Policing, Policy, and Philosophy Initiative (3PI)

Abstract
The Policing, Policy, and Philosophy Initiative (3PI), based at Penn State’s Rock Ethics Institute, fosters collaboration and research on the ethical dimensions of policing and public safety, with an emphasis on informing policy. Many ongoing public debates over policing are, at their heart, simultaneously moral questions and question about social justice. Philosophers and ethicists have a valuable role to play in advancing these debates and our understanding of the responsibilities of police in a democratic society, what rules should govern them, and how best to promote public safety in a manner consistent with justice and fairness. 3PI promotes these goals through building an international network of philosophers and ethicists with expertise in policing, highlighting philosophical research on policing, organizing forums and competitions to encourage such research, and connecting scholars with policymakers, police practitioners, and community leaders.

Basic Information
Project Coordinator(s)
Ben Jones, Désirée Lim, Eduardo Mendieta, Raff Donelson

Steering Committee
N/A

Funding Amount Requested
$5,000

Expected Project Completion Date
June 2024

Project Description
For nearly a decade, the Black Lives Matter movement has put policing as the center of public debate, raising concerns about racial bias and disparities, police technologies that facilitate intensive surveillance, excessive force and brutality, overpolicing and exploitive practices in marginalized communities, and overreliance on police to provide public safety. All these issues have both ethical and social justice dimensions, which cannot be ignored when working to develop policy that improves public safety, promotes democratic accountability, and achieves more just outcomes. For this reason, philosophers and ethicists have a valuable role to play in public and policy debates over policing. Recognizing this potential role for philosophers, the Policing, Policy, and Philosophy Initiative (3PI) will support research in philosophy on policing, while also building connections between philosophers, ethicists, policymakers, police practitioners, and community leaders. 3PI aims to be a big tent project that welcomes a wide range of approaches within philosophy (both the analytic and continental traditions) and perspectives on how to address current challenges in
policing (from reform to abolition). 3PI’s commitment to representing a diversity of approaches is reflected in the team assembled to serve as its project coordinators, which includes analytic and continental philosophers as well as individuals with expertise in policy and law.

The Rock Ethics Institute at Penn State is uniquely positioned to launch 3PI given its past work exploring the topic of policing. In September 2018, the Rock Ethics Institute hosted a conference on the Ethics of Policing that featured philosophers and ethicists such as Lisa Guenther, Jake Monaghan, and Michael Walzer, as well as social scientists Vesla Weaver and Franklin Zimring, legal scholar Tracey Meares who served on President Barack Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, current and former members of law enforcement, community activists, and others. See the following link for news coverage of the conference: https://radio.wpsu.org/crime-and-law-enforcement/2018-11-13/take-note-the-ethics-of-policing-in-the-united-states. Two 3PI project coordinators, Ben Jones and Eduardo Mendieta, organized that conference and co-edited a volume that came out of it: The Ethics of Policing: New Perspectives on Law Enforcement (New York University Press 2021). After that conference and book, Mendieta launched a yearlong project with several undergraduates to study “The Police and the Constitution,” which led to a working paper that he and his students hope to publish. That research was presented in different platforms at Penn State. A few years later, Jones and another 3PI project coordinator, Désirée Lim, built on this prior work to organize a symposium on the Ethics of Immigration Enforcement with the Rock Ethics Institute and Penn State Law Center for Immigrants’ Rights. This event took place in March 2022 and featured as keynote speakers José Jorge Mendoza, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Washington, and Bridget Cambria, immigration attorney and co-founder of Aldea—The People’s Justice Center. See the following link for a story describing the symposium: https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/news/symposium-ethics-immigration-enforcement. Lim and Mendieta are exploring the possibility of publishing the papers presented at the symposium together in a philosophy journal. Through organizing these events and publications, the project coordinators and Rock Ethics Institute have built strong relationships with philosophers, policy scholars, professionals, and activists concerned with policing, which puts us in a strong position to launch 3PI.

An APA small grant would be vital in providing the necessary funds and visibility to launch 3PI so that the Rock Ethics Institute could expand its work on policing in ways that serve philosophy more broadly and, in particular, advance public philosophy on policing. During the year of the APA grant, 3PI will focus on efforts aimed at building a community of philosophers and ethicists with interests in policing, raising the visibility of research in philosophy on policing, and fostering collaboration and connections among philosophers, ethicists, policymakers, police practitioners, and community leaders.

The first steps of 3PI will be to launch a website and invite philosophers and ethicists who study policing to join 3PI as members (which will be free). The 3PI project coordinators already have spoken about a 3PI website with the IT team in Penn State’s College of the Liberal Arts, which has agreed to construct the website as an in-kind donation to the project. While the website is in construction, 3PI project coordinators personally will reach out to philosophers and ethicists with interests in policing whom they know from past collaborations and invite them to join 3PI as
members. We also will publicize the project in other outlets (detailed in the below question on project outreach) in efforts to build 3PI’s membership. Members will be included on a page on the project’s website and added to a listserv that provides periodic updates about 3PI’s activities and recent scholarship on policing in philosophy.

One valuable resource on 3PI’s website will be a bibliography of scholarship in philosophy and ethics on policing. The social scientist Jennifer Doleac offers an analogous resource featuring criminal justice research in economics (see https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1zyRB708QpsxG_8vNCRI7gv5FyrPE81w3mF_kMVJHbY/edit#gid=686724554). The bibliography primarily will serve philosophers interested in researching policing, pointing them to existing scholarship. It also will help establish research on policing as a distinct body of literature within philosophy that is dynamic and growing. Beyond just philosophers, 3PI’s bibliography will provide scholars from other fields, policy experts, and interested laypeople with resources from philosophy on policing to explore. Part of the APA grant will go toward funding a graduate student assistant who will help with compiling the bibliography, as well as other aspects of the project such as its events.

3PI plans to organize two events during the APA grant period, one geared toward an academic audience and the other with more of a community focus. The academic event will be a symposium that includes a best paper prize (open to all levels of researchers). 3PI will publicize a call for papers that engage in normative analysis of policing and offer insights for policy. Those whose papers are accepted will present their work at online panels, which will include commentators selected for their expertise on the issues covered in the papers. Commentators will receive modest compensation for their service on the panels. We anticipate that the symposium will consist of two panels—one in the morning and one in the afternoon—featuring up to eight papers. A committee of 3PI members will evaluate the papers and select the most outstanding for a best paper prize of $1,000. The 3PI project coordinators already have spoken with Tony Bertelli, Professor of Public Policy at Penn State and editor of the Journal of Public Policy, to ask if the journal would consider the winner of the best paper prize for publication in the journal. The Journal of Public Policy has agreed to review the essay that wins the 3PI best paper prize for possible, but not guaranteed, publication. The Journal of Public Policy has a strong interest in bringing policy-relevant normative arguments into its pages and sees this as an opportunity to turn that interest into action. Notably, this feature of the competition offers an opportunity for normative research to appear before a public policy audience, as well as opens up a new and well-respected venue for philosophical work. Through organizing the symposium and best paper prize, 3PI aims to build connections among philosophers working on policing, encourage philosophically rigorous research relevant for policy, and celebrate innovative research in this area. Michael Burroughs, the incoming president of the Public Philosophy Network (PPN) and Associate Professor of Philosophy at California State University Bakersfield, has expressed interest in PPN partnering with 3PI on its symposium. The symposium during the APA grant period will be a stand-alone event, but 3PI and PPN plan to explore whether it can be incorporated into PPN’s future conferences going forward.

The second event will be a community panel on the future of policing that explores meaningful ways for ethicists, policymakers, police practitioners, and community leaders to collaborate
together. 3PI plans for this panel to feature representatives from police, local government, and community groups from Chicago, a major urban center with a large police force. One of 3PI’s project coordinators, Raff Donelson, currently is at Penn State but will be joining the Chicago-Kent College of Law this fall. 3PI will benefit from having one of its project coordinators based in Chicago, where there have long been intense policy debates, experimentation, and community organizing around policing. The Rock Ethics Institute will partner with the Chicago-Kent College of Law to organize the panel, which will be livestreamed and in person (unless the pandemic or other factors preclude an in-person gathering). We see this event during the inaugural year of 3PI as an opportunity to build the initiative’s connections with officials, professionals, and activists concerned with policing, establishing a foundation for further collaboration between 3PI members and these groups.

We also should mention that we plan to propose a panel on policing that consists of 3PI members for the 2024 APA Central Division Meeting. APA grant funds will not be used for this panel. But it is important to take advantage of the opportunity provided by APA gatherings to highlight research in philosophy on policing, particularly by 3PI members.

The APA grant will launch 3PI, which will continue after the grant funding ends. Given support for past projects on ethics and policing, we are confident in our ability to secure internal support from the Rock Ethics Institute and other Penn State sources to ensure that the 3PI symposium and best paper prize continue on an annual basis. Beyond just continuing 3PI’s activities started during the APA grant period, our goal is to expand the initiative through obtaining a larger external grant. With that goal in mind, 3PI project coordinators plan to explore the Templeton Foundation, Mellon Foundation, and other foundations as potential sources for increased funding for the initiative. Additional activities that 3PI would consider pursuing in future years include:

- book manuscript and author meets critics events for its members
- conference and edited volume highlighting international perspectives on police ethics
- collaborative projects between 3PI teams and policymakers, police practitioners, and/or community leaders in select cities on incorporating ethics into policing and public safety

When considering future directions for the initiative, 3PI leadership plans to survey and consult its members to learn how best 3PI could serve them and the discipline in advancing public philosophy on policing.

**Project Impact**

As controversial police killings and mass protests have put increased attention on policing, philosophy has taken greater interest in the topic. In particular, much of the recent work in philosophy has come from younger philosophers, who have applied tools from their discipline to offer insights into ongoing debates on law enforcement and public safety. It is encouraging to see this recent work, but unfortunately philosophy as a discipline currently lacks structures dedicated to support research and collaboration on policing. Traditionally, subfields such as political philosophy and ethics have taken only a limited interest in the topic. For instance, the philosophical literature on just war theory dwarfs what exists on policing. Not surprisingly, various centers and
initiatives are in place to foster research on the ethics of war. As policing continues to be a topic at the center of public debate and more philosophers take an interest in it, there is the need for structures to support this work.

One sign of the growing interest in policing among philosophers is the number of them—over 190—who have joined APA’s Policing and Philosophy member group. Though the group is largely dormant, its size indicates a considerable number of philosophers who potentially would be interested in joining and participating in a project like 3PI.

3PI would benefit this constituency within philosophy by connecting them, building a community of researchers with shared interests, and fostering collaboration among them. Being connected to and supported by other scholars exploring similar questions, as opposed to feeling largely alone when pursuing a research program, can be vital for a scholar’s success, especially when early in one’s career. More broadly, 3PI would raise the profile of philosophical research on policing through the bibliography maintained on its website and its best paper prize. These efforts have the potential to foster more research on policing within philosophy and spur important insights on the topic. Lastly, through its efforts to strengthen links between philosophers and policymakers, police practitioners, and community leaders, 3PI would advance public philosophy and the discipline’s influence beyond just the academy.

**Project Goals**

- Create an international network of philosophers and ethicists with expertise in policing through building 3PI’s membership and listing members on its website, as well as strengthen the connections among them through online events like a planned symposium.
- Encourage and celebrate innovative philosophical research on policing with policy relevance through awarding a 3PI best paper prize.
- Highlight normative research on policing by creating an online bibliography on 3PI’s website of published books and journal articles on policing by philosophers and ethicists.
- Establish a foundation for building connections to policymakers, police practitioners, and community leaders through a 3PI community panel featuring these individuals in conversation with philosophers and ethicists about the future of policing.

**Project Timeline**

January 2023: Advertise graduate assistant position with 3PI

January—April 2023: Build 3PI website with Penn State’s College of the Liberal Arts IT team

February 2023: Form committee to evaluate submissions to 3PI symposium/best paper prize

March 2023: Hire graduate assistant to work with 3PI

March—May 2023: Outreach to philosophers and ethicists to join 3PI as members

May 2023: Launch 3PI website

May 2023: Draft and publicize CFP for 3PI symposium/best paper prize
September 2023: Add bibliography of philosophical research on policing to 3PI website

October 2023: Send invitations for 3PI community panel

November 2023: Deadline for 3PI symposium/best paper prize submissions

December 2023: 3PI community panel finalized and announced

December 2023: Evaluate 3PI symposium/best paper prize submissions

January 2024: Send acceptance/rejection decisions for 3PI symposium/best paper prize

January 2024: Draft survey to 3PI symposium participants

February 2024: 3PI symposium and announcement of best paper prize winner

February 2024: Survey distributed to 3PI symposium participants

February 2024: Panel on policing featuring 3PI members at APA Central Division Meeting

April 2024: 3PI community panel at Chicago-Kent College of Law

May 2024: Draft survey to elicit feedback from 3PI members

June 2024: Distribute survey to 3PI members

Project Outreach

Working with its graduate assistant, 3PI plans to share information about the initiative, how to join as a member, and its events through the following venues:

- Policing and Philosophy APA member group
- Public Philosophy Network
- PhilEvents
- Daily Nous
- Philosophers' Cocoon
- Relevant journals with a social media presence (e.g., Criminal Law and Philosophy and Journal of Public Policy)

3PI also will reach out to entities that work directly with police and have shown a strong interest in incorporating ethics into policing, such as the Policing Project at New York University and the Police Executive Research Forum, to inform them about the initiative and explore potential opportunities to collaborate. Relatedly, 3PI’s project coordinators will share information about the initiative with legal scholars—Rachel Harmon (University of Virginia), Tracey Meares (Yale University), Seth Stoughton (University of South Carolina), and others—whom we already know and who study policing, have influential voices in policy debates, and see the value of normative
expertise for police policy. Building strong relationships between 3PI and leading legal experts on policing is a natural way to open up opportunities for normative research to impact policy debates on policing, given the close connections between philosophy and law.

**Accessibility Plan**

We have spoken with two expert resources at Penn State to inform our accessibility plan for the grant project: Alan Finnecy, ADA Programs Coordinator, and Philip Voorhees, Manager of the IT Accessibility Team. If the APA grant is received, we plan to continue consulting with them to make sure all aspects of the project are accessible.

Ben Jones will serve as the accessibility project coordinator. In addition to speaking about the project and accessibility considerations with Finnecy and Voorhees, he has completed the “Introduction to Accessibility” course made available to Penn State faculty, staff, and students.

For the project events, we will include the following language on the registration form and publicity to indicate how to request accommodations:

"Penn State encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact Ben Jones at btj7@psu.edu or call 814-863-0314 at least 2 weeks prior to the start of the program to allow sufficient time to effectively meet your access needs."

We have budgeted $500 for disability accommodations in our budget, which we estimate would cover the cost of a live captioning service or sign language interpreter for one of our events if either is requested. If additional accommodations are requested that exceed the $500 set aside in our budget, we can obtain additional funds for reasonable accommodations from Penn State’s Affirmative Action Office (see https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/welcome/access-disability/funding-for-reasonable-accommodations/) or the Rock Ethics Institute.

For the project events, we plan to enable Zoom’s live transcription/closed caption feature to make the event more accessible, but will hire a live transcription service with greater accuracy if that accommodation is requested. For the 3PI community panel, we have not selected yet the location where it will be, but will only select a space that is ADA compliant and accessible to wheelchair users (including bathrooms and parking).

Lastly, when developing the website for 3PI, the accommodations project coordinator will work with the IT team in the College of the Liberal Arts and the IT Accessibility Team at Penn State to ensure that the website meets current accessibility guidelines. The IT Accessibility Team is now developing a website template focused on accessibility, a resource that should be available before the 3PI website is built.
**Evaluation Plan**

Dâ©sirâ©e Lim will serve as the methodology project coordinator. Above we listed four goals for the project. Here we detail for each goal how we plan to evaluate whether we are successful in achieving it.

1. **Create an international network of philosophers and ethicists with expertise in policing through building 3PI’s membership and listing members on its website, as well as strengthen the connections among them through online events like a planned symposium.**

   Our goal by the end of the grant period is to have 75 3PI members or more from at least five different countries. Such growth during 3PI’s first year will demonstrate strong interest in the project within philosophy and its international scope. For the symposium, our primary goal is to hold an event that fosters a sense of community and encourages future collaboration among philosophers and ethicists who study policing. We aim to have a critical mass of participants and attendees—a “at least 25,” to ensure a vibrant intellectual atmosphere for the event. Another criterion for evaluating the symposium is whether participants see it as a success that benefitted them professionally. To obtain this information, we plan to design a survey to elicit feedback from those who participate and attend the symposium.

2. **Encourage and celebrate innovative philosophical research on policing with policy relevance through awarding a 3PI best paper prize.**

   We have two criteria for evaluating our progress on this goal: at least three earned media stories covering the best paper prize on philosophy sites (e.g., Daily Nous), which will demonstrate that philosophical work on policing is receiving more attention within the discipline, and the winner of best paper prize successfully passing the peer review process at the Journal of Public Policy, which will serve as an indicator that the work is high quality and has policy relevance.

3. **Highlight normative research on policing by creating an online bibliography on 3PI’s website of published books and journal articles on policing by philosophers and ethicists.**

   We have two criteria for evaluating our progress on this goal: at least one earned media story covering the bibliography on a philosophy site (e.g., Daily Nous), which will show that news regarding this resource is getting out to the discipline, and positive feedback from 3PI members on this resource when we survey them at the end of the grant period.

4. **Establish a foundation for building connections to policymakers, police practitioners, and community leaders through a 3PI community panel featuring these individuals in conversation with philosophers and ethicists about the future of policing.**

   3PI's likely path to opening doors for philosophers to inform policy and public debates on policing is to start with a single project involving collaboration with policymakers, police practitioners, and community leaders and create a successful model that can be replicated. We will consider the initiative to have made success on this goal if, at the end of the APA grant period, the community panel and other outreach yield at least one such ongoing collaboration involving a team of 3PI members.
Online Presence

3PI's primary online presence will be its website, which will include a directory of its members, a bibliography of philosophical articles and books on policing, information about its events and best paper prize competition, and news and updates (e.g., recent publications by 3PI members). There will also be a listserv of 3PI members, which will serve as a means to share with them periodic updates. 3PI would like to establish a social media presence, though this will not be a priority during its first year (i.e., the APA grant period). If the graduate assistant hired has social media expertise and the capacity to handle posts, we may ask them to help launch this aspect of the initiative. Another alternative is identifying an active 3PI member to handle its social media.

The exact URL is not available yet, but it will be at the psu.edu domain.

Budget Narrative

We budgeted $2,500 total for expenses related to the 3PI symposium and best paper prize. We want the best paper prize to be a meaningful amount and incentive that encourages promising research, which is why we propose an award of $1,000. We also believe that it is important to compensate commentators for their service at the symposium. A $250 honorarium is a modest amount, but it communicates 3PI's appreciation for their contribution. We anticipate two commentators for each panel, responding to two papers apiece, which is why we requested honoraria for four commentators at a total of $1,000. The $500 for tech support is what the project coordinators have found to be the typical cost during the pandemic, at least at our institution, to provide tech support for a virtual event.

For the 3PI community panel, there is $500 provided for tech support since the plan is for this to be a hybrid event that is livestreamed and accessible to a virtual audience beyond just those able to attend in person. The remaining expenses, $4,000, are to cover four honoraria at $1,000 apiece. We plan to have this event in Chicago and feature scholars, officials, and activists from the city so as to avoid travel and lodging costs. We propose a meaningful honorarium of $1,000 in order to attract leaders in the city working on policing. If while planning this event it becomes apparent that booking the speakers we want will exceed the budget, we will look to secure additional funds from Penn State and the Chicago-Kent College of Law to cover the difference.

The proposed budget has $2,500 for a graduate assistant. It is important that the graduate assistant is paid a fair wage, $15 an hour, for their labor. Our plan is to hire the graduate assistant shortly after receiving the APA grant and have them help with a range of activities related to 3PI through the grant period: research to compile the bibliography of philosophical research on policing for the 3PI website, publicizing 3PI and its events, helping to coordinate logistics for 3PI events, and potentially helping to manage social media for 3PI. We envision the graduate assistant working an average of five hours a week over 30—40 weeks for a total of ~167 hours, which is why $2,500 is budgeted for this position (167 hours x $15). We do not anticipate offering credit for this position. If further capacity is needed to assist with the launch of the project, 3PI project coordinators can apply to bring on an upper-level undergraduate through the Rock Ethics Institute Undergraduate Fellows Program.
The proposed budget also includes $500 for disability accommodations (see Accessibility Plan for the rationale for this expense).

Lastly, the IT team in Penn State’s College of the Liberal Arts has agreed to build the 3PI website as an in-kind donation. We conservatively estimate that this work would cost at least $1,000.

**Other Funding Sources**

3PI’s project coordinators have confirmed that the IT team in Penn State’s College of the Liberal Arts will build the 3PI website as an in-kind donation (which we estimate at $1,000). We also have received confirmation from Penn State’s Rock Ethics Institute to match APA funding up to $5,000.

The Rock Ethics Institute funding primarily will go toward the 3PI community panel hybrid event. If the expenses for that event exceed the $4,500 budgeted, the 3PI coordinators plan to request co-sponsorship funds from the Chicago-Kent College of Law, where we look to hold the event. In the unlikely event that both those sources of funding fall through, we can cut the community panel from the project and still carry out all the other activities proposed above during the APA grant period. In short, receiving these other sources of funding is not necessary to complete the bulk of the activities outlined in the proposal.

If successful in receiving an APA small grant, 3PI will pursue sources of funding internally (at Penn State) and externally to continue and grow the project. Potential external sources of funding include the Mellon Foundation and Templeton Foundation.