

The Institutional Analysis: A Qualitative Methodology for Examining Racial Disproportionality and Disparity

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Outline of Presentation

- Brief overview of national data and work on racial disproportionality and disparity
- Institutional Analysis/Methodology
- Michigan Experience/Findings

Disparities

Children of color are overrepresented at all decision points of the child welfare system: reporting, investigation, substantiation, placement, and exit from care.

They experience:

- ⦿ higher occurrence of placement changes
- ⦿ longer stays in protective custody
- ⦿ lower rates of legal permanency

What produces racial disproportionality and disparity?

- Individual worker bias?
- Poverty?
- Heighten scrutiny of a particular community?
- Lack of meaningful community-based resources?
- Institutional policies and practices?
- System and worker fear of lawsuits, media coverage, etc...?
- Something else?

What are States doing?

Eleven states -- California, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Texas, and Washington—have addressed racial disparities and disproportionality through public policy activities.

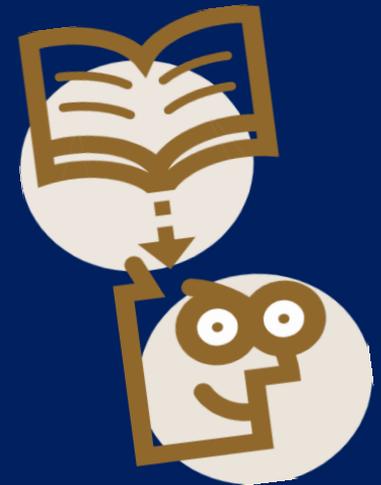
- Legislation, Policy Change, Finance Reform
- Youth, Parent and Community Partnership and Development
- Human Service Workforce Development
- Practice Change
- Research, Evaluation and Data-Based Decision-making

Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings in order to make sense of or interpret phenomena

Use and collection of variety of empirical materials:

- *Case Studies;
- *Personal Experiences;
- *Introspections;
- *Life Stories;
- *Interviews;
- *Observations – that describe the routine and problematic moments of the visible world.



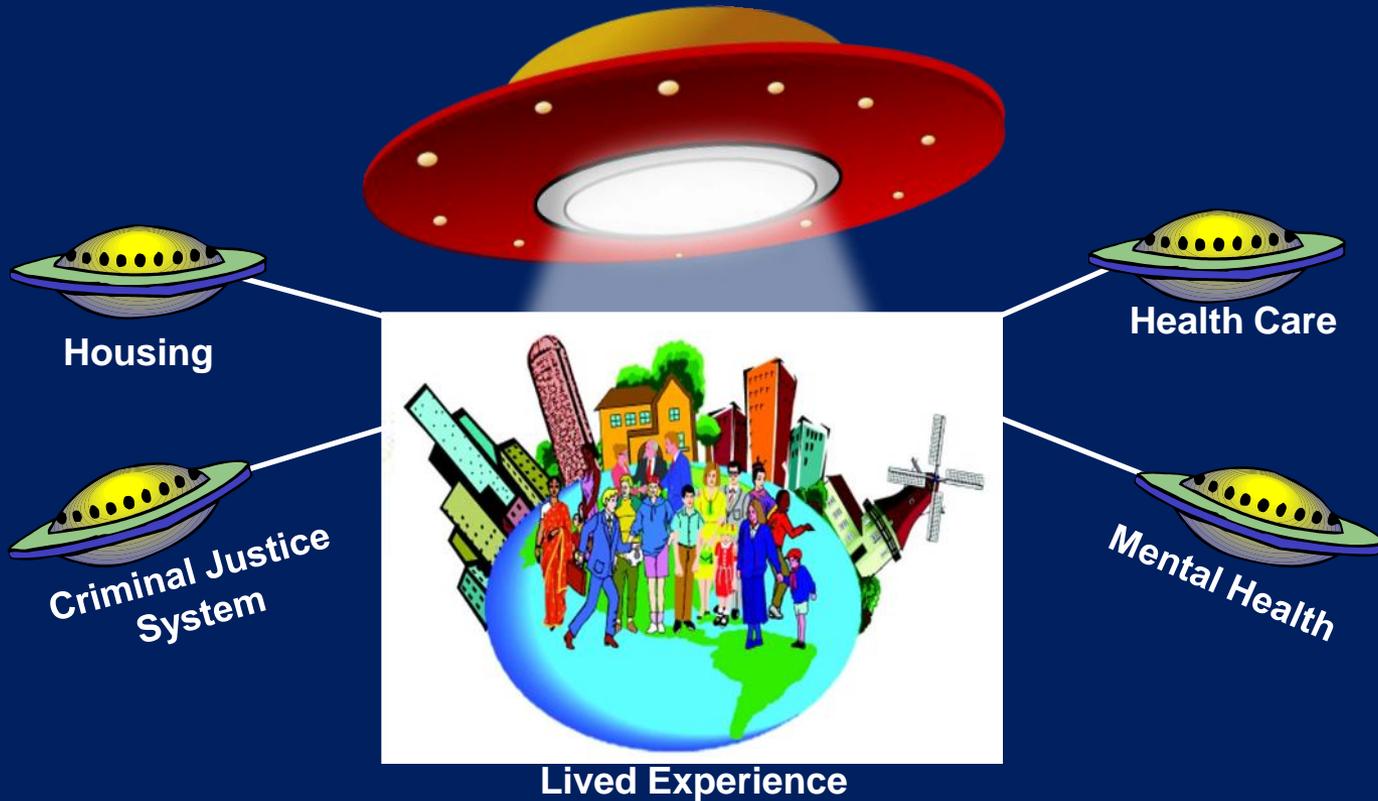
What is an Institutional Analysis?

An analysis is a qualitative methodology that uncovers how a particular outcome is produced. The analysis looks at the GAP between what a child, youth, or their families need in order to be safe and what the institution is set up to do...



Institutional Analysis

CHILD WELFARE



PRESUME...

every worker is coordinated and organized to think about and act on cases in institutionally authorized or acceptable ways

Standard Case Processing Structures



Michigan Institutional Analysis



Analysis Elements

○ Preparation

- > Quantitative Data Collected
- > Groundwork with Jurisdiction Conducted
- > Review Question Narrowed:

- *How does it come about that, after substantiation of neglect, African American children are more likely to be removed from their homes?*

Michigan Children's Services Data Analysis	Total #/% of Children by Race as Defined by Investigation Process											
	Alaskan Native or Native Am.		Asian/Pacific Islander		African Am./ Black		Hispanic		Unable to Determine		White	
Children involved in CPS Investigations	282	0.8%	146	0.4%	13,248	36.4%	1,290	3.5%	491	1.3%	20,940	57.5%
Children w/ Substantiated Investigations	235	0.9%	98	0.4%	10,300	37.6%	931	3.4%	349	1.3%	15,476	56.5%
Children w/ Opened CPS Case—No Removal	146	0.8%	83	0.4%	6,900	35.8%	682	3.5%	264	1.4%	11,197	58.1%
Children Removed from home: Substantiated Investigation	91	1.1%	15	0.2%	3,341	41.6%	233	2.9%	84	1.0%	4,266	53.1%

**Children involved in Child Protective Services Investigations
and**

Disposition by Race: Calendar Year 2005

Source: Michigan Department of Human Resources

Summary of On-Site Data Collection



Type of Interview	Saginaw	Wayne County
Case-based Interview	12	16
Individual	50	106
Focus Groups	Birth parents, youth, and foster parents	Birth parents, youth, foster parents, AAGs, protective services specialists, protective services supervisors, and TDM meeting facilitators
Observations	Hotline, investigations TDM meetings, family court	Hotline, investigations, TDM meetings, family court, juvenile detention
Review of Case Files	40	20



Analysis Elements *(cont.)*

- **Synthesizing Data**
- **Write Report – Findings and Recommendations**
- **Ongoing Work with jurisdiction**

FINDINGS



- Lack of preventive services and inadequate access to services
- Intrusive interventions
- Problematic case processing
- Poor advocacy
- Courts not acting as a “check and balance”
- Placement away from family

Lessons Learned

- **Constantly emphasize the need to identify and address institutional racism**
- **Anticipate turnover within system and advocacy community**
- **Advocacy community must continually pressure systems to make necessary changes**
- **Fold recommendations and agenda for change into larger reform efforts**

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