An Analysis of DC's Stop-and-Frisk Practices

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GOVT 310 - Intro to Political Research

Background

- Terry Stops
  - *Terry v. Ohio* (1968)
- New York City, 1990s
  - Mayor Giuliani's crackdown - the Broken Window Theory
  - Mayor Bloomberg's Appeal - *Floyd v. City of New York* (2013)
  - Mayor de Blasio's Pushback - Eliminating stop-and-frisk
- Washington DC, 2018
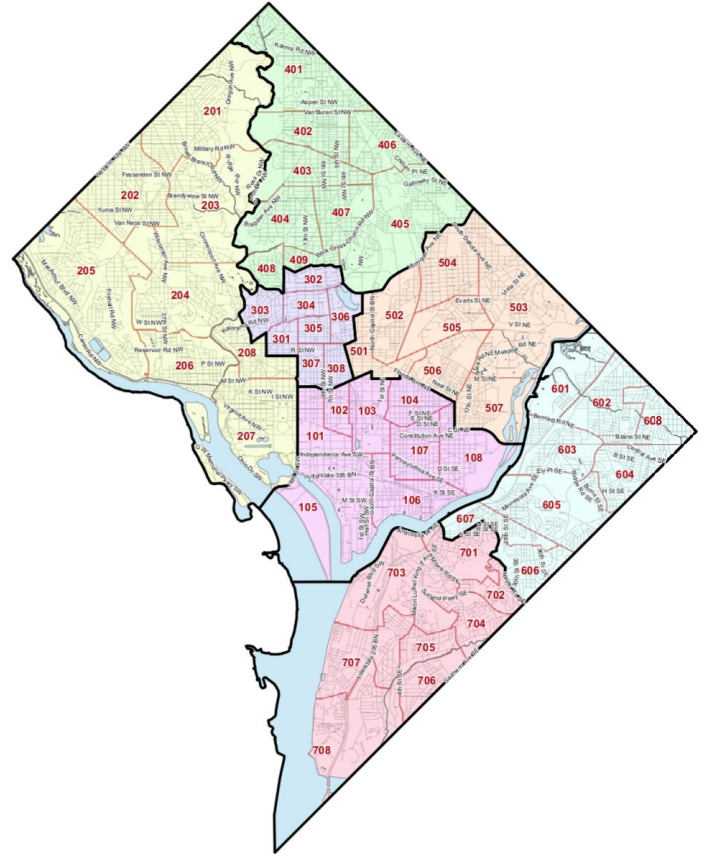 - Stop-and-Frisk still prevalent
  - NEAR Act (2016)

Our Research Questions

1. Is Washington DC's MPD stop-and-frisk practice discriminatory against black residents?

2. Is DC's MPD practicing stop-and-frisk in areas based off of racial composition or off of suspected criminal activity.

Our Results

- Given the sixteen reported reasons for stop-and-frisk, the practice disproportionately affects black residents

- Stop-and-Frisk practices did not disproportionately target areas with a higher proportion of black residents

- Stop-and-Frisk incidents occured in areas where the was a higher proportion of gunshots recorded
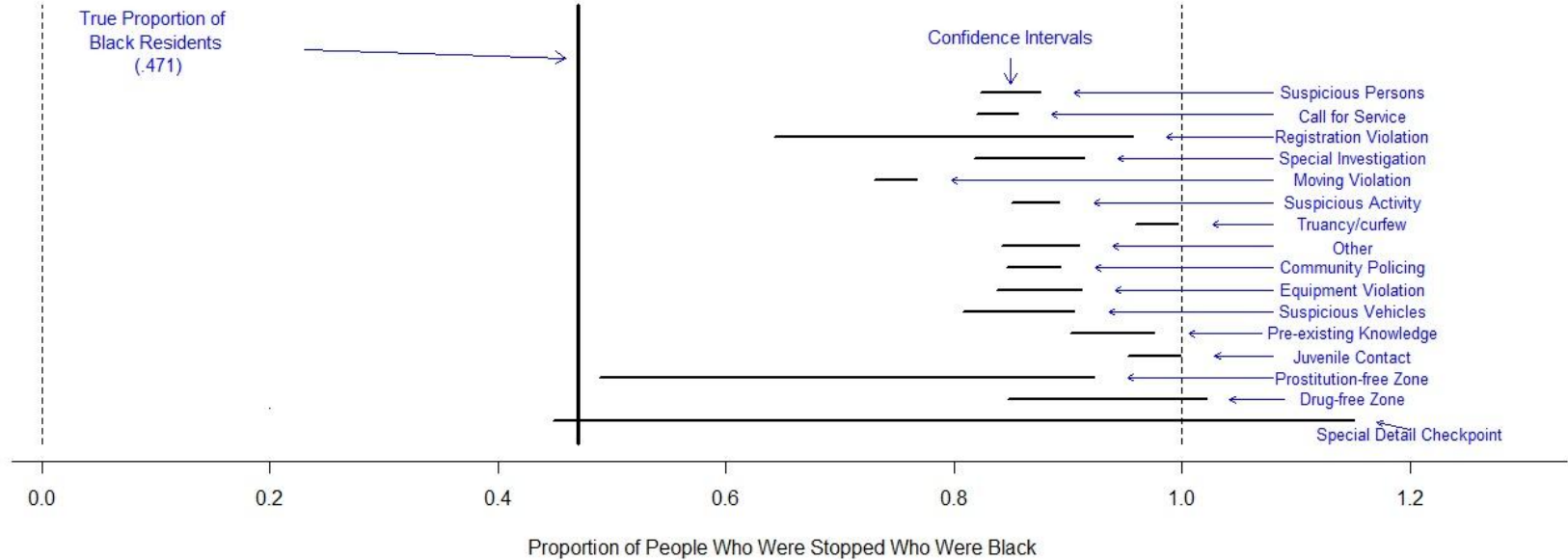
Data, Methods & Models

- Data:
  - Stop-and-Frisk Contact
    - Reasons for Stop
  - Stop-and-Frisk Incident
    - Race
  - ShotSpotter Reports
    - Latitude and Longitude
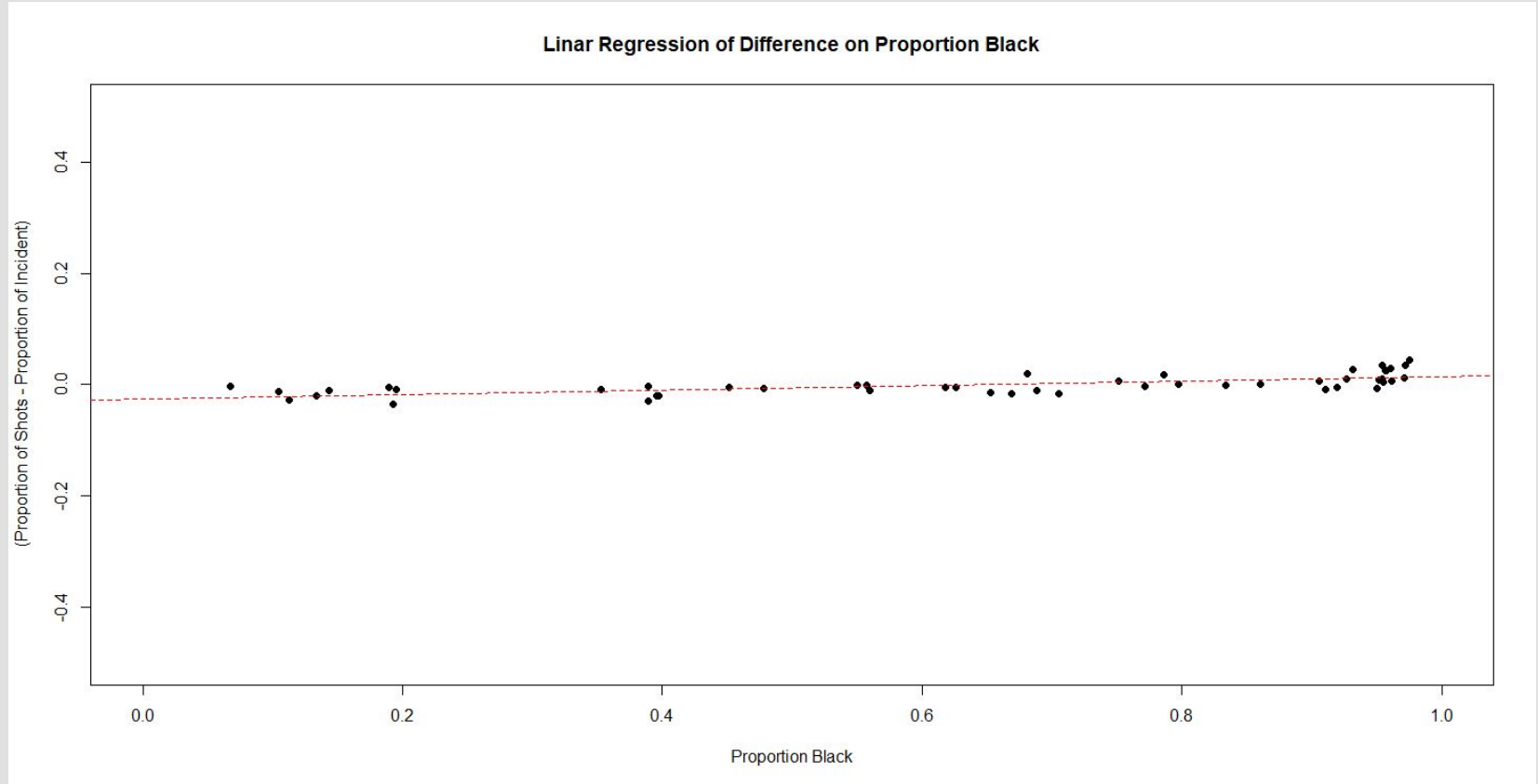
- Methods & Models:
  - Confidence Intervals for Blacks per Reason-for-Stop
    - H_0 (Black proportions) = .47 (actual DC prop.)
  - Linear Regression Testing
    - Shots per PSA - Incidents and Race
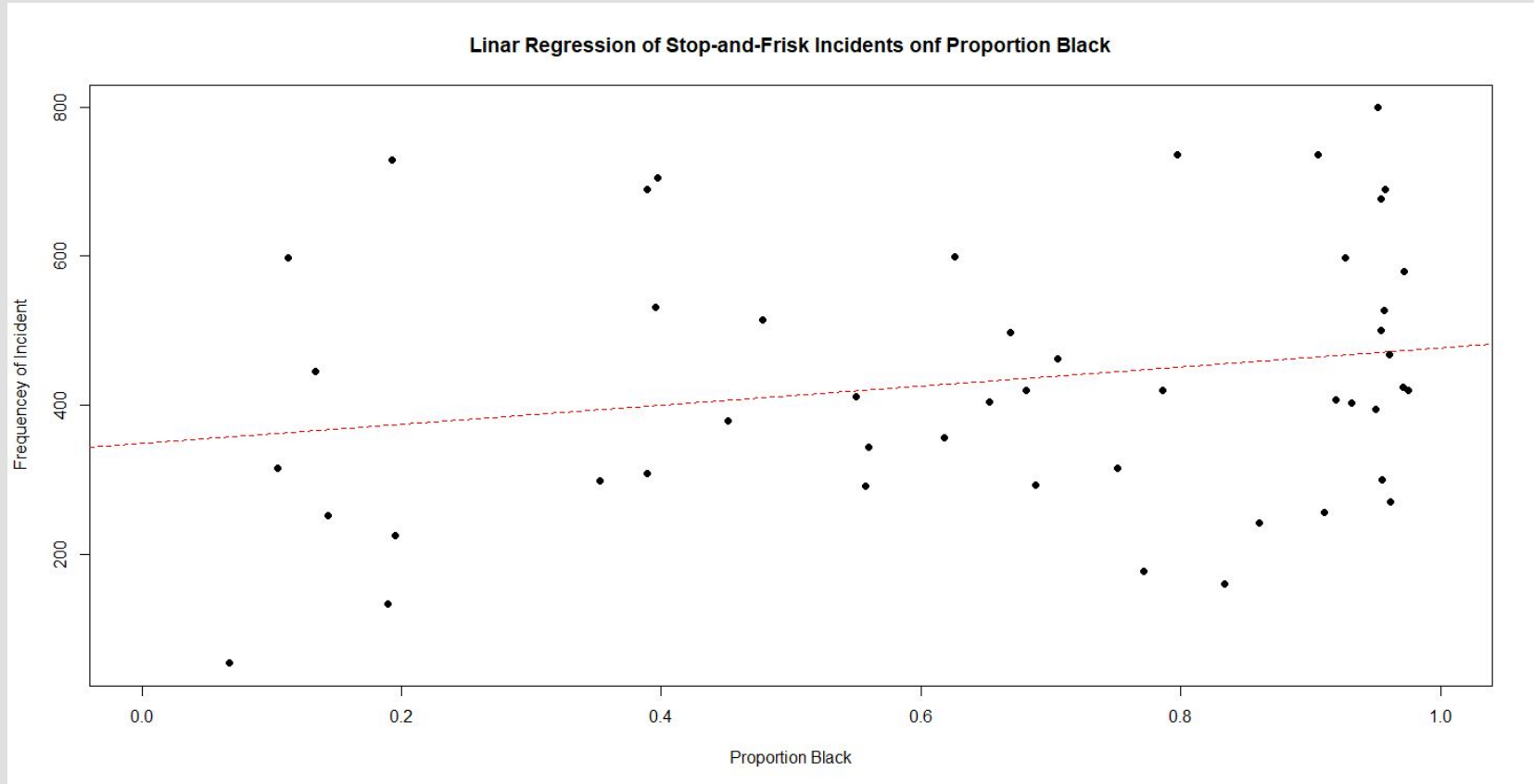   - Proportion of Incidents and Race

Confidence Intervals, Reason for Stop

Linear Regression Tests

Linar Regression of Difference on Proportion Black

Linear Regression Tests

Linear Regression of Stop-and-Frisk Incidents onf Proportion Black

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Conclusions:
  - Individual officers are choosing to conduct Terry stops in a discriminatory manner, but the department as a whole does not target communities with higher proportion of Black residents.

- Recommendations:
  - Increased bias training and subsequent evaluation of MPD activities
  - Police have a substantial amount of discretion when it comes to stop-and-frisk; requiring more data in line with the NEAR Act is a start to better understand MPD's individual behavior

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