Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in the Tarrant County Juvenile Justice System

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Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) is a prevalent problem throughout the juvenile justice system. This analysis provides a thorough overview of DMC in Tarrant County at multiple juvenile justice system contact points. Each contact point was analyzed over a five-year period (2011-2015). The findings from this study provide a foundation for assessment and, ultimately, the development of interventions to alleviate DMC in Tarrant County.

**Introduction**

This analysis has identified several contact points in the Tarrant County Juvenile Justice System where DMC exists:
1. African American and Hispanic youth were disproportionately referred to TCSJ when compared to Caucasian youth.
2. Hispanic and African American youth were consistently overrepresented in the number of in-custody referrals. In the most recent years under analysis, Asian youth were significantly more likely to receive an in-custody referral when compared to Caucasian youth.
3. African American youth were consistently underrepresented in diversionary programs offered at TCSJ. This finding applied to Hispanic youth as well in 2015.
4. African American and Hispanic youth were detained at significantly higher rates than Caucasian youth.
5. African American and Hispanic youth were petitioned at higher rates than Caucasian youth.
6. Youth from all races received DPP at similar rates.
7. There was not any disproportionate minority contact in regard to the number of youth receiving a modification to an existing term or new term of court-ordered probation.
8. African American and Hispanic youth were placed at lower rates compared to Caucasian youth.
9. In general, African American youth were overrepresented in the number of youth committed to TJJD.
10. There was a consistent trend of minority overrepresentation in JAEP referrals.

**Future Research**

This data is not intended to suggest or provide evidence of racial bias or explain, to any degree, the various factors that contribute to disproportionate minority contact. A number of complex decisions and events impact DMC. Through continued research, Tarrant County will contribute to the statewide and national movements toward reducing DMC in the juvenile justice system.

**Methodology**

**Sample**
Referrals to Tarrant County Juvenile Services (TCJS) between 2011 and 2015.

**Contact Points**
- Referral
- Arrest
- Diversion
- DPP
- Placement
- TJJD
- Petition/Charges Filed

**Relative Rate Index (RRI)**
The RRI values if what to what degree disproportionate contact exists at each contact point. RRR = “The rate of minority youth at the juvenile justice system contact point.

The rate used in the RRI calculation is based upon activity in the preceding stage.

**Relative Rate Index (RRI)**

The rate used in the RRI calculation is based upon activity in the preceding stage. The red numbers in the table represent those that are significantly different from those of the general population.

**Relative Rate Index Values**

- 0.50 indicates the youth received a more restrictive disposition.
- An index of 2.00 indicates that the minority group has a rate twice greater than the majority group.
- 0.50 indicates the minority group has a rate two times greater than the majority group.
- **Insufficient number of cases for analysis**

**Results**

- RRI values that cause DMC concern can be greater than 1 or less than 1.
- There are contact points where a lower RRI suggests a disadvantage (i.e., indicates this youth received a more restrictive disposition).
- The red numbers in the table represent significantly different results.
- An index of 2.00 indicates that the minority group has a rate two times greater than the majority group.
- **Insufficient number of cases for analysis**

**Findings**

**Tarrant County Juvenile Probation Department**