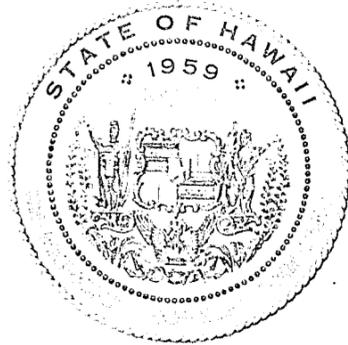
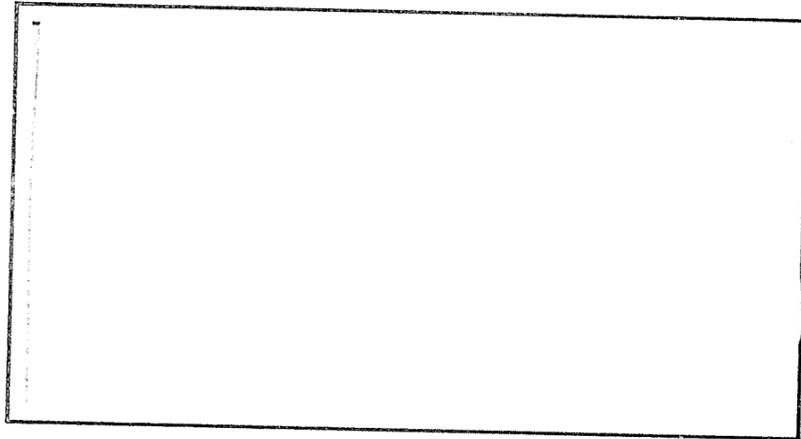


C.R. Sent
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
HAWAII CRIMINAL JUSTICE
DATA CENTER



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CONSIDERATIONS IN THE USE OF RACE DATA

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice 99715

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NCJRO
JUL 25 1985
ACQUISITIONS

CONSIDERATIONS IN THE USE OF RACE DATA

I. Introduction

Researchers must be careful when using data on race because race is not always viewed in the same way. For instance, health professionals are concerned with the biological aspects of race as they examine the risks of becoming ill, while sociologists study the attitudes and values of people who make up the community. Race is used as an indicator of heredity in the first case and of behavior in the second.

In the study of criminal behavior, attitudes and values are important. They are hard to measure or to generalize, however, because they are influenced by countless factors, many of which are interrelated. At the same time, different people may react differently to the same factors.

A first consideration is whether the race information recorded about the offender was truly self-reported. (See "II. Race Coding Methods".) The second is whether race information may be used to predict criminal behavior. (See "III. Race Coding Study".) This report

addresses these two considerations by describing variations in race coding practices and by examining actual data.

II. Race Coding Methods

Social science researchers sometimes look for the causes of behavior in the ways that the subjects regard themselves. Self-reported information may be used as a measure of self-image, attitudes, and values. It is important, therefore, that information to be used for this purpose be truly self-reported.

Some of the ways in which race is coded are presented in this section. The procedures described are those used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the State Department of Health, and the police departments.

U.S. Bureau of the Census

The Census form allows the respondent to indicate on a list the race group to which he belongs. The race categories listed are:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. White | 5. Filipino |
| 2. Black or Negro | 6. Korean |
| 3. Japanese | 7. Vietnamese |
| 4. Chinese | 8. American Indian |

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| 9. Asian Indian | 13. Eskimo |
| 10. Hawaiian | 14. Aleut |
| 11. Guamanian | 15. Other |
| 12. Samoan | |

Whenever someone of mixed race inquires about how to complete the item on race, he is instructed to select one category. If he cannot make a decision, he is then instructed to indicate the race of his mother.

If a form is received where more than one race group is indicated, the first group marked is recorded. If a combination of races is listed in the "Other" category, the first race listed is recorded for the individual.

Vital Statistics Cooperative Program

The Vital Statistics Cooperative Program of the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) uses the U.S. Standard Certificates for all vital events and participates in the Vital Statistics section of the Cooperative Health Statistics system for births and deaths.

To code race of parents on certificates of birth and fetal death, of spouses on certificates of marriage and

divorce, and of the deceased on the death certificate, the following criteria are used:

A) Single race groups coded are White, Hawaiian and Part-Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Samoan, Korean, Puerto Rican, Vietnamese, American Indian, Guamanian, and Black.

B) The coding procedure for mixed races requires the following:

1. Mixtures including Hawaiian are recorded as Part-Hawaiian.
2. Mixtures including White and Non-White races are coded as Non-White.
3. Mixtures of White races and mixtures of Non-White races are coded as the first race listed.

Health Surveillance Program

The Health Surveillance Program of the DOH interviews 2 percent of the population in its survey. The sample is chosen randomly and covers everyone in the selected household, regardless of age. The coding of race in

this survey is not based on self-identification but on the individual's report of his parentage.

Race information is collected for individuals, based on their parentage. Up to two races can be recorded for each parent. If "Hawaiian" is reported for a parent, it is always recorded. However, if a parent is of mixed race, which includes a race already listed for the other parent, that race need not be listed again. As many races as possible are recorded for the individual.

e.g. 1: Mary Doe's father is White. Mary's mother is Korean, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and Hawaiian. The race recorded for Mary's father would be White. The races recorded for her mother would be Korean and Hawaiian.

e.g. 2: John Doe's father is White, Japanese, and Hawaiian. His mother is White, Chinese, Hawaiian, and Filipino. The races recorded for John's father would be White and Hawaiian. The races recorded for his mother would be Chinese and Filipino.

"White" (or "Caucasian") includes Portuguese, Mexican, Spanish, Armenian, Iranian, Afghan and Lebanese. "Filipino-Spanish" is coded as Filipino, while Spanish combined with any other race is considered "White".

Health Surveillance Survey Form: Question on Race

10. Of what race or combination of races is:	Your father?	(If a combination of races, enter only the 3 major ones)	Father
	Your mother?		Mother

Hawaii County Police Department

At the Hawaii County Police Department, the arresting officer fills in the blank space provided for race information on the arrest form for the offender. The codes (OBTS/CCH Standard Abbreviations) usually used are the following:

1. White (W)
2. Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian (H)
3. Black American (N)
4. Filipino (F)

5. Japanese (J)
6. Chinese (C)
7. Samoan (S)
8. Korean (K)
9. Indian (I)
10. Other (O)
11. Unknown (X)

If the arrestee is of mixed race, he is asked which race is predominant, i.e. which race he identifies most with. The question is asked, regardless of whether or not the individual had mentioned "Hawaiian" among his various races.

City and County of Honolulu, Maui County, and Kauai
County Police Departments

At the Honolulu Police Department, the Maui Police Department, and the Kauai Police Department, when an individual is arrested, he is asked for personal information including his race. The information that he provides is then coded and included in the police department's records. (The OBTS/CCH Standard Abbreviations are usually used to code the race information.) All the races that are reported are

assigned codes and listed in a blank space on the arrest sheet. When the UCR statisticians review the information, they classify some of the information; arrestees of mixed race are counted in the category "Mixed Race" unless they are part-Hawaiians, in which case they are included in the category "Hawaiian".

(Note: In 1979, the coding procedure at the Honolulu Police Department for juvenile race information was changed. Part-Hawaiians had previously been classified as "Mixed" but were thereafter classified as "Hawaiian".)

III. Race Coding Study

To see how race coding methods affect data on race, the following issues were studied:

1. a comparison between incident counts and arrestee counts, since race data for repeat offenders would be counted more than once in incident counts;
2. the UCR method of race data presentation; and

3. a comparison of the arrestee sample population (1984) with the general population (1983) by race groups.

Adults arrested in the City and County of Honolulu in 1984 were the study population. A random sample was taken from the OBTS/CCH file, consisting of all cases occurring on each of eight days randomly selected from 1984. The days chosen were April 14, May 25, August 2, September 15, October 3, October 4, November 18, and December 6. Eight days were chosen because that number of days would provide at least 400 cases. (A sample size of approximately 400 was needed for a statistically valid test.) There were 522 arrestees in the sample.

Study Objective 1

Two methods were used to tabulate the data, counting arrestees and counting incidents. (In the UCR program, data are tabulated by counting incidents.) If the number of incidents is counted, the race categories of repeat offenders may be weighted.

Where arrestees were counted, if an individual was arrested on two different selected days, he would be counted twice in the study, but if he was arrested twice on the same day he would be counted once.

e.g. 1: John Doe was arrested twice on Day 1, once for robbery and once for DUI. He is counted once in this method.

e.g. 2: Mary Doe was arrested twice on Day 1, once for robbery and once for reckless endangering. She was also arrested on Day 3 for DUI. She is counted twice in this method.

A single incident may consist of several different charges. When counting cases by incident, however, one incident of several different charges would be one case. An incident is defined by the sameness of time and place of occurrence.

e.g. 1: John Doe was arrested twice on Day 1 at different times, once for robbery and once for DUI. His case is counted twice in the study.

e.g. 2: Mary Doe was arrested twice on Day 1, once for reckless endangering and once for robbery. She was also arrested on Day 3 for DUI. Her case is counted three times in the study.

e.g. 3: Jim Doe was arrested for DUI. At the police department, it was discovered that there were two warrants for his arrest (for contempt-C and for extradition). Three incidents are recorded for him.

In Study Objective 1, the number of incidents was compared to the number of arrestees.

Arrestee data collected by both counting methods were broken down according to six different race category divisions. Comparison between the divisions, which represent different ways of classifying individuals of mixed ancestry, showed the different results produced by using the classification methods. The divisions were:

1. White, Japanese, Hawaiian, Filipino, Black, Samoan, Part-Hawaiian, Non-Hawaiian Mixed, Other, and Unknown

2. White, Japanese, Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian, Filipino, Black, Samoan, Non-Hawaiian Mixed, Other, and Unknown
3. White/Part-White, Japanese, Hawaiian, Filipino, Black, Samoan, Non-White Mixed, Other, and Unknown
4. White, Japanese/Part-Japanese, Hawaiian, Filipino, Black, Samoan, Non-Japanese Mixed, Other, and Unknown
5. White, Japanese, Hawaiian, Filipino/Part-Filipino, Black, Samoan, Non-Filipino Mixed, Other, and Unknown
6. White, Japanese, Hawaiian, Filipino, Black, Samoan, Total Mixed, Other, and Unknown

The percentage distributions within these divisions were then compared between counting methods. The percentages of specific race groups differed by less than 1 percent. As an example, the distributions from the first race category division are presented in Figure 1.

The differences in the distributions between counting methods were minimal because there were very few instances of offenders being responsible for more than 1 incident per day. (Between days, there were only 2 repeat offenders in the sample.)

Information collected by the UCR system on arrestees would include multiple entries for individual offenders if they are arrested for more than 1 incident during the year. Repeat offenders would then skew the information about the race categories with which they identify. The number of days from which data were collected was small; however, the results suggest that re-arrests within the year are infrequent.

Study Objective 2

To compare the UCR method of race data presentation with other ways of examining the data, the sample data collected by counting individuals were used.

Data on the larger race groups (Caucasian, Hawaiian, and Japanese) were selected. The percentages of the total arrestee sample made up by these groups were presented in three different ways:

1. where the arrestees consisted of single race groups,
2. where the arrestees were of full or partial ancestry with respect to a given race group (an arrestee might be counted in more than one group), and
3. where the information reported by the arrestees was coded and presented according to the UCR race data presentation method.

When the race groups studied (White, Hawaiian, and Japanese) included individuals of partial ancestry, the percentage that each group comprised of the total sample increased. (See Figure 2.) The greatest relative increase occurred in the Hawaiian group (see Table 1), where there was an absolute increase in percentage of 13.8 percent. The absolute increase in the White category was 10.2 percent, and in the Japanese group, it was 2.7 percent.

In the Uniform Crime Reporting program, data in the White and Japanese categories are presented on the basis of single race while data in the Hawaiian

category include Part-Hawaiian offenders. (See Figure 2.)

Of interest are two cases where different race codes were recorded on forms for the same person. In the first case, the codes for Caucasian and for Portuguese were used, and in the second case, the codes for Hawaiian and for Hawaiian-Filipino were used. Although only two such cases were found in the study, they illustrate the fact that police department data on race are self-reported and that offenders may identify their racial backgrounds differently at different times, further complicating the research involving race data.

Study Objective 3

The race distribution of the 1984 arrestee sample was compared with the race distribution of the 1983 Health Surveillance Survey population (City and County of Honolulu). The sample data collected by counting individuals were coded according to the Health Surveillance criteria.

A similar comparison was drawn between the number of arrests (adults and juveniles) reported to the UCR program in 1984 for the State of Hawaii and the general

population distribution determined by the Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of the Population.

When the race category pattern in the 1984 study sample was compared to the pattern in the general population shown in the Health Surveillance Survey data for 1983, some differences were noted. (See Figure 3.) (This comparison was between data for the City and County of Honolulu.) The percentages of arrestees were higher than the percentages of the general population in the race categories of White, Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian, Black and Samoan. The percentages of arrestees were lower in the Japanese, Filipino, and Other groups.

When the race category pattern in the UCR arrestee population was compared to the pattern in the general population shown in the 1980 Census of the Population, a trend similar to the pattern in the first comparison was seen. (See Figure 4.) (This second comparison was between data for the State of Hawaii.) Only in the "Other" category was the trend different, where the percentage of arrestees was higher than the percentage of the general population. However, the degrees of the differences varied in some cases.

The greatest degrees of difference were shown in the White and Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian categories. (See Table 2.) The absolute difference in the White group was 10 percent more in the first comparison, and the absolute difference in the Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian group was 10.1 percent more in the second comparison.

The public frequently infers that the data identify the groups most likely to commit crime. Since the level of unreported crime is unknown, however, it can be said with certainty only that the data show which groups are arrested more (or less) frequently than expected.

Limitations

It should be noted that there are many limitations involved in this study and in dealing with the issue of criminal justice research using race data. The primary limitation is that the police departments collect race data mainly for purposes of offender identification; issues of self-identification and motives for offenses are not their immediate concern. The purpose of the police data collection system does not permit control for variations in the definition

of race nor for the possibility of repeat offenders identifying themselves differently each time. In addition, data reported to the UCR program on offenders are actually data on offender-offenses. That is, the information on race for an individual would be counted as many times as offenses were reported committed by that individual.

In this study, it must also be noted that in the comparisons between the arrestee population and the general population, the data for each population were collected differently. The 1984 arrestee study sample was selected regardless of offense type; the sample includes those who were arrested for traffic offenses and other county ordinance offenses. The UCR arrestee population includes all those arrested for Part I or Part II offenses and excludes those arrested for traffic offenses.

IV. Conclusion

There are many different methods used in coding data on race, determined frequently by the purpose of the system. These methods do not always provide self-reported data. If data are to be used in comparisons, however, they should be collected in as consistent a manner as possible.

When there are few repeat offenders within the time frame of the study, using the number of incidents and using the number of offenders does not affect race coding in the study.

The sizes of race groups including those of partial ancestry are not relative to the sizes of race groups consisting only of those of full ancestry. There are probably wider biological and cultural differences between the full ancestry and partial ancestry groups than within the groups. A more conservative approach, therefore, is to compare full ancestry groups to each other or partial ancestry groups to each other but not to select some of each in the comparison.

The relationships between the arrestee populations and the general populations in this study showed similar arrest trends among the race groups regardless of the type of offense.

When the public receives crime statistics dealing with race, it is often inferred that the groups identified are the most likely to commit crime. Perhaps this inference is based on the hope that profiles of those most likely to commit crime would lead to a

deterrence of criminal behavior. Since the level of unreported crime is unknown, it can be said with certainty only that the data show which groups are arrested most frequently. It is important that this difference be clarified by criminal justice researchers so that it may be understood and accepted by the public.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. 1980 Census of the Population, General Population Characteristics: Hawaii, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, PC80-1-B13.
2. "Racial Differences Between Linked Birth and Infant Death Records in Hawaii", Hawaii State Department of Health, R&S Report, Issue No. 44, September 1983.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1
PERCENT OF ARRESTEES
BY RACE AND PRESENTATION METHOD
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
1984 SAMPLE (n=522)

Race	DATA PRESENTATION METHODS			UCR
	Full Ancestry	Full and Partial Ancestry	Difference	
White	37.7%	47.9%	10.2%	37.7%
Hawaiian	4.8%	18.6%	13.8%	18.6%
Japanese	9.6%	12.3%	2.7%	9.6%

TABLE 2
ARRESTEES COMPARED
TO THE GENERAL POPULATION

Race	C&C of Honolulu			State of Hawaii		
	% Arrestee Sample 1984	% H.S. ¹ 1983	Diff. ²	% UCR Arrestees 1984	% 1980 U.S. Census	Diff. ²
White	37.7	25.3	12.4	35.4	33.0	2.4
Japanese	9.6	23.1	-13.5	7.2	24.9	-17.7
Hawn/Part-H	18.6	17.6	1.0	23.1	12.0	11.1
Filipino	8.4	10.5	- 2.1	11.8	13.9	- 2.1
Black	5.0	2.1	2.9	3.8	1.8	2.0
Samoan	5.0	1.3	3.7	4.2	1.5	2.7
Other	15.8	20.1	- 4.3	14.5	13.0	1.5
Total ³	100.1	100.0		100.0	100.1	

NOTES:

- ¹ "H.S." represents "Health Surveillance".
- ² Negative difference (Diff.) indicates under-representation.
- ³ Total may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

FIGURE 1.
ARRESTEE COUNT VS. INCIDENT COUNT
C&C OF HONOLULU
RANDOMLY SELECTED DAYS FROM 1984

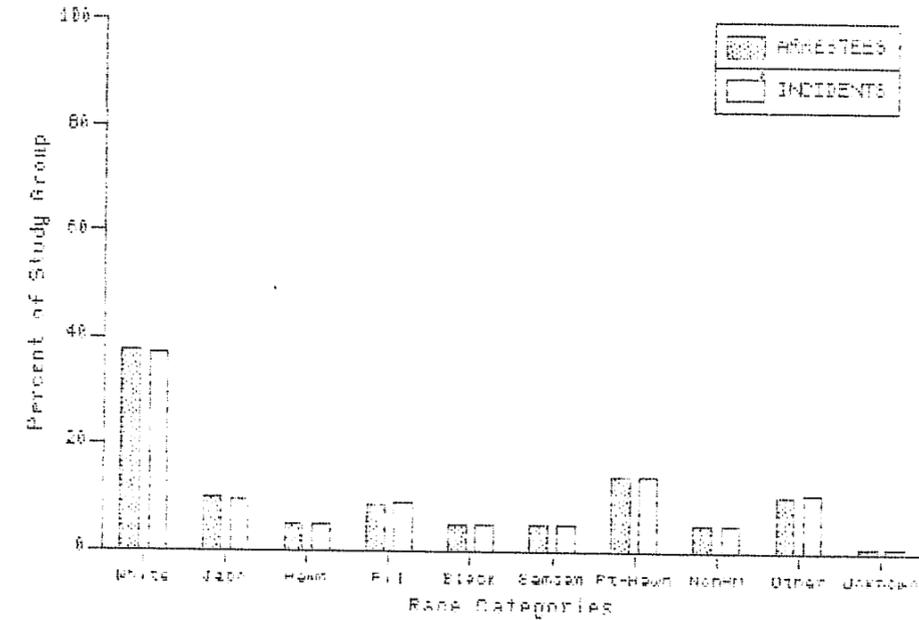


FIGURE 2.
DATA PRESENTATION METHODS
C&C OF HONOLULU
1984 SAMPLE (n=522)

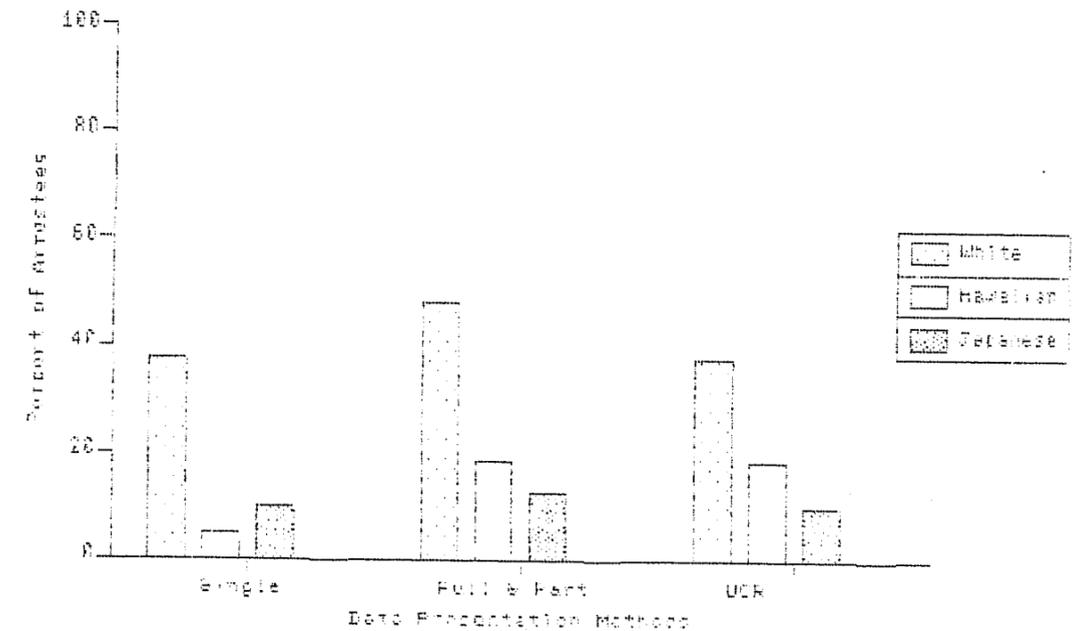


FIGURE 3.
 ARRESTEES COMPARED TO GENERAL POPULATION
 C&C OF HONOLULU
 ARRESTEE SAMPLE 1984 VS. HEALTH SURVEILLANCE DATA 1980 (N-021)

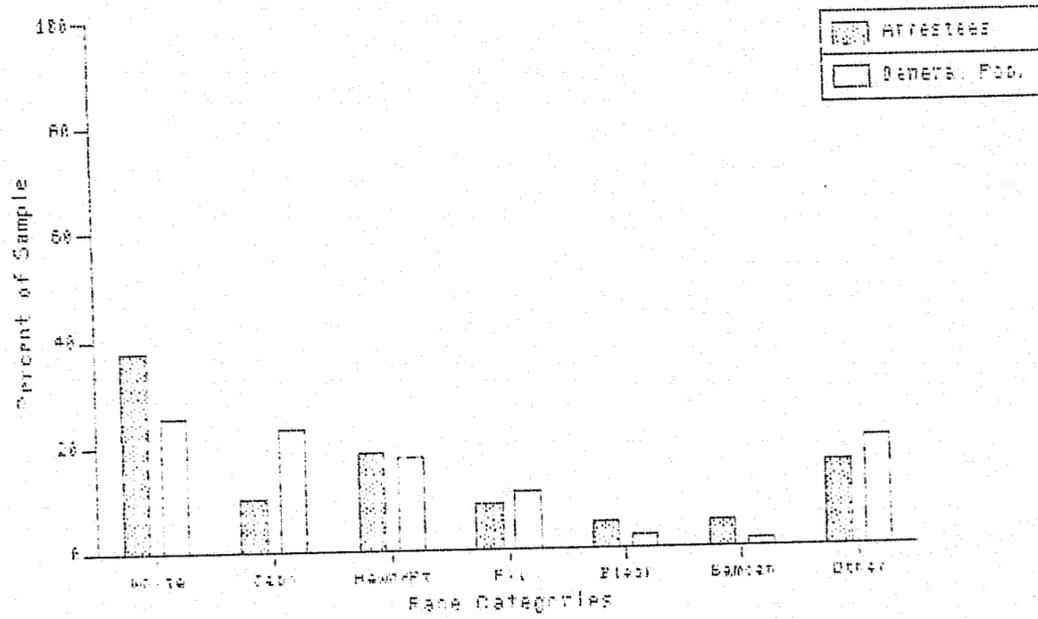
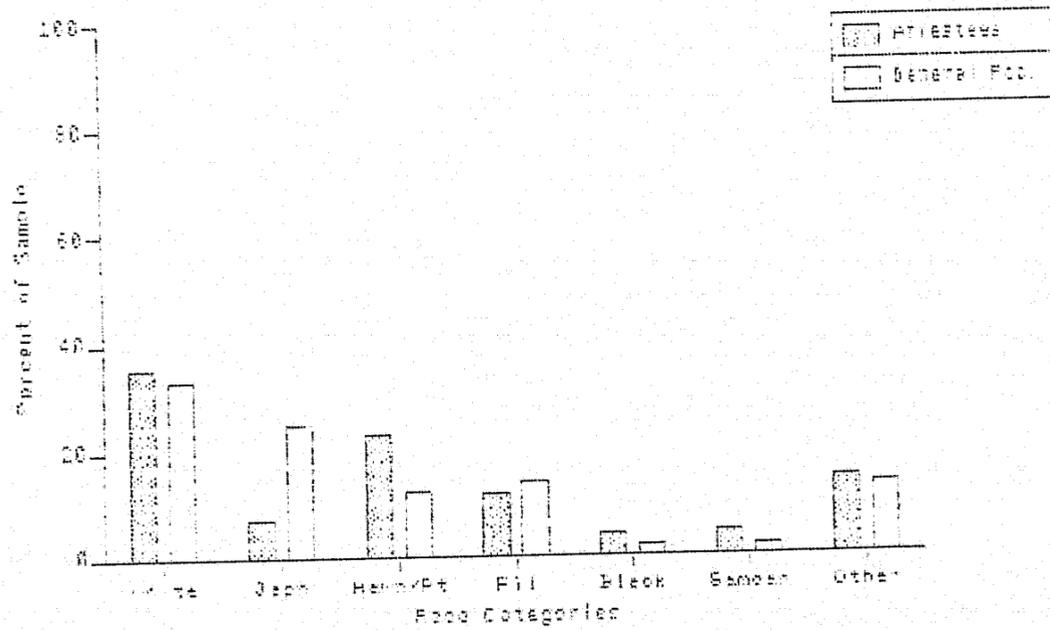


FIGURE 4
 ARRESTEES COMPARED TO GENERAL POPULATION
 STATE OF HAWAII
 DCF ARRESTEE DATA 1984 VS. 1980 CENSUS OF THE POPULATION DATA



END