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Mapping America's Police Violence Epidemic

🕒 November 15, 2018 👤 Max Freebern 📁 News 💬 0



An anti-police violence activist empowered local community members at SUNY New Paltz with data-based tools to analyze and attack the police violence epidemic sweeping the nation.

On Thursday, Nov. 8, speaker Samuel Sinyangwe held "Mapping Police Violence" (presented by the Benjamin Center) in Lecture Center 100. Dozens of students and local residents were speckled around the room. Sinyangwe discussed his research based approach to assessing the impact of police violence, and how to develop policies to combat it.

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“People in power, who have heard stories from communities impacted by police violence, dismiss them by asking for supporting data,” Sinyangwe said. “We want to help show how widespread police violence affects communities.”

Sinyangwe was born in Orlando, Fla. and studied the impacts of race and racism on the U.S. political system at Stanford University (class of 2012). After 28-year-old Michael Brown was gunned down by in 2014 a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, Sinyangwe co-founded Mapping Police Violence (MPV) with Ferguson activists. MPV is a research collaborative seeking to quantify the imprint that police violence has on communities.

According to MPV 852 people have been killed by police officers in 2018 so far. In 2017 there were only 14 days that someone was not killed by the police that year. Additionally black people are three times more likely to be killed by the police, with 13 of the 100 largest U.S. police departments killing black men at higher rates than the U.S. murder rate.

He used data to debunk common false narratives that surround police violence. For example, some skeptics claim that the volume of police killings correlates with the violent crime rate (VCR) of an area. However MPV's data shows that the Buffalo Police Department of NY shot no civilians in 2015, even though their city's VCR (per 100 thousand people) was higher than Orlando, Fla. That same year, the Orlando Police Department shot and killed 15 civilians.

“There is no correlation between community and police violence,” Sinyangwe said. “People doing the same activities, with different appearances, in different places are experiencing significantly different treatment.”

Sinyangwe and his team then compiled this data and founded Campaign Zero (CZ), which provides 10 urgent policy changes that they felt could impose change. One policy sought to evaluate and amend, if necessary, the force policy of each department which outlines protocol to determine the level of enforcement allowed during an arrest. CZ encouraged departments to adopt policies that preach prioritizing de-escalation and using deadly force as a last-resort.

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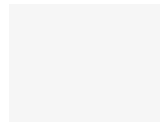
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MPV's data is then used to support progressive police reform with policy makers and promote advocacy with educational tools. This work has helped identify Jim-Crow era laws, such as Florida's Fourth Amendment, which turned crimes that were statistically associated with black people into felonies. This amendment was recently changed, restoring voting rights to felons, excluding sexual offenders and murderers, after they complete their prison sentence, parole and probation.

"I am hopeful that students and people can use data science as a tool to make a positive change within their community," Sinyangwe said.

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CAMPAIGN ZERO

MAPPING POLICE VIOLENCE

POLICE VIOLENCE

SAMUEL SINYANGWE



« **PREVIOUS**

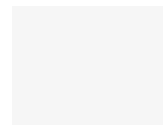
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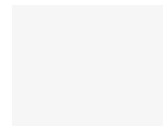


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