

## Racial Profiling: What Police Executives & Public Administrators Should Know

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## Racial Profiling



### Ferguson, Missouri



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### Los Angeles (1992)

- 52 Deaths
- 2150 Injured
- \$775 Million property damage



### Anaheim (2002)

Riots erupt over the police shooting death of Manuel Diaz



Oakland (2009)

Riots erupt over police shooting of Oscar Grant

## The Racial Profiling Controversy

1. Many racial minority citizens say that they are regularly targeted and profiled by police authorities based on their race
2. Police authorities deny the allegations and say they are simply doing their job
3. Beginning in the mid-1990s media attention increased public awareness
4. Emerging litigation (minimal legal precedent)
5. Academics searching for the best method to collect and analyze data
6. The pretextual stop



## What we know

- Minority drivers are stopped by police at higher proportions
  - ❖ The benchmark problem
- Searches are more likely involving stops of racial minority drivers

## What we know

- Racial minorities are not more likely to be carrying contraband/drugs
- Some studies have found racial minorities are detained longer during stops than non-minorities

## What we know

- Officer characteristics (age, race, gender, years of police service) do not seem to affect enforcement behavior



## The Kansas Study

### Objective

To describe minority citizens experiences with perceived racial profiling in selected communities across Kansas.

It was anticipated that by identifying racial minority citizens experiences with perceived racial profiling would place Kansas Law Enforcement in an advantageous position when developing training policy and other protocol centered on biased based policing.



## The Study

- 87 minority citizens participated in study
  - African American Citizens = 53
  - Hispanic Citizens = 33
  - Asian Citizen = 1
- 91 stop reports by minority citizens of perceived racial profiling in 16 Kansas communities



City	Location Reference
Dodge City	154 miles west of Wichita
Emporia	88 miles east of Wichita
Florence	29 miles northwest of Newton
Great Bend	118 miles northwest of Wichita
Hesston	48 miles north of Wichita
Kansas City	62 miles east of Topeka
Leawood	5 miles east of Overland Park
Liberal	83 miles southwest of Dodge City
Maize	14 miles northwest of Wichita
Manhattan	58 miles northwest of Topeka
Mulvane	17 miles south of Wichita
Newton	27 miles north of Wichita
Overland Park	13 miles south and west of Kansas City, KS
Spearville	17 miles northeast of Dodge City
Topeka	59 miles east of Emporia
Wichita	30 miles north of Oklahoma state line (I-35)

## Results

### ---Six Common Themes---



### Theme 1: Emotional/Affective

- Associated Meanings
  - Embarrassment
  - Heightened alertness upon seeing police
  - Increased anxiety
  - Anticipation of being stopped
  - Anger
  - Lasting emotional trauma



### Theme 1: Emotional Effective

- "I saw him [the police officer] sitting in the parking lot and he stared at me as I drove by. I knew there was a good chance he would start following me. I was about maybe a block away and I saw him pull out and come in my direction. He followed me for about two more blocks and I remember thinking, OK he is going to stop me any minute. That's just a fact when you are Black and driving late at night."



### Theme 1: Emotional Effective

- "For many of us, especially African American males we laugh and joke about it, but this is a serious matter. Whenever I drive past the police, I find myself getting nervous even though I've done nothing wrong."
- "I was embarrassed that someone who knows me would drive by and see me... You know there must have been 4 or 5 police cars. You know that you haven't done anything and it hurt so badly and you can't do anything about it... You learn to expect this."



## Theme 2: Symbolic Vehicle

- Associated with minority driver

## Driving Expensive Car

- Cadillac
- Lexus
- BMW

## Hootie

- Older model car
- Customized apparel
- Rims
- Paint
- Window tint



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## Theme 2: Symbolic Vehicle

- “They stopped me because I was Black and driving a nice car. They probably think I am not supposed to drive a nice car. If I was driving my Kia I would have never been stopped.”
- “You know, it was just the type of car I was driving.”
- “They never issued me a ticket so I think it had to be because I was Black and driving that nice Jaguar.”



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## Theme 2: Symbolic Vehicle

“I drive a 1999 Cadillac with lavender paint. I got stopped and he never gave me a reason why he was stopping me. I had my sister in the car. He asked to search my car and I said no. I was not given a ticket and after I refused to let him search he let me go. I think the reason I was stopped was because I was driving a 1999 Cadillac with lavender paint and tinted windows. This is the kind of car they associate with a minority driver and that will get you stopped. It’s almost like if you are a Black person you aren’t supposed to be driving that nice of a car.”



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Symbolic Hootie



Symbolic Hootie



Symbolic Hootie



Symbolic Hooptie

### Theme 3: Nature of Violation

- Associated Meanings
  - Perceived minor traffic violation
    - 32% of stops were for tinted windows, defective brake lights, & cracked taillights
    - 92 total reported violations
      - In 60 (65%) no ticket was issued
  - Pre-textual stop



### Theme 3: Nature of Violation

“When they stopped me it wasn’t even for a traffic violation, at least they never told me I violated any law, they just said they were checking me out. I never got a ticket. They would always ask where I was headed and where I was coming from. They asked for my license and proof of insurance. Sometimes they would ask if they could search my car. A couple of times I would get out, they would have me stand at the back of the car and they would search my car and have me open up the trunk... The older I get the more I just learn that it is easier just to let them do their thing so I can get on my way.”



### Theme 4: Officer Demeanor

- Associated Meanings
  - Ambiguity surrounding stop
  - Accusatory
  - Demeaning



### Theme 4: Officer Demeanor

- “He [the officer] acted superior, talking down to me and his voice, his words, the way he talked and acted was aggressive. He treated me like I was inferior...I thought the way he treated me was awful and if they are getting away with this with me, what else are they getting away with?”
- “I think a lot of Black men get offended because they [the police] make them feel like less than a man, especially in front of other people.”



### Theme 5: Normative Experience

- Associated Meanings
  - Accustomed to being stopped
  - A part of life in minority community
  - Routine



## Theme 5: Normative Experience

- “You know I have become so used to the possibility of being stopped it’s like an everyday thing. You get used to it after a while. When I see a police officer, I automatically begin to think that I may be stopped. It is always there in the back of your mind, it’s automatic, you just think about it when you see a police car.”
- “To many Black males in a car will strike up suspicion...My friends refuse to let other Black people pile up in a car or they will get stopped. That’s the norm. It’s just not worth the hassle. Why take a chance and give them a reason.”



## Theme 6: Race and Place

- Belief that they will attract attention in many areas
- Altered driving routine
  - Drive around some neighborhoods because of higher probability of being stopped
  - Allow for additional travel time



## Theme 6: Race and Place

“I’m driving around this neighborhood in broad daylight and I see in my rearview window this police car following me. I thought to myself, here we go again. My 11 year old sister is in the car with me. I was driving a big yellow 2000 Buick. I know it stands out. I kept driving thinking he would get off of me but after a couple of blocks he stopped me. He told me he was stopping me for a cracked windshield...I’m pretty sure he stopped me because he saw this Black woman driving a yellow Buick around in this this White neighborhood. I got a warning for the cracked windshield and he told me I could go.”



## Current Work

### Law Enforcement Perceptions of Racial Profiling in Kansas



## Take Aways ...

- ✓ Perception and race relations matter
  - Work with police CEOs to ensure comprehensive racial profiling policies and training are intact and ongoing
  - Revisit diversity and inclusion policies
- ✓ Data collection
  - Don't run from it
  - On running programs that collect and analyze police stops
  - If outside assistance is needed from experts, if possible, ensure they have knowledge of police operations



## Take Aways ...

- ✓ Community oriented policing strategies

✓ Utilize Technology



South Carolina State Trooper

- [Trooper Shooting](#)
- [Benefits of a body cam](#)