Framing Data and Equity

Findings and Recommendations for the Data Funders Collaborative

by The Topos Partnership
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Topospartnership.com

Executive Summary

When advocating for the collection and use of data to help promote racial equity, communicators face a host of complicated framing challenges—and frequently encounter significant real-world pushback that slows down or derails their efforts. Knowing that the narrative context is critical, the Data Funders Collaborative (DFC) asked Topos Partnership to explore the current dynamics at the intersection of data, government, and racial equity.

This report and the accompanying toolkit identify paths to promote greater support for effective, community-driven data-related efforts, specifically toward the goal of increasing racial equity. How do we effectively reach audiences that might sometimes be indifferent or even hostile to our efforts in order to increase the odds that potentially beneficial research and other efforts don't get ignored or shut down? This report and the accompanying toolkit contribute by:

• Identifying traps and opportunities for making the case that promoting greater racial equity requires an abundance of good data, and

• Providing sample approaches/language that can help communicators navigate this very challenging terrain, in order to elicit broader support and less pushback.

Supporting "good" efforts

Importantly, the assumption throughout this effort is that the communications findings and recommendations will be used to promote data efforts that communicators believe are valuable and being "done right." A number of objections raised by audiences are valid and recognized as such by practitioners themselves—e.g. with respect to lack of community involvement in data efforts, or the potential misuse of data for "profiling."

The key questions addressed by the report have to do with more effectively promoting these "good" efforts, rather than making the case that data is always used beneficially.

Research approach

The Topos research approach focuses on understanding challenges and opportunities at the level of the "cultural common sense"—widely shared, default perspectives that lead thinking on an issue in one direction or another, and the level at which competing ideas must be compelling.

Ethnographic conversations: Researchers visited communities in Michigan, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Georgia, seeking out and speaking with a diverse group of 63 individuals (roughly 60% people of color) in public spaces and workplaces. These semi-structured conversations allowed us to hear from people whose voices usually don't figure in research, and to have particularly authentic, on-the-ground conversations.

Table sessions: An additional 42 individuals from around the country participated in "table sessions," virtual small group discussions with three to four participants, in which researchers can explore responses to particular ideas and conversational dynamics about a topic. These participants, too, were roughly 60% people of color.

Stakeholder input: The project was informed by an initial set of conversations with professionals working at the intersection of data and equity, and recommendations were vetted and refined through a final set of responses from this professional audience.

Key challenges

The research identified or confirmed a set of obstacles to a constructive conversation about using data to promote equity. While many of these were familiar to communicators prior to the research, it is worth restating them because each represents a powerful challenge (related to the cultural common sense) that must be successfully navigated.

Data is abstract, distant: Across all geographies and demographics, the topic of data typically feels far removed from people's lives and concerns, making it hard to achieve a positive and engaged conversation when it is the focus.

Data feels dehumanizing: When people do focus on the idea of data and how it can be used to depict individuals and communities, they often feel that "numbers" simply can't capture the truth, and that data ignores the real, human essence. We see this view across all geographies and demographics.

Data can be used against us: Across all geographies and demographics, people suspect that data will be used in ways that hurt rather than benefit them, whether this is about profiling people of color or about a more vague sense among many that whoever is gathering data probably has their own self-interested agenda.

Society should be "colorblind" (race-related data is irrelevant): Among "race-dismissive" audiences (those who do not recognize the importance of race in shaping people's opportunities, experiences and outcomes), attention to race is perceived as disingenuous, divisive, and to be avoided. (Note that while this huge category of Americans tends to be largely white, it also includes people of color who, in some situations, insist that race shouldn't be such a focus.)

Skepticism about government: Widespread, negative default perceptions of the government's intentions and its competence lead to skepticism about its collection and use of data. Many

assume data efforts are controlled by people who have power but don't care about regular people or are incapable of doing anything helpful.

Recommended approach

While there are no silver bullets to get everyone on board with using data to promote racial equity, the research suggests a helpful, common-sense approach to making the case. The research suggests this approach can be helpful across broad ranges of audiences.

Core idea: "Knowing is better than NOT knowing."

Instead of focusing on the value of "data," it is much more helpful to focus on the common-sense idea that good decisions and helpful actions require knowing what's going on. This idea is hard to push back against, and also frames the topic concretely and relatably in terms of actions and choices. A number of other ideas flesh out the story of knowing vs. not knowing:

Trusted helpers (nurses, teachers, social workers …) want more information in order to do a better job.

Confirming prior Topos research, audiences respond positively to the common-sense idea that trusted helpers—which might be defined differently in different communities—want and need information about those they are helping. (See Topos Partnership for the Data Funders Collective, "Promoting Data Sharing Approaches,"

September 2019.)

Relatable institutions (schools, school boards, hospitals, etc.) can do a better job if they know what's going on.

It is helpful to point to relatable institutions (not just individuals) as actors in this common-sense story.

Different groups face different challenges where help is needed (based on age, health, location, … and race), and we can only address these if we know about them.

To bring race explicitly into the story, it can be helpful to situate the idea of race-specific data in the broader (and less "controversial") idea that all kinds of groups of people face challenges and require solutions that others may not be able to relate to. This broader context helps to inoculate against concerns (especially among race-dismissive audiences) that race is the "only" consideration, and helps these audiences relate more easily to the idea of a focus on the needs of different populations.

Community members themselves know the most, and also know what the important questions are, and can be active in gathering info (e.g. as "community scientists").

As a way of building trust and engagement, it is very helpful to bring community members into the story not just as passive beneficiaries, but as active participants and leaders—engaged in collecting and using information, even deciding what information needs to be collected. The phrase "community scientists" was helpful and "sticky" in the research conversations.

Real-life "success stories" illustrate where more/better info has led to positive outcomes.

Finally, "success stories" are important tools for building engagement and optimism. Easy-to-understand real-world, or even hypothetical examples of how good information leads to positive outcomes help clarify what the story of data is all about, and promote hope and optimism.

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The body of the report further fleshes out the core ideas presented here, the research approach, and additionally offers brief discussion of some of the communications approaches that missed the mark by triggering pushback or dismissal, such as an overemphasis on government decision-makers. The Toolkit that accompanies the report offers sample language for communicators, as well as additional tools like a digestible checklist of considerations when making the case for data-for-equity.

" *...it's probably better if people are involved that are familiar with the community, familiar with how to address the community, be aware of... the issues that impact the community, of course [that] probably makes a big difference.*

Table Session, woman, 47, Hispanic/Latine, conservative Democrat, New York, NY

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1. Research Approach & Methods

As social and cognitive scientists, Topos focuses on what we call the Cultural Common Sense—the deeply held understandings that are pervasive, unquestioned, and have the power to shape people's views and behavior. This is the level at which we win and lose.

In focusing on the Cultural Common Sense, our work goes far beyond measuring passive responses to messaging. Our insights have implications for communications campaigns, but also for organizing, power-building, community-driven policy development, advocacy and so on.

Our unique and always-evolving research approach allows us to unearth insights and strategic possibilities others miss, and helps to establish a shared vision of the landscape of public understanding in which we are operating.

From June to September 2023, Topos used a number of methods to explore the current narrative landscape and the opportunities and obstacles it creates.

Ethnographic conversations take place primarily in person, as researchers visit communities to seek out and talk with people who would otherwise not be heard from on a given issue. Conversations in public spaces, workplaces and even homes yield authentic insights about people's thoughts and feelings on the topic, and allow us to explore relevant dynamics in both targeted and open-ended ways.

For this effort, we spoke with 63 participants in person in four states (Michigan [8], New Mexico [25], Pennsylvania [8], and Georgia [9]) and virtually [13]—allowing us to reach key demographics. Conversations of about 15 minutes each took place from June through September 2023. The sample was approximately half men and half women. Out of 63 participants, 26 were white, 13 were Hispanic/Latinx (may also have reported other races), 12 were Black/African American, and 12 reported mixed race or another race or ethnicity.

Table sessions are intimate, semi-structured, small-group virtual conversations (with three to four participants) that allow us to observe how ideas fare in the course of an interaction. They are especially valuable for identifying implicit and explicit frames that structure conversation around a topic, both those that lead to helpful thinking and those that support problematic or challenging understandings. From June through September 2023, we organized 42 participants into 12 sessions, 3 sessions of which were all BIPOC, 3 of which were

all moderates or conservatives, and 6 of which were a diverse mix of respondents. The sample included about half men and half women, and included 1 non-binary participant. Out of the 42 participants, 17 were white, 10 were Black/African American, 8 were Hispanic/Latinx (may also have reported other races), 6 were Asian American, and 1 was Indigenous.

Stakeholder input earlier and later in the research process allowed us to explore the experiences and perspectives of professionals working in this sphere, in order to deepen the researchers' understanding of the current context, to unearth assumptions and hypotheses of these professionals, clarify challenges and opportunities, and to vet recommendations with a group actually engaged in current debates.

For this effort, we met with DFC for two group discussions in June 2023 and circulated a feedback questionnaire about interim findings and recommendations in October 2023.

Ethnography

- Explore current narratives and opportunities around race, government, and data by local, diverse populations.

Table Sessions

- Identify explicit and implicit frames - both helpful and not.

- See how ideas stick and to which other thoughts they'd lead.

Stakeholder Input

- Inform research process by sharing experiences, hypotheses, priorities, etc.

- Clarify challenges and opportunities.

2. Key Challenges in Current Thinking

The research revealed a set of important challenges for communicators to keep in mind in making the case that we should use data to help promote racial equity. Some of these default perspectives or responses that get in the way of constructive communication relate to the collection and use of data per se (often reinforcing findings from earlier work such as a Topos study in 2018). Others have more to do with race and racial equity. All are important obstacles that must be navigated.
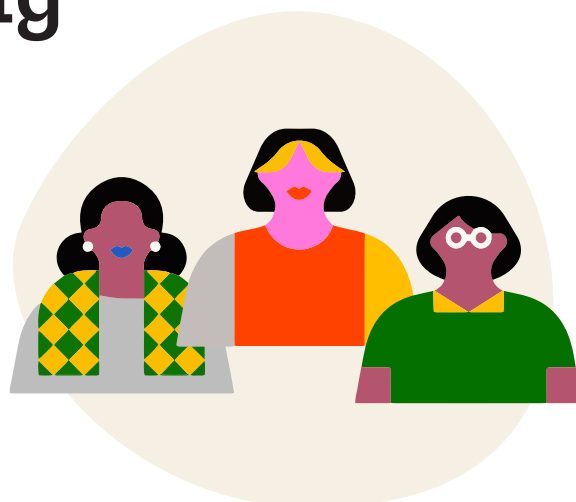
People typically don't see results of data collection in their own communities and often don't understand how information is used.

HEAR DIRECTLY FROM THE PARTICIPANTS >
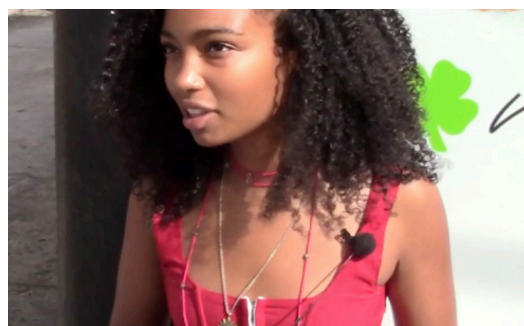
Data is abstract, distant.

The idea of "data" (especially when this term is used) can often be off-putting or unengaging. It feels removed from people's concrete, vivid, real-world concerns and experiences—about health, family, money, or safety.

" *Like I'm Black Trinidad and Puerto Rican, Native American… you definitely get targeted… definitely targeting us more in a stereotypical and negative way…it's so much data that's collected but I don't feel like… the system—no matter what type of the system—is not really set up for minorities.*

Table Session, woman, 35, Black and Indigenous, Waynesboro, VA

Data feels dehumanizing.

Discussion of using data to characterize people and communities can also make audiences feel that they are stripped of their individuality, complexity, or even their humanity.

Data can be used against us.

People of all backgrounds tend to mistrust both the methods of data collection and the intentions of the institutions behind data collection. When it comes to data about themselves, the potential for misrepresentation, manipulation, and misinformation is top of mind for many, across all populations.

More specifically, because data feels (and often is) decontextualized, it's easily folded into concerns about broad stereotyping. While we see suspicion of data across audiences and demographics, the stories and justifications vary. For some people of color, for example, mistrust is based explicitly on racism.

Society should be "colorblind" (and race-related data is irrelevant).

Pushing back against an emphasis on race, many participants—largely, but not only, white—stressed ideas like individual responsibility or made vague references to everyone being equal.

" Yeah, it's nice that you provide your data, but I believe your data is called manipulated data. That's true to your self interest. I need more besides your... so-called manipulated data, right? Everybody can use data. I need the raw data, how you came up with that data.

Table Session, man, 63, Asian American, moderate Independent, Seattle, WA

" You can put down whatever race you want because there's so many different races and genders and, and you don't know who is who anymore "cause they don't look the same... You don't have to have a label. You can change it. You have the right to do that. So does it really matter?

Table Session, woman, 61, white, conservative, Picayune, MS

Past Topos research related to race-specific views and dynamics has pointed out that many, if not most, Americans are "race-dismissive."[1] For race-dismissive audiences, race shouldn't and doesn't (much) matter in a society that should strive to be "colorblind." From this perspective, factors like income matter much more than race when it comes to people's outcomes.
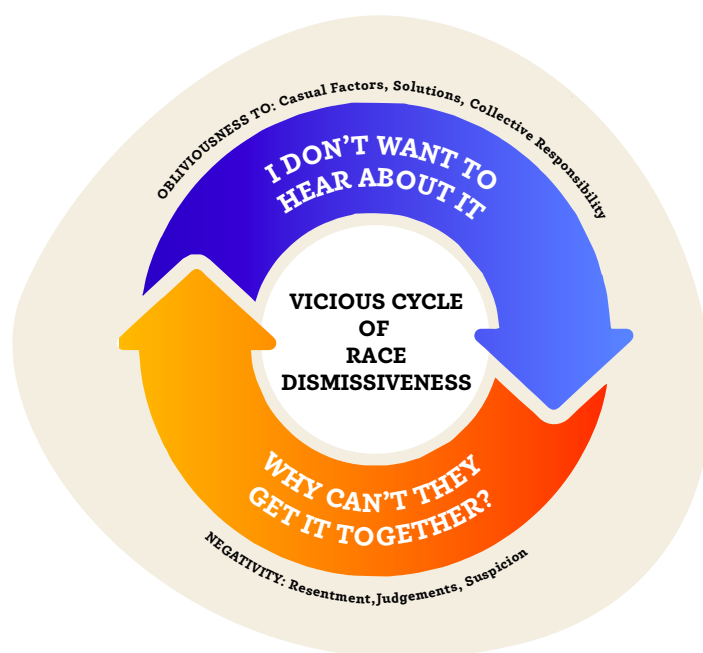
This perspective is also part of a vicious cycle: When people are oblivious to dynamics related to racial bias, discrimination, and systemic obstacles, they are likely to see BIPOC as responsible for their own challenges, to resent being made to feel "guilty" or responsible, and to suspect the motives of anyone who brings up the topic. In turn, this negativity reinforces the seeming unwillingness to hear, understand or take in basic information.

The cycle of race dismissiveness is stubborn and deeply ingrained, and has important implications for communicators. It suggests there are no valid reasons—only disingenuous ones—for bringing up or asking about race, and implies that race-based analyses or policies actually promote discrimination and sow division.

Skepticism about government means skepticism about data efforts.

When a communication focuses on how government will use the data, it easily triggers pushback based on skepticism about government's motives or ability to do a good job.

Confirming patterns seen in other research, a broad cross-section of Americans are distrustful towards government, in general. While there is particular suspicion of federal government—most removed from people's everyday lives, communities and experience—this distrust extends to government at all levels.

OBLIVIOUSNESS TO: Casual Factors, Solutions, Collective Responsibility

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT

VICIOUS CYCLE OF RACE DISMISSIVENESS

WHY CAN'T THEY GET IT TOGETHER?

NEGATIVITY: Resentment, Judgements, Suspicion

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[1] The term "race-dismissive" refers to individuals who reject most conversations about race as unnecessary and think claims about race-based obstacles and disparities are exaggerated. While not consciously hostile towards Black and brown people—and often even sympathetic and well-meaning—their resentment toward people who "play the race card" is a major obstacle to progress. Those who are Race-Dismissive tend to be white, though some Black and brown people fall into this category as well. See: Topos Partnership, Two Narrative Strategies for Engaging on Race, May 2020.

In addition to skepticism about government's motives, there are also doubts about government's competence, effectiveness, and ability to make a difference.

This overall lack of trust and confidence often extends specifically to efforts to address racial equity. (Is there a hidden agenda? Can government deal with questions of race? Should it?)

Note that this pattern represents a challenge across audiences and demographics. While some white conservatives are reflexively anti-government, for instance, liberals of color also express a general sense that government tends to mismanage things, misrepresent motives, and abandon communities in need.

> " *...that information, once the government gets their hands on it... some of that information is actually sold to corporations.... So they're not actually using it for what they should be using it for. It's being given to corporations.*
>
> *Ethnography, man, 61, Black, liberal, Albuquerque, NM*

> " *So...are we helping people? But what data are [they] collecting and what are they actually doing with it? ...the median income is this, so what? Are you gonna change the taxes? Are you gonna change minimum wage? Like, what are we doing with that data?*
>
> *Table Session, woman, 42, white, moderate Independent, Pahrump, NV*

3. Opportunities & Recommendations

The opportunities coming out of the research provide important guidance for communicators. While there are no silver bullets—to reliably and immediately get everyone on board with using data to promote racial equity—the following recommendations tap into already productive associations and can help engage greater support.

Several opportunities are about effective ways of promoting a common-sense understanding of the value of data—essentially by humanizing and making relatable the ways in which information is collected and used. Others are about framing the topic of racial equity in ways that are less likely to trigger pushback.

All are broadly helpful across all audiences.

HEAR DIRECTLY FROM THE PARTICIPANTS >

The common-sense value of data: "Knowing is better than NOT knowing."

Rather than focusing on the value of "data," it is much more helpful to focus on the idea that in order to take good, beneficial, effective action, we need to have knowledge.

• It is nearly impossible for people to reject the common-sense idea that it is better to know—about patterns and dynamics—than to NOT know.

• Data can seem abstract, and it is more helpful to highlight a basic scenario that occurs all the time—someone needing to take action or make a decision, and needing information in order to do it right.

*Sample Language***

Teachers, social workers, and others who provide services to people and families say they can do a much better job if they have good information about the people and communities they serve.

** Note that the sample language throughout this report suggests compelling ways of conveying key ideas. These messages are not intended to be copied verbatim and can be expressed in multiple ways, though the sample language is usually identical or very similar to language that worked well in testing.

The common-sense value of data: Trusted helpers want information in order to do a better job.

Prior research with DFC explored how to best promote a wide range of data sharing and led to a core recommendation to focus on one simple, relatable idea: "helping trusted helpers." In other words, more information sharing allows trusted helpers (community figures) to work more effectively on behalf of people, families, and communities. (See Topos Partnership for the Data Funders Collective, "Promoting Data Sharing Approaches," September 2019.)

This concept promoted buy-in and tested well in 2019, and remains effective today.

• Instead of an abstract discussion about data and how it can help, focusing on the kinds of trusted helpers who want and use information provides a concrete, people-centered story about data efforts.

• The specific identities of "trusted helpers" vary from community to community, but often include people like teachers, nurses, doctors, social workers.

• By focusing on their need and desire for information in order to help more effectively, we humanize the ideas we're talking about and tell a common-sense story, building greater understanding and engagement.

Sample Language

Teachers, social workers, and others who provide services to people and families say they can do a much better job if they have good information about the people and communities they serve. Access to good, reliable, rich information makes these helpers much more effective at their job.

" *... and the reality is this, we are all different. Yes, we bleed the same, yes, we all have the same organs and all these other things, but how certain medicines affect my body will be different than a different culture. How different foods affect my body or you know, my blood pressure or whatever. It's definitely different based off of... some of where you're from. So I think the information is necessary that we find out about cultures and races and all this other stuff because it's beneficial both medically, it's beneficial in your community. There's benefits to it.*

Table Session, woman, 39, Black, unknown political leaning, Portland, OR

The common-sense value of data: Relatable (local) people and institutions benefit when information is available.

It is helpful to highlight the people who will be helped (for example, children, parents, people in the community, etc.) and the close-to-home, familiar institutions (for example, the school board, "our town," etc.) that use and benefit from the information.

• Because people feel removed from the collection and use of data, connecting it to their real life experiences and connections eases suspicions.

• Note that "relatable" and "trustworthy" depend, of course, on audiences and locations. Communicators can identify the best examples to use in their own contexts.

• Likewise, some of these trusted local actors can serve as messengers and allies to make the case even more compelling.

Sample Language

For one project, middle school students worked with a college professor and interviewed their peers to understand their school's social climate—things like student-teacher interactions, bullying, and specific challenges faced by Black students. The student researchers then worked with the professor to make recommendations to the school

leadership about improving the school climate for all students.

The common-sense value of data: Community members participate in gathering information.

To reduce skepticism, build clarity and trust, it is helpful to offer scenarios of communities and their members as active participants in data collection and use.

• Audiences' trust in both the process and use of data collection tends to increase the more local, familiar players and institutions play a role.

• Providing concrete examples of how communities can be active participants in data collection and use both builds trust and serves to empower. It also aligns with goals around community control and access to their own data.

• In testing, there was excitement and energy around the idea of "community scientists"—individuals who help collect helpful information about their own communities.

Sample Language

One way that communities can be involved in research is through what some people call "community scientists"—community members who help collect and use information about their area and can even help lead the research. After all, they know the most about how their community works, what it needs, and who to talk to.

The common-sense value of data: Different groups face different challenges (and solutions).

This round of research confirms that it is helpful to situate the idea of race-specific data in the broader (and less "controversial") idea that all kinds of groups of people face challenges and require solutions that others may not be able to relate to.

• When the context includes groups defined by factors other than race, broader audiences tend to listen more generously and constructively—in part because they inevitably know people who fit this story—than if we focus immediately or exclusively on race. For example, communicators may begin by pointing out that seniors, or people with particular health conditions, face challenges the rest of us may not relate to.

• This approach resonates with natural allies and also appeals to a broader audience (including those who tend to be race-dismissive) by avoiding concerns that race is the *only* focus.

Important Note

This approach isn't about avoiding race. It's about getting to an explicit discussion of race via an effective path—i.e. one that doesn't unnecessarily trigger dismissal or even hostility from some audiences.

" *...it's probably better if people are involved that are familiar with the community, familiar with how to address the community, be aware of, you know, the, the issues that impact that community, of course [that] probably makes a big difference.*

Table Session, woman, 47, Hispanic/ Latine, conservative Democrat, New York, NY

" *Get into the community, talk to the parents, talk to the neighbors. Everyone knows something that's going on and sometimes they don't know who to go to with their information. "Hey, I have a, I have a terrible stop sign here...*

Ethnography, woman, 40, Hispanic and white, conservative Democrat, Albuquerque, NM

Important Note

Communicators should mention challenges that make it hardest for people to "blame the victim"—e.g. by highlighting how living conditions in a community have been impacted by leaders' decisions.

Sample Language

We want everyone to have an equal chance to succeed in school—no matter what their background—but various groups of kids may face particular challenges we need to understand. Kids in rural households may ... while kids with a health condition like ... And Black and brown kids often .... By understanding and addressing each of these challenges, we give all kids and schools the best opportunity to thrive.

The importance of success stories.

As on other issues, "success stories" can be very important and powerful elements of communication.

• Real-world examples of how good information leads to positive outcomes can clarify and demystify how data and information benefit people and communities.

• They also offer hope and optimism and emphasize the importance of this work.

Sample Language

In Jacksonville, Florida, researchers had access to school information that showed that child abuse reports spiked after the release of report cards, but only when report cards were sent out on Fridays. This led to changing the day of the week that report cards were sent out to prevent that abuse before it happened—and also training for doctors and teachers to talk to parents about how to support their children to do well in school.

" *We all are facing different local challenges, such as the people in Florida... they're cleaning up from a hurricane. Other parts of the country are drought stricken, others are, were just recently flooded. So I think that, and not just looking at weather and climate, but I think that a lot of issues are hard to solve and more complex than even politicians make them out to be because we're all facing different challenges and even though we have a lot of similarities, it's really a hard concept to grasp, I think, to try to kind of get everyone on the same page when everyone's kind of like fighting and facing different issues.*

Table Session, man, 39, white, conservative Republican, Austin, TX

4. Appendix

A   Approaches that missed the mark

On this challenging topic, it was easy for conversations to go astray in the research, as participants pushed back based on the kinds of skeptical perspectives discussed earlier. The following are several examples of communications approaches that didn't work well, at least when treated as the primary/central focus for the conversation.

Information for decision makers

"Some people say that if we want to address issues and help communities, we need to know what's actually going on. That means gathering information from people, so decision makers know what they need to know to actually help people— instead of just guessing."

This approach triggered concerns about government effectiveness, the motivations of politicians, and other unhelpful distractions—instead of keeping the attention on the efforts of trusted helpers and/or who is being helped by access to good data.

Collecting more information

"Some parents and community members have actually been arguing that MORE information needs to be collected about how people are doing, because THEY want the information, in order to improve things."

This approach did not connect the dots well to the positive outcomes, on who is being helped, and on the value of community members being involved in data collection.

Vague Community Involvement

"A top concern among some communities is that their information will be collected and used without having a say in how it's used or what it's used for. That's why some people think that communities themselves should participate in making those decisions and should also have access to the information to inform the community's own goals and projects."

This message simply doesn't offer a concrete enough example. Audiences had a difficult time imagining how community involvement would look in practice.

Sample Ethnography and Table Session Prompts

Ethnography

- When you think about your town making decisions about things that affect the community, how do you suppose they get the information they need?

- What about at the state level?
  - What kind of information helps us make the smartest decisions at the city or state level?
  - Where do you suppose that information comes from?

- Do you think the city/town should be trying to make life better for people in your community?
  - In what ways? What kinds of challenges are people facing that we could work on through our government?
  - What kind of information do we need in order to do that right?

- There are many ways that the city, state, and country collects information about residents, through surveys and the census, school enrollment, social workers, etc. How do you think all that information is used?
  - Do you think it is generally used in positive or negative ways? Why?
  - Why do you think that the city, state, and country collects this information about people?

What comes out of that?
  - In addition to questions about age, gender and so on, there's also a question about race. Why ask that? Why does it matter?

- Some people say that it's important to know how different racial and ethnic groups are doing in our country—that if there are differences in education, income, wealth, health, that it's better to KNOW about those differences than to NOT KNOW about them.
  - What's your reaction to that idea that it's better to KNOW than to not have the information?
  - Others say that the government is meant to be colorblind and should stop trying to gather that kind of information. That it might just perpetuate prejudice.
  - What's your reaction to that idea?

- There's a lot of information automatically collected by official means that can't be tracked back to a particular person [if needed it's de-identified, names, addresses are removed before researchers see it] and could be really used to understand the causes of inequality and how to really help people. We simply need to make it a priority to use the data that way.
  - [If needed] It wouldn't require researchers knocking on doors or residents showing up to a town meeting. The info is already there. We just need to agree that the data can be used this way.
  - What do you think about this idea? Why?

- What parts do you agree or disagree with and why?

Table Sessions

- Every area or community faces some issues or problems. And some people say that's why we should collect good information from people about how they are doing. That it's better to KNOW what our problems are and WHO is facing them than to NOT KNOW. What do you all think of that idea?

  - What about knowing if different groups of people face different problems, for example if some groups are experiencing challenges others can't relate to, based on their age, their health, their background?
  - Is it better to collect information about race and ethnicity so that we KNOW if there are differences, for example? Or is that not that important to know? Why or why not?

- [If needed] What about the other side of the coin, that we ALREADY know that problems are out there and collecting information from people is unnecessary? What are your reactions to that idea?

  - Does that apply also to the information about race and ethnicity?

- In every community, single-parent households could benefit from more support: good information could lead to things like a statewide mentorship program for students from single-parent households early on in their education—like a Big Brother or Sister who could help advocate for the student over the years, even as their teachers change and they move from middle school to high school.

  - What do you think about a program like that? What does that have to do with collecting good information from people, if anything?

- Some people say that in many cases building racial equity doesn't require treating people differently at all. It can mean focusing on problems that affect some people in all communities, INCLUDING people in Black or brown communities.

  - What's your reaction to that idea? Or what thoughts does it bring to mind?
  - Have you seen examples (in support or against)? Your experiences or those around you?

- There are community organizations and people we trust, like schools, hospitals, and rec centers that receive resources based on the information that's been collected about the people in the area. What do you think about that idea?

- Some people say that a great way to support these community organizations is to make sure that we collect good, accurate information about the community. What do you think?

- Some say that collecting information about people in the community is a way for all of us to be REPRESENTED and COUNTED.

- What's your reaction to that idea? Or what thoughts does it bring to mind?
- Have you seen examples (in support or against)? Your experiences or those around you?

• One way that communities can be involved in research is through practices like "citizen scientists"—community members who participate in collecting and using information about their community or area and can even help lead the research. After all, they know the most about how their community works and what it needs, and who to talk to.

- What's your reaction to that idea? Or what thoughts does it bring to mind?
- Can you think of other ways that it might look if a community/neighborhood had access to the information collected from them?