“Racial Profiling” in 2018
Psychological Causes
& Data Challenges

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What do we mean by “racial profiling”?

- **1990’s conception:** Formal, drug courier profiles including race and ethnicity
  - But, of course, many causes of disparities
- **Today:** Formal profiles that include racial or ethnic identity are taboo, banned, disavowed, etc.
  - But, data, where available, clearly indicates disparities that are almost certainly caused by group-based biases
Multiple Causes of Disparities

- Differential *offending*
- Differential *enforcement*
  - LE prioritizing different offenses
  - LE prioritizing different locations
- *Formal* profiling
- *Informal* profiling
  - Influence of stereotypes (implicit or otherwise)
Challenges with Policing Data

• Getting it

• Benchmarking it
  – What is the denominator?
  – What is the racial/ethnic distribution of stops we’d expect in the absence of bias?

Outcome tests circumvent benchmarks
  – But require confidence in completeness
Pedestrian Stops ...and what happens next

NYPD, 2011 (peak year)
Inferring Bias
(Circumventing Benchmarks)

Outcomes of Frisks, NYPD, 2011

% of Those Frisked

- Contraband
- Non-Gun...
- Gun
- Arrest

- Black
- Hispanic
- White
Outcome ("hit rate") disparities

- Indicate differential suspicion thresholds
  – If one group has higher hit rates, it strongly suggests they are subjected to a higher suspicion threshold
Black drivers are 85 percent more likely to be stopped in Missouri than whites

- Missouri law enforcement stopped black drivers at a rate 85 percent higher than white drivers last year
- In the eighteen years since this figure has been documented, the disparity has never been so great
- White drivers were less likely to be stopped, searched or arrested
- However, those who were stopped and searched were more likely to be found with contraband than black or Hispanic drivers
- Report found 7.1 percent of Hispanics, 6.6 percent of blacks arrested after stops

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NYPD: % *Contraband* Per Stop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
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<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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</table>
NYPD: % Weapons Per Stop

- Blacks
- Whites
- Latinos
NYPD: % *Arrested* Per Stop

![Graph showing the percentage arrested per stop by race from 2011 to 2015. The graph indicates an increasing trend for all races, with a significant increase for Latinos.]
Challenges with Policing Data

• Getting it
• Benchmarking it
  – What is the denominator?
  – What is the racial/ethnic distribution of stops we’d expect in the absence of bias?
• Outcome tests circumvent benchmarks
  – But require confidence in completeness
Challenges with Policing Data

• Outcome tests circumvent benchmarks
  – But require confidence in completeness

• Does change in reported stop rates reflect change in stops or change in reporting?
  – Need accountability