

BIAS FREE POLICING:

The Kingston Data Collection Project

Preliminary Results

Scot Wortley

Associate Professor

Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto

and

The Centre of Excellence for Research on
Immigration and Settlement (CERIS)

Racially Biased Policing:

The Context of the Debate

- Widespread community allegations of racial bias in the Canadian criminal justice system.
- Denials and indignation from the police and other criminal justice agencies.
- Community allegations are not new.
- Allegations of bias exist in all communities – both large and small.

Research Questions

- Are the police more likely to stop, question and search racial minority citizens?
- Are racial minority citizens stopped for different reasons than white people?
- Are racial minority citizens treated more harshly during police encounters than white people?

Methods for Investigating Bias in Police Stop Activities

- Qualitative Interviews.
- Field Observations.
- Quantitative Surveys
- Official data.

The Kingston Pilot Project

- An investigation of all “contact cards” completed by Kingston police officers from October 1, 2003 to September 30, 2004.
- A contact card was supposed to be completed every time a civilian was stopped by the police and questioned in any manner.
- “Casual contacts” with civilians were not recorded.

The Kingston Pilot Project

- For each contact, officers were supposed to record the age, gender and race of the person stopped – as well as the location of the stop, the reason for the stop and the final disposition of the case.
- After being reviewed by the Staff Sergeant on duty, and the members of the “Special Services” or Intelligence branch, the information from each contact card was entered into a computer dataset.

The Kingston Pilot Project

- The final, cleaned, contact dataset consists of 10,236 stops (approximately 60 stops per officer).
- 122 cases (1.2%) did not include information on the civilian's racial background. Thus, the analysis presented in this report is based on the 10,114 cases that included information on race.
- 64% of all contact cards were issued to pedestrians
 - 36% involved people in motor vehicles.

2001 Census Projections for the City of Kingston, by Racial Group

Racial Group	Census Count	% of Population
White	103,025	92.7
Native	1,765	1.6
Black	685	0.6
Asian	2,790	2.5
South Asian	1,430	1.3
Hispanic	595	0.5
West Asian	530	0.5
Other	265	0.2

Total Number of Stops Conducted by
the Kingston Police, by Racial Group of Civilian

Racial Group	Number of Stops	Percent
White	9,361	92.6
Native	223	2.2
Black	219	2.2
Asian	104	1.0
South Asian	88	0.9
Hispanic	46	0.4
West Asian	45	0.4
Other	28	0.3

Total Police Stops, by Race, City of Kingston Census Benchmark

Racial Group	% Pop. 2001 Census	% of all Stops	Ratio (% Stops/% Pop.)
White	92.7	92.6	0.99
Native	1.6	2.2	1.38
Black	0.6	2.2	3.67
Asian	2.5	1.0	0.40
South Asian	1.3	0.9	0.69
Hispanic	0.6	0.4	0.67
West Asian	0.5	0.4	0.80
Other	0.2	0.3	1.50

Calculation of the Police Stop Rate

Number of Stops

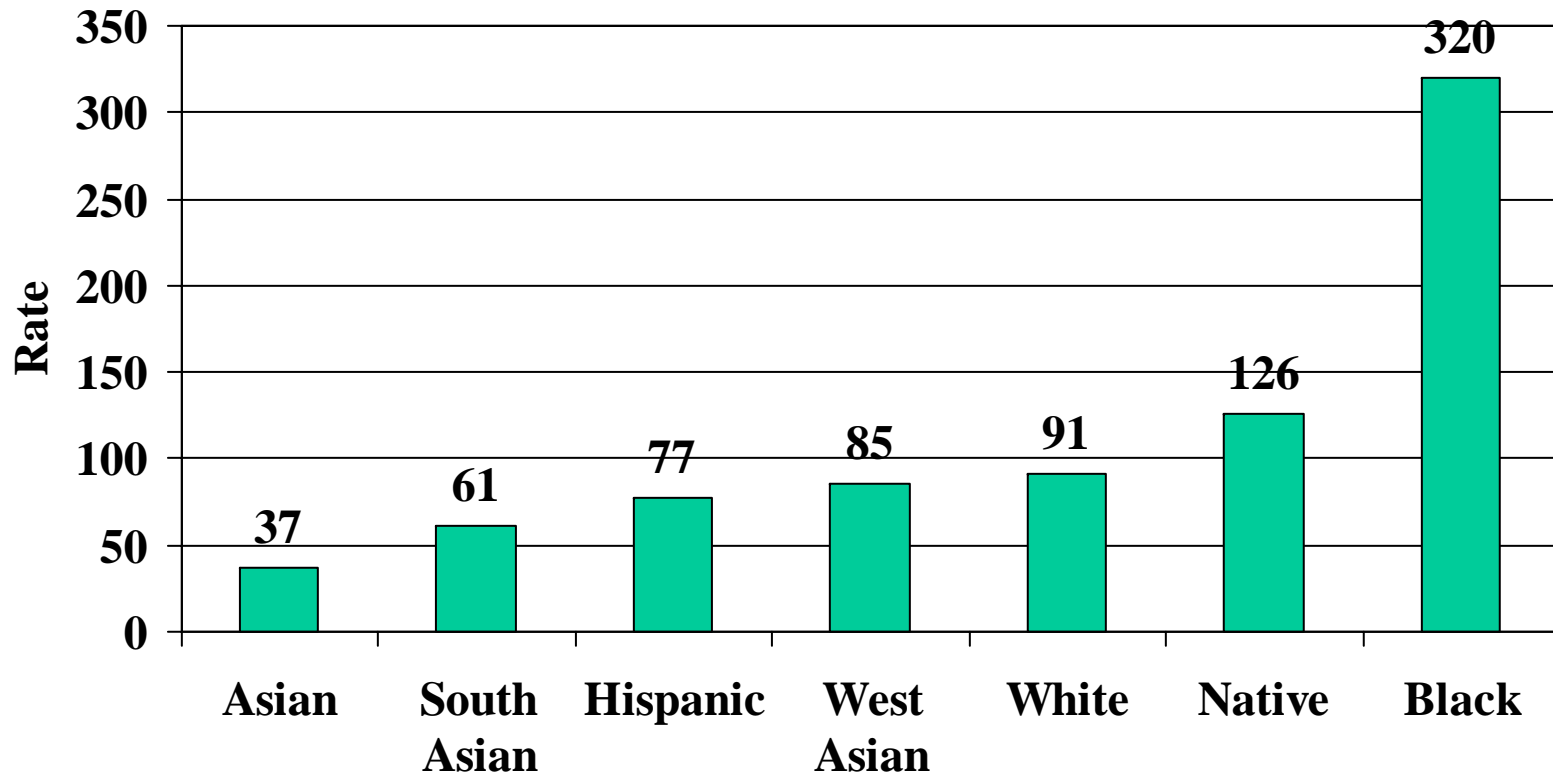
divided by

Population Estimate

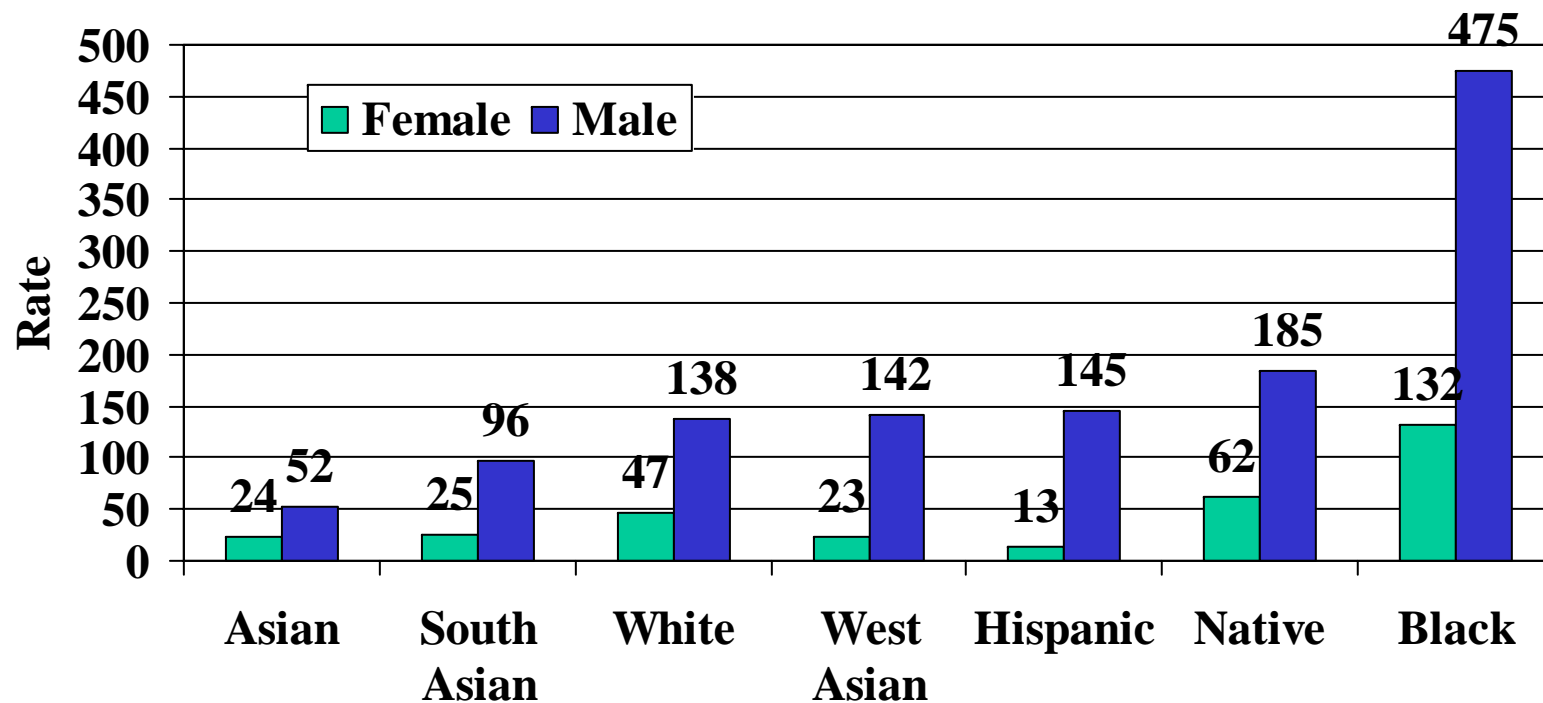
Times

1,000

Police Stop Rate (per 1000), By Race, City of Kingston Census Benchmark



Police Stop Rate (per 1000), By Race and Gender, City of Kingston Census Benchmark



DATA ISSUE

- What proportion of all people stopped by the Kingston police are non-residents?
- Are Kingston's police stop rates inflated because of a high number of police contacts with non-residents?
- ***SOLUTION***: Eliminate non-residents from the data and re-calculate the stop rate.

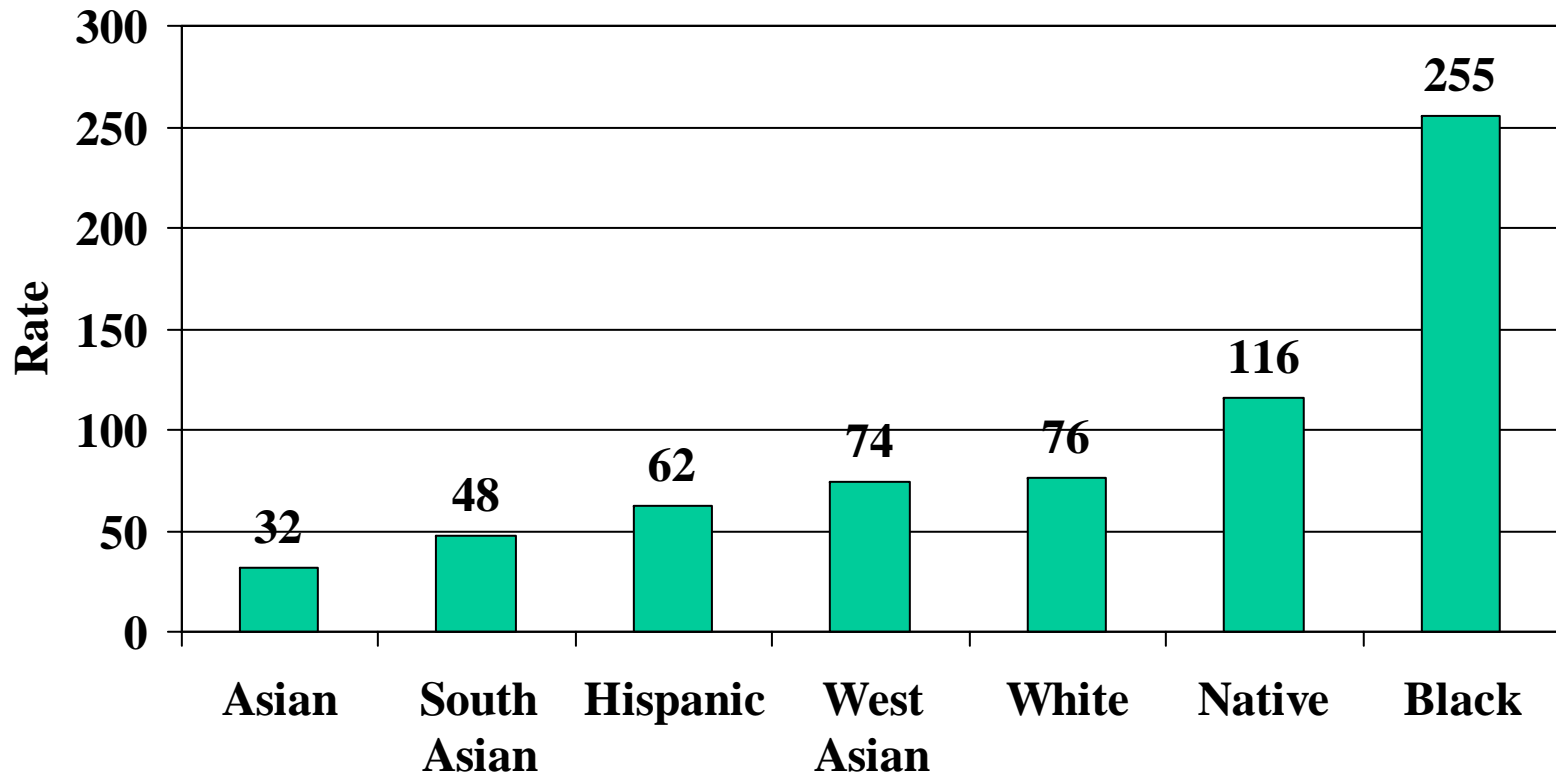
Total Stops -- Kingston Residents Only,
by Racial Group

Racial Group	Number of Contacts	Percent
White	7,816	92.4
Native	205	2.4
Black	175	2.1
Asian	89	1.1
South Asian	68	0.8
Hispanic	37	0.4
West Asian	39	0.5
Other	26	0.3

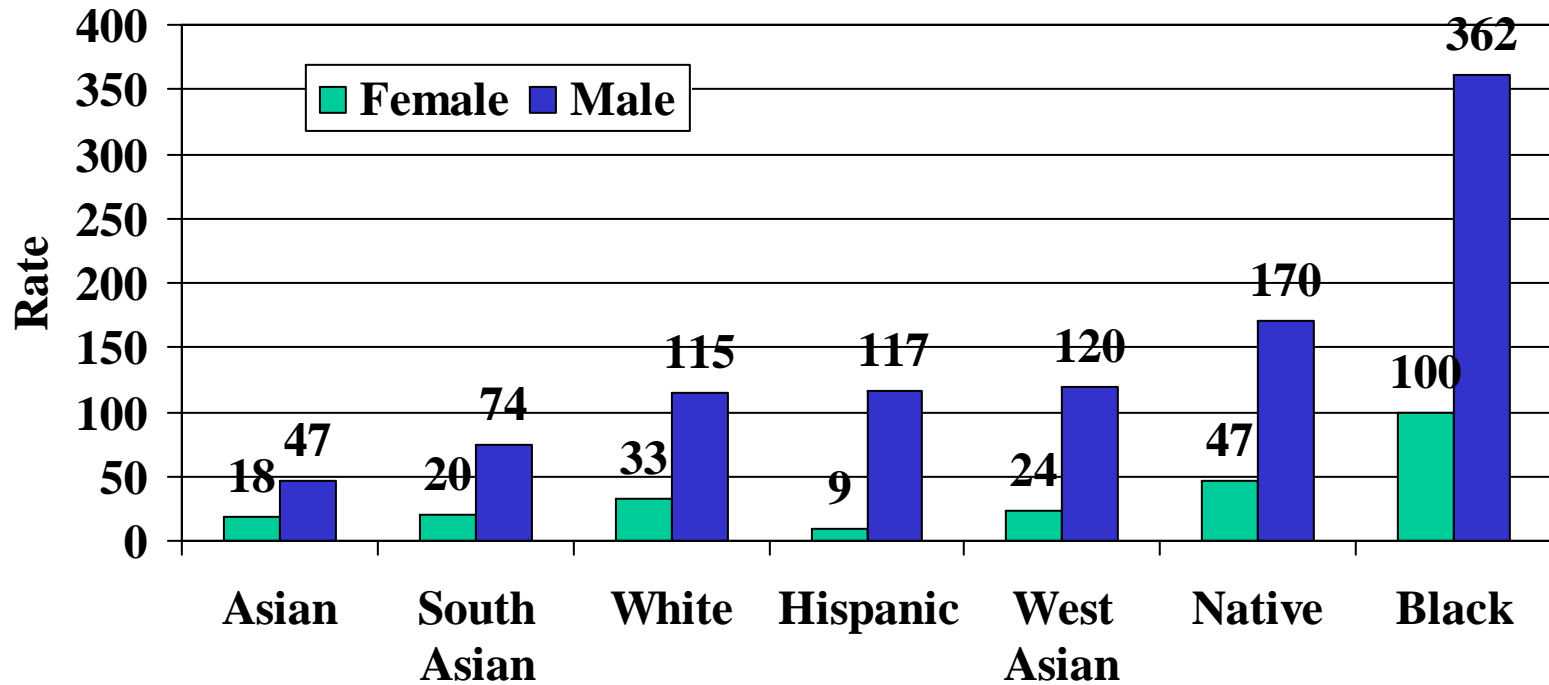
Total Stops – Kingston Residents Only

Racial Group	% Pop. 2001 Census	% of all Stops	Ratio (% Stops/% Pop.)
White	92.7	92.4	0.99
Native	1.6	2.4	1.50
Black	0.6	2.1	3.50
Asian	2.5	1.1	0.44
South Asian	1.3	0.8	0.62
Hispanic	0.6	0.4	0.66
West Asian	0.5	0.5	1.00
Other	0.2	0.3	1.50

Total Police Stop Rate (per 1000), By Race, Kingston Residents Only



Total Police Stop Rate (per 1000), By Race and Gender, Kingston Residents Only



DATA ISSUE

- A small number of individuals who are stopped many times can inflate the overall stop rate.
- ***SOLUTION***: Create a new dataset that captures all *individuals* who were stopped by the police.
- This represents a move from a “stop” dataset to a “person” dataset.

The Individual Dataset

- Total stops dataset=10,114.
- Total stops dataset (Kingston residents only)=8,455.
- Total individual dataset (Kingston residents only)=6,180.
- In other words, 6,180 Kingston residents were responsible for 8,455 police stops.

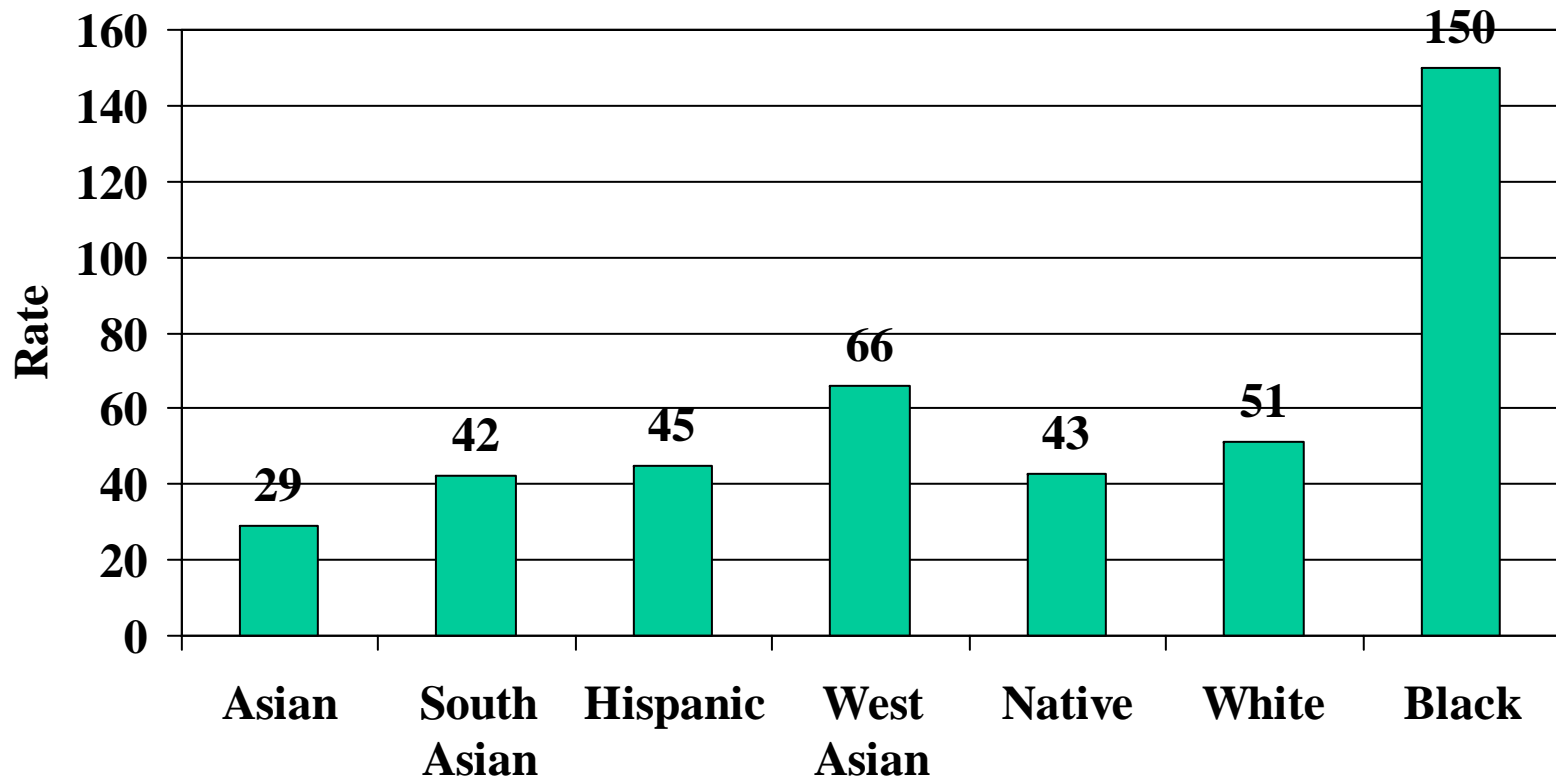
Number of Individual Kingston Residents
Stopped by the Police, by Racial Group

Racial Group	Number of Stops	Percent
White	5,308	93.0
Native	76	1.3
Black	103	1.8
Asian	80	1.4
South Asian	60	1.1
Hispanic	27	0.5
West Asian	35	0.6
Other	21	0.4

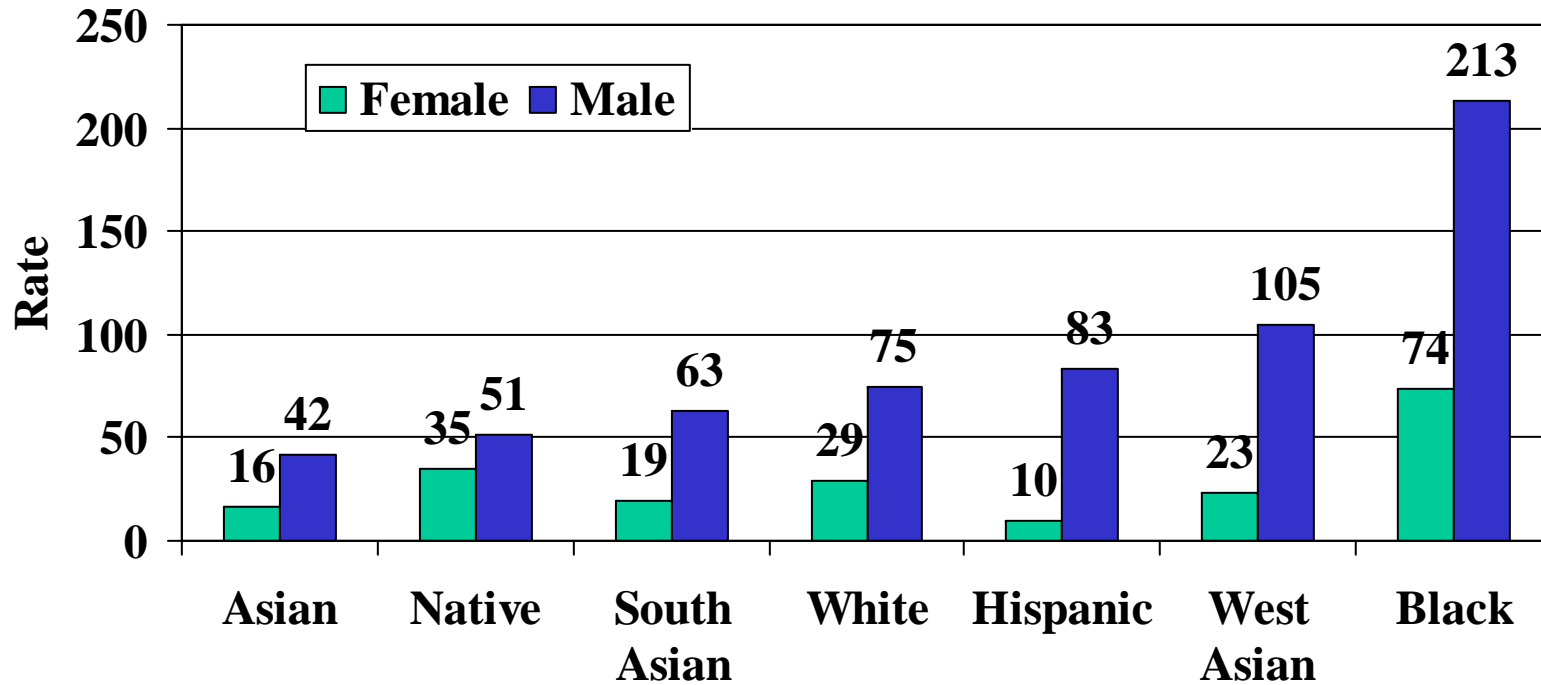
Individual Kingston Residents Stopped by the Police, by Race

Racial Group	% Pop. 2001 Census	% of all Stops	Ratio (% Stops/% Pop.)
White	92.7	93.0	1.00
Native	1.6	1.3	0.81
Black	0.6	1.8	3.00
Asian	2.5	1.4	0.56
South Asian	1.3	1.1	0.85
Hispanic	0.6	0.5	0.83
West Asian	0.5	0.6	1.20
Other	0.2	0.4	2.00

Individual Stop Rate (per 1,000), Kingston Residents, By Race



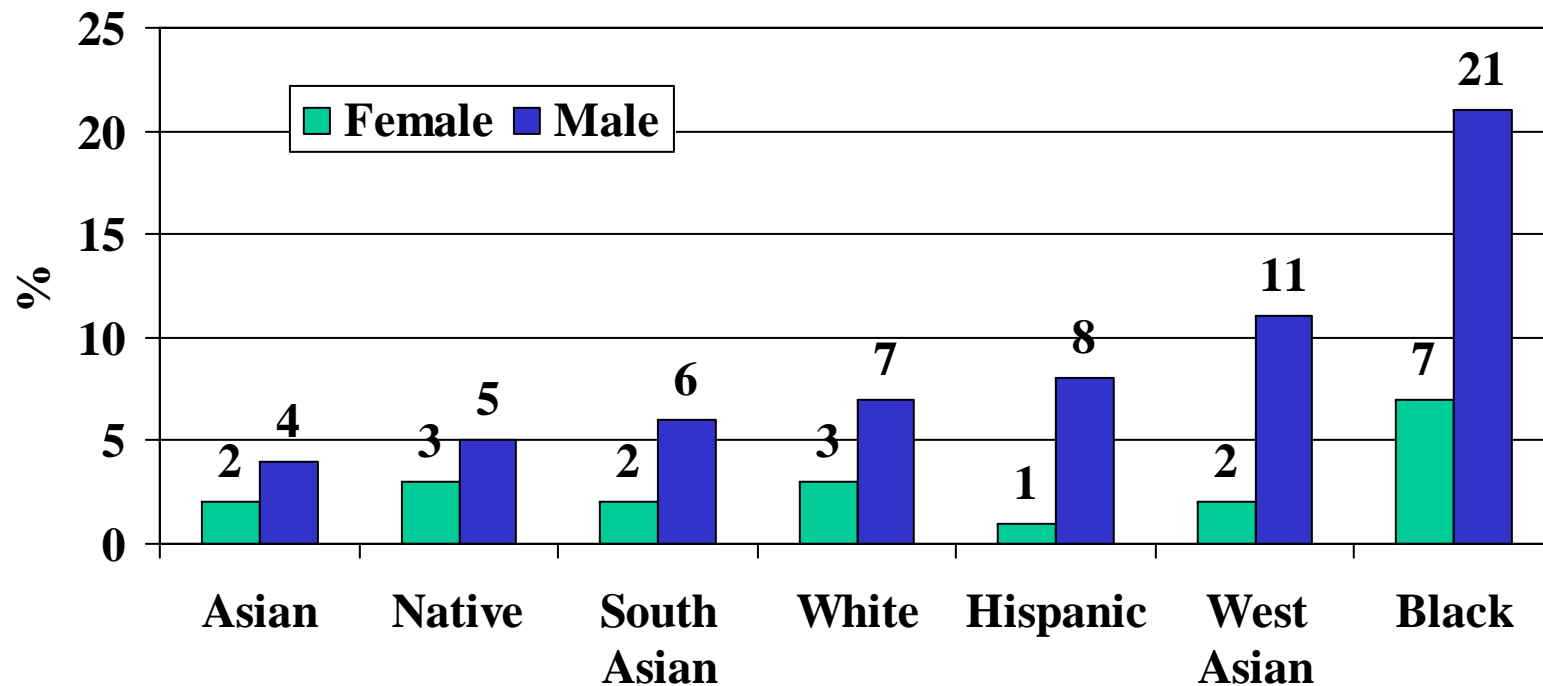
Individual Stop Rate (per 1000),
By Race and Gender,
Kingston Residents Only



Percent of Individual Kingston Residents Stopped by the Police During the Study Period

Racial Group	2001 Pop. Estimate	Number of Individuals Stopped	Percent Stopped
White	103,085	5,305	5.1
Native	1,765	76	4.3
Black	685	103	15.0
Asian	2,790	80	2.9
South Asian	1,430	60	4.2
Hispanic	595	27	4.5
West Asian	530	35	6.6
Other	265	21	7.9

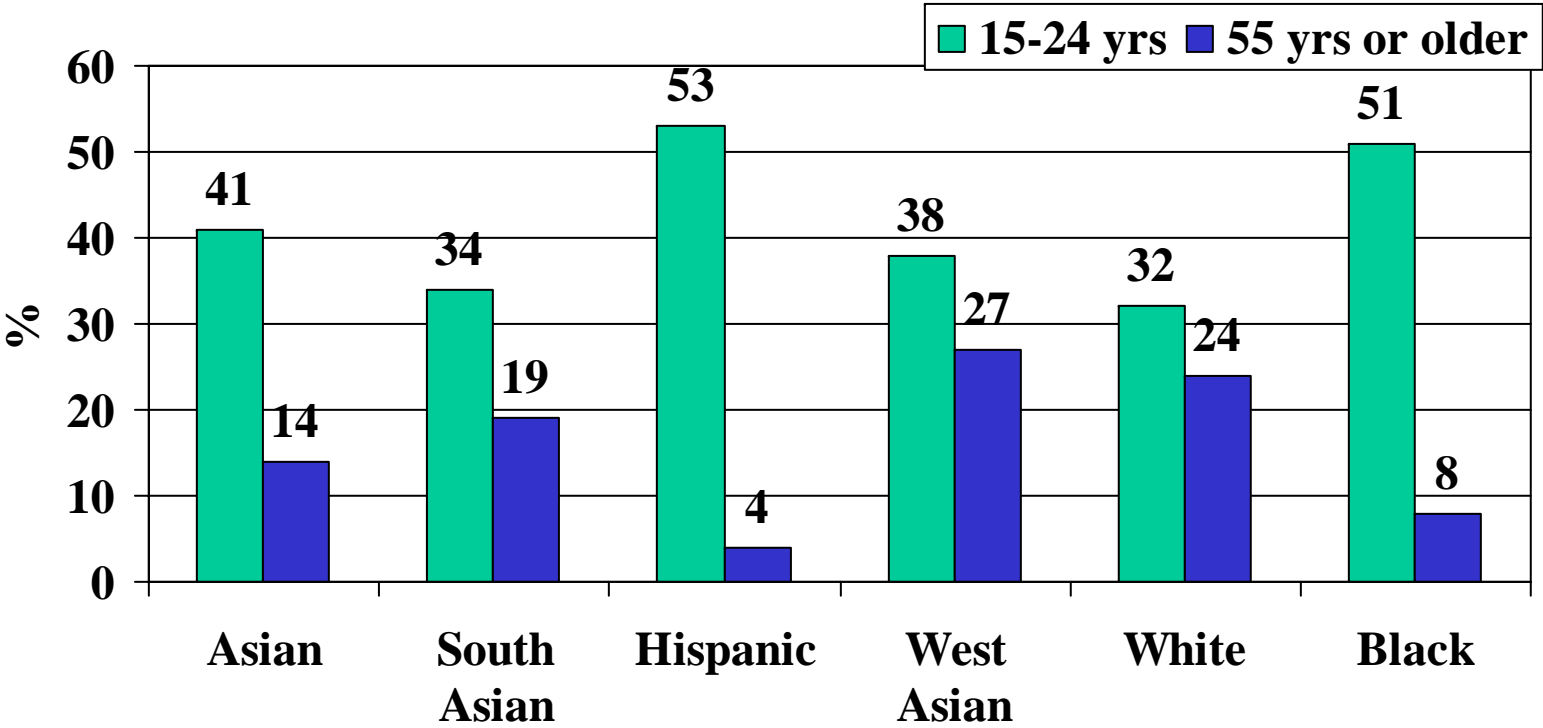
Percent of Individual Kingston Residents Stopped by the Police During the Study Period, by Race and Gender



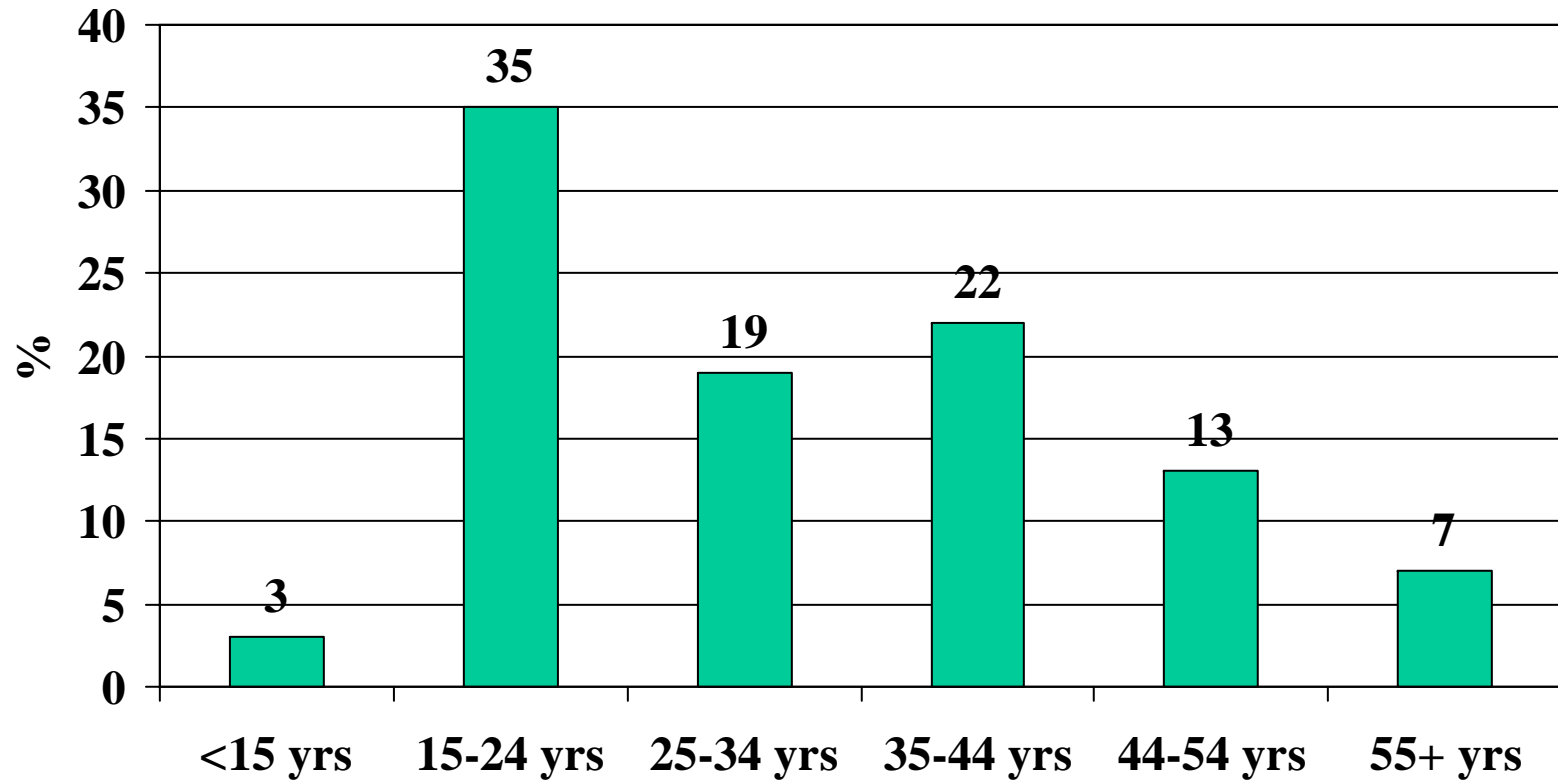
DATA CONCERN

- The black population of Kingston is younger than the white population.
- Can racial differences in the age structure of Kingston help explain racial differences in police stop rates?
- ***SOLUTION***: Calculate age specific stop rates, by racial group.

Percent of the Kingston Population (CMA Estimate) within Specific Age Categories, by Race



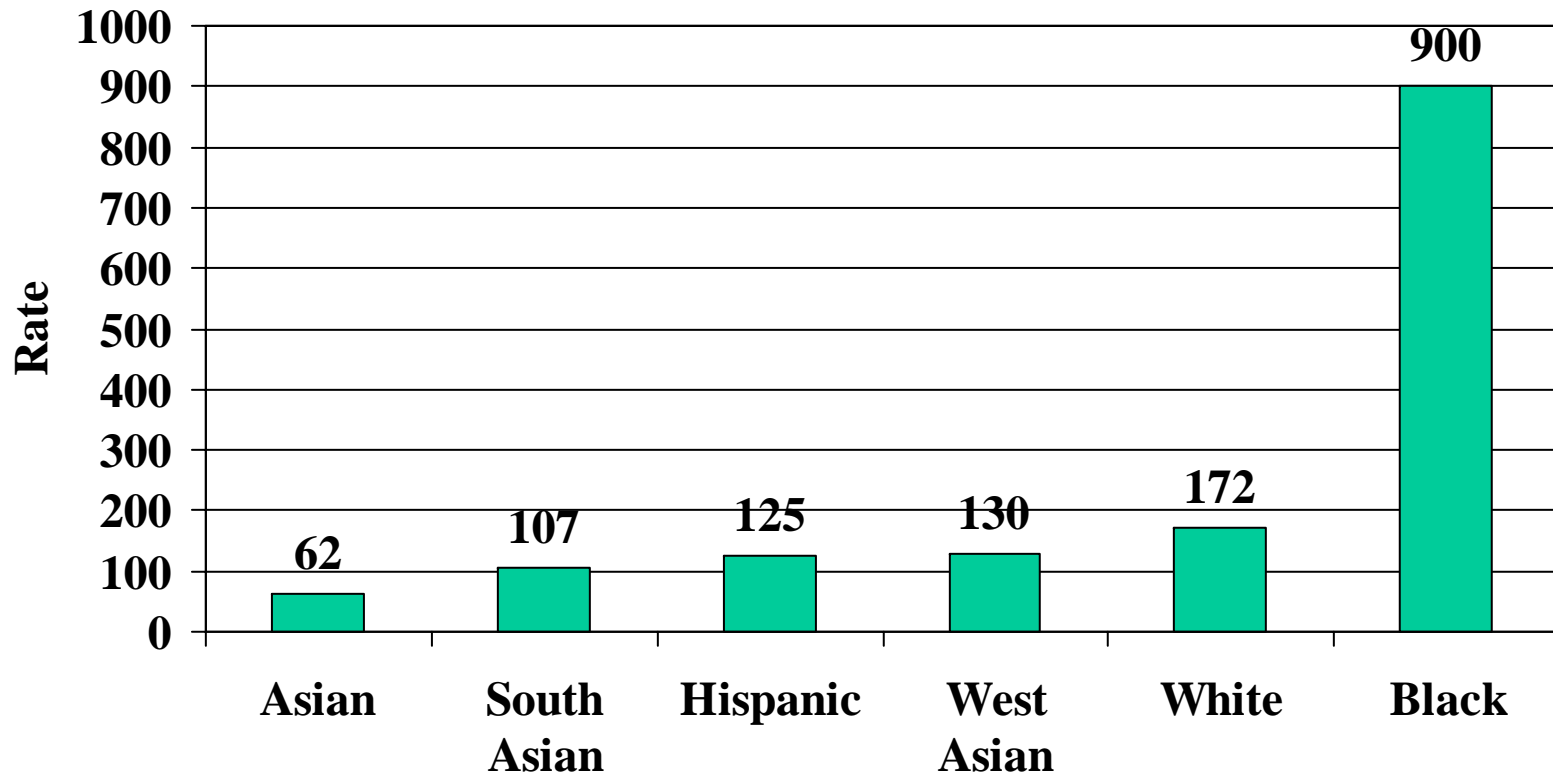
Total Police Stops – by Age Group



All Stops of 15-24 Year-Olds, by Race,
Kingston CMA Benchmark

Group Racial	Census Estimate	% Pop.	# of Stops	% of all Stops	Ratio
White	19,160	93.3	3,294	94.1	1.01
Black	100	0.5	90	2.6	5.20
Asian	730	3.6	45	1.3	0.36
South Asian	225	1.1	24	0.7	0.64
Hispanic	160	0.8	20	0.6	0.75
West Asian	115	0.6	15	0.4	0.67
Other	35	0.2	13	0.4	2.00

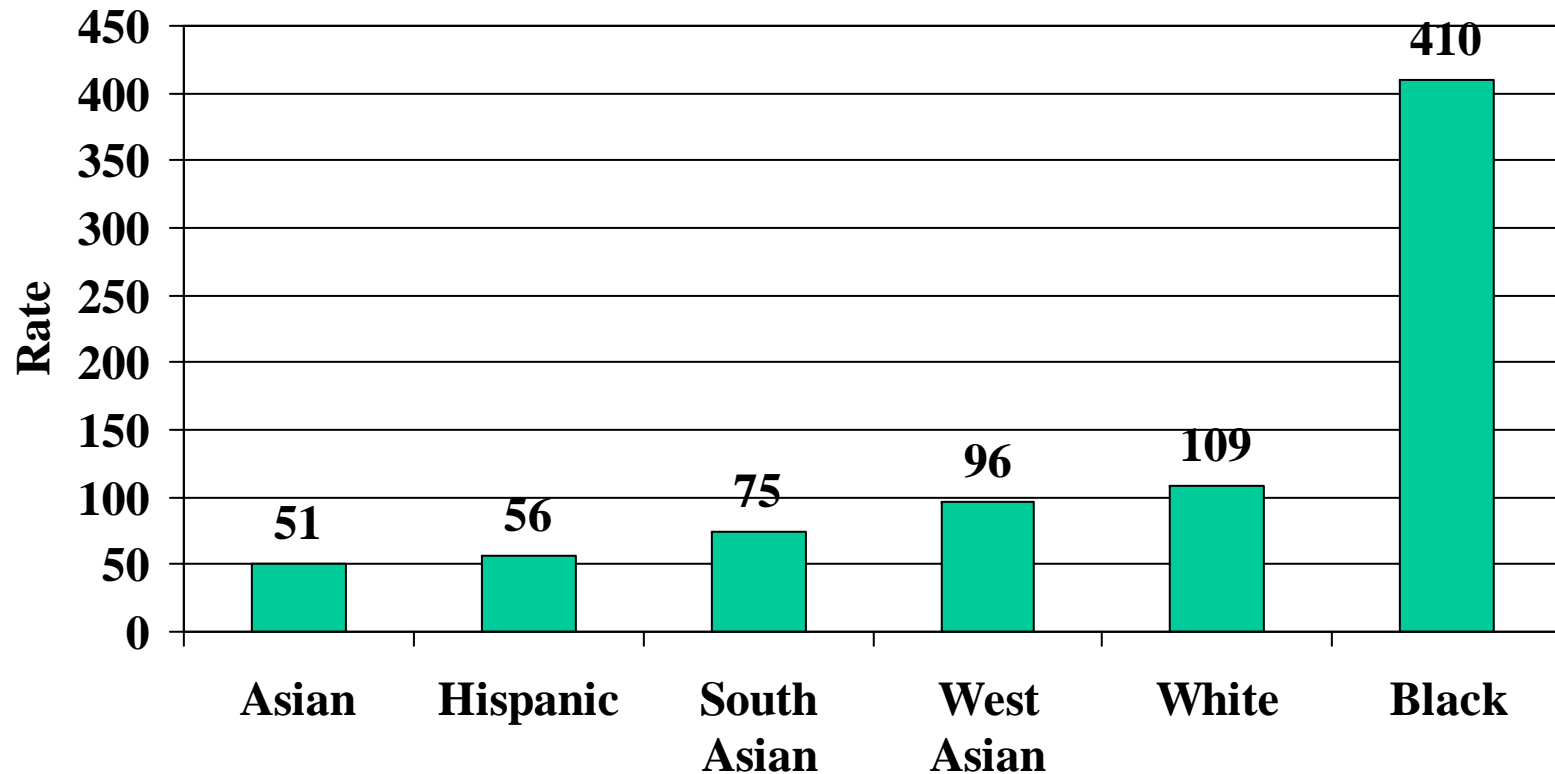
Overall Stop Rate (per 1,000), 15-24 Year-Olds, By Race, Kingston CMA Benchmark



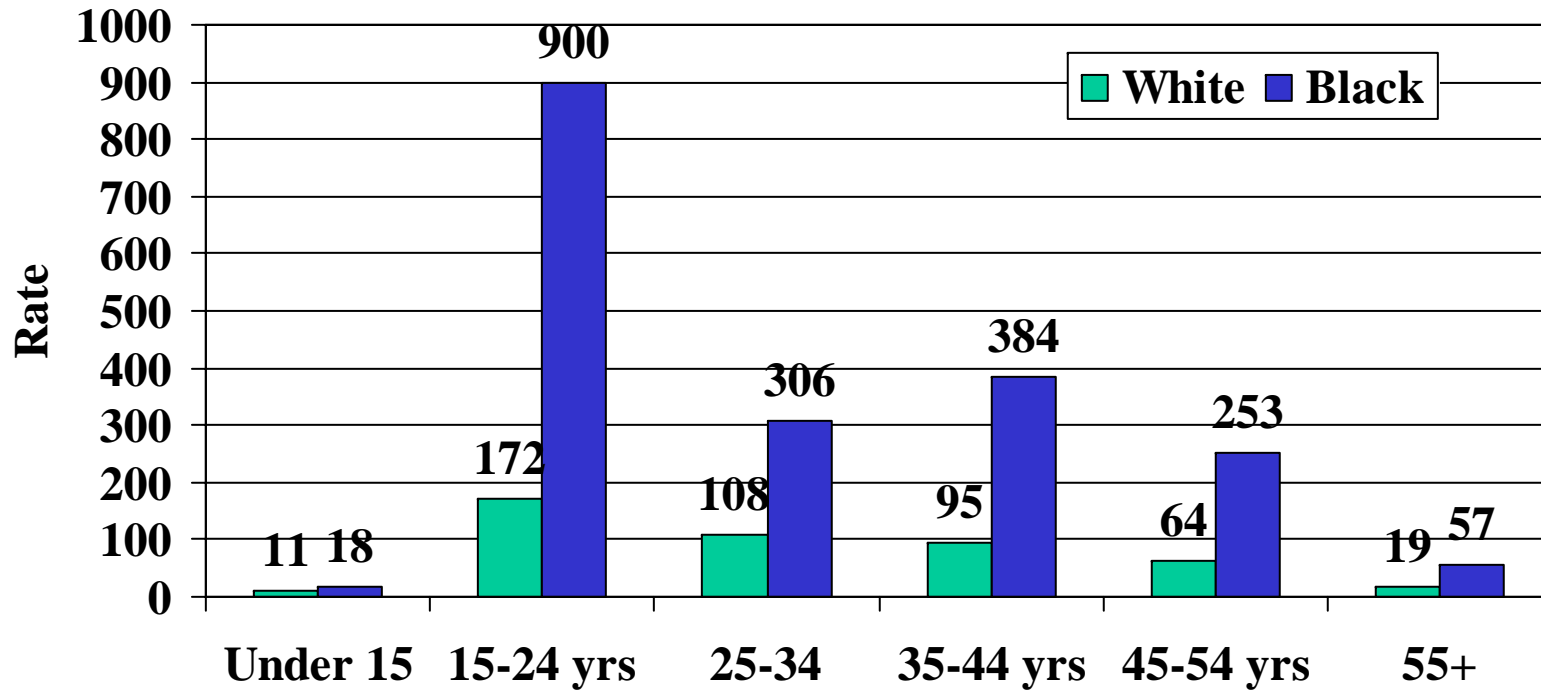
Stops of Individual CMA Residents,
15-24 Years-Old, by Race,
Kingston CMA Benchmark

Group Racial	Census Estimate	% Pop.	# of Stops	% of all Stops	Ratio (% Stops/ % Pop.)
White	19,160	93.3	2,098	94.4	1.01
Black	100	0.5	41	1.8	3.60
Asian	730	3.6	37	1.7	0.47
South Asian	225	1.1	17	0.8	0.73
Hispanic	160	0.8	9	0.4	0.50
West Asian	115	0.6	11	0.5	0.83
Other	35	0.2	9	0.4	2.00

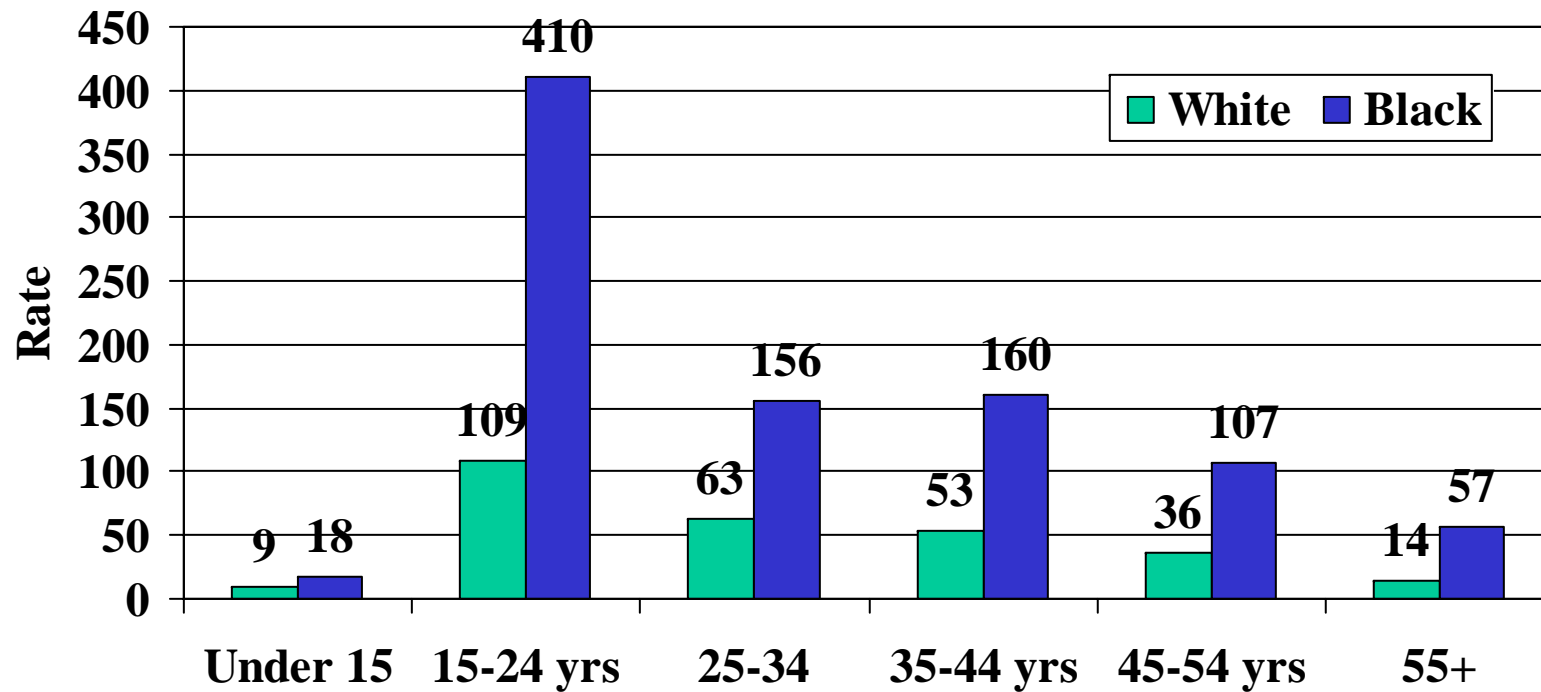
Individual Stop Rate (per 1,000), 15-24 Year-Olds, By Race, Kingston CMA Residents Only



Overall Stop Rate (per 1,000), 15-24 Year-Olds, By Race, Kingston CMA Benchmark



Individual Stop Rate (per 1,000), 15-24 Year-Olds, By Race, Kingston CMA Residents Only



DATA CONCERN

- To what extent are police stops concentrated within certain areas of Kingston?
- Can “stop location” help explain racial differences in the stop rate?
- ***SOLUTION***: Examine race and location of stops.

Percent of Each Racial Group Stopped Within Different Regions (Zones) of Kingston, by Race

ZONE	White	Native	Black	Asian	South Asian	His- panic	West Asian	Total
1	11	26	14	20	21	16	0	12
2	25	33	22	20	12	16	10	25
3	13	11	16	1	9	9	10	13
4	14	12	14	22	24	7	35	14
5	11	15	13	10	13	16	13	11
6	3	1	3	2	1	2	0	3
7	5	0	3	8	2	5	3	5
8	8	2	8	11	11	18	7	8
9	11	1	7	8	6	11	22	10

Percent of All Stops Within Specific Regions (Zones) of Kingston, by Racial Group

Race	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
White	88.1	93.0	93.9	91.1	91.0	95.8	96.2	92.6	95.4
Native	5.1	3.1	1.9	2.0	3.1	0.4	0.0	0.7	0.1
Black	2.6	2.0	2.7	2.1	2.6	2.3	1.3	2.3	1.5
Asian	1.6	0.8	0.1	1.5	0.9	0.8	1.5	1.3	0.7
South Asian	1.6	0.4	0.7	1.5	1.0	0.4	0.4	1.2	0.5
Hispanic	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.4	1.1	0.5
West Asian	0.0	0.2	0.3	1.1	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.9
Other	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.3

DATA ISSUE

- Does the census under-estimate the racial diversity of Kingston's population "on the street."
- We need to know the diversity of the Kingston's population "available" to be stopped by the police.
- ***SOLUTION***: Conduct independent street observations of Kingston's population.

Total Street Observations, by Location and Race

<i>Race</i>	<i>Mall Counts %</i>	<i>Queen's Counts %</i>	<i>St.Lawrence Counts %</i>	<i>Nightlife Counts %</i>	<i>Total Street Counts %</i>	<i>2001 Census Estimate %</i>
White	90.2	75.7	92.5	93.5	89.2	92.7
Native	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	1.6
Black	1.9	1.8	1.3	1.8	1.8	0.6
Asian	4.6	13.9	3.7	2.6	5.4	2.5
South Asian	1.9	5.9	1.5	1.3	2.4	1.3
Hispanic	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.5
West Asian	0.5	2.0	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.5
Other	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2
N	3,405	5,570	1,110	15,840	26,014	111,085

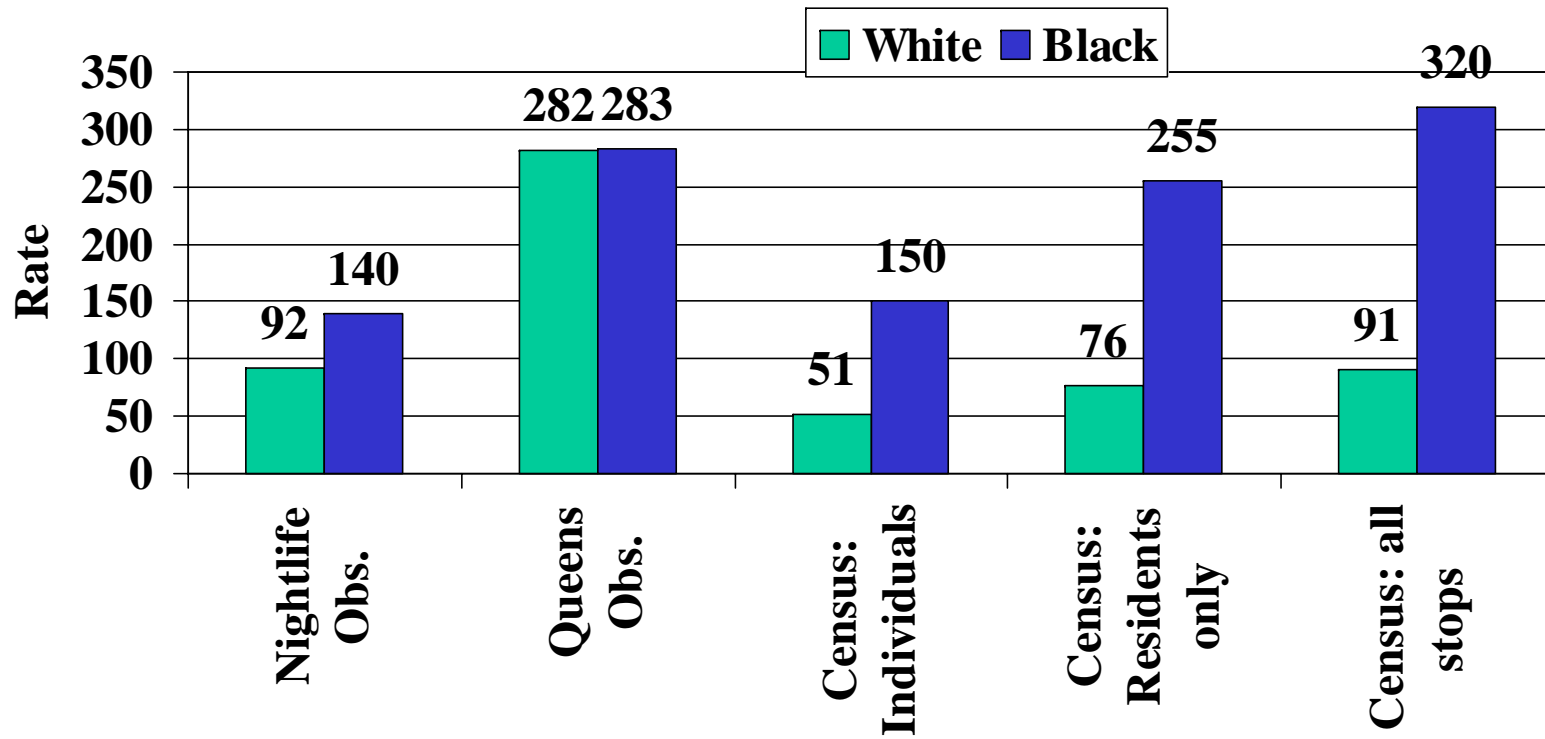
Weekend Nightlife Observations and Police Stops, By Racial Group

Race	# Weekend Nightlife Observs.	% of Weekend Nightlife Observs.	% of All Weekend Nightlife Stops	Revised Ratio (% Stops/ % Obs.)	Revised Rate
White	14,818	93.5	91.7	0.98	91.8
Native	11	0.1	2.6	26.00	3,454.0
Black	286	1.8	2.7	1.50	139.9
Asian	416	2.6	0.9	0.35	31.3
South Asian	209	1.3	1.0	0.77	71.8
Hispanic	66	0.4	0.4	1.00	75.7
Arab	34	0.2	0.4	2.00	176.4
Other	0	0.0	0.4	-----	0.0
TOTAL	15,840	100.0	1,488 (N)	1.00	93.9

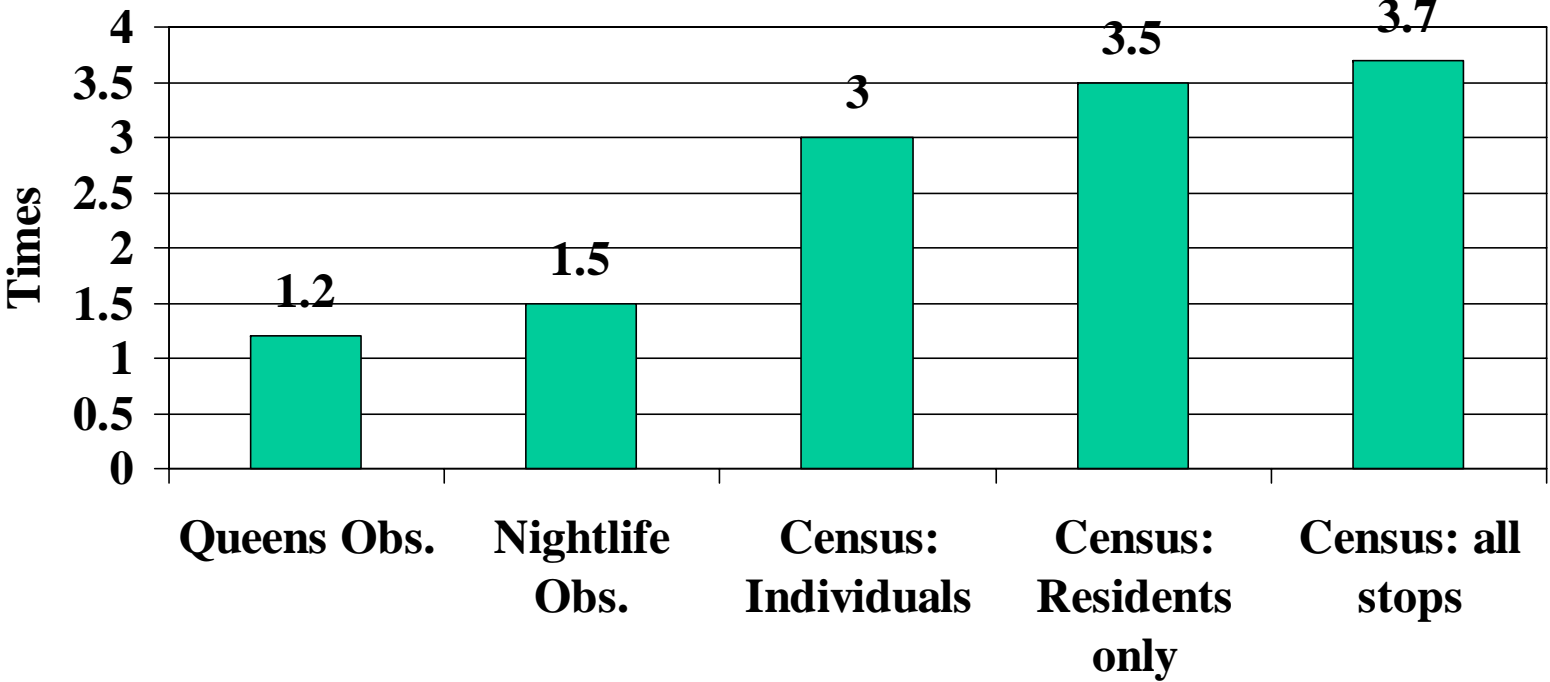
Queens University Observations and Zone Four Police Stops, By Racial Group

Race	# of Queens Observs.	% of All Queens Observs.	% of All Stops in Zone Four	Revised Ratio (% Stops/ % Obs.)	Revised Rate
White	4,218	75.7	91.1	1.20	281.9
Native	5	0.1	2.0	20.00	5,200.0
Black	99	1.8	2.1	1.17	282.8
Asian	777	13.9	1.5	0.11	25.7
South Asian	328	5.9	1.5	0.25	60.1
Hispanic	18	0.3	0.2	0.66	166.7
Arab	110	2.0	1.1	0.55	127.3
Other	15	0.3	0.4	1.33	333.3
TOTAL	5,570	100.0	1,305 (N)	1.00	234.3

Police Stop Rate Estimates (per 1000), Using Different Benchmark Methods, by Race



Degree of Black Over-Representation in Police Stop Statistics, by Benchmark Method



RESEARCH QUESTION

- Are there significant racial differences in the reasons for police stops?

REASONS FOR POLICE STOPS

<i>Reason for Stop</i>	<i>Number of Stops</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Suspect Bulletin	703	7.0%
By-law Infraction	369	3.6%
CCC Infraction	863	8.5%
Citizen Generated	1,496	14.8%
Drug Offence	125	1.2%
Traffic Infraction	3,031	30.0%
Other Reason	3,526	34.9%
Total	10,113	100.0%

Reason for Stop (%), by Race

<i>Race</i>	<i>Suspect Bulletin</i>	<i>By- Law Inf.</i>	<i>CCC Inf.</i>	<i>Citizen Generated</i>	<i>Drugs</i>	<i>Traffic Inf.</i>	<i>Other</i>
White	92.6	92.4	91.5	91.0	91.2	93.3	92.9
Native	3.0	2.2	2.3	3.7	1.6	0.7	2.7
Black	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.2	4.0	1.9	2.2
Asian	0.1	0.5	0.7	1.3	0.8	1.4	0.9
South Asian	0.9	0.8	1.6	0.5	0.0	1.2	0.6
Hispanic	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.3
West Asian	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.2
Other	0.0	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.8	0.4	0.2
N	703	369	863	1496	125	3031	3526

Race by Reason for Stop

<i>Reason</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Native</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>South Asian</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>West Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>
Suspect	7	9	8	1	7	7	7	0
By-law	4	4	4	2	3	2	4	11
CCC	8	9	10	6	16	15	2	14
Citizen Generated	15	25	15	18	9	13	22	7
Drugs	1	1	2	1	0	2	2	4
Traffic	30	9	26	40	40	35	49	39
Other	35	43	35	32	25	26	13	25
N	9361	223	219	104	88	46	45	28

RESEARCH QUESTION

- What was the outcome or disposition of police stops?
- Are there racial differences in stop outcomes?

OUTCOMES OF POLICE STOPS

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
No Action Taken	5,063	50.0%
Ticket Issued	1,668	16.5%
Arrest/Charge	637	6.3%
Warning	2,975	29.1%
Time to Produce	141	1.4%
Searched	93	0.9%
Property Seized	45	0.4%
Total	10,114	100.0%

Outcomes of Stops (%), by Race

<i>Race</i>	<i>No Action Taken</i>	<i>Warned</i>	<i>Charged /Arrested</i>	<i>Given Ticket</i>	<i>Searched</i>	<i>Time To Produce</i>	<i>Property Seized</i>
White	92.2	91.4	91.4	94.1	93.5	92.9	93.3
Native	2.1	2.7	2.8	0.6	4.3	1.4	2.2
Black	2.2	2.5	3.3	1.5	1.1	0.7	2.2
Asian	1.1	1.2	0.9	1.1	0.0	1.4	0.0
South Asian	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.0	1.4	0.0
Hispanic	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0
West Asian	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.0	1.4	0.0
Other	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.1	1.1	0.0	2.2
N	5101	2975	637	1668	93	141	45

Race (%) by Outcome of Stop

<i>Reason</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Native</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>South Asian</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>West Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>
No Action	49.8	48.0	50.7	55.8	59.1	50.0	60.0	53.6
Warned	28.7	35.4	33.3	33.7	31.8	19.6	33.3	46.4
Ticket	16.8	4.5	11.4	17.3	21.6	26.1	28.9	7.1
Arrested/ Charged	6.2	8.1	9.6	5.8	5.7	6.5	4.4	0.0
Searched	0.9	1.8	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
Time to Produce	1.4	0.9	0.5	1.9	2.3	2.2	4.4	0.0
Property Seized	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
N	9361	223	219	104	88	46	45	28

SUMMARY OF MAJOR RESULTS

- The data suggest that black people are more likely to be stopped and questioned by the Kingston police than people from other racial backgrounds.
- However, the level of black over-representation varies significantly by the benchmarking method used.

Summary (continued)

- Native people also appear to be over-represented in police stops. However, native over-representation is eliminated once we control for individuals who have been stopped on multiple occasions.
- All other racial minorities (Asians, South Asians, etc.) are less likely to be stopped by the Kingston police than whites.

SUMMARY (continued)

- Age and gender are also strongly associated with police stops. Males and young people, regardless of race, are more likely to be stopped than women and older people.
- Young black males, between 15 and 24 years of age, are more likely to experience a police stop than any other demographic group.

SUMMARY (continued)

- The data reveal no major racial differences in the reasons for police stops.
- The data reveal no major racial differences in case disposition.
- Black people are, however, slightly more likely to be arrested or charged during police stops than people from other racial groups.
- The data suggest that racial minorities are not more likely to be searched by the police than whites.

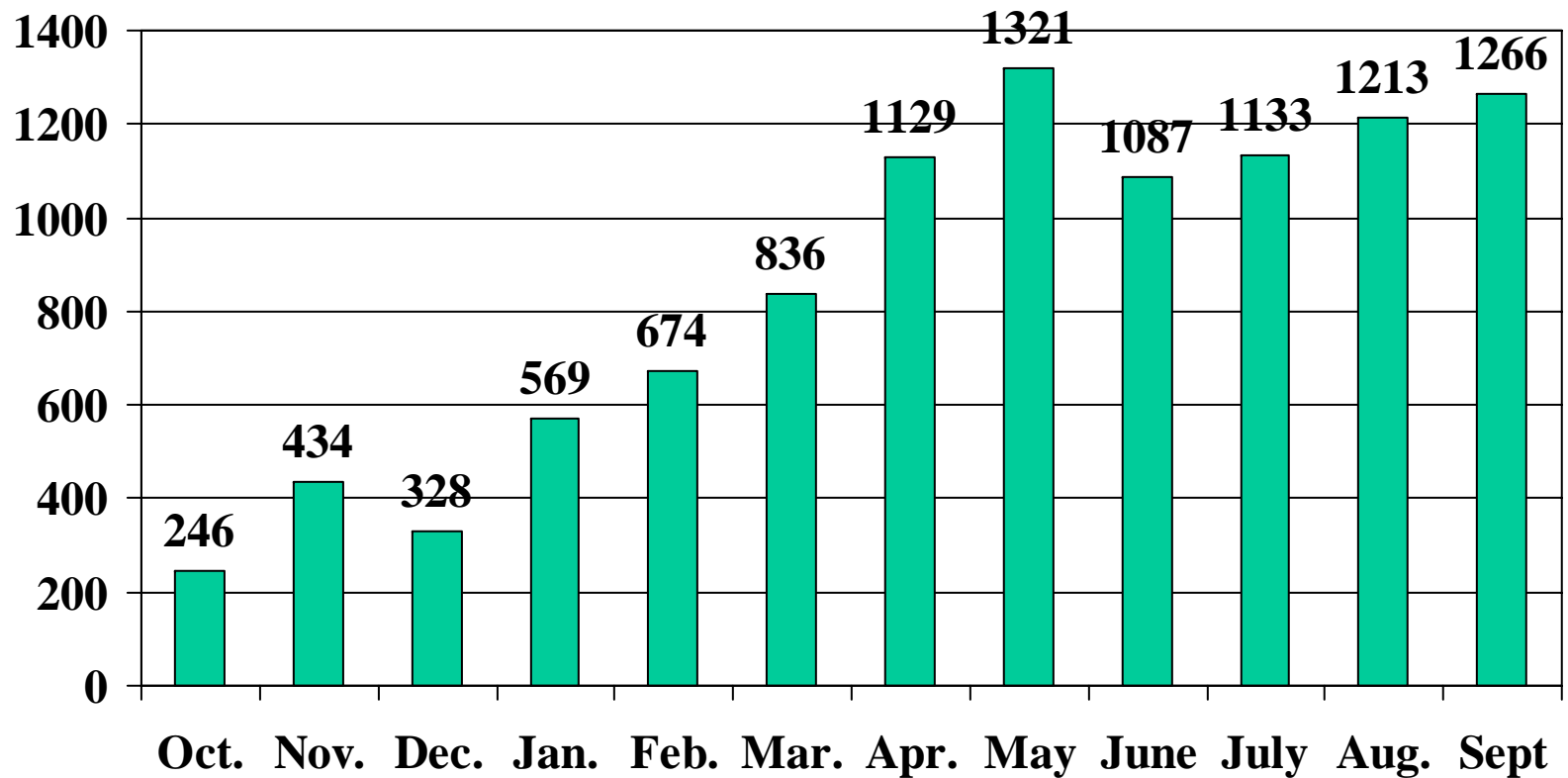
Possible (Police) Criticisms of the Data

- Kingston is much more diverse than the Census suggests. Thus, Minority Stop Rates based on Census data are inflated.
- Racial differences in Stop Rates do not capture racial differences in the types of behaviours (traffic violations, crime, etc.) that warrant police attention.

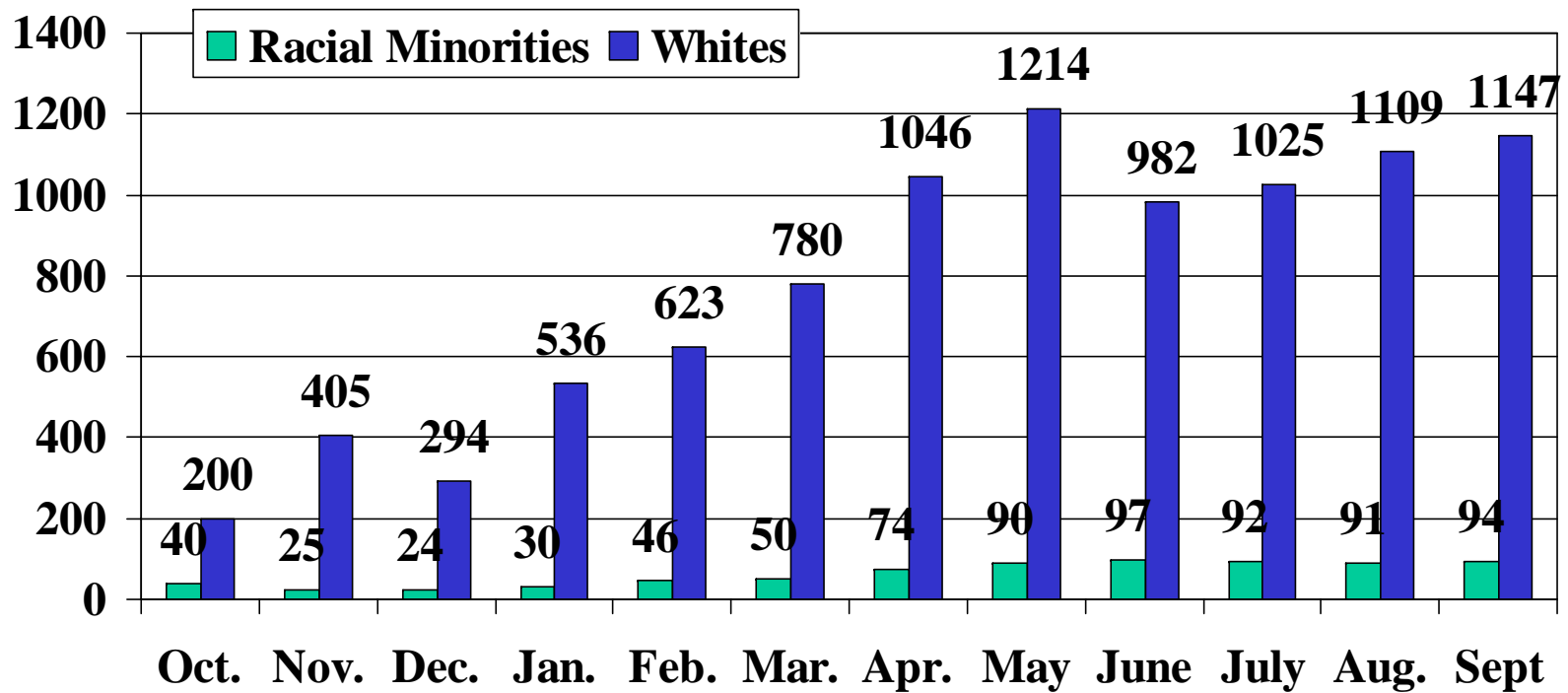
Possible (Community) Criticisms of the Data

- It is possible that some police officers did not properly record all stops and searches.
- It is possible that some police officers did not properly record the race of the people they stopped.
- It is possible some police officers “padded” the data in order to increase the number of recorded contacts with white people.

Possible Police Resistance to Data Collection?
Number of Contact Cards Completed, by Month



Number of Contact Cards Completed, by Month and Race



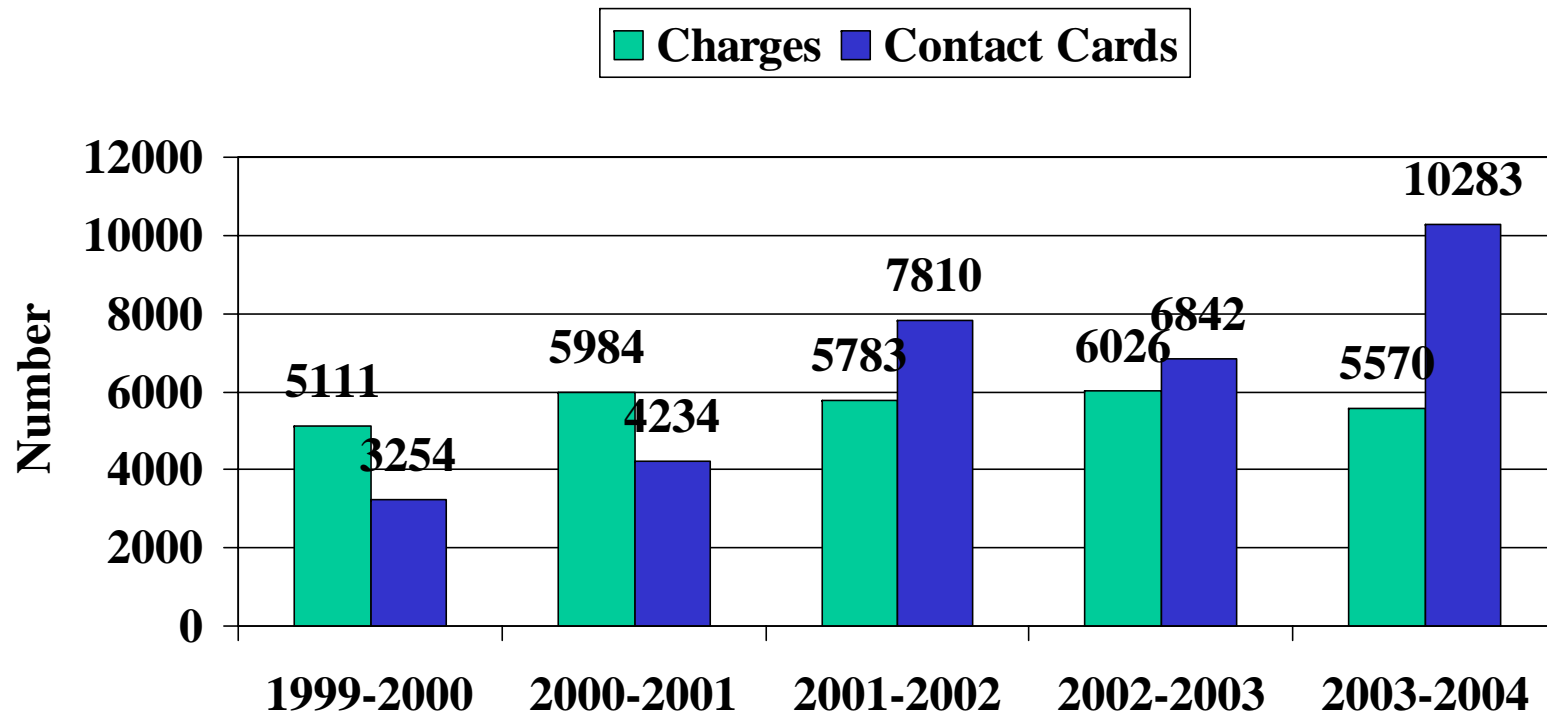
The Impact of Data Collection

- Does the act of data collection actually reduce racially biased policing?
- Are police officers less likely to engage in biased policing when they know they are being monitored?
- Will biased policing increase once monitoring ends?
- Does data collection increase minority satisfaction with the police?

The Impact of Data Collection

- Is data collection too expensive?
- Is data collection too time consuming?
- Does data collection decrease police activity (de-policing)?
- Does data collection lead to an increase in crime?
- Does data collection damage officer morale?

Number of Charges Laid and Contact Cards Issued By the Kingston Police, by Year



Future Research Needs

- On-going monitoring (data collection) is required.
- Monitoring needs to be conducted in all Canadian jurisdictions. Other police services should take the lead from Kingston.
- Official police data needs to be supplemented by other research methodologies (field observations, surveys, etc.).
- Future research needs to focus on the nature of police-citizen encounters – not just the frequency of such encounters.

Future Research Needs

- More extensive benchmarking is required.
- Better checks on data validity needed.
- Significant research funds are required to conduct better, more extensive examinations of these issues.
- Research money should not be taken directly from police budgets.

CONCLUSION

- The Kingston Pilot Project is an important first step in the examination – and hopefully elimination – of racially biased policing in Canada.
- The Kingston Police Service should be applauded for their efforts and transparency.
- Without direct action and monitoring – the debate over racially biased policing will continue.
- We need to stop the “crisis cycle.”