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Teaching & Learning Guide for: Institutional interactions and racial inequality in policing: How everyday encounters bridge individuals, organizations, and institutions

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Author's Introduction

Racial disparities in American policing are profound and accompanied by equally persistent gaps in trust. Similar disparities are found across a wide swath of institutional settings. How can we understand and intervene on these disparities? Answers to this question are often bifurcated between institutional and individual levels of analysis. However, the everyday contacts between the public and doctors, teachers, or police officers –institutional interactions—can bridge these levels. Organizations direct and coordinate these agents' individual discretion; at the same time, individual agents relate to the public in ways institutions themselves cannot. The dual nature of these encounters links individual and dyadic processes to organizational and institutional ones. Using police stops as a paradigmatic example, I illustrate how institutional interactions contribute to racial gaps in police-community trust, how they can be used as a platform for changing the relationship between law enforcement and the public, and how they can inform research on racial inequality in a range of institutional contexts, including health and education. Capturing these points where institutions and individuals meet is essential to understand systemic racism, and critical for counteracting it.

Author Recommends:

Please add 5-10 annotated readings to help situate readers in the key relevant works in this field. If referencing an online publication, please provide a full citation, link, and a digital object identifier (DOI) if possible.

Hinton, E., & Cook, D. (2021). The mass criminalization of Black Americans: A historical overview. *Annual Review of Criminology*, *4*, 261-286.
Institutional interactions do not take place in a vacuum; this article provides historical context for the mutual constitution of race and criminalization in the U.S. In so doing, Hinton and Cook provide a concise but thorough history of policing and the larger criminal justice system for an interdisciplinary audience.

Glaser, J. (2015). *Suspect race: Causes and consequences of racial profiling*. Oxford University Press, USA.
This book provides an excellent overview of the psychology of stereotyping and its relevance for racial profiling. Glaser walks through the challenges for establishing racial profiling from stop data, and some of the convergent sources of evidence for its existence. In short, this work provides an accessible introduction to the psychology of officer decision-making, a central focus of translational work.

Epp, C. R., Maynard-Moody, S., & Haider-Markel, D. (2014). *Pulled over: How police stops define race and citizenship*. University of Chicago Press.

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Epp and colleagues' book complements and extends the Glaser reading, focusing on institutional and individual contributions to disparities in officer discretion. Readers from psychology will gain an understanding of how institutions guide discretion; readers from policy backgrounds will appreciate the authors' survey and interview explorations of how routine stops influence drivers' perceptions of law enforcement.

Tyler, T. R., & Huo, Y. J. (2002). ***Trust in the law: Encouraging public cooperation with the police and courts.*** **Russell Sage Foundation.**
Procedural justice has become one of the dominant -if not the most popular- contributions of psychology to police practice. The research on procedural justice is voluminous, but this work is an excellent place to start. Survey data walks through the psychological bases of institutional trust, how citizens generalize from their experiences with law enforcement, and gaps across identity.

Camp, N. P., Voigt, R., Jurafsky, D., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2021). The thin blue waveform: Racial disparities in officer prosody undermine institutional trust in the police. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 121*****(6), 1157. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000270**
This article articulates many of the main ideas of this review with an empirical study of body camera footage. The authors use this footage as data to observe disparities in officer communication with Black versus White men, the consequences of these disparities for trust and representations of law enforcement, and variation in how these interpersonal cues are disambiguated.

Gross, N. (2023). Walk the Walk: How Three Police Chiefs Defied the Odds and Changed Cop Culture. New York, NY, USA: Metropolitan Books.
This recent work describes police departments that have pursued reform, and some of the ways they have sought to change how law enforcement interacts with the public. The author, whose background includes both sociological training and policing experience, gives concrete examples of how organizations have sought to intervene on the processes described in this article.

Online Materials:

1. **Speaking of Psychology: The Role of Body and Dash Cams in Policing:**
https://youtu.be/E7LnW3Xy8Dg?si=pF6AIuju-UZCNL6D
This podcast episode with the author describes what body cameras can tell us about race and police-community interactions, reviewing recent studies described in the accompanying paper.

2. **Detroit Under Fire:** https://policing.umhistorylabs.lsa.umich.edu/s/detroitunderfire/page/home
This site provides historical context for police-community relations, with a focus on policing in Detroit, Michigan during the civil rights era. It contains photo essays, media, and research on policing in this period, plus sample curricula for using the site in the classroom.

3. **Justice Collaboratory: Procedural Justice:** https://law.yale.edu/justice-collaboratory/procedural-justice

Procedural justice has been a foundational psychological contribution to the understanding of institutional relations. This website contains summaries of procedural justice research, as well as guides for practitioners and practical implementation.

4. **APS SPOTLIGHT Expert Panel: Policing and Racism, Insights from Psychological Science:**
https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/expert-panel-policing

This panel covers a wide range of psychological perspectives on racial inequality in policing, from procedural justice, to structural racism, to efforts to intervene in law enforcement. The talks from Jennifer Eberhardt, Phillip Goff (Solomon), Keith Payne, and Tom Tyler can be used to introduce key insights from psychology separately, or viewed together in conversation.

5. Nicks, Peter [Director]. 2017.**The Force** [Film].

https://www.theforcefilm.com/

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This documentary, available on many streaming platforms, features an in-depth account of reform in the Oakland Police Department. It provides a cross-section of issues discussed in the paper, from organizational influences on discretion, to cycles of mistrust in policing, to levers of change- and their limitations.

Sample Syllabus:

The sample syllabus below situates this article in a course on race and policing. Instructors could incorporate it in any course on criminal justice, racism, the psychology of bias, or the sociology of organizations.

Topic	**Readings**
A brief history of policing in the U.S.	Alexander, M. (2012). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The New Press. Chapter 1: The Rebirth of Caste Hinton, E. (2016). *From the war on poverty to the war on crime: The making of mass incarceration in America*. Harvard University Press. Introduction: Origins of Mass Incarceration
	Forman Jr, J. (2017). *Locking up our own: Crime and punishment in Black America*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Chapter 5: "The Worst Thing to Hit Us Since Slavery"; Crack and the Advent of Warrior Policing Kelling, G. L., & Coles, C. M. (1997). Fixing broken windows: Restoring order and reducing crime in our communities. Simon and Schuster. Chapter 3: The Failure of Past Policing Practices
Race, Crime, & Punishment: Psychological and Organizational Perspectives	Eberhardt, J. L. (2010). Enduring racial associations: African Americans, crime, and animal imagery. In *Doing Race*. Glaser, J. (2015). Suspect race: Causes and consequences of racial profiling. Oxford University Press, USA. Chapter 3: Causes of Racial Profiling Swencionis, J. K., & Goff, P. A. (2017). The psychological science of racial bias and policing. Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 23(4), 398.
	Ray, V., Herd, P., & Moynihan, D. (2023). Racialized burdens: Applying racialized organization theory to the administrative state. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *33*(1), 139-152. Crank, J. P., & Langworthy, R. (1992). Institutional perspective on policing. J. Crim. L. & Criminology, 83, 338.
Integrating levels of analysis: Institutional Interactions	Camp, N. P. (2023). Institutional interactions and racial inequality in policing: How everyday encounters bridge individuals, organizations, and institutions. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, e12930. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12930
Discretion in action: Stops and searches	Glaser, J. (2015). Suspect race: Causes and consequences of racial profiling. Oxford University Press, USA. Chapter 2: Racial Profiling is Real Epp, C. R., Maynard-Moody, S., & Haider-Markel, D. (2017). Beyond profiling: The institutional sources of racial disparities in policing. *Public Administration Review*, *77*(2), 168-178.
	Forman Jr, J. (2017). *Locking up our own: Crime and punishment in Black America*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Chapter 6: What Would Martin Luther King, Jr. say? Stop and Search Moskos, P. (2008). *Cop in the hood: My year policing Baltimore's eastern district*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 6: Under Arrest: Discretion in the Ghetto Brayne, S. (2020). *Predict and surveil: Data, discretion, and the future of policing*. Oxford University Press, USA. Chapter 6: Coding Inequality

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Inside the stop: procedural justice	Tyler, T. R., Goff, P. A., & MacCoun, R. J. (2015). The impact of psychological science on policing in the United States: Procedural justice, legitimacy, and effective law enforcement. Psychological science in the public interest, 16(3), 75-109. Najdowski, C. J. (2023). How the "Black criminal" stereotype shapes Black people's psychological experience of policing: Evidence of stereotype threat and remaining questions. American Psychologist. Epp, C. R., Maynard-Moody, S., & Haider-Markel, D. P. (2014). *Pulled over: How police stops define race and citizenship*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 6: Evaluating the Stop: Looking beyond official politeness
	Voigt, R., Camp, N. P., Prabhakaran, V., Hamilton, W. L., Hetey, R. C., Griffiths, C. M., ... & Eberhardt, J. L. (2017). Language from police body camera footage shows racial disparities in officer respect. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *114*(25), 6521-6526. Camp, N. P., Voigt, R., Jurafsky, D., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2021). The thin blue waveform: Racial disparities in officer prosody undermine institutional trust in the police. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 121(6), 1157.
Police Violence and Protest	Correll, J., Hudson, S. M., Guillermo, S., & Ma, D. S. (2014). The police officer's dilemma: A decade of research on racial bias in the decision to shoot. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *8*(5), 201-213. Kahn, K. B., Goff, P. A., Lee, J. K., & Motamed, D. (2016). Protecting whiteness: White phenotypic racial stereotypicality reduces police use of force. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *7*(5), 403-411.
	Reinka, M. A., & Leach, C. W. (2017). Race and reaction: Divergent views of police violence and protest against. Journal of Social Issues, 73(4), 768-788. Hinton, E. (2021). America on fire: The untold history of police violence and Black rebellion since the 1960s. Liveright Publishing. Chapter 1: The Cycle
Interventions: Changing Police Culture	Hamedani, M. G., Markus, H. R., Hetey, R. C., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2023). We built this culture (so we can change it): Seven principles for intentional culture change. American Psychologist. Zaki, J. (2019). The war for kindness: Building empathy in a fractured world. Crown. Chapter 5: Kind Systems
Interventions: Diversifying the Force	Ba, B. A., Knox, D., Mummolo, J., & Rivera, R. (2021). The role of officer race and gender in police-civilian interactions in Chicago. Science, 371(6530), 696-702. Meuris, J. (2023). Can racial diversity attenuate racial discrimination in service interactions? Evidence from cite-and-release decisions within police departments. Organization Science, 34(1), 197-222.
Interventions: Changing Interactions	Dobson, K., Dittmann, A. & Yeager, D. (under review). A Transparency Statement Improves Community-Police Interactions. 10.21203/rs.3.rs-2239643/v1. Peyton, K., Sierra-Arévalo, M., & Rand, D. G. (2019). A field experiment on community policing and police legitimacy. Proceedings of the national Academy of sciences, 116(40), 19894-19898.
	Weisburd, D., Telep, C. W., Vovak, H., Zastrow, T., Braga, A. A., & Turchan, B. (2022). Reforming the police through procedural justice training: A multicity randomized trial at crime hot spots. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 119(14), e2118780119. Owens, E., Weisburd, D., Amendola, K. L., & Alpert, G. P. (2018). Can you build a better cop? Experimental evidence on supervision, training, and policing in the community. Criminology & Public Policy, 17(1), 41-87.
Institutional Interactions in Education and Health	Okonofua, J. A., Walton, G. M., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2016). A vicious cycle: A social–psychological account of extreme racial disparities in school discipline. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *11*(3), 381-398

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	Yeager, D. S., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Hooper, S. Y., & Cohen, G. L. (2017). Loss of institutional trust among racial and ethnic minority adolescents: A consequence of procedural injustice and a cause of life-span outcomes. *Child development*, *88*(2), 658-676. Okonofua, J. A., Goyer, J. P., Lindsay, C. A., Haugabrook, J., & Walton, G. M. (2022). A scalable empathic-mindset intervention reduces group disparities in school suspensions. *Science advances*, *8*(12).
	Dovidio, J. F., Penner, L. A., Albrecht, T. L., Norton, W. E., Gaertner, S. L., & Shelton, J. N. (2008). Disparities and distrust: the implications of psychological processes for understanding racial disparities in health and health care. *Social science & medicine*, *67*(3), 478-486. Martin, K. J., Stanton, A. L., & Johnson, K. L. (2023). Current health care experiences, medical trust, and COVID-19 vaccination intention and uptake in Black and White Americans. *Health Psychology*, *42*(8), 541. Hagiwara, N., Dovidio, J. F., Eggly, S., & Penner, L. A. (2016). The effects of racial attitudes on affect and engagement in racially discordant medical interactions between non-Black physicians and Black patients. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *19*(4), 509-527.

Focus Questions

1. How do institutional interactions between police officers and citizens compare to interactions in other domains (e.g. between doctor and patient, or teacher and student)? What are common elements in these interactions, and what are some important differences to consider?
2. We can think about race and policing "from individuals up" or "from institutions down". What are some of the contributions and limitations of each of these perspectives in understanding racial inequality in policing? What do institutional interactions tell us about organizations and about individuals?
3. This article highlighted a few ways in which organizations shape discretion, and interpersonal aspects of police stops shape perceptions of institutions. What are other institutional practices that inform police officers' judgment in these interactions; what are other relational dynamics that might emerge?
4. What are some of the practical challenges in studying institutional interactions in applied contexts? How might these encounters be captured in the field, or approximated in lab settings?
5. Institutional interactions are one place where individuals and institutions make contact. What are some other points of contact? What do they reveal about racial inequality, and what do they suggest for psychological and organizational change?
6. Pick an institutional domain. What are some dynamics you observe in associated institutional interactions that erode trust? What recommendations would you give stakeholders - organizations or institutional agents- to counteract or repair these processes?

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Author Biography

Nicholas (Nick) Camp is an Assistant Professor of Organizational Studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. His research examines racial inequality where institutions and individuals meet, with a particular focus on race and police-community interactions. His recent work uses body camera footage as a means of capturing disparities in routine police-citizen encounters and their effects on community trust. Nick received his BA in Psychology from Columbia University, and holds a PhD in Psychology from Stanford University.

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