

## **Thematic Panel**

Race, Place, and Policing

American Society of Criminology

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### **Session Description**

Researchers in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska Omaha will present findings from four studies broadly concerned with race, place, and policing.

## Presentation #1

### Title:

Centering Race in the Study of Precursors to Perceptions of Legitimacy and Trust in Police

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### Abstract:

**Objectives.** Examine the variability within and between racial groups in how experiences with police and experiences with crime—as both a victim and an offender—are related to citizens' perceptions of police.

**Methods.** Using three samples of U.S. adults—white ( $N=650$ ), Black ( $N=624$ ), and Hispanic ( $N=626$ )—that are approximately representative of each population, we conducted an online survey to examine how experiences with police and experiences with crime are related to perceptions of police, and how these relationships vary between and within racial groups.

**Results.** Experiences with police are related to perceptions of legitimacy and trust, regardless of race but having a trusting relationship with at least one officer is especially important for Black and Hispanic citizens' perceptions of law enforcement. Prior victimization, but not prior offending, is related to less favorable views of law enforcement. The negative effects of prior victimization are particularly acute for Black citizens' trust in the police.

**Conclusions.** Findings reinforce the importance of procedurally just policing for Black, white, and Hispanic citizens. Further, the variability between groups in the strength of the relationship between perceptions of law enforcement and experiences with police and crime demonstrates why future research should continue to disaggregate analyses by race.

## Presentation #2

**Title:**

Do Body-Worn Cameras Reduce Disparities in Police Behavior in Minority Communities? Evidence of Differential Impact across Hispanic and Black Neighborhoods

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**Abstract:**

Objective. Examine whether body-worn cameras (BWCs) reduce disparities in police behavior in minority neighborhoods.

Data/methods. Cross-classified models were used to identify the impact of situational, officer, and neighborhood characteristics on police discretion using data collected as part of an RCT of BWCs. Interaction terms between BWC activation and measures of neighborhood disorganization, racial/ethnic composition, and violence were examined to assess whether BWCs moderate neighborhood context.

Results. Officers engaged in more formal policing in Hispanic and Black neighborhoods both before and after BWCs were deployed, though the influence of neighborhood context was stronger after BWC deployment. The moderating effects suggest that proactivity and arrests were even more likely in Hispanic neighborhoods when a BWC was activated. However, incidents in Black neighborhoods were less likely to be proactive and result in arrest when a BWC was activated. Use of force was unrelated to neighborhood racial/ethnic context.

Conclusions/implications. BWCs did not eliminate differences in police behavior in minority neighborhoods. In fact, BWCs appeared to increase legalistic policing in Hispanic neighborhoods, though their impact in Black neighborhoods was more nuanced. These results could be attributable to different patterns of victimization. Additional research examining the potential for BWCs to increase equitable policing is needed.

## Presentation #3

### **Title:**

Factors associated with police shooting mortality: A focus on race and place and a plea for more comprehensive data

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### **Abstract:**

Objectives. To quantify nonfatal police shootings and examine the factors associated with victim mortality.

Methods. We gathered victim-level data on fatal and nonfatal police shootings from four states that have such information publicly available: Florida (2009-14), Colorado (2010-19), Texas (2015-19), and California (2016-19). For each state, we examined bivariate associations between mortality and race, gender, age, weapon, and access to trauma care. We also estimated logistic regression models predicting victim mortality in each state.

Results. Forty-five percent of these police shooting victims did not die. In every state, Black victims were less likely than white victims to die from their wound(s). The disparity between Hispanic and white mortality was less pronounced and inconsistent across states. Younger victims were less likely to die from their wound(s) in every state, as well as those who were unarmed. In three of the four states, access to trauma care reduced the odds of victim mortality.

Conclusions. Racial and age disparities in police shootings are likely more pronounced than previous estimates suggest. Other states should strongly consider compiling data similar to that which is currently being compiled in California.

## Presentation #4

**Title:** The risk of experiencing police use-of-force by age, sex, race, and county

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**Abstract:**

Objectives: The empirical patterning of police violence has become a powerful and polarizing theme in the discourse around civilians and the police with studies finding that police-initiated contacts are not randomly distributed but concentrate on people and places. The current study provides estimates of the prevalence of police use-of-force in New Jersey.

Data/ methods: The study draws from the Force Report, a database of police force reports, population data from the American Community Survey, and county data from the National Historical Geographic Information System to estimate how age, sex, race, and jurisdictional county jointly influence civilians' risk of experiencing police use-of-force.

Results: Relative to the population in New Jersey, the cumulative risk of ever experiencing police use-of-force are highest for Black men and women than White men and women. The risk of experiencing force for the first time peaks for all groups between the ages of 20 and 24; however, Black men and women experience force, for the first time, at a markedly higher rate than their counterparts.

Conclusion/ Implications: Evaluating systematic patterns of force provides insight into police civilian relations, drawing attention to who is policed and how degrees of policing vary across select demographics and communities.