: How the discourse on community engagement privileges the university over the community. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *18*(1), 49–59.

Cahill, C. (2007). Repositioning ethical commitments: Participatory action research as a relational praxis of social change. *ACME An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, *6*(3), 360–373. https://www.acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/784/643

Chatterton, P. (2006). "Give up activism" and change the world in unknown ways: Or, learning to walk with others on uncommon ground. *Antipode, 38*(2), 259–281. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2006.00579.x

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (2013). *On intellectual activism*. Temple University Press.

Crane, E.S. (2015). Theory should ride the bus. In A. Roy & E. S. Crane (Eds.), *Territories of poverty: Rethinking north and south* (pp. 344–354). University of Georgia Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes (2nd ed.).* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Enos, S., & Morton, K. (2003). Developing a theory and practice of campus-community partnerships. *Building partnerships for service-learning*, 20–41.

Fetterman, D.M. (2010). *Ethnography: Step-by-step* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Fouché, C. B., & Chubb, L. A. (2017). Action researchers encountering ethical review: a literature synthesis on challenges and strategies. *Educational Action Research, 25*(1), 23–34. doi:10.1080/09650792.2015.1128956

Gates, A. B. 2014. Integrating social services and social change: Lessons from an immigrant worker center. *Journal of Community Practice, 22*, 102–129. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2014.901270

Han, H. (2014). *How organizations develop activists: Civic associations and leadership in the 21st century*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Heynen, N. (2009). Bending the bars of empire from every ghetto for survival: the Black Panther Party's radical antihunger politics of social reproduction and scale. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *99*, 406–422. https://doi.org/10.1080/00045600802683767

Hyde, C. (1992). The ideational system of social movement agencies. In Y. Hasenfeld (Ed.), *Human services as complex organizations* (pp. 121–144). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Lanz, P., Cunningham, T., Nguyen, H., White, P., & Bar, F. (2021). Skid Row Power Now! A participatory co-design project to power up digital devices in Skid Row. *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Communities & Technologies-Wicked Problems in the Age of Tech, 10,* 121–127. https://doi.org/10.1145/3461564.3461595

London, R.A., Glass, R.D., Chang, E., Sabati, S., & Nojan, S. (2022). "We are about life-changing research": Community partner perspectives on community-engaged research collaborations. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *26*, 19–36. https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/jheoe/article/view/2512/2722

Madison, D. S. (2011). *Critical ethnography: Method, ethics, and performance* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

McKittrick, K. (2019). Rift. In Antipode Editorial Collective (Eds.), *Keywords in radical geography: Antipode at 50* (pp. 243–248). Antipode Foundation Ltd.

McKittrick, K. (2021). *Dear science and other stories*. Duke University Press.

Morton, K., & Bergbauer, S. (2015). A case for community: Starting with relationships and prioritizing community as method in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *22*(1), 18–31.

Mountz, A., Bonds, A., Mansfield, B., Loyd, J., Hyndman, J., Walton-Roberts, M., ... & Curran, W. (2015). For slow scholarship: A feminist politics of resistance through collective action in the neoliberal university. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, *14*(4), 1235–1259.

Muhammed, C. (2017, March 15). Homeless activist Pete White goes 1-on-1 with the Sentinel. *Los Angeles Sentinel*. https://lasentinel.net/homeless-activist-pete-white-goes-1-on-1-with-the-sentinel.html

Nelson, I., London, R. A., & Strobel, K. (2015). Reinventing the role of the university researcher. *Educational Researcher, 44*(1), 17–26. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X1557038

Reardon, K. M. (2006). Promoting reciprocity within community/university development partnerships: Lessons from the field. *Planning, Practice & Research*, *21*(1), 95–107.

Ritterbusch, A. (2019). Empathy at knifepoint: The dangers of research and lite pedagogies for social justice movement. *Antipode, 51*(4), 1296–1317. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12530

Robinson, C., & Robinson, E. (2017). Preface. In G. T. Johnson & A. Lubin (Eds.), *Futures of Black radicalism*. Verso Books.

Sabati, S. (2019). Upholding "colonial unknowing" through the IRB: Reframing institutional research ethics. *Qualitative Inquiry, 25*(9–10), 1056–1064. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418787214

Sen, R. (2003). *Stir it up: Lessons in community organizing and advocacy*. John Wiley & Sons.

Stockdill, B. C., & Danico, M. Y. (Eds.). (2012). *Transforming the ivory tower: Challenging racism, sexism, and homophobia in the academy*. University of Hawaii Press.

Strand, K., Marullo, S., Cutforth, N., Stoecker, R., & Donohue, P. (2003). Principles of best practice for community-based research. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *9*(3).

Tamariz, L., Medina, H., Taylor, J., Carrasquillo, O., Kobetz, E., & Palacio, A. (2015). Are research ethics committees prepared for community-based participatory research? *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, *10*(5), 488-495. https://doi.org/10.1177/1556264615615008

Tuck, E. & Yang, K. W. (2019). Series editors introduction. In L. Tuhiwai Smith, E. Tuck & K. E. Yang (Eds.), *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*. Taylor & Francis.

Vakil, S., McKinney de Royston, M., Suad Nasir, N. I., & Kirshner, B. (2016). Rethinking race and power in design-based research: Reflections from the field. *Cognition and Instruction*, *34*(3), 194–209. https://doi.org/10.1080/07370008.2016.1169817

Wahab, S., Mehrotra, G. R., & Myers, K. E. (2021). Slow scholarship for social work: A praxis of resistance and creativity. *Qualitative Social Work*, *21*(1), 147–159. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325021990865

Wood, L. (2017). The ethical implications of community-based research: A call to rethink current review board requirements. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*(1), 1609406917748276

Author Note

We are grateful for the staff and members of Los Angeles Community Action Network for welcoming us into your organization and allowing us to learn and organize with you. We gratefully acknowledge Brenda Tully for comments on earlier drafts and the two anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments. This research was partially funded through the generous support of the UCLA Graduate Division Dissertation Year Fellowship and a UCSB Blum Center Research Fellowship on Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy.

Author Bio

Rachel Wells, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Social Work and the MSW Program Director at Lewis University. Her research examines assumptions about poverty that shape social services and the role of community-based organizations in low-income neighborhoods and she has worked with grassroots organizations and housing justice efforts as part of her research.

Victoria Copeland, PhD, is a researcher, organizer, and senior policy analyst. Their current work focuses on the use of data and technology within the criminal legal system and social services.

Both authors contributed equally.

Corresponding author: Rachel Wells, Lewis University, Department of Social Welfare, One University Parkway, Romeoville IL 60446, United States. E-mail address: rwells2@lewisu.edu