

MY457: Week 2 Seminar Guiding Questions

2025-01-29

Paper:

Paper: Zhang, N., Gereke, J., & Baldassarri, D. (2022). Everyday discrimination in public spaces: a field experiment in the Milan metro. *European Sociological Review*, 38(5), 679-693.

Guiding Questions:

1 General a. What is the **purpose/relevance** of this study? What **research gap** does this paper try to fill? Which exact **causal question** do the authors try to answer? b. **Why** do the authors conduct a **field experiment**? Or put differently: Why can we not just collect all “bench-sitting data” in the Italian tube system and then test for different “sitting-rates”?

2 Measurement and design a. What is the **treatment**? What is the **outcome (variable)**? Do the authors measure **any covariates**? b. What is the **unit of analysis** / what are the observations? c. What is the **level of treatment assignment**? d. **Why** do the authors use three (treatment/control) groups / **different types of treatments (instead of two)**?

3 Internal validity a. How would you assess whether the field experiment is (likely to be) internally valid? Do the authors **provide supporting tests for the identifying assumption(s)**? b. Do you have any **key concerns about the internal validity** of this experiment? c. Do the authors **remove some observations**? If so, why? If not, would you recommend doing so?

4 Heterogeneity and mechanisms a. According to the authors, what are the two competing theories that explain everyday discrimination? How do they test which one is (more likely to be) true? b. Which heterogeneous effects do the authors examine? Which other ones would you have assessed?

Final question:

How would you assess everyday discrimination? This could be an experiment or an observational study.

I like the field experiment approach and I would do something similar probably. I would send confederates into a coffee or restaurant and I would use a hidden camera to record the interaction. Later I would analyse things like eye contact, tone, facial expressions, politeness etc

Or maybe use a VR simulations that is start to become increasingly prevalent in psychology and Participants experience social situations (e.g., walking through a store, sitting in a café) through the eyes of a racial minority in a VR simulation. Simulated interactions include subtle forms of racism (e.g., being ignored, getting different service).

Helps measure implicit biases in real-time.
Can test participants of different racial backgrounds to see how racism is perceived.

Random Thoughts that come up

Because of the time and that people travel for the same reason, we measure possible similar people