POLICE EMPLOYEE DATA FROM THE UCR


BACKGROUND

Since 1930, the FBI has annually published selected data on the number of crimes, arrests, and police employees as part of it Uniform Crime Reporting series. While the UCR has been criticized for flaws related to nonreporting and different reporting practices, policymakers, researchers, and others rely on its crime data, since they are only one of two data sources available at the national level. The police employee data have not received the same scrutiny, though they are often used by policymakers and law enforcement for decisionmaking. This article discusses the potential utility of the UCR’s police employee data, and points out possible problems with their validity.

MAIN POINTS

- Data Elements
  Information collected on police employees by the UCR series include the following data elements:
  - Number of police employees and number of civilian employees
  - Employee gender
  - Allocation of personnel and number and type of vehicles—collected only in 1938
  - Number of auxiliary police officers for agencies serving populations over 25,000—collected only in 1942
  - Officer patrol assignments
  - Officers killed in the line of duty
  - Officers assaulted in the line of duty
  - Availability of Data
    Pre-1960 data are available only in printed tables within each year’s report. Data for 1960-1999 are available on data cartridges from the Criminal Justice Information Services Division in Clarksburg, WV. Data from 1998 and 1999 are available on the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Web site: www.icpsr.umich.edu/.
  - Data Representativeness
    Police employee data collected prior to 1960 appear to provide a reasonable estimate of the population of large, municipal police agencies, but not other types of agencies. Post-1960 data seem to represent a reasonable number of police agencies in the United States.
Data Quality

The quality of the police employee data in the UCR varies. The number of officers and civilians and the gender of employees are the most accurate data reported. The data on officers assaulted in line of duty should be viewed carefully due to unusual variations in number of assaults reported by some agencies.

SUMMARY

The UCR police employee data are a useful resource, but it is important their validity is assured for two reasons: 1) future waves of such data will be able to more accurately address questions researchers and policymakers want answered; and 2) a valid dataset will serve as a benchmark for comparing other police organizational datasets.

LEMAS


PROBLEM

This article briefly describes the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey and its origin, discusses its capacity to provide measures of organizational dimensions, and considers how the survey results can best be used to increase our understanding of police organizations.

THE LEMAS SURVEY

The Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey is an administrative survey of police organizations conducted about every three years beginning in 1987. LEMAS provides two important elements for developing a more complete understanding of police organizations: 1) a platform for describing police organizations that promotes comparative analysis of structures; and 2) a platform for contextualizing the burgeoning literature of police organizational case studies.

The Sample. The LEMAS sample is composed of a census of state police agencies and other large agencies, and a sample of the remaining law enforcement agencies. The definition of “large” has changed since the survey began, but the sampling frame, the Directory of Law Enforcement Agencies, has remained the same. The Directory lists state police, sheriffs, county police, municipal police, township police, and special police at the state and local levels. Undercounts of small agencies in the sampling frame were an early problem, but the omissions are not apt to produce flawed descriptions or unreasonable inferences for two reasons: 1) the sampling frame is becoming more inclusive each time the Directory is updated; and 2) sampling with optimal allocation results in lower sampling rates in the small agency strata, where undercounting appears most pronounced.

Sample Execution. Overall survey response rates range from 92% in 1990 to 98% in 1999. Most questions asked are routinely answered, with a few exceptions. In 1997, about 15% failed to answer questions about temporary holding facilities, 23% to 47% did not answer about calls for service, and 13% did not answer financial questions about asset forfeiture (13%) or overtime (10%-29%). Some concerns have been raised about the reliability of the responses to some items, which needs to be explored in future studies.

Survey Content. The content of the survey has remained fairly constant, though wording and format have been adjusted over time. A complete questionnaire is distributed to state police and large agencies, and a shorter instrument to the sample of smaller agencies. Sections of the survey have been added or embellished, and the questionnaire is changed to address known problems, but the core content of the instrument—operations, equipment, personnel, financial matters, policies, and programs—has remained more or less constant.

LEMAS CHARACTERISTICS

The potential of the LEMAS effort is best viewed as a comparative organizational research platform from which other studies can be launched. For its potential to be realized, LEMAS must provide valid and reliable measures of salient organizational characteristics, as listed below.
Spatial differentiation is the degree to which an organizational territory is divided into units. LEMAS has included questions about the number of patrol beats and, more recently, the number of precincts and substations. The reliability of the patrol beat data must be strengthened.

Occupational differentiation is the degree to which an organization employs specialists. LEMAS provides data about civilianization, which researchers have used as an indicator of this variable.

Functional differentiation is the degree to which an organization distinguishes elements of its task and assigns them to special units. The LEMAS platform provides two sets of data that have been used as measures of this variable: assignment of personnel to functions, and a listing of units.

Hierarchical differentiation is captured as height of the hierarchy and segmentation. LEMAS routinely provides salary data that have been used to measure height, but provides no data that can be used to measure layers.

Centralization can take at least two forms: spatial and authority. Spatial centralization is substantially captured by measures of spatial differentiation; centralization of authority is not routinely captured by LEMAS.

Formalization is the degree to which an organization is governed by formal rules. LEMAS asks researchers to indicate whether their department has written policies on 10 to 15 concerns.

Administrative overhead is the proportion of organization resources committed to administrative function and is manifest in two dimensions: vertical, or the intensity of supervision, and horizontal, or the commitment of resources to support functions. LEMAS asks about commitment of employees to functions (horizontal overhead), but there are no data that allow measures of vertical overhead.

CONCLUSIONS

The LEMAS sample is drawn from an exceptional organizational sampling frame and is quite robust. The sample plan is well executed, and the response rate is high. Some work is needed on several of the items (calls for service and beat enumerations), and the survey would be more useful if the agency rank structure were explicated, if the list of functional assignments were expanded, and if questions were able to reliably capture centralization of authority. The reliability of some of the data must be assessed, and it seems reasonable to consider administering the longer survey to at least the top tier of local police agencies in the sample of smaller agencies. Finally, it is clear that the LEMAS platform is an extraordinary vehicle that could become even better. Continued development of the LEMAS program could help in the integration of cases studies and comparative organizational studies and lead to a more complete understanding of police organizations.

MULTIWAVE SURVEYS OF POLICE


PROBLEM

This article discusses the use of multiwave establishment surveys of American police organizations. It presents a definition and brief history of this set of methodologies, and discusses some of the well-known surveys of this type. The essential elements of each survey are described, including their contribution to knowledge about police, and suggestions are given about future use.

ESTABLISHMENT SURVEY DEFINITIONS

Surveys in which organizations are the unit of analysis (not the individuals within them) are known as “establishment” or “organizational” surveys. Surveys that are repeated over time are known as “multiwave” surveys. There are three types:

1) Panel surveys, in which the same sample is surveyed repeatedly using the same or very similar instrument;

2) Repeated cross-sectional surveys, in which the same instrument is used repeatedly on different samples, 

3) Hybrid surveys, in which portions of the same instrument are used repeatedly and/or portions of the same sample are surveyed repeatedly.
SURVEY HISTORY

Throughout the history of collecting data about police, many multiwave establishment surveys have been conducted. Those listed below have value for their historical contribution, their popularity, or their timely examination of current trends and issues.

- **Uniform Crime Reports.** Three of UCR’s many data collection instruments gather information on police.
  - The Age, Sex and Race file collects monthly arrest data from police departments for 29 general offense categories, with 56 separate variables for each offense type. These data are used to examine police department arrest rates.
  - The Supplementary Homicide Reports file collects incident-level data on homicides in the United States. These data have been used to study police use of deadly force.
  - The Police Employees file collects data each year on the number of civilian and sworn police personnel, and the number of officers killed and assaulted.

- **The ICMA Surveys.** The International City Manager’s Association (now the International City/County Management Association) has been collecting policing data since 1934, currently through its Police and Fire Personnel, Salaries, and Expenditures Survey.

- **The Kansas City Police Department and the Fraternal Order of Police** both began conducting annual surveys of police in 1951. Both surveys have now been terminated.

- **Washington State University Surveys.** The Division of Governmental Studies and Services at Washington State University has conducted a national mail survey of municipal police departments every three to four years since 1978. The same cities are chosen for a mail survey of City Clerks. Together these data sets can shed light on the relationships between police organizations and their local environments.

- **Directory Survey of Law Enforcement Agencies.** With the help of the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Justice Statistics began this survey in 1986, and has repeated it in 1992, 1996, and 2000. It serves as the primary source for descriptive information about law enforcement agencies in the United States, and it is an effective sampling frame for sample surveys of these agencies.

- **Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS).** The major multiwave establishment survey in American policing was begun in 1987 and has been repeated five times.

- **Community Policing Surveys.** The Police Foundation conducted a survey of more than 1,600 police agencies in 1993, which was followed up in 1997 with a survey by Macro International and the Police Executive Research Forum. The final report in 1997 presented a variety of findings about how community policing had changed.

- **Urban Institute Surveys.** From 1996 to 2000, the Urban Institute conducted four waves of telephone surveys on random samples of American police organizations.

ISSUES AND TRENDS

Survey Administration. Most of the multiwave establishment surveys of police organizations are done by mail and range from 2 to 18 pages. Most have response rates of 70% or higher. The areas of inquiry run from basic administrative features and human resource issues to innovation and other topics of interest to researchers and policymakers, such as community policing issues.

Data Quality. The quality of the data collected in multiwave establishment surveys depends largely on the ambiguity, subjectivity, and neutrality of the variable being measured. First, questions about ambiguous concepts, such as autonomy or cynicism, may be difficult to answer. Second, respondents are answering questions about the organization, not themselves, so in that sense responses may be considered subjective. Third, some questions that are not value-neutral (such as use of force) may encourage exaggerated or false responses.

Inferences and Applications. There are at least three reasons multiwave establishment surveys of police organizations are conducted: to provide current, cross-sectional, descriptive data; to calculate descriptive measures of change; and to explain why such changes are taking place.
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Multiwave establishment surveys of police organizations are an invaluable source of information about police agencies and they should continue to be conducted.

- It is not known who uses the LEMAS survey data and which portions of it are most of interest. BJS should investigate how the data are used and by whom, and modify the instruments, if necessary, to fit the needs of their users.

- The LEMAS series should be treated as a platform on which to build special topics surveys in between the regularly scheduled survey intervals.

- A meta-analysis of the many establishment surveys of police organizations should be conducted. The results could be used to produce a set of useful guidelines for doing quality establishment survey research in policing.

- Multiwave establishment surveys of police organizations can help us understand, rather than just describe, the factors that influence organizational change in policing.

- Findings of multiwave establishment surveys should be validated by surveying multiple informants within each organization, combining survey research with some type of systematic interview and observation protocol, or developing some type of audit procedure.

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY


PROBLEM

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is a major source of nationally representative data, but its potential to add to our understanding of crime and criminal justice issues has not been fully realized. This article explores how the NCVS can more fully inform issues related to the police.

THE NCVS TODAY

The NCVS has a number of technical advantages over other surveys.

- The NCVS uses a large, nationally representative sample of the U.S. noninstitutionalized population.

- It is conducted by the Census Bureau and has higher response rates than other surveys.

- The Census Bureau has a standing field staff, which allows contact with non-telephone households.

- Respondents are interviewed continuously throughout the year, so seasonal differences in the occurrence of crime do not affect the data.

- A great deal is known about the error structure of the survey, which allows these errors to be taken into account when analyzing the data.

- NCVS surveys are bounded in an effort to avoid telescoping events occurring outside of the reference period into that period.

The information gathered through the NCVS can illuminate a number of issues relevant to the police industry. Respondents are asked about criminal victimization experiences and their subsequent contact with police, an important component of police-citizen contact. Information is collected on victimization incidents, victims, and their households, which can be used to identify the subpopulations and situations involved when police mobilization and service differ. The survey can also provide longitudinal data on individuals and households, including those who have been victimized and those who have not, providing a different perspective on reporting to police and police service. Finally, the NCVS has a long time series—for some topics about 30 years, for others maybe only a decade—in which its procedures and instrumentation have remained reasonably constant, which can help in understanding the changes in policing over time.
The NCVS also has limitations. First, the survey content is limited and inflexible. Second, the survey can provide national estimates but not subnational estimates. Third, some events are so rare that they are undetectable in a large survey. Fourth, the survey’s reliability depends upon the knowledge of the respondents and their willingness to share that knowledge.

IMPROVING THE NCVS

To gather more information about policing, the NCVS could add more questions targeted to specific police topics. One of the most beneficial expansions would be to add a question on police-public contact beyond that stemming from criminal victimization. Another way to supplement the NCVS is by adding to its sample to make data-based estimates of police responses to victimization for specific jurisdictions.

Having the Census Bureau draw new samples would be extremely expensive, but random digit dialing samples that adjusted for non-response and other problems could increase the sample size in a logistically and financially feasible way. Another form of supplementation could be considered for addressing the issue of police excessive use of force. Samples drawn from arrest lists or lists from police lock-ups could be used in conjunction with selective supplements of the NCVS to make a dual or multiple frame sample that could serve as a basis for statements about excessive force in the noninstitutionalized population. Finally, many of the unique features of the NCVS have not been fully exploited. It would be useful to have a group with expertise in policing conduct annual and episodic analyses of the NCVS to address issues pertinent to the police industry.

CONCLUSIONS

Surveys of citizens are an important part of a comprehensive data system on the police. If the NCVS is to achieve its potential as a source of information on policing, it must preserve its core content, provide for changes in information content, and be supplemented to offer more data on the police.

A NATIONAL SURVEY FOR MONITORING POLICE LEGITIMACY

Tom Tyler, A National Survey for Monitoring Police Legitimacy, Justice Research and Policy, 4, 71–86.

PROBLEM

Police legitimacy can be measured using objective or subjective criteria. Objective legitimacy has received far more attention, with the importance of establishing professional standards and practices for the police being widely accepted. Subjective, or perceived, legitimacy often is not measured, but such information is important because public cooperation with the police is linked to how the public views its level of legitimacy. Measurement strategies in particular surveys, to monitor the subjective legitimacy of police need to be developed and conducted. This article discusses what subjective legitimacy is and why it should be studied, and offers examples of the kinds of approaches taken to measure it.

DISCUSSION

Objective indicators of police performance in fighting crime include indices such as the community crime rate, assessments of the level of community disorder, and indicators of police adherance to codes of conduct. Subjective indicators include the judgments made by community residents about these same issues.

Why study subjective legitimacy? One important reason is that the public’s compliance with the law and its willingness to cooperate with the police are both influenced by public views about police legitimacy.

Two approaches have been taken to measuring legitimacy. The first measures overall public judgments about the police and the law that reflect the idea of legitimacy—in other words, the public’s “trust and confidence in the police.” The second approach measures the public’s views about aspects of the police and police behavior that are potentially related to legitimacy. Three aspects have been measured: evaluation of police performance in fighting crime; evaluation of the equality or inequality of the distribution of police service and/or treatment of residents across people and groups; and evaluation of police adher-
ence to standards of appropriate conduct when dealing with the public.

CONCLUSIONS

Broad views about the legitimacy of the police are most directly reflected in feelings of perceived obligation to obey the police. The findings of studies that measure general views about police legitimacy suggest that different elements of general legitimacy are correlated, with each reflecting one aspect of a broad favorable, or unfavorable, orientation toward police. This orientation, in turn, is linked to people's acceptance of decisions made by police officers, as well as to their general everyday compliance with the law and cooperation with the police.

The second, more particular, approach to measuring legitimacy focuses on particular judgments about police behavior, which allows different aspects of police behavior to be distinguished and related separately to the overall judgment. Findings from past studies suggest that judgments about the fairness of the procedures through which the police exercise authority dominate people's views about police legitimacy. Such procedural judgments are more important to legitimacy than are judgments about the effectiveness of the police in fighting crime and/or evaluations of the distribution of police services.

To test the importance of various indices of legitimacy, however, researchers need to do a validation study in which a link between elements of legitimacy and important criteria behaviors is established empirically. Once validated, these subjective indices of legitimacy can be incorporated into overall assessments of policing, as are other statistical measures.

POLICE USE OF FORCE


PROBLEM

The United States has no systematic or meaningful national data describing the frequency and consequences of police use of force. This article reviews existing data and offers recommendations for collecting and disseminating information that will better inform citizens, scholars, public officials, and the police themselves.

AGGREGATE STUDIES

Aggregate studies typically collect and report data from several jurisdictions without indicating the contribution of each jurisdiction to the figures presented. While such studies increase our knowledge about police use of force, they have limited implications for policy.


- Henriquez, M. A. (1999). IACP national database project on police use of force. In J. Travis, J. M. Chaiken, & R. J. Kaminski (Eds.), Use of force by police: Overview of national and local data (pp. 19-24). Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics. A report on aggregate studies done by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Findings include: in 1996, the police use of force rate was 4.19 per 10,000 responded-to calls for service; most use of force was interracial; 10% of officers using force were hurt themselves; and 20 of 3,972 incidents resulted in complaints.


**AGENCY-SPECIFIC STUDIES**

- Wilson, J. Q. (1968). *Varieties of police behavior*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University. A few police agencies have allowed researchers to study them, but cooperating with researchers creates a risk of embarrassment. Nassau County and Brighton (NY) police departments were praised by Wilson, but departments in Albany, Amsterdam, and Newburgh (NY) were characterized as unprofessional “watchman” departments.


- Compelled research. Governmental superiors or court orders are sometimes responsible for compelled studies of police departments. Such research typically confirms the suspicions of those who commission it, reporting results that contradict the usual findings of consensual research.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Despite research dating back to at least the early 1960s, there are no systematic data on use of deadly force by the police or lesser uses of force by police. There are also no data on citizens’ complaints against police. The only way these holes in our knowledge can be filled is to mandate that central authority collect and summarize data on these issues, identifying the agencies involved.

**RACIAL PROFILING**


**PROBLEM**

The term “racial profiling” describes race-based selection of citizens for interdiction by police and other legal actors. This article reviews definitions of practices that are commonly described as racial profiling, contrasts these narrow views with the more complex legal standards that have evolved in case law, and assesses whether recent data collection efforts can generate reliable information about the extent and nature of racially disproportionate police contacts with citizens.

**PROFILING CONTROVERSIES**

The term “racial profiling” has emerged as a broad descriptive category that encompasses many different practices by police and other legal actors. A majority of both black and white citizens said in a recent Gallup poll that they believe racial profiling is a problem. Racial profiling has contributed to a crisis of trust and confidence of minority citizens toward the criminal justice system. While the courts have focused on discriminatory intent as central to racial profiling, a racially motivated stop may not be discriminatory if there is “reasonable suspicion” that the suspect is involved in a crime. The suspect’s location, as well as his or her race and behavior, may contribute to such a determination. Although tolerated in case law, the use of such factors opens the door to stops being based on substitutes for race rather than the actual racial categorization.

**MEASURING RACIAL DISPARITY**

*The Numerator. Methods of collecting data on traffic stops vary. Information is sometimes transmitted by radio to central locations where it is entered, or sometimes entered into a car’s mobile data terminal and then transmitted. Some departments have experimented with laptop computers and personal digital assistants (PDAs). The reliability of these data collection systems is difficult to measure. Points of vulnerability include the following:*

1. Discretion still resides with officers, and stops may be selectively recorded.*
OUTCOME TESTS OF DISPARATE TREATMENT


PROBLEM

Outcome tests can provide evidence of when a particular type of decisionmaking has a disparate effect on minorities. The basic idea of the outcome test is to analyze whether the outcomes about which the decisionmaker cares are systematically different for minorities and nonminorities. Outcome testing is an especially useful tool in assessing allegations of racial profiling.

POLICE SEARCH OUTCOME TESTS

The probability (after the fact) that a police search will uncover contraband or evidence of illegality is evidence of the average level of probable cause that police require before undertaking a search. If minority searches are systematically less productive than white searches, this could mean that police
A major advantage of outcome tests is that researchers do not need to observe and control for all of the factors in the police decisionmaking process as long as they can observe the outcome of their decisionmaking. Thus, the outcome test is not susceptible to the “omitted variable” or “qualified pool” problem. The decisionmaker by his or her own decisions defines what the qualified pool is. The outcome test then directly assesses whether the minorities and nonminorities so chosen are in fact equally qualified. As applied to police searches, finding that the search success rate (that is, the probability of finding evidence of illegal behavior) is systematically lower for searched minorities than for searched whites suggests that minorities less deserved (that is, were less qualified) to be searched.

But outcomes tests have disadvantages as well. First and foremost, the test is a test of whether decisionmaking criteria have an unjustified disparate impact, but there are ways that it can be both under- and overinclusive as a test of disparate treatment. In terms of police searching criteria, for example, an outcome test would likely capture arbitrary targeting and harassment of minorities, but might not capture express racial profiling that was based on statistical inference.

Other potential problems arise with outcome assessments if researchers are only able to measure the average outcome and not outcomes associated with marginal decisions (the “infra-marginality problem”), although in some cases these difficulties can be overcome. There is also the problem of “subgroup validity.” When a particular observable characteristic is valid for some races but not for others, it is possible that a decisionmaker conditioning his or her decisions on this characteristic generally might induce racially disparate outcomes.

SUMMARY

“Outcome tests” have important strengths in comparison to traditional auditing tests of disparate treatment. Most importantly, these new tests avoid the recurrent “omitted variable bias” or “qualified pool” problems that plague attempts to show disparate treatment on the basis of traditional audits or with disparate impact evidence. But these new tests also have limitations. The outcome tests may be overinclusive because of problems of infra-marginality or subgroup validity. However, because there are in particular contexts adequate responses to each of these problems, this relatively new type of test deserves to be part of the accepted arsenal of civil rights empiricism. Outcome tests can provide credible evidence especially when combined with other (more traditional) types of evidence that decisionmaking subjects minorities to an unjustified disparate impact.

MEASURING STOPS AND SEARCHES


PROBLEM

In Britain, the police use of powers to stop and search members of the public has long been a source of controversy, in large part because minorities are stopped and searched at a disproportionately higher rate than whites. The Home Office piloted a new system of monitoring police stops and searches in four police forces across five police areas in Britain. In addition, Home Office researchers carried out a program to assess the impact and success of the pilot measures, and to examine a number of other issues related to stops and searches. This article describes an evaluation of the recording practices related to the new monitoring system and examines issues related to disproportionality.

METHODOLOGY

Aspects of the new system of monitoring stops and searches by police in Britain were assessed in a series of studies. The research described here addressed issues relating to recording. The evaluation drew on a number of data sources, including interview with more than 100 operational police officers, supervisors, and managers at the beginning and end of the pilot; more than 340 hours of observation of routine patrol work across all sites; in-depth interviews with 55 people stopped or searched during the pilot and 12 discussion groups with 104 people from the pilot sites; and statistics produced from the police records made during the pilot.
To examine the issue of disproportionality, or differences in rates of stops and searches between those from different ethnic groups, the researchers measured the “available” populations on the street and compared them with resident populations and with those stopped and searched. Four populations were looked at: pedestrians stopped, pedestrians searched, vehicles stopped, and vehicles searched. The research also explored the geographical relationship between stops and searches and crime. The methodology included identifying hotspots, or zones, within each of the site areas where most stops and searches take place using GIS software. Demographic profiles of the available pedestrian and vehicle populations within the specified zones were also obtained by using video cameras and observers situated in vehicles driven within the zones.

FINDINGS

Police Compliance with Recording Requirements

- Twenty searches were observed; in 13, forms were filled out at the time, and in 4, forms were completed later.
- Of the 179 stops observed, only 21% had forms filled in at the time or started and completed later.
- Reasons for the underrecording included definitional/practical difficulties, officers’ desire not to be intrusive, and officer discretion. Public reaction to the form was unproblematic in a large majority of cases.
- In asking people to self-define their ethnicity, officers used either an open-ended question, or fixed-category responses. Based on the fixed category responses (open ended responses were too varied), officer-defined ethnic codes are reasonable approximations of the categories used by individuals to describe themselves.

Disproportionality

- Based on comparison between stop and search populations with resident populations, disproportionality was evident across all pilot sites.
- Of overwhelming significance was the finding that the ethnic make-up of those people in cars and on the streets in areas where stops and searches take place has little resemblance to the residential population. Most significantly, in areas with high stop and search activity, young men and people from minority ethnic backgrounds tend to be overrepresented in the available population.
- Overall, the findings suggest no general pattern of bias against people from minority ethnic groups, either as a whole or for particular groups.

CONCLUSIONS

An understanding of potential biases about police decisionmaking in stops and searches cannot rely on residential statistics as a basis for comparison; the importance of measuring “available” populations was clear in these findings. But while the methodology used for measuring available populations was well designed for the purposes of this study, it was complex and expensive. It is important to find simpler and inexpensive approaches that provide similar information if this type of measurement is to become a routine part of police monitoring.

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