

Lundman, Richard J. and Robert L. Kaufman. "Driving While Black: Effects of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender on Citizen Self-reports of Traffic Stops and Police Actions." Revised and under review.

Abstract

Are African American men as compared to white men more likely to self-report being stopped by police for traffic law violations? Are African American and Hispanic drivers more likely to perceive the stop as pretextual and less likely to report that police had a legitimate reason for stopping them? Do the special problems associated with encounters between police and citizens of color mean that African American and Hispanic citizens are less likely to exit their traffic stop encounters believing police acted properly. The present research provides multivariate answers to these questions using citizen self-reports of their traffic stops encounters with police from the Contacts between Police and the Public: Findings from the 1999 National Survey. Net of important explanatory variables (such as social class), the citizen self-report data indicate police make traffic stops for Driving While Black and male. In addition, African American and Hispanic drivers are less likely to report that police had a legitimate reason for the stop and less likely to report that police acted properly during the encounter. The paper also provides extended discussion of the validity of citizen reports of their encounters with police and an agenda for future research. The major conclusion is that there is clear need and ample scholarly room for additional research on Driving While Black using triangulated police-reported, citizen self-report, and observational data.