Street Participatory Action Research in Prison: A Methodology to Challenge Privilege and Power in Correctional Facilities

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Abstract

This article presents a prison research model grounded in street participatory action research (Street PAR) methodology but programmatically facilitated in an Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program class. Street PAR's nine tenets were adapted to a prison setting, and we demonstrate its promise with a brief case study of research projects at one prison location. This article also explores the challenges scholars and incarcerated persons as researchers may face in correctional facilities. Street PAR and Inside-Out can improve prison environments and successful transition to local communities as a function of equipping incarcerated persons with reading, writing, and analytic skill sets.

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Introduction

Quality educational and vocational opportunities inside correctional facilities improve an incarcerated person's likelihood of program completion (Fine, 2013; Halkovic, 2014; Karpowitz, 2017; Marquez-Lewis et al., 2013; Patton, 2012; Torre & Fine, 2005). Furthermore, these programs are predictive of securing employment upon release from prison[1] (Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, & Miles, 2013). According to the RAND Corporation, every dollar invested in prison education will result in approximately US$4 to US$5 in future savings, primarily as a function of lower rates of recidivism (Davis et al., 2013). Research also reveals that 25% of incarcerated individuals who participated in postsecondary education programs recidivated in 3 years following their release, a reduction of 50% compared with the recidivism rate of those who did not participate in postsecondary education courses (Batiuk, Lahm, McKeever, Wilcox, & Wilcox, 2005; Erisman & Contardo, 2005).

Special issues of *Qualitative Inquiry* (2014, Volume 20, Issue 4) and *Social Justice* (2009-2010, Volume 36, Issue 4) call attention to the dearth of contemporary ethnographic prison-based research and the need to "do prison research differently," with particular attention to participatory action research (PAR) methodologies and activist scholarship. The 2014 American Society of Criminology President, Joanne Belknap (2015), has also addressed and called for the need for more activist criminology. Critical criminology scholars (Belknap, 2015; Dupont, 2008) call for moving beyond traditional, institutionalized (in both the academy and criminal justice agencies) paradigms of understanding and solutions to address the U.S. incarceration binge.

This article calls for street or prison ethnographers to use street participatory action research (Street PAR) methodology within the context of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. Street PAR is a comprehensive research-activist program designed for those who are street-identified and/or involved with the criminal justice system to participate in empirically evaluating the lived experiences of other individuals or groups involved in crime (Bryant & Payne, 2013; Payne, 2006, 2013; Payne & Brown, 2016). Higher education opportunities in prison (especially joined with conducting research) are an effective means for reducing recidivism and the prison population (Batiuk et al., 2005). The *Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program* is a national and international prison-based program that brings college students and incarcerated individuals together as peers in a classroom within a correctional institution. Together, Street PAR and Inside-Out offer a sturdy context to perform high quality research that captures the voices of persons incarcerated by providing an infrastructure to operationalize research-activism agendas inside prisons.

In addition, we address how Street PAR is an appropriate methodology and educational intervention to positively engage persons who are incarcerated during and after release. After a review of PAR projects and Inside-Out research, we demonstrate the promise of Street PAR with Inside-Out course research projects at one prison location. Last, nine dimensions of Street PAR are provided for aspiring scholars to extract from a framework or a set of principles to organize their respective projects inside correctional facilities.

Theory and Research Design

The term "action research" was first coined by social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946), and the conceptualization and implementation of this methodology has widely evolved since its inception. PAR is understood by Lewin (1946) and generations of subsequent scholars to be a methodology that incorporates marginalized voices to more fairly guide analysis and activist-based agendas. There are dozens of established PAR iterations, and each, in some respects, has its own theoretical, methodological, and empirical standards. Current examples of action research include PAR, youth participatory action research (YPAR), community-based participatory action research (CBPR), participatory geography (PG), and participatory art (PA).

Generally, PAR requires investigators to include members of the population under study on the research team and throughout the research process (Baum, MacDougal, & Smith, 2006; Brown, 2010; Brydon-Miller & Maguire, 2009; Payne, 2017). However, PAR projects greatly vary in how or to what extent they involve everyday people in research. Most PAR projects enlist local residents as community consultants/advisors for guidance and as assistants to collect community-level data. In some instances, local residents are actually recruited to assist with all aspects of the project, including data analysis, formal presentations, and co-authorships.

We advocate for the most aggressive definition of PAR, particularly when working with criminal justice populations or issues related to this demographic group (Brown, 2010; Morgan, Pacheo, Rodriguea, Berg, & MSchensul, 2004; Payne, 2017; Payne & Brown, 2016). Specifically, we argue for PAR members to be involved in all phases of the research project, including the development of (a) research questions/hypotheses, (b) theoretical framework, (c) methodological design, (d) data collection and analyses, (e) co-authored publications, (f) formal presentations, and (g) "action" or social activism. PAR members are equitably compensated and PAR projects are expected to develop institutional partnerships (e.g., non-profit and civic leadership). Community stakeholders provide PAR projects with the institu-

tional support needed to offset unforeseen barriers unique to local environments or institutions.

Furthermore, we recommend Street PAR as the *particular* PAR methodology to be used for prison-based research as people of color are highly overrepresented in U.S. prisons. Street PAR is a methodological framework and a phenomenologically based research orientation that requires a deep appreciation and full respect for men and women of color who hold a street identity and/or are involved with the criminal justice system. Street PAR ultimately calls for culturally competent and comprehensive analysis of street-identified people of color through an agency-structure theoretical, methodological, and empirical paradigm.

Street PAR projects also reflect the following three features: (a) research orientation, (b) intervention for Street PAR members, and (c) a vehicle for action or activism that extends to local community members. Street PAR assumes there are not enough well-resourced programs/interventions designed for street-identified people of color; and as a result, this methodology understands itself to be an aggressive, empowering, and liberating intervention designed to provide Street PAR members with high quality employment and educational opportunities.

Street PAR and Sites of Resilience (SOR) Theory

SOR theory inform Street PAR designs by framing a street identity as a psychological and physical "site" of resilience for street-identified people of color (Payne, 2011, 2013). Low-income people of color active in the streets and/or criminal justice system often engage in illegal activity to cope emotionally and financially provide for themselves, immediate family, and other loved-ones. SOR theory is also bolstered by structural violence theory (Bobichand, 2012; De Maio, 2015; Galtung, 1969, 1971; Parsons, 2007) given low-income Black and Brown people are disproportionately blocked from quality economic, educational, and political opportunities.

SOR theory and Street PAR privilege phenomenology by threading *their language* and assumptions throughout all aspects of the project. Phenomenological language is considered by those involved with crime to be an empowering mechanism that can be used to challenge mainstream classifications of their behavior which are typically considered to be deeply offensive (e.g., deviance, delinquency, pathological, etc.; Payne, 2011; Rios, 2011). "The streets" is a type of colloquialism first developed by low-income Black men but eventually co-opted by many other persons or groups. The streets specifically represent a social identity, physical locations, and tangible activities. We use this language to explain how low-income persons or

groups of color internalize street life, a street identity, and/or crime as a social identity—an identity grounded in an ideology of personal, social, and economic survival (Payne, 2011). Also, many in the streets conceptualize their social identity as being far more complex than just their experiences with crime. Like other social or professional identities, a street identity is also a multi-dimensional experience. These men and women, for instance, are also parents, siblings and friends to many inside their communities. Their street identities are central and foundational to their worldview and thus most of their lived experience are filtered through this street identified frame of reference. In addition, SOR theory considers a street identity to be activity-based given this identity typically manifests in *illegal* and *bonding* activities.

Street PAR privileges the worldview of street-identified populations of color as "expert" indigenous knowledge, epistemology, or theory. Street PAR as method also seeks to organize these men and women to empirically document the lived experiences of other street-identified people of color primarily in local street communities, schools, and correctional facilities (Bryant & Payne, 2013; Payne, 2006, 2013; Payne & Brown, 2016; Payne, 2017). Persons, active or formerly involved with the streets, are best poised to critically examine the culture or habitus of street populations. Last, Street PAR projects are required to engage in "action" or social activism in the local environments out of which the research is conducted.

PAR in the Streets and Prison

PAR as method has been mostly used by educational and public health scholars, and both literatures have confirmed that schools and local communities are excellent sites to carry out PAR work. A number of PAR studies have also examined the link between educational and health outcomes by examining questions related to children's and students' rights, public health issues, and other social-political concerns (Brydon-Miller & Maguire, 2009; Lewis, 2001; McIntyre, 2000). Although relatively fewer in comparison, there are some examples of PAR work conducted *with* criminalized populations (Brown, 2010; Bryant & Payne, 2013; Frank, Omstead, & Pigg, 2012; Long Incarcerated Fraternity Engaging Release Studies [LIFERS], 2004; Marquez-Lewis et al., 2013; Mishne, Warner, Willis, & Shomaker, 2012; Payne & Brown, 2016; Piché, Gaugher, & Walby, 2014; Price, 2008; Shomaker, Willis, & Bryant, 2014; Torre & Fine, 2005; Van den Eynde &Veno, 2013).

Payne led an institutional partnership of three universities and four nonprofits to work with local residents to examine notions of physical violence in the Southbridge and Eastside neighborhoods of Wilmington, Delaware. After

reviewing 150 applications, conducting a half-day interview with 70 applicants and individual interviews with 30 applicants, the partnership selected and trained 15 Black men and women (ages 20-48), formerly involved with the streets and/or criminal justice systems across 18 research methods workshops to become Street PAR members (Payne, 2013; Payne & Brown, 2016). After completion of the workshops, Street PAR members entered the Eastside and Southbridge to collect data from a community sample of street-identified Black men and women (ages 18-35). Data were collected through the following multi-media design: (a) 520 survey packets, (b) 24 individual interviews, (c) four dual interviews, and (d) three group interviews. Survey participants had relatively low levels of direct experiences with physical violence yet high levels of exposure to physical violence. Positive attitudes toward economic well-being were also found to be predictive of fewer experiences with physical violence. In addition, all Street PAR members received employment earning US$17 per hour at the end of the project's funding period. Six Street PAR members enrolled in college. Two members graduated with a bachelor's degree, and three enrolled in graduate school. These same three members completed their master of arts degrees, and two enrolled in doctoral programs.

The unique insider perspectives of people in prison have been found to enable practical solutions to daily correctional problems (Bryant & Payne, 2013; LIFERS, 2004; Ross, Zaldivar, & Tewksbury, 2015). Persons who are incarcerated are able to accurately critique misinformed outsider perspectives, and they can dispel negative perceptions of corrections. Given the barriers persons who are incarcerated face with access to technology, information, and professional feedback required for scholarly publications, Ross et al. (2015) argued that scholars must work *with* persons who are incarcerated as co-researchers to produce and publish research that can fulfill the vision of convict criminologists. The LIFERS (2004) are a scholarly and activist-based group of men sentenced to "life" but have remained determined to offer their analysis and recommendations for addressing the individual and structural conditions behind street culture. The LIFERS (2004) said,

> . . . it is unrealistic to think that any serious efforts to address the problem of drug addiction could be successful while simultaneously excluding drug users, who consume illegal substances and drug dealers, who market them, from such efforts. It is logically inconsistent, therefore to expect a reduction in crime simply by galvanizing law enforcement, legislators, and a few select community groups, while excluding those deemed to be criminal elements from the process. (p. 51)

Torre and Fine (2005) conducted a 4-year PAR project of a prison-based college program to document the consequences of higher education for women in prison and after they were released. They documented how higher

education transformed participants and communities, reduced crime, and produced cost-savings by providing college to persons who are incarcerated. Participation of persons who are incarcerated as researchers enhanced their study's overall validity and, therefore, Fine (2013) argued that the entrenched academic position of studying and developing policy for others is a form of "epistemological violence." Marquez-Lewis et al.'s (2013) PAR parole project legitimized the data produced by persons who are incarcerated by documenting how they took full responsibility for their crimes and worked tirelessly to transform themselves and their prison communities. Project findings were used to educate and collaborate across audiences, including the public, criminal justice reformers, and scholars.

Doing Inside-Out Research

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program is an international initiative directed at transforming ways of thinking crime and justice (www.insideoutcenter.org). Established in 1997, this program brings college students and incarcerated individuals together as peers in a classroom setting that emphasizes dialogue and critical thinking. The logistics of the course includes an in-person screening process to determine the appropriateness of the student's participation in the course, a strict set of institutional and classroom rules, semi-anonymity (first names only), and a strict no-contact rule upon completion of the course for both inside and outside students. Classes are typically weekly, 3-hr sessions at the prison site. Enrollment generally includes 10 to 15 undergraduate "outside" university students and 10 to 15 "inside" incarcerated students. All course participants write a minimum of six reflection papers. Papers require students to observe, reflect, analyze, and integrate the information in the readings with the prior week's discussion. Student papers reflect on their own process (and that of the group), and further analyze social issues raised by the course. Final group projects designed to utilize empirical research to guide specific criminal justice policy recommendations are presented to all participants at the public closing ceremony.

Allred (2009) conducted a survey and an analysis of her Inside-Out students' reflection papers focused on one particular week's topic (what are prisons for?) to determine how students ranked the importance of the structure of the class (icebreakers, large group brainstorming activities, and small group activities), the content of those class discussions, and the readings for that week. She found students learned most from the course structure (followed by content and readings) because it created a critically nurturing intellectual environment for inside and outside students to genuinely learn from one another. Second, Allred, Harrison and O'Connell (2013) examined

self-efficacy by conducting a pre-/post-survey design across three Inside-Out courses. On the precourse scale, outside students had significantly higher levels of self-efficacy than inside students; however, at postcourse administration of the survey, only inside students experienced a significant increase in self-efficacy. Allred et al. (2013) suggested measures specific to academic skills (e.g., knowledge attainment and/or abilities to apply critical thinking skills to course readings) and other specific domains may result in similar significant shifts for both groups of students.

Inside-Out strongly encourages students to avoid the perception of themselves as passive objects; and instead, emboldens and resituates them as active subjects. Students develop critical consciousness, personal agency, and active collective responsibility. The second author of this article also conducted an unpublished ethnographic content analysis of Inside-Out participants' reflection papers to document and understand both the contextual and individual factors that influence students' construction of self, others, and the U.S. criminal justice system. All students who completed the course in autumn 2009 were recruited in spring 2010 to utilize their course papers for analyses. The final sample consisted of 17 (nine outside university and eight inside incarcerated) students. University students consisted of three White males, one Black male, and five White females. Inside students consisted of four Black males and four White males. Inductive analysis was deeply informed by literature reviews, our own experiences as researchers in this topical area, and new knowledge gained throughout the coding and analysis process (Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Weston et al., 2001). Intercoder reliability revealed an average of 80% agreement between three coders for each transcript (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The context and structure of Inside-Out classes were found to deepen students' knowledge about the criminal justice system, shift perceptions of themselves and others, and allow students to critically evaluate the theory and realities of punishment and rehabilitation in corrections. Most Inside-Out students (10 out of 17 students) remarked how this course enhanced their understanding of the criminal justice system.

> This class made me more aware of the criminal justice system and gave me more knowledge than I could even imagined up to this point. . .Now I can leave S.C.I. with the knowledge and tools to further enhance my capabilities to be an upstanding citizen in my community. (Inside 11)

> I have learned how the criminal justice system works from a textbook standpoint, but we questioned far beyond what a textbook could hold. For example, we read a lot about what America considers criminal. Before this class, I never would have questioned such things, or considered that they might

> be harming more people than helping. After reading the text and the class discussions, I realized how blinded my train of thought really was. (Outside 4)

Inside students commented about how little they knew about why things happened the way they did in their particular cases, and many described moments of clarity after reading course material and discussing it in class in terms of understanding the context of the decisions that were made (see also Mishne et al., 2012). Inside-Out students also questioned whether the criminal justice system achieved the desired goals of punishment and rehabilitation. All 17 students concluded prison was designed to punish and warehouse offenders rather than rehabilitate and prevent recidivism. For most university students, this course was the first time they encountered people in prison and it is through the context of the Inside-Out class that change occurred in attitudes of who we incarcerate, what purpose prisons serve, and the realization that most people in prison are more similar to than different from free persons (see also Hilinski-Rosick & Blackmer, 2014). Similarly, for most inside students, this course was the first prison educational experience where they felt their voice or informed opinions mattered. The context of holding class inside prison walls, the pedagogy of equal participation and dialogue,[2] and the interactions with each other as classmates in small group and large group activities has lead many inside students to develop a more critical understanding of the realities of the criminal justice system.

Challenges With Conducting Street PAR in Prison

Van den Eynde and Veno (2013) drew attention to the methodological concerns of emotional safety for ethnographers involved in research projects with criminalized populations. Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs's (OMC) PAR project created an inside–outside team built on "complementary dissimilarity" to mitigate the emotional costs the insider faced conducting intense fieldwork (Van den Eynde & Veno, 2013). Reiter's (2014) work on supermax prisons in California demonstrates how even with cross-disciplinary and institutional-networked approaches, scholars must also document the emotional challenges (as data) they face when negotiating institutional collaborations and the likelihood the research itself could contribute to unintended policy consequences. Scholars must move beyond reflexivity or purely confessional accounts and, instead, empirically document the emotional challenges of prison-based research (Bryant & Payne, 2013; Leibling, 2014). According to Piché et al. (2014), scholars are essentially research-facilitators of prison ethnography as a method to foster trust and circulation of power during the

research process. Piché et al. (2014) argued that both critical and collaborative ethnography still privileges the standpoint of the academic as "knower," whereas "researcher-as-facilitator" privileges the standpoint of the incarcerated person and promotes their written words, the model adopted by the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons* (*JPP*), and initiatives like the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program.

Price (2008) documented how "paradigm wars" in academia play out similarly in criminal justice organizations in that both institutions support dominant or positivist paradigms over participatory research. Price's (2008) study of an alternative-to-incarceration program was dismissed as valueless because it lacked objectivity, was perceived as anecdotal, and did not provide solutions to problems. In line with the tenets of Street PAR, Price (2008) argued that the accounts of those hit the hardest by the criminal justice system are a necessary and fundamental source of knowledge production:

> . . .doing research on people convicted of felonies for the purposes of an institution fundamentally dedicated to surveillance and monitoring of young people of color seemed to contribute to a repressive apparatus. . . Not all approaches to research can fulfill that role or function equally well. Although our attempts at participatory research may have piqued the interest of the more liberal or democratic sensibilities alive in the organization, they fundamentally were at cross-purposes with the organization's implicit mission within the criminal justice apparatus. (p. 406)

Bourke (2009) reflected on her own experiences across three health PAR projects and challenges some of the assumptions of PAR such as "maximal participation" and "shared power." Participant involvement was described as vacillating between low participation and a strong desire for more immediate results and actual change as opposed to developing and sharpening a theoretical understanding of a social challenge. Furthermore, given communities are not homogeneous, it is not a surprise that at times consensus cannot be achieved and dominant voices may attempt to silence minority views. Power in PAR is complex and it is always a negotiated process, thus generally forcing PAR projects to have longer timelines in comparison with traditional research (Bourke, 2009; Bozalek, 2011).

Blueprint for Prison Research: Rethinking Street PAR Using Inside-Out

Street PAR and Inside-Out are separate programs, but are theoretically and methodologically aligned in spirit or mission to street-identified populations.

When possible, we encourage phenomenologically based prison research programs to organize their projects as a function of both Street PAR and Inside-Out paradigms. Inside-Out offers a sturdy teaching and research context while Street PAR provides a theoretical, methodological, and analytic research orientation grounded in nine core dimensions (Bryant & Payne, 2013; Payne, 2013).These nine principles were identified to evaluate and guide the focus of Street PAR projects. Also, these nine principles are conceptualized within the framework of two subareas: (a) project organization and (b) community and activism.

Project Organization

This subarea is responsible for fleshing out all technical and operational features of the project. This larger organizational principle charges Street PAR teams with critically thinking through use of resources, power dynamics, project design, and the ethical implications of the project. Project organization is also guided by the following five dimensions: (a) project identity, (b) ethics, (c) resources and incentives, (d) timeline, and (e) methodological design.

Dimension 1: Project identity. This first dimension focuses the purpose and goals, operational structure, and overall identity of the project. The crystallization of a Street PAR study begins with a well-organized research methods training. Formal research methods trainings precede the implementation of Street PAR projects and are ultimately used to properly prepare Street PAR members for the study. Methods trainings are conceptualized as a function of the institutional climate or cultural context of the respective correctional facility. Correctional facilities are extremely varied in terms of geographical location, resources or technology, accessibility, gender, and level of offense, and, as a result, developed curricula for methods training and the execution of Street PAR studies inside correctional facilities vary tremendously.

Research methods trainings provide at least two additional functions. First, Street PAR members concurrently *learn about* and *assist with* informing the study's theory, methodology, and analysis plan during research methods training workshops. Data collection begins after training is complete. Second, workshops elicit and ensure group cohesion among the Street PAR team as well as foster rapport between formal research members (i.e., principal investigator [PI], graduate students) and Street PAR members. Group rapport is vital to the success of Street PAR projects. Research method training workshops are ground-zero for creating safe or supportive learning environments, unified and empowered Street PAR teams, and successful studies.

Workshops allow all members to learn about each other in a different and deeper way. These trainings are also spaces in which projects first forge an overall identity. Street PAR projects have been found to creatively distinguish and/or adorn themselves so as to uniquely situate their Street PAR project's identities (Payne, 2013). For instance, project names, insignia's, colors, or clothing (e.g., t-shirt) can be selected to represent and promote the project's purpose as well as unify team members. In fact, teams are encouraged to be as creative as possible with fashioning their respective social and professional identities.

In addition, it is during research methods training that members of the formal research team can identify strengths and interests of Street PAR members to later assign them to subteams organized within the larger Street PAR study (Payne, 2013). Subteams are smaller more focused and specialized units of individual members from the larger Street PAR team. Payne's (2013) Street PAR study titled "The People's Report" organized their 15 Street PAR members into four subteams: (a) literature review subteam, (b) data collection subteam, (c) data analysis subteam, and (d) action subteam. Street PAR members worked in their respective subteams over the course of the study. Every 2 weeks, all subteams met for a 2- to 3-hr period to inform the larger team of their various activities.

The last major component of Dimension 1 involves the research team holding discussions on the "power dynamics" of the team. Street PAR (like any other form of PAR) is not a "pure democracy." "Good" Street PAR teams require firm guidance, strong leadership, and clear directions offered in a respectful and culturally sensitive way. Formal leadership also must establish an agreed-upon process in which Street PAR members can respectfully challenge and overrule decisions made by the project's formal leadership.

Dimension 2: Ethics. Research methods curriculums address ethical notions as function of traditional and nontraditional discourses on ethics. By *traditional*, we mean that Street PAR teams are taught the formal process of seeking university and prison institutional review board (IRB) approvals to conduct research. In fact, Street PAR teams slowly review the actual IRB applications approved for their project. Conscientious reviews of the IRB process and actual IRB application allow the team to be informed of their legal and moral rights while working on the project and the rights of study participants. *Nontraditional* discussions of ethics include critically reviewing the literature and other credible and creative sources on how low-income people of color have been egregiously exploited by the academy. Street PAR teams also address how most research operates from the perspectives, assumptions, and interests of those who conduct the research—interests that oftentimes are not in line

with the value system of those being studied. Continued discussions of power and who and how scholars benefit from the research endeavor are critical. In line with notions of power, Street PAR teams explicitly determine *who owns the project* (especially the data) and what *ownership* means to various members on the team. Definitions of ownership will vary as function of those involved on the project (e.g., inside students, outside students, faculty, and prison authorities). Finally, Street PAR projects are mandated to engage in activism or change. As a consequence of this charge, it would be unethical not to organize and execute instances of advocacy or "action" throughout prison-based Street PAR projects.

Dimension 3: Resources and incentives. Open conversations about the structuring and resourcing of the Street PAR project are held during methods training. Street PAR members are also made aware of how research projects often attract other funding and other forms of resources. In addition, Street PAR members, particularly those on the inside, are informed of how college students and faculty benefit from research through continued publications, entrance into graduate school, tenure and promotion, financial payments, and other employment opportunities. With this said, formal researchers are mandated to incentivize inside members of the Street PAR project. Types of incentives depend on the correctional facility but can include college credit, access to literature and books, or co-authored publications, for example (Fine, 2013; Mishne et al., 2012).

Dimension 4: Project timeline. Street PAR projects sometimes struggle with time given the inherent complexity of these studies. Clarity of a timeline upfront and throughout the course of a project's life determines how ambitious goals become. Street PAR projects also become more efficient with its time when formal researchers *find time* to build relationships with people who are incarcerated prior to the project's start. Rapport building hastens team cohesiveness once the study begins which in turn gives the team *more time*.

Furthermore, the end of the project and what the end of the project looks like is discussed at the beginning of the study. *The project will end!* Although there may be ways for the team or the project to evolve in different forms, it should be underscored the project in its initial form will end at some point. How the team stays connected is something to be determined throughout the project.

Dimension 5: Methodological design. PAR is not tantamount to a *single* research method and PAR is not synonymous with qualitative methodology. PAR is a methodological framework and epistemological orientation that can house most theoretical, methodological, and empirical designs (Bryant & Payne,

2013; Payne, 2017). PAR methodological designs are diverse given that they address a wide variety of topics. At their core, PAR projects are unified by involving members of the population under study in the research process and activism-based agendas. However, PAR projects deviate in the development and execution of their respective methodological designs. Resources, institutional access, and timeline will determine the project's parameters or methodological possibilities.

Torre and Fine (2005) utilized quantitative and qualitative methods for their 4-year PAR project that evaluated the impact of higher education inside of prison and upon release: archival analysis of college program data, individual interviews of incarcerated persons on the impact of the college program, focus group interviews with incarcerated persons based on varying status within the college program, individual interviews with postrelease women who were in college, participant observations of the prison-based college program, individual interviews with correctional administrators and officers, focus groups and surveys with educators, and a quantitative recidivism analysis of women who did and did not complete the college program. Marquez-Lewis et al. (2013) utilized a longitudinal quantitative analysis of re-incarceration rates for men and women and also conducted postrelease individual interviews with a subsample of these men and women to understand return rates for those convicted of violent crimes, the effects of parole denials and long sentences on return rates to prison, and the personal narratives of those directly affected by parole decisions. These two examples illustrate each PAR project's methodologies are driven by research questions and, thus, are often varied.

Community and Advocacy

This subarea focuses on grounding the project in the spirit, interests, and culture of the local correctional facility based on which the study is being conducted. This subarea is guided by the following four dimensions: (a) local history, (b) audience, (c) the PEOPLE, and (d) action plan.

Dimension 6: Local history. A historical analysis contextualizes current attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, thus offering a broader way to understand the social phenomenon under study. If the study is not centrally historical in focus, then Street PAR projects must organize a historical component that remains committed to tracing the history of the topic in relation to the local street-identified population under study. For instance, if a study seeks to examine the mental health policy of the respective correctional institution, then selected team members can organize a historical analysis of mental health policies used by the correctional facility. An historical analysis of

phenomena or policy within a correctional facility can be done in a way that appropriately challenges the institution.

Dimension 7: Target audiences. During research methods training, Street PAR teams identify target audiences to continually inform them about the project's status. Multiple audiences are ideal and two-to-three target audiences are recommended for Street PAR projects. Target audiences generally fall under two categories including *professional* (e.g., academic, policy makers) and *community audiences* (e.g., incarcerated persons, family, community residents, college student community). It behooves Street PAR projects to organize products (e.g., report, journal article, photo-essay) as a function of audience.

Dimension 8: The PEOPLE. Nonrandomized Street PAR projects find ways to assess how the larger community (beyond participants) views the study. It cannot simply be assumed that the community identified to be affected by the project experienced the project in a positive way. If the project determines it constructively impacted the larger community, then the project has to also provide evidence of how the community beyond the Street PAR team and study's sample supported the project. McDougal (2014) makes the argument that adherence to the principle of "ontological authenticity" is paramount. To what extent the project is received by the larger population is also about knowing "how well the research allows members of the setting to gain a better understanding of their social conditions" (McDougal, 2014, p. 273).

Dimension 9: Action plan. "Action" or social activism is required by Street PAR projects and action products, mostly due to the study's context, can range considerably in their expressions (Payne, 2013; Payne & Brown, 2016; Payne, 2017). Successful social justice projects organized inside correctional facilities are only successful if done with and through the authorities of prison environments. Correctional-based action needs to be conceptualized in ways that benefit the institution without comprising the integrity of the project. To carry out action, we recommended organizing an "action subteam" of selected Street PAR members. This subteam is responsible for developing and executing an "action schedule" throughout the life of the project—an action schedule that has to first be approved by the larger team and correctional institution. Action schedules are also best guided by formal theories of social justice as related to the project's findings (Payne, 2006). Social action theory efficiently streamlines the action goals by remaining transparent and adhering to a concrete timeline. This theoretical approach with action prevents the project from evolving into unfocused forms of activism.

Group projects, which are required by Inside-Out courses, are an excellent way to exact notions of scholarship and policy-based activism. For example, each Inside-Out class spends the last 4 weeks working on a group project of their choosing that utilizes data to guide prison policy recommendations. The 2012 Inside-Out cohort's group project focused on recommendations for the implementation of evidence-based practices for reentry programs geared at the prison's reintegration dormitory. One key recommendation advocated a partnership between the prison and the university to enable college students to co-facilitate some of the needed reintegration dorm programs to address staff shortages and budget cuts at the prison. The prison site was very receptive to the plan and the pilot initiative was implemented in spring 2013. Eight college students enrolled in a college internship course and were trained by both the prison and faculty member to co-facilitate four different programs for approximately 80 men housed in the reintegration dorm. University students gained the educational and career benefits of working in a correctional environment, and incarcerated men gained the educational skills developed through the programs and completed hours necessary toward employability certification. The prison also implemented required reintegration programs without incurring additional costs and this initiative was designated a "best practice" by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC).

Conclusion

Educational programming inside prisons increases the likelihood of acquiring educational and employment opportunities upon release thus greatly reducing their chances for recidivism. Correctional facilities are overcrowded with mostly low-level non-violent offenders and at least 95% of nearly 2.5 million persons incarcerated will be released at some point (Alexander, 2010; Halkovic, 2014). In fact, correctional facilities release approximately 700,000 incarcerated persons each year to local communities (Carson & Golinelli, 2014). Given opportunity is the greatest predictor of reducing recidivism and improving overall public safety, it behooves larger society to equip returning men and women with a professional skill set so that they are able to function in a modern society.

Street PAR is a comprehensive program that provides social-cultural, educational, and economic capital to incarcerated people. Street PAR is also a phenomenologically based research orientation and methodological framework that establishes a reciprocal university–community partnership for all participants involved with prison-based research to benefit. The Inside-Out program aligns well with Street PAR by offering an infrastructure to operationalize this research-action enterprise inside prisons. *Time* is perhaps the

biggest challenge Street PAR faces inside prisons even if these studies are organized through the Inside-Out program. We strongly recommend using the Inside-Out principle of *group projects* as a way to deliver Street PAR inside prisons. Group projects should be conceptualized across two semesters rather than one, which will give the Street PAR *more time*. Ideally, the first semester course should be to developed and train Street PAR members in the five dimensions of project organization (project identity, ethics, resources and incentives, timeline, and methodological design) and the second semester course should focus on the four dimensions of community and advocacy (local history, audience, the PEOPLE, and the action plan).

Street PAR is an effective and ethical methodological framework that enhances contemporary prison-based research. This research paradigm considers social advocacy as an important component for implementing short- and long-term solutions to community-defined social problems, as well as building the necessary social-cultural, educational, and economic capital for Street PAR participants. In sum, Street PAR with Inside-Out *provides an adequate context for continued evolution* of prison-based research.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Notes

1. The link between higher education and recidivism for people in prison is *only one justification* for offering higher education classes in prison. For a much richer discussion of the arguments for higher education in prison, see Lagemann (2016).
2. The power dynamics in institutional settings of prison impact the ability of inside and outside students to truly have equal voice and/or be viewed as college student peers by standard terms. For further discussion of the challenges of teaching Inside-Out, please see Van Gundy et al. (2013).

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