

Crime and Violence in Indian Country: The Myths, the Facts, and the Importance of Research

with

- Twyla Beth Baker-Demaray, Fort Berthold Community College
- Michelle Chino, University of Nevada Las Vegas
- Thomasine Heitkamp, University of North Dakota
- Ada Pecos Melton, American Indian Development Associates
- André B. Rosay, Executive Visiting Research Fellow, National Institute of Justice (NIJ) & Director, University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center

Moderator

- Christine Crossland, NIJ



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Convention Center: Smoketree F (A10) | Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation, CA*

Who is in the audience?

- Do we have any:
 - tribal leaders and/or council members?
 - criminal or tribal justice staff (e.g., prosecutors, law enforcement, probation officers)?
 - victim service and behavioral health specialists?
 - researchers, evaluators, graduate students?
 - practitioners who are partnering with researchers?
 - researchers partnering with practitioners?
 - federal, state, or private science agency staff?
 - tribal citizen who has participated in a research study?



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What are the barriers to research in Indian Country and Alaska Native villages and what, if any, strides have been made despite these challenges?

Twyla Beth Baker-Demaray, Fort Berthold Community College
Thomasine Heitkamp, University of North Dakota



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“Barriers to Research...?”

Lack of academic education on tribal sovereignty, role of trauma, understanding cultural differences

Inflexible scientific process that creates dissonance

Inattention to need for reciprocity

Romanticized – even hostile – media images that damage relationships

Lack of attention to shared partnerships and community engagement

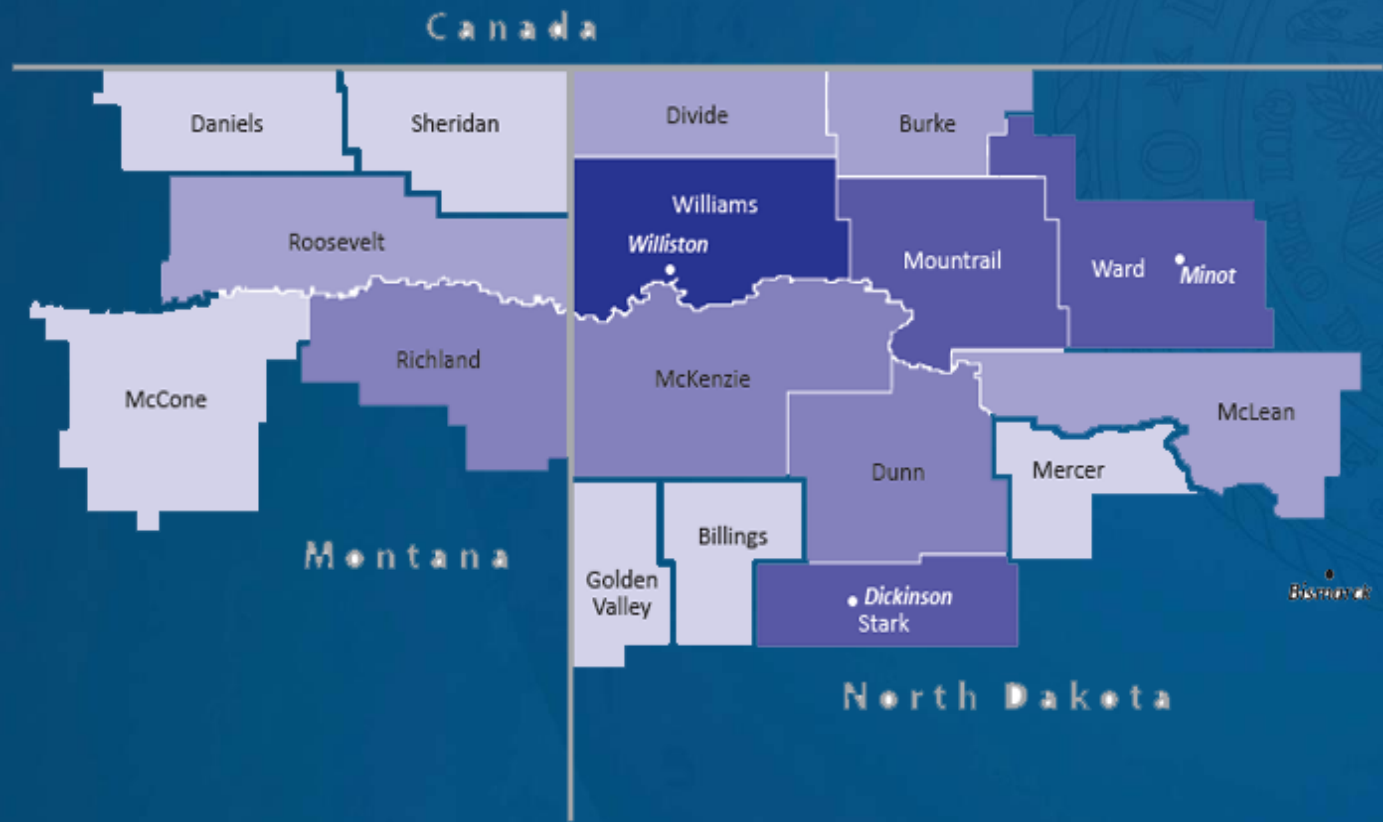
Urban-based focus of RFPs and publications

Misguided Intentions



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A Case Study: North Dakota and Montana Oil Producing Counties



Strides Made.....?



*What models have been used by
researchers that assure
appropriate research practices
are used?*

Ada Pecos Melton, American Indian Development Associates



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Addressing Gaps in the Research & How Research is Conducted

- Using culturally respectful methods & strategies
 - Listening Sessions, Tribal Consultations, Focus Groups, Oral Histories
- Marrying western and traditional scientific concepts and protocols
- Building research & evaluation capacity with tribal communities at every step of the process



Tribal Research & Evaluation Examples

- Tribal Victim Assistance Program Evaluation
- Tribal Youth Reentry Evaluation
- National Baseline Study – protocol approaches
- Tribal Youth Methods Study



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Examples of Building Community Capacity via Research

- Obtaining tribal government approval via tribal resolutions, participatory agreements/MOUs/MOAs, and information sharing agreements.
- Hiring and training indigenous project staff—interviewers, interpreters, site coordinators.
- Coordinating and collaborating with tribes to: secure space, transportation, sampling lists/data, maps, data sources, and services.
- Enabling citizen-level participation (e.g., child care, trauma support, incentives, informed consent, translation of findings).
- Providing relevant training to project staff and community members.
- Providing ongoing information and updates to tribes and stakeholders throughout the process to get input from tribal communities.



*How do study results impact policies
and practices that ensure safety,
justice, and healing both negatively
and positively?*

André B. Rosay, Executive Visiting Research Fellow, National
Institute of Justice & Director, University of Alaska Anchorage
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Impacting Policy and Practice

- To impact policy and practice:
 - Do good research
 - Disseminate research



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Doing Good Research

- Begin by “setting the stage”:
 - Build trusting, respectful, and reciprocal relationships
 - Abandon Eurocentric research process
 - Develop good research questions
 - Focus on improving tribal communities
- Maintain trusting, respectful, and reciprocal relationships

Disseminating Research

- Reporting back and sharing knowledge
- Maintaining trust, respect, and reciprocity
- Accepting feedback
- Transferring ownership



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*How can research studies
appropriately address crime and
victimization in Indian Country
and Alaska Native villages?*

Michelle Chino, University of Nevada Las Vegas



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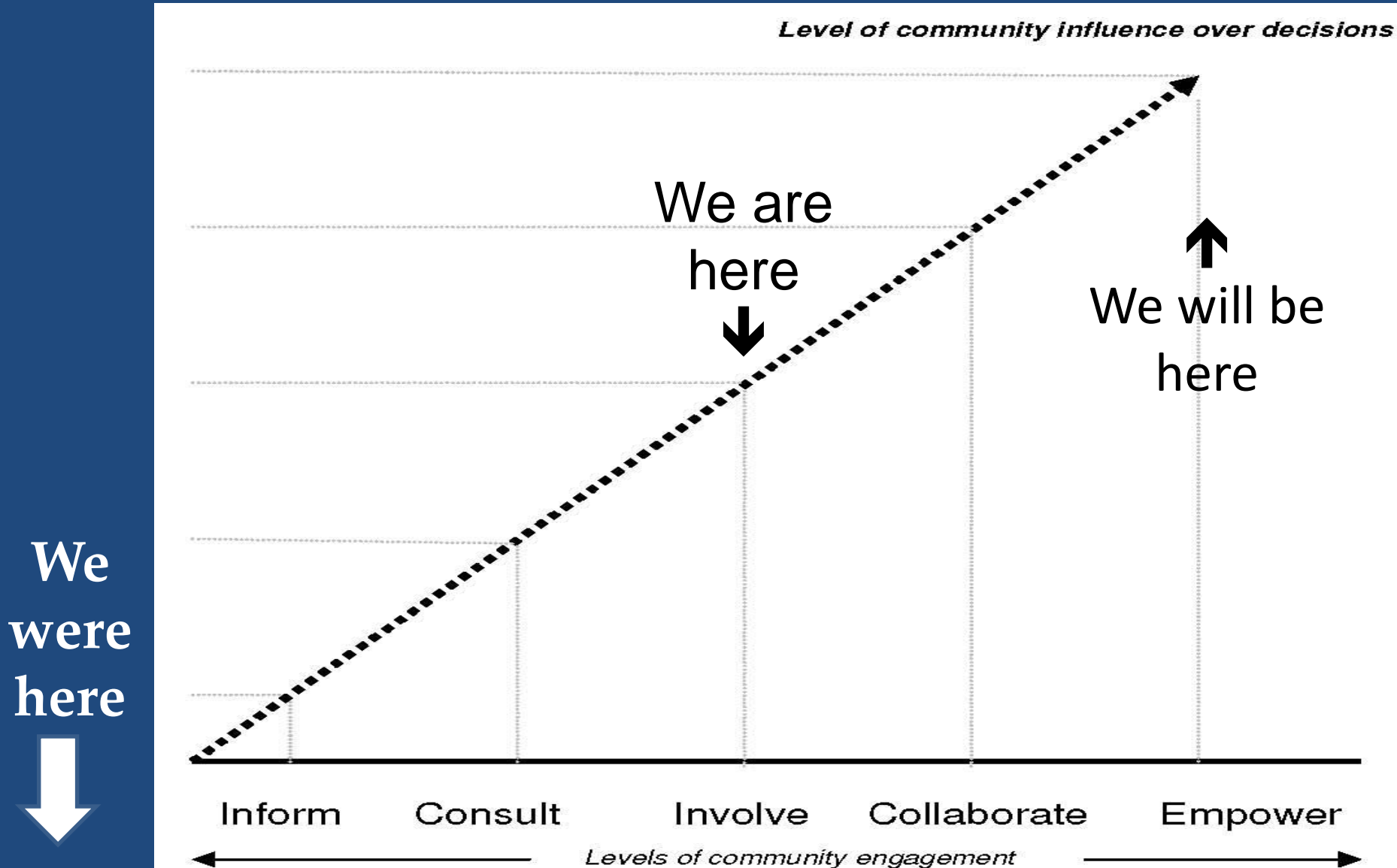
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Legacy of Indian Research

- **Most studied minority group**
 - 1% of the population but highest proportion of studies; Proportionally four times higher than African Americans
- **History of research abuses**
 - abuse, stigmatization and limited benefits
- **Not surprisingly, Indian people are reluctant to:**
 - pursue research,
 - allow research,
 - participate in research
 - trust researchers



Redefining Tribal Research

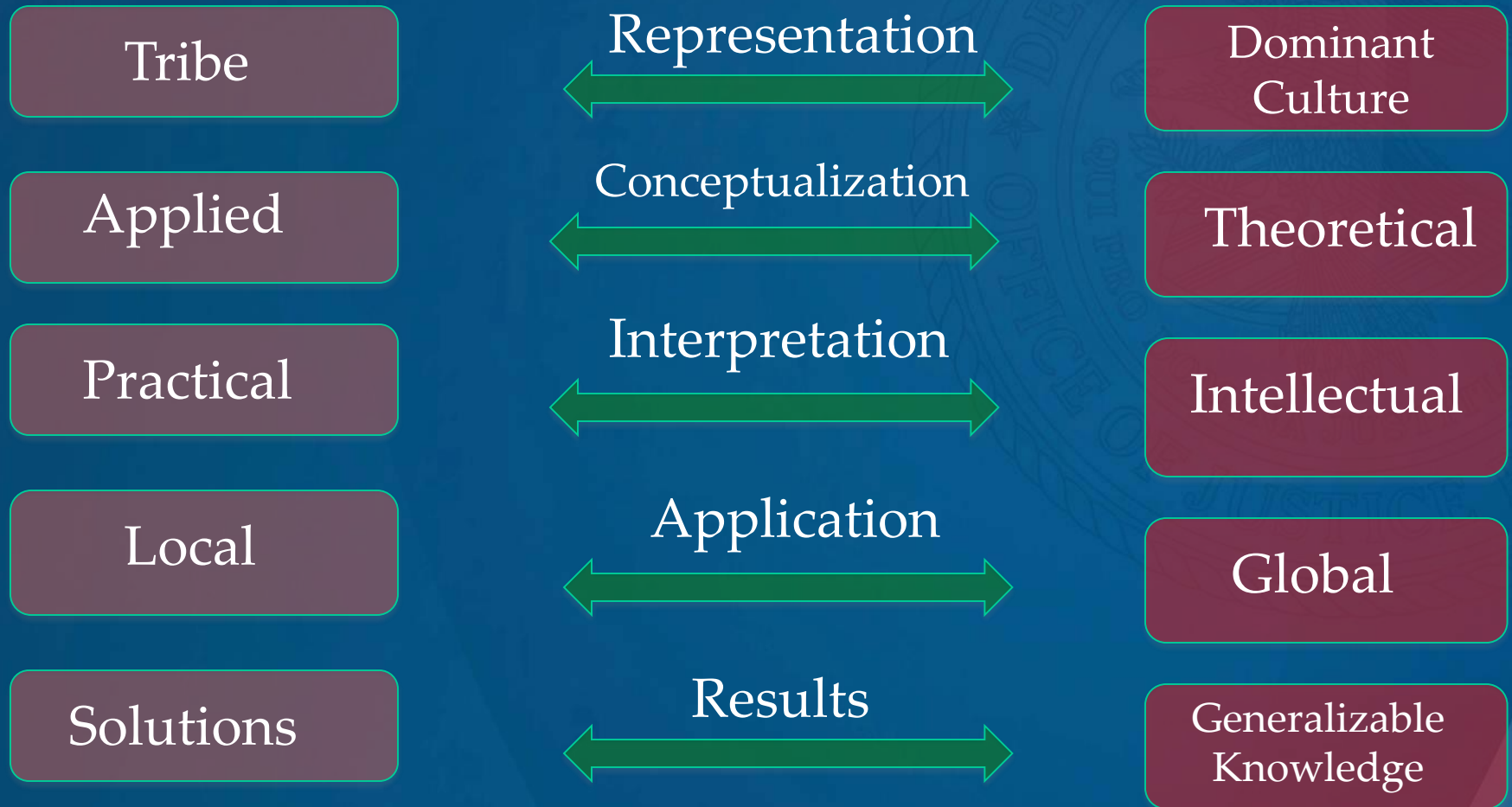


Tribal-Research Partnerships

- **Western Scientific Knowledge**
 - provides structure for scientific inquiry
- **Tribal Knowledge**
 - context for problem definition, interpretation of results,
 - culturally appropriate solutions
 - Native Science
- **Native Researchers**
 - Skilled, trusted,
 - Knowledgeable about tribal context,
 - can bridge gaps



Redefining Tribal Research



Partners from Start to Finish

- Connection Points

- Priorities
- Problem definition
- Goals
- Strategies
- Stakeholders
- Beneficiaries
- Capacity building

- Ethical Process

- Mutual Achievement
- Maximize Benefits
- Minimize Risks
- Increase Scientific Validity
- Relevant to Community
- Relevant to Science

What approaches to research can lead to a better understanding of crime and violence in Native American communities and ultimately to better solutions for dealing with public safety issues?



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Questions & Answers

Panel & Audience Discussion



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THANK YOU



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