

Call for papers for an issue on:

Criminal Justice Contact and Inequality

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In the United States, almost 8 million individuals have served time in state or federal prison, 20 million individuals have a felony conviction, and roughly one-third of the total population will be arrested by age 23. Contact with the criminal justice system is ubiquitous. But contact with the criminal justice system is also broadly disparate. Criminal justice contact—including police stops, arrests, convictions, and incarceration—is concentrated among racial/ethnic minorities, those with low educational attainment, young men, and individuals living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The prevalence and unequal distribution of criminal justice contact, in conjunction with the consequences of criminal justice contact across the life course and across generations, has important implications for social inequality in the United States.

In this issue of *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, we will bring together creative and rigorous empirical papers from multiple disciplines and methodologies to reflect on the consequences of criminal justice contact for individuals, families, and communities. We hope all papers will reflect on how criminal justice contact creates, maintains, and exacerbates existing social inequality in the United States. We expect that most papers will speak to one of the three research areas described below. Papers that propose new methods for studying inequality resulting from the criminal justice system are also encouraged.

Stages of Criminal Justice Contact

A large literature considers the consequences of confinement for currently and formerly incarcerated individuals. But the criminal justice system also includes policing, surveillance, arrests, and criminal justice processing, and it is likely that these types of criminal justice contact also have implications for inequality throughout the life course. The criminal justice system is

perhaps best described as a series of systems and institutional practices, often with little linkage between them, and few incentives for one stage to collaborate with other stages. For example, police and prosecutors are rarely forced to consider the implications of their practices for the correctional system. Moreover, some stages of the system are more visible to researchers; for example, plea-bargaining typically takes place behind closed doors while sentencing/adjudication decisions are often public. Research that creatively accesses relatively unexplored sites of criminal justice contact, or research that links inequalities related to entry into the criminal justice system with inequalities at the back end of the system, would move research forward considerably. Similarly, papers that engage the so-called paradoxes of policing for inequality—legitimacy deficits and challenges that result from patterns of both under- and over-policing—are especially encouraged. Specific research questions may include the following:

- What are the consequences of police contact for health and wellbeing, and how do these consequences vary across population subgroups?
- How does variation in indigent defense and attorney quality contribute to inequalities resulting from criminal justice contact?
- How does criminal justice processing vary across counties and states?
- What is the role of bail bonds in the criminal justice system, and how might bail bonds structure inequalities resulting from criminal justice contact?
- How do legal debts (court costs, attorney fees, or supervision fees) affect family or community reintegration upon release?
- To what extent are inequalities that result from doing time attenuated or exacerbated by the conditions of confinement?
- How do the effects of incarceration vary by patterns of incarceration spells and sentence lengths (for example, short prison/jail spells vs. more lengthy sentences)?

Spillover Consequences of Criminal Justice Contact

Recent research highlights that incarcerated individuals are connected to families and communities prior to their incarceration and after their incarceration. This research also demonstrates that incarceration has collateral consequences for the wellbeing of these families and communities. However, it is less well known how other stages of criminal justice contact—including policing, surveillance, arrests, and criminal justice processing—has consequences beyond the individual. It is also less well known how these other stages of criminal justice contact have implications across generations and what these intergenerational consequences mean for social inequality. Papers that address the spillover consequences of criminal justice contact, and the implications of these spillover consequences for inequality, are welcomed. Specific research questions may include the following:

- How do neighborhood-level police stops affect neighborhood-level health and wellbeing?
- What are the implications of pre-trial detention for the family members of those awaiting trial?
- How does variation in visiting policies across facilities matter for inequalities

in wellbeing among the incarcerated and their family members?

- How are conditions of confinement associated with reintegration into families and communities upon release?
- How does variation in community supervision experiences contribute to family wellbeing post-release?

Incentives and Disincentives for Policy Change

Finally, we are interested in papers that move beyond an accounting of the individual and spillover consequences of criminal justice contact and instead address policies and practices that meet criminal justice and public safety goals while reducing inequality. Although there is currently widespread agreement across the political spectrum about the need to reduce the nation's incarceration rate, there is relatively little agreement on what policies to pursue in order to do so. Additionally, the most popular policies often exclude large portions of the convicted or incarcerated (for example, those convicted of violent or non-drug-related crimes or recidivists). Papers that describe specific policies and their consequences for the incarceration rate, inequality in contact with the criminal justice system, *and* the implications for public safety are critical at this historical moment. Specific research questions may include the following:

- How might the 'paradox of over-policing and under-policing' in neighborhoods with high incarceration rates be addressed to increase public safety and legitimacy while also decreasing incarceration?
- How does criminal justice processing vary across counties and states, and how does this structure inequality?
- What are the costs and benefits of policy changes (e.g., AB 109 [or Realignment] in California) for incarcerated individuals and their family members?
- What are the consequences for reform and the reduction of inequality by targeting reforms at certain classes of the convicted or incarcerated?
- What policies offer the most promise for reducing inequality and increasing public safety in high-crime communities?
- How might fines and fees associated with criminal justice contact be reduced to maximum effect?
- How are the incentives facing police, prosecutors, judges, and prisons related to inequality?
- Do policies that incentivize coordination between criminal justice actors (police, prosecutors, judges, correctional officials) have the potential to reduce inequality?
- What the most important determinants of criminal justice policy reform diffusion and how might these be leveraged to aid policymakers?

Anticipated Timeline

Prospective contributors should submit a CV and an abstract (up to two pages in length, single or double spaced) of their study along with up to two pages of supporting material (e.g., tables, figures, pictures, etc.) no later than 5 PM EST on January 15, 2017 to: <https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com>. All submissions must be original work that has not been previously published in part or in full. Only abstracts submitted to <https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com> will be considered. Each paper will receive a \$1,000 honorarium when the issue is published. The journal issue is being edited by Kristin Turney (Department of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine) and Sara Wakefield (School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University). All questions regarding this issue should be directed to Suzanne Nichols, Director of Publications, at journals@rsage.org and not to the email addresses of the editors of the issue. A conference will take place at RSF in New York City on September 22, 2017. The selected contributors will gather for a one-day workshop to present draft papers (due on August 22, 2017, a month prior to the conference) and receive feedback from the other contributors and editors. Travel costs, food, and lodging will be covered by the Foundation. Papers will be circulated before the conference. After the conference, the authors will submit their revised drafts. The papers will then be sent out to three additional scholars for formal peer review. Having received feedback from reviewers and the RSF board, authors will revise their papers. The full and final issue will be published in 2019.