



**Officer Contacts with Civilians and Race in the
City of Spokane:
A Quantitative Analysis**

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Executive Summary

Overview

The process leading up to this report began during July of 2012 through Captain Brad Arleth of the Spokane Police Department (SPD) initiating contact with Dr. Ed Byrnes of Eastern Washington University (EWU) about using data to inform ways for improving police-community relations – the current leaders of the SPD have continuously supported this work, and a climate of open, data-informed practices.

The data collection strategy used for this study aligns with national best practices and the Revised Code of Washington, and in many instances exceeds what is required by these practices and standards.

This report is a starting point for our community to engage in ongoing and holistic conversations about relations between civilians and police in the City of Spokane.

To inform this conversation four findings from this study should be considered:

1. Officer use of force is a rare occurrence, occurring in only 22 contacts, which was only 0.3% of all the contacts analyzed, and race was not a significant factor relating to use of force;
2. Although there were racial disproportionalities observed in searches and arrests, the reasons that these searches and arrests occurred were equivalently distributed across racial groups;
3. There is therefore no indication of racially biased decisions by officers in their reasons for searching or arresting civilians they come into contact with;
4. There was observed racial disproportionality in the rate of contacts between civilians and officers, and it appears that this initial disproportionality is what drives the subsequent disproportionalities in searches and arrests.

The most viable data-driven starting point for ongoing and holistic conversations about race and policing in the City of Spokane is initial contacts between civilians and officers.

Holistic conversations, by definition, should include, in addition to policing practices, neighborhood and city-wide conditions relating to crime and quality-of-life, including housing, poverty, schools, substance use and mental health, for example.

Question, Data & Sample

Although this study is intended to set a baseline from which to measure progress, the study also provides initial answers to important questions about civilian-officer contacts in The City of Spokane.

The questions answered in this study were:

1. What is the relationship between officers' perceptions of civilians' race and rates of civilian-officer contact by race?
2. What is the relationship between officers' perceptions of civilians' race and arrest rates by race?
3. What is the relationship between officers' perceptions of civilians' race and the reasons for arrest by race?
4. What is the relationship between officers' perceptions of civilians' race and rates of searches by race?

5. What is the relationship between officers' perceptions of civilians' race and the reasons for searches by race?
6. What is the relationship between officers' perceptions of civilians' race and officers' use of force rates by race?

Five months of data were collected by Spokane Police Department (SPD) officers using an electronic web based instrument developed by Dr. Byrnes from Eastern Washington University (EWU). Data collection is ongoing and continues, affording an opportunity for longitudinal analysis of data on civilian-police contacts.

For a contact to be recorded in the database it had to meet these criteria:

1. It had to be an in-person contact between a civilian and officer;
2. It had to be a contact that either:
 - a. Involved an officer detaining a civilian, or
 - b. Was likely to involve an officer detaining a civilian.

There were 7,021 contacts between civilians and SPD officers that met these criteria between March and August of 2014. When comparing the number of these contacts that were traffic stops with the number of traffic stops in the CAD database the margin-of-error for these study data was $\pm 0.3\%$.

Contacts

Racial disproportionality was observed for the rate of contacts. African Americans are 2.5% of The City of Spokane population and were 6.1% of contacts. Native Americans are 1.7% of the city population and were 3% of contacts. These differences between population and civilian-officer contact proportions were statistically significant.

Arrests

Of the 7,021 contacts there were 632 arrests made, which was 9% of all contacts. Racial disproportionality was observed for the rate of arrests. African Americans were 6.1% of contacts and 10.9% of civilians who were arrested. Native Americans were 3% of contacts and 7.6% of civilians who were arrested. These differences between arrest proportions and civilian-officer contact proportions were statistically significant.

Of the 632 arrests made, 318 (50.3%) were for a new charge and 314 (49.7%) were for a warrant. The proportions of members of different racial groups arrested for new charges or warrants are very similar to each other and to the overall proportions for the entire group of arrestees. The differences between racial groups in their proportions by reason for arrest were not significantly different¹.

Searches

Of the 7,021 contacts 570 searches were conducted, which was 8.1% of all contacts. Racial disproportionality was observed for the rate of arrests. African Americans were 6.1% of contacts and

¹ The data set included one anomaly involving nine members of the Asian-Pacific Islander racial group who were all arrested for new charges. When the data are analyzed without this anomalous subset that was 1.4% of arrests, the remaining racial proportions did not significantly differ from each other.

10.4% of civilians who were searched. Native Americans were 3% of contacts and 8.4% of civilians who were searched. These differences between search proportions and civilian-officer contact proportions were statistically significant.

Of the 570 searches reported in the data there were 490 (86%) that included data about the reason for the search. Nearly 96% of searches were post-arrest and nearly 4% were officer safety frisks. Members of each racial group were searched for these reasons at very similar rates. The difference in proportions of search reasons between races was not statistically significant.

Use of Force

Because of the small number of use of force (UOF) incidents in the data it is premature to offer a robust probability analysis of the relationship between race and UOF.

Of the 7,021 contacts there were 22 incidents involving a reportable UOF, which was 0.3% of all contacts. African Americans made up 6.1% of contacts and 4.5% of UOF cases. Native Americans made up 3% of contacts and 9.1% of the UOF cases. Hispanics made up 3.3% of contacts and 4.5% of UOF cases. The observed differences between racial groups in UOF cases was not statistically significant, though the sample size precludes as sufficiently robust probability based analysis. As more data are accrued this analysis shall be repeated and hopefully the trend of no significant racial differences will emerge as a durable truth for our community. However, as it is with low frequency events the probability analysis results may vary over time.

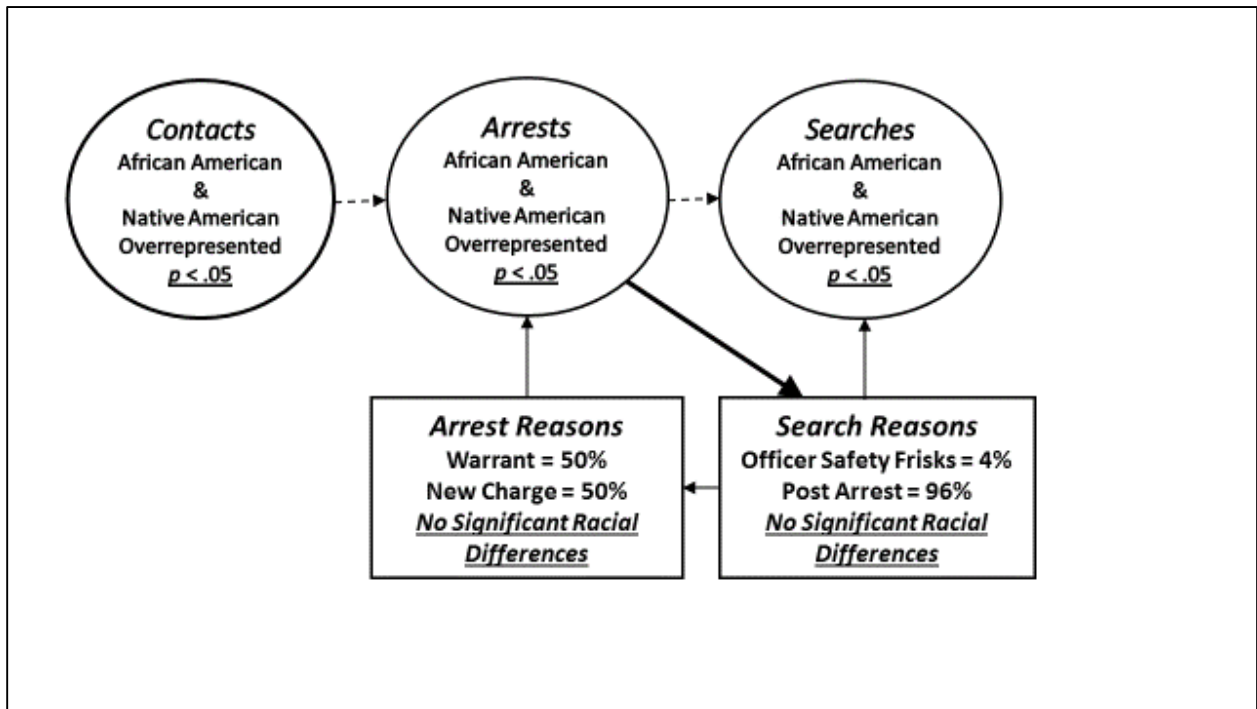
Indications

Racial disproportionality in rates of civilian-officer contacts is statistically significant, appears to be the starting point for subsequent overrepresentation in arrests and searches, and as such can be a highly fruitful beginning point for necessary conversations between SPD officers and leaders and their civilian counterparts. Figure A displays contacts, arrests and searches, and the reasons for arrests and searches, revealing that initial contacts are a highly important point for dialogue.

Although racial disproportionality was evident for proportions of arrests and searches, the data reveal that African Americans and Native Americans were as likely as their White counterparts to be arrested for warrants or new charges. African Americans and Native Americans are as likely as their White counterparts to be searched subsequent to arrest or for an officer safety frisk.

Very few searches are safety frisks and these frisks are applied uniformly across racial groups – it therefore does not appear that SPD officers are creating reasons to search people on the basis of race. The overwhelming majority of searches are post-arrest, and reasons for arrest are applied uniformly across races – it therefore does not appear that SPD officers are creating reasons to arrest people on the basis of race. These data indicate that, as displayed in Figure A, a clear point for beginning discussions about racial disproportionality should center on initial contacts.

Figure A. Civilian-officer contact outcomes flowchart.



The UOF data from this study indicate an initial trend for our community of no significant racial disproportionality that will hopefully continue, though the sample of 22 incidents is currently insufficient for probability-based analysis so only time, and more data, will tell. What is certain is that officer UOF will continue to be monitored along with the other data, and a more robust analysis of UOF will be included in the next report.

As indicated by the data, a series of meaningful conversations about civilians' race in initial contacts with SPD officers would be a good starting point for addressing tensions in our community.

History and Background

Development Time Line

This research project developed from conversations that forged a partnership between Ed Byrnes of Eastern Washington University (EWU) and Brad Arleth of the Spokane Police Department². The conversation began more broadly and was about many issues confronting officers and civilians as they try to come together for a safer and more positive community, then moved to a sharper focus on the intersection of race with relations between officers and civilians.

This is the time line of key events leading to this report:

July 2012: Brad Arleth writes to Ed Byrnes following testimony about research and racial disproportionality give at a Use of Force Commission (UOFC) hearing, which begins their working discussions.

July 2013 through November 2013: Brad Arleth and Ed Byrnes collaboratively develop the data collection instrument for this study. They are influenced by:

- Northeastern University Racial Profiling Data Collection Resource Center for Best Practices
- The NYPD Stop & Frisk Data Collection Form
- The RAND NYPD Stop & Frisk Report
- Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.43.80
- U.S. House Bill (HR) 2851: End Racial Profiling Act.

November 2013: Lisa Smith, SPD Crime Analyst creates an electronic version of the instrument for on line use by officers.

January 2014 through February 2014: The SPD Executive Team and City Legal Department review then approve instrument and procedures.

February 2014: SPD Patrol officers are trained in data collection procedures.

March 2014: Data collection by officers begins.

July 2014: Preliminary data are download and the analysis at the level of events subsequent to initial contact demonstrates a need more cases before the analysis can continue.

October and November 2014: The second set of data are download.

December 2014 through February 2015: Ed Byrnes engages in the data analysis that results in this report.

March 2015: This report is released to the public.

² This project resulted from Ed and Brad donating their own time to it since 2013. The SPD has stated their intention to work with EWU administration to release Ed from some of his teaching obligations so that the data for this report, which are collected on a continuous basis, can be analyzed quarterly, and that more in depth research questions and analyses can be identified and pursued.

Instrument

The verbatim text used in the electronic data collection instrument is included in this report as Appendix A³. As reported in the project time line this instrument was influenced by and conforms with the best practices of the Racial Profiling Data Collection Resource Center, RCW 43.43.80 and HR 2851 (the End Racial Profiling Act). Although HR 2851 is not law and is not anticipated to be heard or debated soon, our efforts conformed with every aspect of the proposed legislation except for collecting data about civilians religion, since officer perceptions would be very challenging to gauge for that variable. Additionally, HR 2851 includes pilot study and university partner requirements that this project meets without requiring any legal mandate to do so.

The only area where the data collection instrument needs improving is adding an age grouping variable. It was originally thought that civilians' ages could be collected from the SPD CAD database, which the instrument can link to, and that assumption made by Ed Byrnes was incorrect. Age grouping data collection will begin in April of 2015 and this variable will be added to all subsequent analyses. Finding this CAD database deficiency demonstrates the necessity of using a unique data collection instrument for this study.

Categories of data collected by this instrument include:

- Background information to connect contact with officer and details in the CAD database;
- The type of contact and precipitating reason for it;
- The result of the contact, including arrests and reasons for them;
- Whether reportable force was used during the contact;
- Whether a search was conducted during the contact and the reasons for any searches;
- The civilian's gender;
- The civilian's race and how it was identified by officers.

This study focuses on how officers' perceptions of civilians' race relates to contacts and the results of contacts between officers and civilians. Given that the essential question is about officers' perception no procedure requiring officers to ask civilians about their race was included in this study. This was the case for two reasons:

The fundamental research question is about officers' perceptions of civilians' race;

When a contact between an officer and civilian involves any level of conflict, asking about race risks escalating rather than de-escalating the contact for no purpose whatsoever, and no rational officer or civilian wants to introduce procedures that risk escalating contacts between officers and civilians.

³ Because of very low observed frequencies the race Asian or Pacific Islander was created from the races of Asian, Pacific Islander and Middle Eastern/East Indian, and Eastern European was combined with White. These races will be broken out in the next report when a full year's data will hopefully allow for analysis with this level of detail.

Analysis

Analysis Primer

The data analysis being reported focus on three basic concepts:

- How well the data represent contacts between officers and civilians;
- Using appropriate benchmarks for assessing racial disproportionality for every contact characteristic and result;
- Determining if any differences observed between contact characteristics or results and the appropriate benchmark are beyond what random chance alone would predict.

Each of these concepts is described as follows.

Representative Sample

How representative a sample is has its basis in a continuum, rather than a yes-or-no answer. This continuum is commonly known as the margin-of-error, and every sample has a margin-of-error that reflects how the results may differ from or be similar to the population. To know the margin-of-error one must know the number of cases in a population and the number of cases in a sample. Motor vehicle stops are the type of contact that is most clearly identifiable between the CAD database and the data for this study. When comparing the number of motor vehicle stops in this study with those identified in CAD for the identical time period, 93.2% of motor vehicle stops identified in the CAD database were counted in our study data, for a 0.3% margin-of-error⁴, which is not only generally excellent, but also up to the task of our study⁵.

Benchmarks

A benchmark is what the basis for comparison is, specifically for determining what one would naturally observe when nothing else influences what is observed. These are the benchmarks being used in this study and the reasons for their use:

- When examining the relationship between race and a civilian having contact with an officer the appropriate benchmark to use is the population of the City of Spokane, since all Spokane residents have an equal likelihood of an officer contact.
- When examining the relationship between race and being searched, arrested or having force used during a contact, the appropriate benchmark is having had contact with an officer, since a contact must occur before any of these events can possibly transpire.
- When examining the relationship between race and the reason for a search, the appropriate benchmark is having been searched, since one would have to be searched for any of those reasons to apply.

⁴ This is based on 6,706 motor vehicle stops recorded in CAD and 6,251 cases of motor vehicle stops in our study data with repeating CAD incident numbers counted only once.

⁵ The smallest racial group in our study, Native Americans, make up 1.7% of Spokane City residents and 0.3% is sufficiently small as a margin-of-error to avoid concerns of over- or under-representing this group in our probability-based estimates.

- When examining the relationship between race and the reason for an arrest, the appropriate benchmark is having been arrested, since one would have to be arrested for any of those reasons to apply.

As one can see, different benchmarks must be applied to appropriately analyze different events because not everyone in Spokane has contact with the police, and are therefore not equally likely to experience each of the events that may result from a civilian-officer contact⁶.

Likelihood

Likelihood means the odds that what is observed is something that could happen by chance alone, or is different from what chance alone would say. In this report when we state that an event is beyond chance alone what we mean is that the difference in percentages is greater than what you would expect to find from just a random draw. For example, a coin has two sides so you can expect each side to appear half the time during a series of coin tosses, so if a series of ten coin tosses results in seven heads and three tails that is different from what is likely to happen. Likelihood is also related to the number of times something is observed, for instance seven heads in ten tosses could happen while seventy heads out of one-hundred tosses is very unlikely.

Sample Size and Sub-Analysis

There were a total of 7,021 contacts⁷ between civilians and SPD officers in our study data, and this number can provide for robust data analysis even with the relative racial homogeneity observed in the City of Spokane. However, the numbers of searches, arrests and uses of force in our study data were 570, 632, and 22, respectively, and when these numbers are combined with the small percentages of some races in the City of Spokane and therefore our study data the analysis must remain at the City of Spokane level until more data are collected. Once more data are collected analysis at the neighborhood level may be undertaken⁸.

Results

The benchmark for testing the relationship between race and contacts is the population of the City of Spokane. The racial proportions for the City of Spokane for this study come from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2013 three-year population estimates. Figure 1 displays the racial makeup of the City of Spokane. As one can see Spokane is a relatively homogenous city racially, with slightly over 87% of the population being White and 13% belonging to racial Minority groups. The largest racial Minority group in Spokane is Hispanics, who make up 5.3% of the population.

Contacts

There were 7,021 individual officer-civilian contacts during the study period. Figures 2, 3 and 4 display the type, reason for and result of these contacts. As one can see in Figure 2 the overwhelming majority of contacts were between officers and motorists, with 78% of contacts being motor vehicle stops. As one can see in Figure 3 the majority of contacts were for hazardous moving violations (58%)

⁶ For example, not everyone who has an officer-civilian contact is arrested, and only one who is arrested can be arrested for an outstanding warrant.

⁷ These were all reported between March 20th and August 31st of 2014.

⁸ It is anticipated that at least some neighborhood level analyses will be reported during late summer of 2015.

with other moving violations (22%) and investigatory contacts (16%) making up the majority of other contacts. As one can see in Figure 4 the most frequent result of a contact is a verbal warning (48%), followed by citations for hazardous moving violations (37%), with arrests being very infrequent (9%). The relationships between race and reason for contact, and race and all contact results, will be analyzed for the next report when there are sufficient data to analyze lower frequency events.

Figure 1. The racial makeup of the City of Spokane.

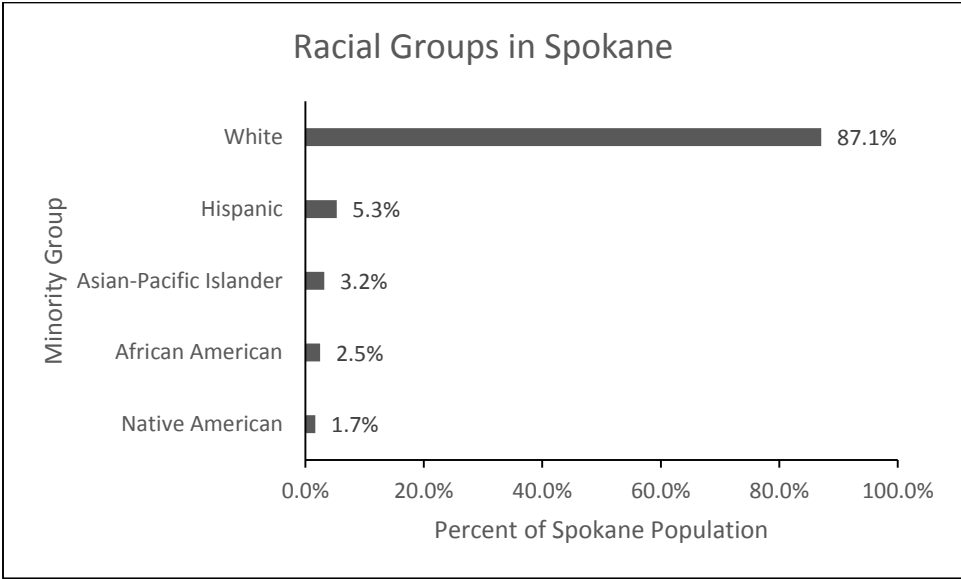


Figure 2. Type of contact.

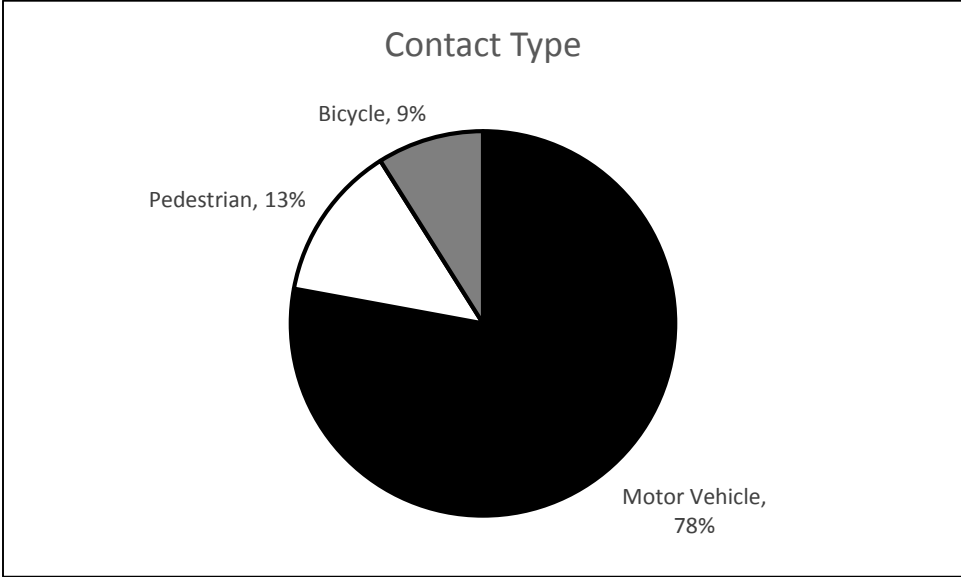


Figure 3. Reason for contact.

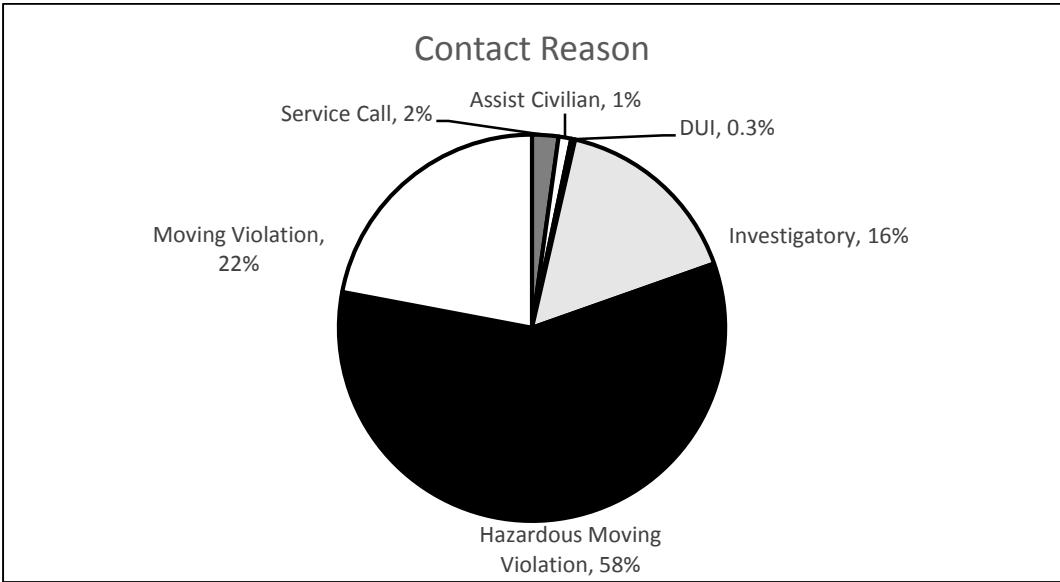
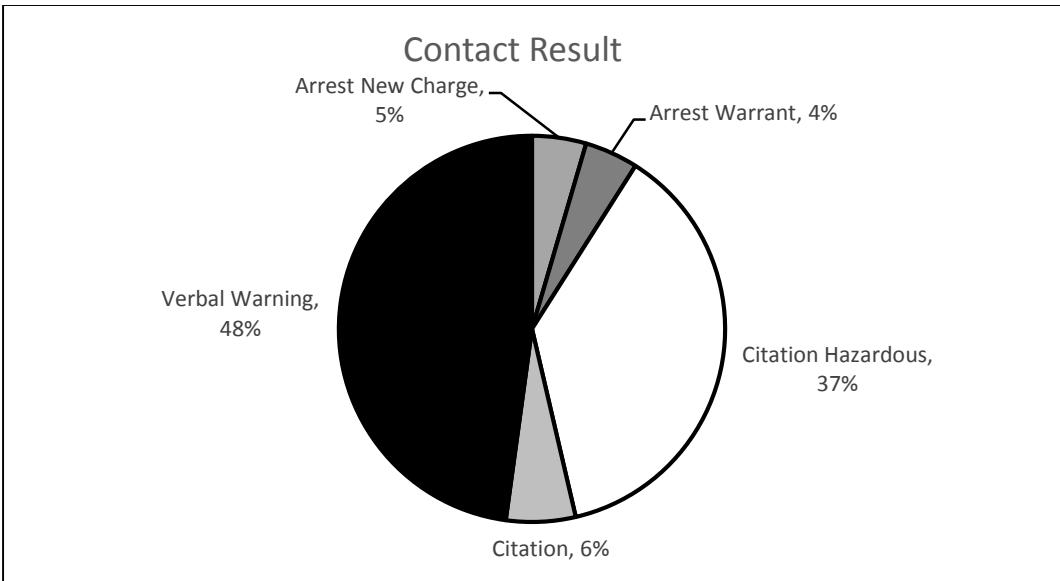


Figure 4. Result of contact.

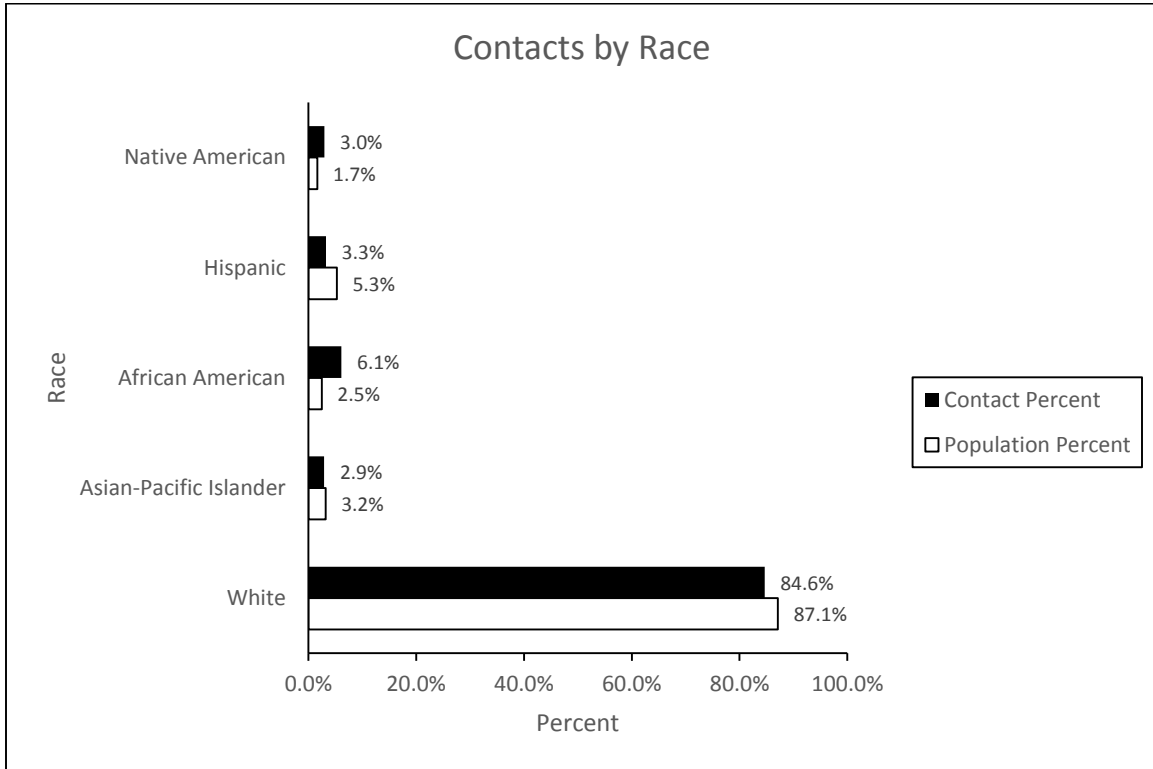


Race and Contacts

Figure 5 displays contacts by race, using the City of Spokane population as a benchmark. As one can see in Figure 5 African Americans make up 2.5% of the city population and 6.1% of contacts, and Native Americans make up 1.7% of the city population and 3% of contacts. The reasons for this observed disproportionality in contacts cannot be answered by the data from this study. It is noteworthy that Hispanics make up 5.3% of the city population and 3.3% of contacts, though again the

reasons for this observation are beyond the scope of the study data. The observed difference between population and contact proportions was beyond what chance alone would predict⁹.

Figure 5. Race and officer-civilian contacts.

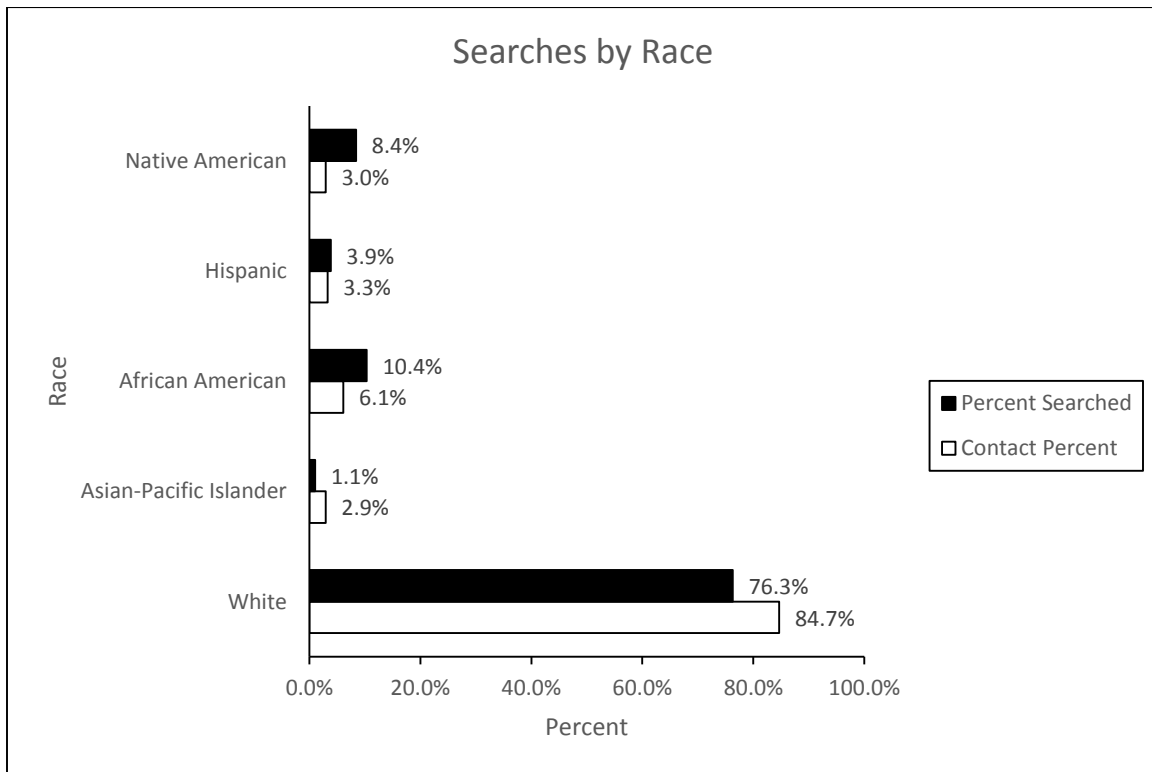


⁹ *Chi Square* = 492.6, *df* = 4, *p* < .05. Examining the standardized residuals revealed that differences between observed counts of contacts and the number predicted by chance were sufficiently large for African Americans (*sresid* = 19.1), Native Americans (*sresid* = 8.2) and Hispanics (*sresid* = -7.3) to influence statistical significance. A standardized residual with an absolute value greater than or equal to 2 can influence statistical significance.

Race and Searches

Of the 7,021 contacts there were 570 searches conducted, which was 8.1% of all contacts. Figure 6 displays search occurring by race, using the 7,021 contacts as a benchmark. As one can see in Figure 6 African Americans made up 6.1% of contacts and 10.4% of civilians searched, and Native Americans made up 3% of contacts and 8.4% of searches. Hispanics made up 3.3% of contacts and 3.9% of searches. The observed difference between contacted and searched proportions was beyond what chance alone would predict¹⁰, though race only accounted for 1.3% of the variability in whether a civilian in contact with an officer was searched or not¹¹. Although the study data cannot ascertain the thinking of either officers or civilians, the data do allow us to examine the relationship between the reason officers had to conduct a search and the race of the civilian being searched.

Figure 6. Search occurring by race.

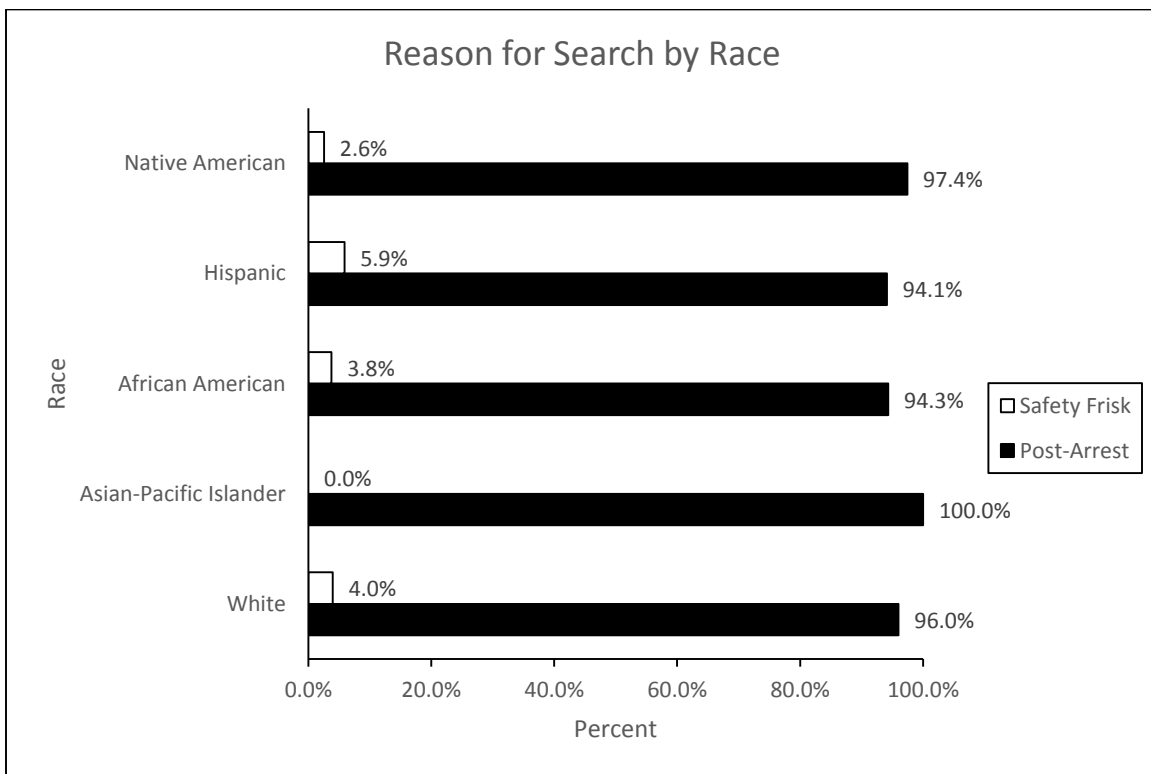


¹⁰ *Chi Square* = 93.7, *df* = 4, *p* < .05. Examining the standardized residuals revealed that differences between observed counts of contacts and the number predicted by chance were sufficiently large for African Americans (*sresid* = 4.1) and Native Americans (*sresid* = 7.6) to influence statistical significance, though this was not so for Hispanics (*sresid* = 0.7).

¹¹ The *Cramer's V* coefficient was .116 and its square, which is the coefficient of determination that estimates explained variance, was .013, hence 1.3% explained variability.

Figure 7 displays the reason officers had to conduct a search and the race of the civilian searched, using the group of civilians who were searched as a benchmark¹². Of the 570 searches reported in the data there were 490 (86%) that included data about the reason for the search¹³. Nearly 96% of searches were post-arrest and nearly 4% were officer safety frisks¹⁴. As one can see in Figure 7 the two reasons for searches were (a) post-arrest and officer safety frisks, and (b) members of each racial group were searched for these reasons at very similar rates. The differences in proportions of search reasons between races was not greater than what chance alone would predict, and race only accounted for 0.9% of the variability in reasons for searches¹⁵. Although the search data cannot explain the reason for arrests, the overwhelming proportion of searches being post-arrest point toward the arrest data for a deeper understanding of the small percent of officer-civilian contacts that result in a search.

Figure 7. The reason officers had to conduct a search and the race of the civilian searched.



¹² Recall that when examining the relationship between race and the reason for a search, the appropriate benchmark is having been searched, since one would have to be searched for any of those reasons to have been applied.

¹³ We acknowledge that 14% missing data is problematic and patrol officers are being re-trained on using the data collection instrument to ensure full data collection becomes implemented.

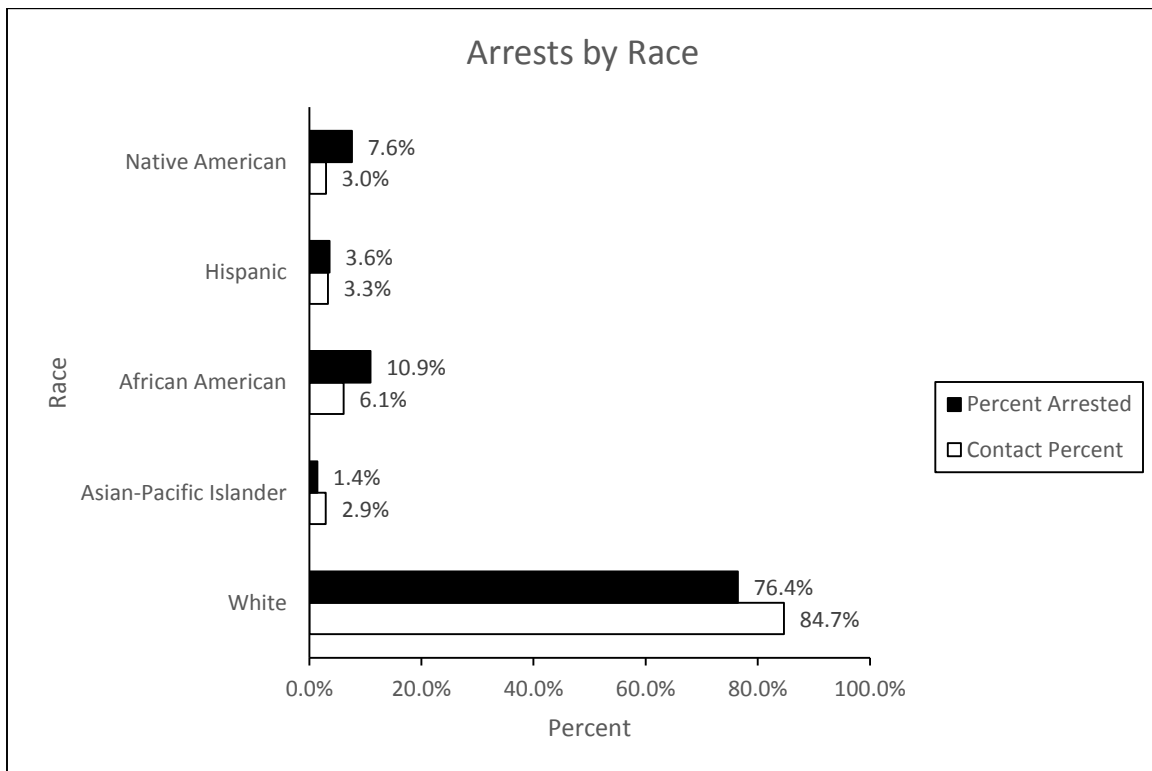
¹⁴ There was one search with warrant authority and the race of the civilian was African American.

¹⁵ *Chi Square* = 8.8, *df* = 8, *p* = .36. The *Cramer's V* coefficient was .095 and its square was .009, hence 0.9% explained variability. There were 40% of cross tabulated cells with an expected frequency ≤ 5 which limits the stability of the probability estimates and therefore the generalizability of this result.

Race and Arrests

Of the 7,021 contacts there were 632 arrests made, which was 9% of all contacts. Figure 8 displays arrest made by race, using the 7,021 contacts as a benchmark. As one can see in Figure 8 African Americans made up 6.1% of contacts and 10.9% of civilians arrested, and Native Americans made up 3% of contacts and 7.6% of arrests. Hispanics made up 3.3% of contacts and 3.6% of arrests. The observed difference between contacted and arrested proportions was beyond what chance alone would predict¹⁶, though race only accounted for 1.2% of the variability in whether a civilian in contact with an officer was arrested or not¹⁷. Although the study data cannot ascertain the thinking of either officers or civilians, the data do allow us to examine the relationship between the reason officers had for a search and the race of the civilian being searched. Although it remains true that the study data cannot ascertain the thinking of either officers or civilians, the study data again allow us to dig deeper and examine the relationship between the reason for an arrest and the race of the civilian being arrested.

Figure 8. Arrests made by race.

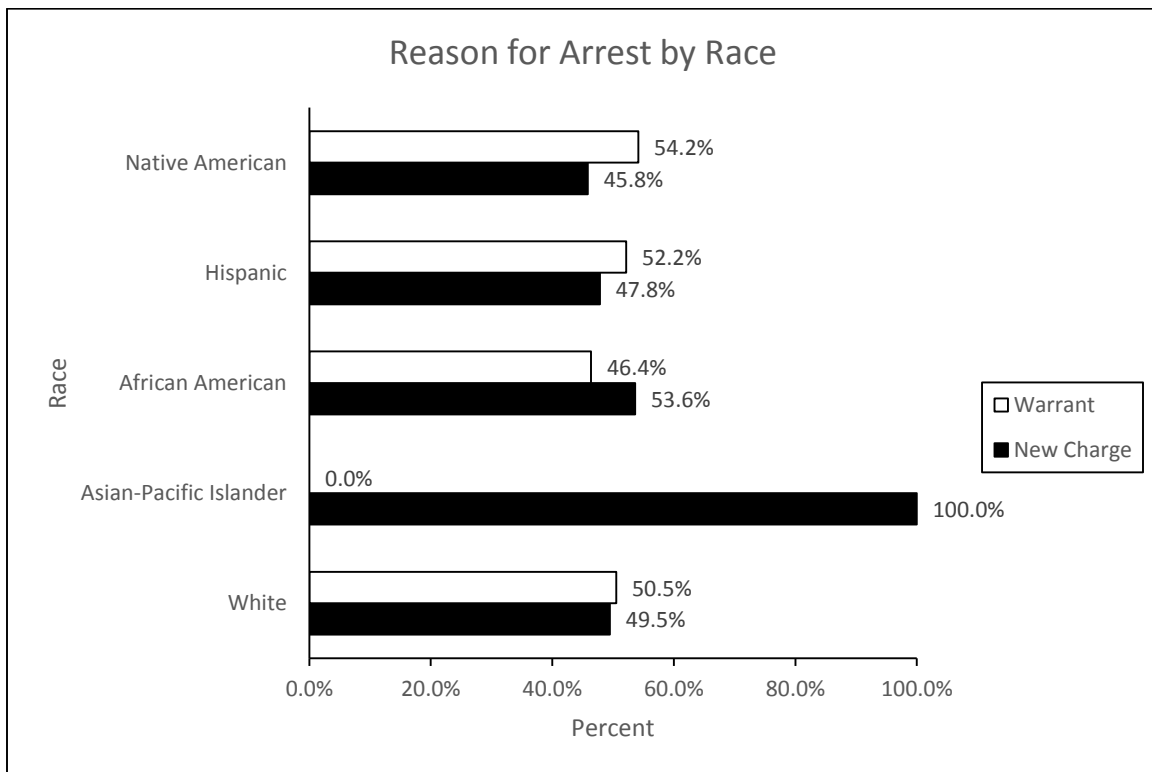


¹⁶ *Chi Square* = 87.1, *df* = 4, *p* < .05. Examining the standardized residuals revealed that differences between observed counts of contacts and the number predicted by chance were sufficiently large for African Americans (*sresid* = 4.9) and Native Americans (*sresid* = 6.7) to influence statistical significance, though this was not so for Hispanics (*sresid* = 0.5).

¹⁷ The *Cramer's V* coefficient was .111 and its square was .012, hence 1.2% explained variability.

Figure 9 displays the reason officers made an arrest and the race of the civilian arrested, using the group of civilians who were arrested as a benchmark¹⁸. There were two reasons for an arrest being made, which were for (a) a new charge or (b) an arrest warrant having been issued by a judge. Of the 632 arrests made there were 318 (50.3%) for a new charge and 314 (49.7%) for a warrant. As one can see in Figure 9 the proportions of members of different racial groups arrested for new charges or warrants are very similar to each other and to the overall proportions for the entire group of arrestees. One group that diverged from this pattern were the Asian-Pacific Islander group, of whom all nine arrestees were arrested for new charges. This observed difference was beyond what chance alone would predict though this result is a statistical artifact¹⁹. Aside from the one observed anomaly it appears that the reasons officers arrest people of different races occur at very similar rates²⁰.

Figure 9. The reason officers made an arrest and the race of the civilian arrested.



¹⁸ Recall that when examining the relationship between race and the reason for an arrest, the appropriate benchmark is having been arrested, since one would have to be arrested for any of those reasons to have been applied.

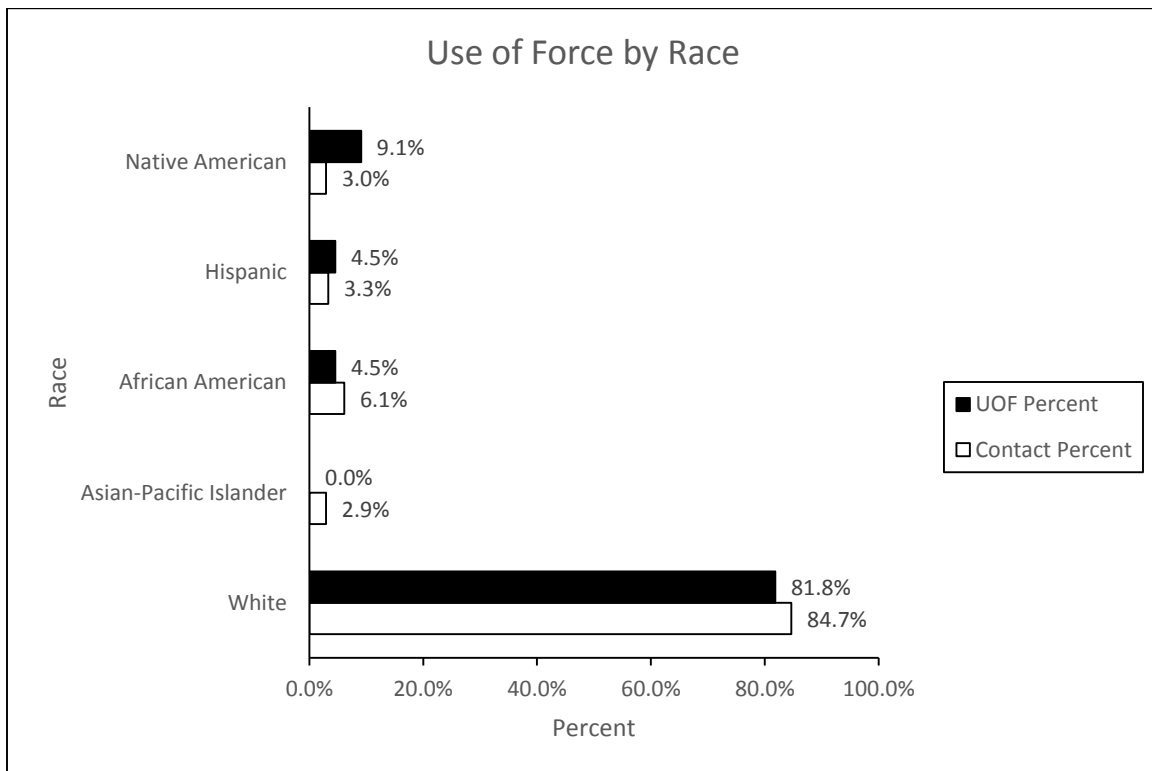
¹⁹ The standardized residuals for African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics, at .4, -.2 and -.4, respectively, for new charge arrests, and -.4, .2 and .4, respectively, taken with the 2.1 standardized residual for new charge arrests for Asian-Pacific Islander civilians, demonstrates that these nine arrestees are driving the finding of statistical significance and also modestly inflated the value of Cramer’s V to .124. The difference between the observed Chi Square value and the cutoff was only 3% (9.77 versus 9.46).

²⁰ When the nine API cases, which were 1.4% of cases, were removed the result was no longer statistically significant, and the observed Chi Square value was 90% the cutoff value (0.75 versus 7.82).

Race and Use of Force

Of the 7,021 contacts there were 22 incidents involving a reportable UOF, which was 0.3% of all contacts. Figure 10 displays UOF by race, using the 7,021 contacts as a benchmark. As one can see in Figure 10 Native Americans made up 3% of contacts and 9.1% of the UOF cases, and Hispanics made up 3.3% of contacts and 4.5% of UOF cases. African Americans made up 6.1% of contacts and 4.5% of UOF cases. The observed differences between racial groups in UOF cases was not beyond what chance alone would predict, and race accounted for 0.05% of the variability in whether or not force was used in a case, though the small sample size precludes a robust probability analysis²¹. Although no rational officer or civilian wants to see any force used in officer-civilian contacts and such incidents are quite infrequent in Spokane, urban reality repeatedly demonstrates that there will be cases where force must be used and as more data are accrued this analysis shall be repeated and as it is with low frequency events the probability analysis results may vary over time.

Figure 10. Use of force by race.



²¹ *Chi Square* = 3.6, *df* = 4, *p* = .46. Examining the standardized residuals revealed that differences between observed counts of UOF and the number predicted by chance was largest for Native Americans (*sresid* = 1.7) and was the only value to exceed 1. The *Cramer's V* coefficient was .023 and its square was .0053, hence 0.05% explained variability. There were 40% of cross tabulated cells with an expected frequency ≤ 5 which limits the stability generalizability of this result.

Application: Baseline for Deliberate Conversation

These data analyses are best considered as two things: (1) A baseline from which to consistently measure our community's progress in reducing racial disproportionality in officer-civilian contacts; and (2) A starting point for deliberate conversations between law enforcement officers and their leaders, with members of diverse communities throughout Spokane and their leaders. These conversations are necessary since numbers can only illuminate a path that is paved through narrative and these conversations must be ongoing because the ultimate direction of the path is not fully known to anyone. It is therefore abundantly clear that this report is not an end point in any way or manner.

No quantitative study can fully capture the phenomena it seeks to understand, and this one is no exception. On the topics of why searches were conducted and who force was used with, more data collected over time will hopefully shed a more stable light. As our SPD officers begin to collect age data as part of this process that will hopefully also add useful direction to our necessary conversation. Some will criticize the method of this study because we asked for officers' perception of civilians' races, despite the fact that the core question is, and a long history of allegations have been about, officers' perceptions. In addition to the logic of this methodology one could assume that at least some officer-civilian contacts are stressful for civilians and that officers asking about a civilians race during these time would hurt rather than help such situations, and would therefore introduce unnecessary risk. A different critique along a similar line is that we have asked officers to collect the data and that means the study is biased. These data do not paint the SPD in a uniformly flattering light, which speaks to the veracity of the data collection procedure.

Given the purpose of this report as a commencing point for deliberate conversation we shall not venture too much interpretation, though a few results warrant attention. It appears that a focus for discussing change is at the initial point of contact. Rates of disproportionality are quite similar for searches and arrests though slightly higher than for contacts and UOF. Very few searches are safety frisks and these frisks are applied uniformly across racial groups – it therefore does not appear that SPD officers are creating reasons to search people on the basis of race. The overwhelming majority of searches are post-arrest, and reasons for arrest are applied uniformly across races – it therefore does not appear that SPD officers are creating reasons to arrest people on the basis of race. The UOF data do not support allegations of systematic disproportionality, given that the proportions were not beyond chance alone, and appear to be in reverse of some disproportionality patterns, both for better and worse, though there are not many cases on which to base conclusions. That the UOF data from these five months in 2014 depart from past results may be in part attributable to training, specifically by March of 2014 all SPD officers had engaged in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) with staff members from the largest local public mental health center joining them. Additionally, during 2014 all SPD officers engaged in Verbal De-Escalation Training which included scenario testing at the end of the training in which a trained actor would respond in kind to officers' appropriate or inappropriate de-escalation responses.

Despite the legitimacy of some initial conclusions it is most important to remain aware that these findings are a baseline from which to measure our future results.

Since outcomes of contacts have some apparent uniformity and the risk of force being used is not beyond chance for race, contacts again appear to be the fulcrum on which the lever turns.

That the SPD has opened itself to outside data analysis, is sharing the results with the community and shall continue to collect and share these data will hopefully encourage us to engage in ongoing and deliberate conversations about disproportionate minority contacts with officers in our community. It is now time to complete with narrative what cannot be completed with numbers.

Appendix A: Data Collection Instrument

Interaction Background

Incident Number: _____

Officer Name:

Officer Personnel Number: _____

Stop Type:

- Motor Vehicle
- Bicycle
- Pedestrian

Interaction Reason:

- Moving Violation:
 - Hazardous
 - Non-Hazardous
- CFS Related
- Investigatory Stop
- Civilian Assistance
- General Broadcast
- DUI

Interaction Outcome:

- Verbal Warning:
- Traffic Citation:
 - Hazardous
 - Non-Hazardous
- Arrest Made:
 - Warrant
 - New Charge

Reportable Force Used?

- Yes
- No

Civilian Characteristics

Gender:

- Male
- Female

Race/Ethnicity:

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Eastern European
- Native American
- Asian
- Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern/East Indian

How Race Identified:

- Visually
- Civilians Speech
- Civilians Name
- Civilian Self Report

Search Conducted?

- No
- Yes
 - Vehicle Searched
 - Person Searched
- Authority For Search:
 - Incident To Arrest
 - Search Warrant
 - Officer Safety Frisk
 - Consent Search
 - Inventory Search
- Contraband Found?
 - No
 - Yes
- Property Seized?
 - No
 - Yes