ICPSR 32161

Understanding the Fear of Street Gangs: The Importance of Community Conditions [Santa Ana, California, 1997]

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ICPSR Processing Notes for #32161

Understanding the Fear of Street Gangs: The Importance of Community Conditions

1. Data Format:

- These data are qualitative transcripts.
- The principal investigator(s) redacted the transcripts prior to submission to ICPSR.
- Minimum ICPSR checks were done for confidentiality.

2. Data Incompleteness

- The transcript for the Townsend Raitt neighborhood is shorter than the other transcripts. Conversations with the investigator have revealed that the transcript deposited with ICPSR is complete.
 - ICPSR decided that there was utility in the shorter transcript and decided to include it as a qualitative data set like the other transcripts.

Townsend Raitt #1 Focus Group July 1997

Translator: She's going to ask you some questions and I'm going to translate them for

her.

Interviewer: What are your biggest concerns about in the community?

Translator: What are the (not don't hit the table) biggest concerns about in your

community? Whomever can talk, in other words it's open to anyone and their opinions. What are your major problems that concern you in your

community?

TRI-W1: The gangs is the major thing. Because the kids are growing up....and most

of us have young children and they're seeing how the older one's act and

want to be that way.

TRI-W7: The other gang members....If they do something the kids say "well I want

to do that to and be like them.

TRI-W1: See them smoke, drink and the young kids want to copy them. That's the

main thing.

Translator: Anything else.

TRI-W8: Where I live, sometimes it's 10:00, 10:30 at night and there are still kids

from ten to twelve years old outside. That's the parents fault. Because

they should be inside the house.

Interviewer /Trans.: (discussing something unable to pick up)

Translator: These problems she says you've just mentioned. Why do you worry about

these problems? I just told her that you've said, "Due to the young

children that you have. And the examples that they follow.

TRI-W5: the kids school

TRI-W5: Also where I live, kids pass by that are around six years old pass the

entrance

TRI-W8: They're not even scared anymore and they're going to school with a gun

and ready to shot.

TRI-W5: A school on Lincoln some boy went in and shot a

TRI-W5: to see that one gets frightened but they like that

TRI-W1: Here at the school someone was trying to kidnap a little girl.

TRI-W7: There still looking for him. It's been twice already he's tried.

TRI-W1: But in that school right?

TRI-W8: Last week....a little girl.... The case was that an ice cream vender who

touched a little girl. Of an ice cream vender who passed by. A lot of people got angry because they said "Poor ice cream man he was doing his route and those who were accusing him were doing so unjustly." But the little girl is four years old and talks well. And she said clearly what . See what ignorance of the people. They said "well no he's one of us" Who cares if he's one of us (meaning Hispanic, of our race) Just because he's one of us or my brother will I allow that.......If I see that someone is

touching a child I'm not going to keep quiet.

Interviewer: (difficult to hear)

Translator: She says, when you arrive at a particular place. Maybe for example being

in your own home and you go outside. Or you go to the market or a particular place. What do you notice in that moment that lets you understand that there's danger? What do you notice that gives you the

perception there's danger?

Group: Suspicious people, gang members

TRI-W5: What happened to me one time at a taco bell. I was sitting with my son

and in front of were some "cholos" as they call them. And all of a sudden they're coming in the other door with sticks, rocks, and with (?) and I just got my son and ran. (??????) Since that happened if I see a group

like that I just leave.

Interviewer: What do you feel are the most serious crime problems in your

neighborhood? And why do you think this?

Translator: What do you think are the most serious crimes or problems in your

community? And why do you think so?

TRI-W2: I think with in the family it's the abuse of the woman. I think it's

indicative of the economic problems. I think there's a lot of frustration

with in a Latino family due to the low wages. Because there not comparable to those of other races or communities. People dedicate themselves to only work. Sometimes working two shifts just to pay the

bills. Generally, in some families the woman stays home to take care of the kids. While the father has to go out to provide for the family. By means of food and rent. I think that the fact that the man spends more than what he makes causes problems within the family. Like "I don't have money for food, for the clothes of the children, or because I won't have enough money for the rent and here comes the last day of the month." I think that it's frustration, also to the women is unable to have the opportunity to go out and be her own person. I see it for example, taking care of children all the time especially when they're young need more attention than a child who is a little older. I'm referring to "Don't touch this, or don't put this in your mouth because you can choke." Or because he's put a balloon in his mouth. Or he got something that he's not supposed to. The job of a homemaker is as difficult as that of the breadwinner. But unfortunately it's the man who's seen as bringing home the money. The women doesn't bring home money because her job, taking care of her children is not paid monetarily. But in fact her job is just as important, but often it is not taken into account. I think the frustration on the part of the women or to feel.....bad about herself, it's not easy to give that......... When one feels bad about themselves it's difficult to feel good with others. Nor can they take care of the children. I think our problem is also cultural. It's cultural in that in this country there are those of us from many different parts and we have many different ways of thinking. But in our Latino community and our Latino world the family is always the center. It's not completely lost. Perhaps those born here have a different history. But we always want our children to be close to us. Know how they are. I think it's the ignorance. I think our community is the lowest. The lowest class, and what follows is a middle and then upper class. I think that we haven't been given the opportunity.....opportunity to succeed...... It's true that many of us don't have mastery of this country's' language. But we still have the ability to do well or even better than someone of another country. But for me that's the most important. That one feels frustrated within ones' own home. The economic problems. People come to this country, not necessarily by choice. They left their family, siblings or whatever behind in their country. Ones comes here for necessity. The only thing that is left is to work. But they don't pay one well. Meanwhile they don't pay us well our children are still desiring things. And the problems continue in the family.

TRI-W3: And those are some of the problems of why there are crimes

TRI-W2: True!

TRI-W5: The drugs, the gangs, the assaults, and the robberies.

TRI-W2: On occasion both have to work. Both have To go out and work because

what one earns is not enough. By necessity both have to go out and find a

job. And then who takes care of the children.

TRI-W3: And there go the children and that's when they get into to things here and

there. In the gangs because they want to.....know what's going on. And

that's what begins to destroy the family.

TRI-W5: Yes that's true.

Interviewer /Trans:

Group: (Talking in the background)

Interviewer: My next question is. When do you think gangs became the problem in

Orange County? And What makes you say that's when it happened?

Translator: In your opinion, when do you think that you started to notice gangs in your

community?

TRI-W2: I think when we arrived they were already there.

Group: (All in agreement with above statement.)

Interviewer: Next is, In your opinion where is the gang problem in Orange County?

What I mean by that is everywhere, in certain places, in certain locations,

or cities?

Translator: In your opinion, where do you think the gang problem is in O.C. For

example, is it in any location, in certain location, or cities. Where?

TRI-W5: It's everywhere, but each location has it's territory

TRI-W2: The kids say "It's my territory, it's my varrio." And when did they buy?

All of Orange County gangs. Where ever one goes. Except for the areas

where they don't exist

TRI-W5: And we're not there so......

TRI-W3: In my opinion, I don't know, maybe all of you would be in agreement.

Have you noticed that the gangs and problems are in the communities of lower incomes and resources? With higher income and rescues, which one can see not far from here. If you go by Flower, from 17th street on, where the expensive homes are. One doesn't ever see a group of gang members

there. Not at all.

TRI-W5: No, it's like she says

TRI-W2: Where there are beautiful homes that doesn't exist.

TRI-W5: Sure there are some but they go outside their area.

Jodi: Do you currently think about a process to protect yourself from crime?

And, if so what do you do?

Translator: O.K. Do you take precautions to protect yourselves from crimes? If so

from the gangs? What precautions do you take to prevent a crime or a

problem with gangs.

TRI-W2: I in particular have for example,....I have a certain time that I don't go

outside. For example, at 8:00 or sometimes 6:00 at night I'm already inside the house with my son and daughters. I have everything I need so that I don't need to go the store. "Because I forgot something or because I need to do something." I like to be in my home at a reasonable time. I try not to get into problems with anyone. I mean I prefer that people think I'm

isolated because I avoid problems. So I don't like to give or receive problems. If I see a group ofI just continue.....I don't....

Unfortunately, to start they are characterized by their clothing. If I see plaid shirts, colors in the hair, long pants, shirts tucked out, or baggy

pants.. to me I'm not really interested. And, my daughter say "Look mom the boy." and I tell them "I don't like that or the way he dresses." I want them to know that for me that's not the proper way to dress. I don't want them to mimic them. I plan someday to take them away from that

influence. Because I don't want them to be there. (meaning in the

environment)

Group: Yes, yes.

Translator: Does anyone of you have anything to add?

Group: Don't go out to dressed up. They say we dress (don't keep up our

appearance) but it's not that. There are men out....... Many say we

Keep your purse close to you. Not to go walking alone at night.

Interviewer: Are you afraid all the time or at certain times of the day? If you.... your

very brave. Is it all the time your afraid or is it only certain times when

you see certain people?

Translator: She wants to know....because the little she is understanding. She wants to

know if you constantly....every time you go out of the home. For example,

are you afraid of crime or are there only certain times of the day your afraid? Or certain places where your afraid of crime? What do you think? Is it all day?

Group: (Several speaking at once)

TRI-W5: Before one would say that after 7:00 p.m. one cannot go outside.

TRI-W5: But now.....

TRI-W5: But now they say things happen in the day time.

TRI-W5: The shooting in the day. Now one doesn't even know when to go out

Woman: Doesn't matter when or where someone goes out. Someone can go out

right near their home..... and that is where they have assaulted people. Any time of the day. There's no specific hour nor a specific place.

TRI-W2: Over where I live they killed a boy at 11:00 a.m. in the day. The other boy

was going by on a bike and he killed him. Right near my home.

TRI-W5: That's what I say there's

Group: (Several speaking at once)

TRI-W5: It can almost be more in the day than the night because at night you don't

hear as much. But during the day.

TRI-W5: That's what I say, the schools

TRI-W4: There not to [sic] safe and less in this school. This school has no security.

Interviewer: What would make you feel safer than you do now? What could happen

here to make you feel safer?

Translator: What do you think or in what way do you think that you'd feel safer and

feel it's less dangerous for you? What for example, could be done?

TRI-W5: That parents have more care of their children. A child doesn't know.....

TRI-W2: Many parents know that their kids are hanging around that type of people

(gang members). But, than they say "My son isn't a gang member. He dresses like one but he's not one." So what is he doing than if he's not a gang member? "No he bought the gun in case of a necessity." How does a person think that a kid of fifteen years of age needs to buy a gun out of

necessity! Now that necessity is a serious issue. Because for a fifteen year old to buy a gun.........I don't think that should be necessary.

TRI-W4: To prevent all of these types of things in the neighborhood we need to

unite.

TRI-W5: All the Latinos, all the neighbors, all of us unite and take care of one another. When I go out they can keep watch and when they go out I'll

keep an eye out.

TRI-W5: Yes.

TRI-W3: I say in a community.....A couple of years ago I was in charge of some

apartments and once a month we had meetings with the police department. And it helped with the crime. I think that in a community you need to know everyone. Who's who. We should watch over one another. Someone notices that this person went out.....When someone notices that someone is getting near the home or even window. I think one would

know that they're not familiar and take care of one another.

TRI-W5: Excuse me for interrupting. Where I live they're mobile home park they

also have similar meetings. You get numbers and if someone enters that you don't recognize then you call the police. Then the policeman come and they ask the boy where he lives. If someone recognizes him then he can stay. If not than the police can take him. Because what are they doing

there anyway?

Interviewer /Trans: Ya. o.k.

Interviewer: The next question I have for you is when we talk about the media. How

do you feel about the way they present crime and gangs?

Translator: When you listen tofor example the TV, radio, the newspapers. Are you

listening, hearing that they are presenting something that happened, such as a crime or a gang. What's your opinion of the way they explain the

facts. What do you think?

TRI-W6: They put to [sic] much....how do you say

TRI-W3: They exaggerate.

TRI-W6: They exaggerate the facts more than..... All the programs on television

Man, the news......

TRI-W3: If you notice too. I'm not sure if it has anything to do with.....not because

of discrimination or......I don't know. I always talk to my husband about this. Why is it that they always put on the news......not just the Spanish news. But also, I listen to both, I listen to the American news broadcast. And always, everything that occurs with the Latino is on the news. But basically nothing is talked about when an American commits a crime. You hear something but only when it's something major. If there was an explosion or they robbed something and they're going to sentence him. But normally even for a simple street fight the cameras are there, when it

has to do with Latino gangs. And that's true.

TRI-W5: For them we're the ones who have destroyed. We're the ones who have

come and spoiled the nation, all the Latinos. They don't like us, we're the

dirty ones, we're trash, we treat each other badly supposedly.

TRI-W5: I excuse me. When someone says gangs. One thinks of adolescent or in

men or women BUT Latinas! I think aren't there American gangs??? Or

aren't there other race gangs?

Group: But they always put the blame on the Latin gangs

TRI-W3: Here there is a very large gang, in the Asian community. What's all of

Westminister. It's a large gang and I've heard a lot of things that have occurred over there. But in fact you don't here about it on the TV About

what's happening or about what they are doing.

TRI-W5: The Chinese gang unite themselves and the Latinos

TRI-W3:they protect themselves.

Group: All the gangs......all of them but us. Seriously all other races but outs....

Exactly!

TRI-W3: We ourselves as adults can classify ourselves as gangs. Because we get

together in groups and do nothing to help one another.

TRI-W5:

TRI-W3: Yes. There's different ways of seeing ourselves.

Interviewer: My next question. What are the aspects of crime stories that you hear on

TV that make you fearful?

Translator: What aspects of crime or stories you hear nationally or locally of violence

that cause you fear? What things have you heard of?

Group: The abuse of minor children. Protecting your children from whomever,

parents, uncles, brothers.

TRI-W5: The abuse of children not just little girls but little boys who are in danger.

TRI-W5: Lots of little girls, because you can () little girls adolescents who are

getting pregnant and destroying their children. I mean throw them in the trash because they're afraid to tell their parents. I think that causes a lot of fear to see what they're doing with their children. Not just by those who

abduct them but also by one's own hands. The little girls.

Interviewer: (Faint) I hope that they will be willing because it will really help me a lot.

What I would like to do is give you a camera and an envelope that already has a stamp. All you have to do is drop it in. If you would take pictures of the things you just talked about here so I know what you mean when you

say "This scares me"

Translator: