

Group Briefing Note Instructions – Racial Bias in Criminal Justice

READING ASSIGNMENT: Readings for Monday, where we will start this briefing note:

- 1 – Arnold et al. (2017) – Racial Bias in Bail Decisions
- 2 - Fryer (2016) - Police Use of Force
- 3 - Antonovics and Knight (2009) - Motor Vehicle Searches in Boston
- 4 - Coviello and Persico (2015) - NYC's Former Stop-and-Frisk Program
- 5 - Alesina and La Ferrara (2014) - Racial Bias in Capital Sentencing
- 6 - Eren and Mocan (2016) - Judges Get Emotional When LSU Loses

In terms of reading assignment, if you want to have your implicit bias group be your group for this briefing note (recommended) then, as a group, you can decide how to allocate these readings. Your group will need to cover AT LEAST as many readings as the number of group members, but it's preferred if you can weave in more papers than that.

FORMING GROUPS: My suggestion is to use the same groups as for the implicit bias in-class activity today. But you can make changes to your group. Those that missed today will either need to find others to form a group with, will have to join an existing group, or can do this solo.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GETTING STARTED: Please start by summarizing your paper to your group in around two minutes. Focus on summarizing the situation being analyzed, the non-technical aspects of the methodology (briefly), and the conclusions. After everyone has summarized their paper you can all decide on the thesis statement for your briefing note, discussed below.

BRIEFING ASSIGNMENT: Suppose you work for a Congressperson and are asked to write up a briefing note on to what extent there is racial bias in the criminal justice and policing systems. The Congressperson is considering legislation on the topic and wants to know what research suggests, in addition to what she has learned from meetings with stakeholders.

FORMAT: You must write up a ONE page briefing note (single spaced, 1 inch margins, 11/12 point Times New Roman font or similar). References can be on a separate page so-as not to contribute to the space constraints.

REFERENCES: At the end of the briefing note, on the next page, include a references section in APA or Chicago Author-Year format. This will NOT count towards the one page total. You can put the references on the second page.

ADVICE ON WRITING: Start off with a concise introduction paragraph that motivates the issue and provides your thesis statement. Then the remaining page is dedicated to summarizing the research and backing up your thesis statement. A conclusion sentence or short paragraph can also be helpful at the end. Avoid simply listing papers and listing details about papers as this can read like a shopping list. Try to organize the papers into groups if you can. Each paragraph should start with a statement that makes clear what the purpose of the paragraph is.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING: One person per group will submit the first draft to me via email (pbutton@tulane.edu) and they should CC their group members (otherwise your group members will be left in the dark). I will grade this, and not the TA. The deadline to submit is Monday November 4 by 8 pm.

Please submit the briefing note as a Google Doc. When you create the doc, change the sharing settings to “anyone with the link can EDIT” and then provide me with the link in the email.

NOTE: If you try to share the document to my Tulane email directly, it'll be hard for me to open the document since my Google account is associated with my personal email. So, email the link after selecting “anyone with the link can EDIT”. Failure to submit this properly may result in a minor penalty due to the delay this causes.

GRADING CRITERIA: See rubric uploaded to Canvas.

GRADING PROCESS: I will add numerous comments/edits directly to your Google Doc. I will grade this as if it's the final version, giving you temporary grades for each rubric section with notes on why you got that particular score. I will email you to let you know when the grading is done. Grades in the first round usually range between 4 to 8 out of 10, but final scores usually range between 8 to 10.

OPTIONAL REVISION PROCESS: Once you get your feedback and initial grade, you have one week to make revisions to re-submit. For example, if I give feedback on Oct 13, you have until the end of the day on Oct 20 to re-submit. In your email to me re-submitting this, please summarize your changes so I can more easily identify them and include the link to the google doc again. It's best if you just reply to our original email chain as that makes it easier for me to compare your revisions to my feedback.