
Race Data Collection in Policing: lessons learned by OPS TSRDCP

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Outline

1. The impact of globalization
2. Why Police should collect race data
3. Lessons learned from the OPS TSRDCP
4. Benefits and challenges of race data collection

1: The Impact of Globalization

Policing models and practices in an age of competitive economics and diversity

Security & Justice Ecosystem

- Adapting to forces of globalization places a premium on security and procedural justice goals in police-community relations
 - **new and evolving security threats** – i.e. global risks have become local
 - **increasing diversity/ pluralism** – i.e. heightens the procedural justice challenges of police-community relations.

2: Why Police Should Collect Racial Data

Balancing Police-Community Relations

Crime Fighting Side Data Collection

- Data collection: routine operational priority in delivering “core police services” i.e. crime control / order maintenance/ public safety
 - **Intelligence-led policing** – and crime analytics
 - **Predictive policing** – algorithms

Public Servant Side Data Collection

- Data collection: “not” a routine operational priority in addressing police performance issues beyond interests in security and crime control
 - **Procedural justice** [fair treatment of all citizens]
 - **Distributive justice** [fairly distribute services across people and communities]
 - **Democratic policing** [accountable to democratic structures, and the community – and is transparent in its activities]

3: The OPS TSRDCP - select variables

- ❑ **The races of drivers** Indigenous peoples, White, Black, East/Southeast Asian, South Asian, Middle Eastern, and other racialized minorities
- ❑ **Sex and ages** “16-24”, “25-54” and “55+”
- ❑ **Reasons for stop** “criminal offence”, “provincial offence”, suspicious activity”
- ❑ **Outcome of stops** “no action”, “warning”, charge”

Reliability of Study Data

- ❑ Benchmarking
- ❑ Post-stop analysis
- ❑ Data auditing
- ❑ Community Engagement

4: Benefits of Race Data Collection

Studies in US, UK, Ottawa show that data collection processes can:

- ❑ Avoid rhetoric and accusation and promote more rational dialogue
- ❑ Send a strong message to the community that the department is against racial profiling
- ❑ Identify and deter potential police misconduct as an early warning system
- ❑ Build trust and respect in the communities served

Benefits of Race Data Collection (con't)

- ❑ Help shape and develop training programs to educate officers about racial profiling and interactions with the community
- ❑ Help proactively address issues, measure progress and capitalize on opportunities
- ❑ Assess the quality and quantity of police-citizen encounters
- ❑ Reduce exposure to legal action and human rights complaints

Challenges of Data Collection

- ❑ Concerns about extra-budgetary expenditures associated with collecting data
- ❑ Developing a robust benchmark against which the data can be compared
- ❑ The potential burden of an improved data collection procedure on individual officers in the course of a normal shift
- ❑ The potential for police disengagement from their duties, which may lead to officers to scale back on the number of legitimate stops

Challenges of Data Collection (con't)

- ❑ The challenge of ensuring officers will fully comply with a directive to collect stop data
- ❑ Ensuring data is recorded on all stops and data collected is correct.
- ❑ The difficulty of determining the race or ethnicity of the persons stopped
- ❑ Racial data on its own does not answer definitely whether racial profiling is systemic or not

Conclusions

- ❑ Only collecting racial data by police will determine if racial profiling is a systemic problem for Canadian police services
- ❑ Given Canada's diversity with its deep commitment to human rights, racial profiling can no longer be ignored or avoided