

Behind the Decision on the Stop-and-Frisk Policy

August 12, 2013

A federal judge on Monday ruled that the stop-and-frisk practices of the New York Police Department in recent years violated the constitutional rights of New Yorkers by targeting young minority men for stops.

Opinion excerpt

In one example, the judge, Shira A. Scheindlin, noted how reasons for the stops differed for blacks and for whites.

Unconscious bias could help explain the otherwise puzzling fact that NYPD officers check

“Furtive Movements” in 48% of the stops of blacks and 45% of the stops of Hispanics, but only 40% of the stops of whites.¹⁵⁹ There is no evidence that black people’s movements are objectively more furtive than the movements of white people.

She was referring to an analysis of Police Department data commissioned by the Center for Constitutional Rights, a plaintiff in the lawsuit. Police officers record data on each stop that they conduct, including the factors that led to the stop.

Stops citing each factor, by suspect's race



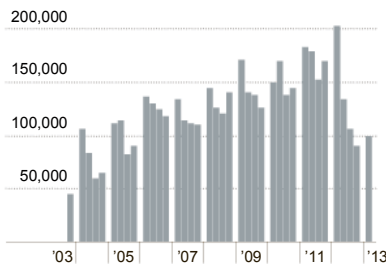
Data for January 2010 - June 2012.

10 years of stop-and-frisk

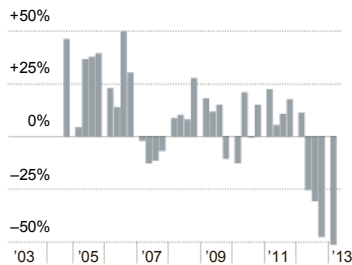
Stops by the police grew substantially under the Bloomberg administration, though the practice began to decline last year.

The percentage of stops resulting in an arrest has remained at roughly 6 percent over the past 10 years.

Total stops, by quarter



Change from previous year



Share of stops involving arrests



Sources: Opinion by United States District Court Judge Shira A. Scheindlin; Center for Constitutional Rights; New York City Police Department