

Stop and Frisk Report Summary

October 2014

Key Facts

- 63% of Boston police-civilian encounters from 2007–2010 targeted Blacks, even though Blacks made up less than 25% of the city's population.
- Even after controlling for crime, Boston police officers were more likely to initiate police encounters in Black neighborhoods and to initiate encounters with Black people.
- Boston police gave essentially no justification for 75% of these encounters, simply listing "investigate person" as the reason.
- More than 200,000 encounters led to no arrest, and only 2.5% led to seizure of contraband.

Summary

The Boston Police Department (BPD) has used racially biased policing, as shown by data from reports of 200,000+ encounters between BPD officers and civilians from 2007–2010. According to researchers, the data show that *police targeted Blacks in 63.3% of encounters—while Blacks make up less than a quarter of Boston's population.*

This racial disparity cannot be explained away by BPD efforts to target crime. The researchers' preliminary statistical analysis found that the racial composition of Boston neighborhoods drove police-civilian encounters *even after controlling for crime rates and other factors.* They also found that Blacks were more likely than whites to be subjected to repeat police-civilian encounters and to be frisked or searched, even after controlling for civilians' alleged gang involvement and history of prior arrest.

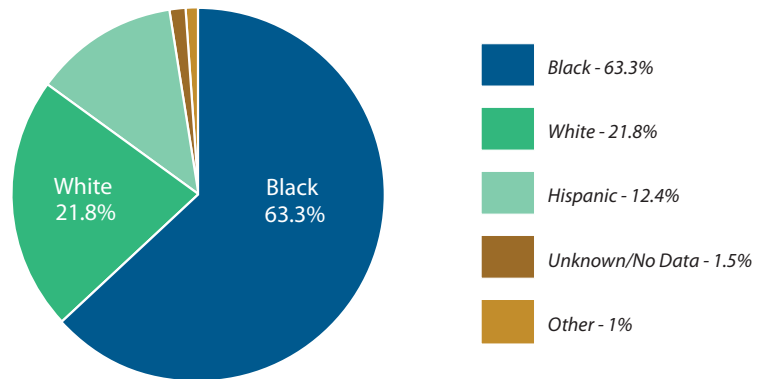
The bottom line is that race was a significant factor driving the BPD's stop-and-frisk practices.

This racial disparity was *not the result of crimes being committed* by the people subjected to these encounters. The 200,000+ encounters involved stops, frisks, searches, interrogations and observations that did *not* result in documented arrests or criminal charges. And only 2.5% of these encounters led to a seizure of contraband. Worse yet, BPD officers gave essentially no justification for conducting most of these 200,000+ encounters. In three out of four of them—roughly 150,000—the officer simply listed "investigate person" as the reason for targeting someone. The Fourth Amendment, however, requires individualized, reasonable suspicion to conduct any stop or frisk.

Who's Stopped and Who's Not

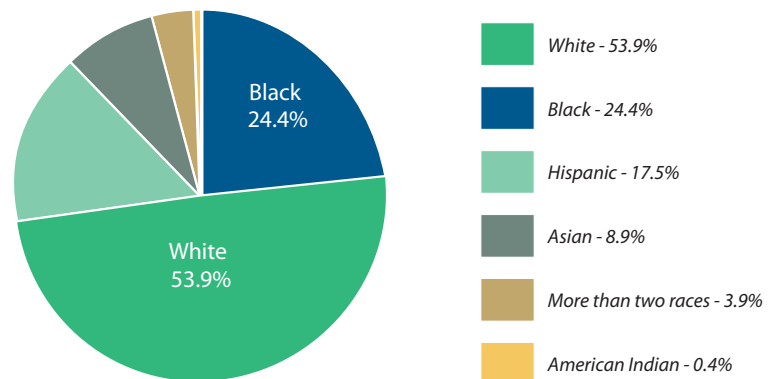
Boston Police-Civilian Encounters

Blacks accounted for more than 3 out of 5 FIOFS (Field Interrogation, Observation, Frisk and/or Search) in 2007-2010 but represent less than 1 of 4 people in Boston.



Boston Population

2010 U.S. Census data



ACLU

aclum.org/stopandfrisk

An officer's decision to "investigate person" cannot establish reasonable suspicion because it fails to explain why the officer initiated the encounter. It's like writing, "because I said so."

Just as in New York, where similar problems with stop and frisk have made national headlines, the BPD's racially biased policing has marginalized, stigmatized and alienated Boston's communities of color.

Where do these numbers come from?

In 2009, the ACLU of Massachusetts began investigating the BPD's stop-and-frisk practices. For nearly five years, the ACLU of Massachusetts, joined by the national office of the ACLU, has worked to make information about the BPD's stop-and-frisk program available to the public.

As a result, the BPD commissioned a research team to review police-civilian encounter reports from 2007 to 2010, conduct a statistical analysis and issue a report. This research team shared preliminary results with both the BPD and the ACLU in March 2014. Those results confirm what we had long heard from communities of color: police unfairly target young men of color.

Recommendations

In contrast to similar stop-and-frisk abuses in New York, the Boston Police Department has a chance to be a national leader if it chooses to "ACT" with Accountability, Constitutionality and Transparency. Specifically, the ACLU has three main recommendations.

- 1. Body-Worn Cameras:** require all officers who engage in any police-civilian encounters to wear and use body-worn cameras during every interaction with the public.
- 2. Police-Civilian Receipts:** provide documentation—i.e., a receipt—to any civilian involved in a stop, frisk, search, or consensual interview or search.
- 3. Regular Data Reporting:** publish on a quarterly basis electronic data on all stops, frisks, searches, observations, and consensual and non-consensual interviews and searches, including a breakdown by race, gender, age, and the officer's basis for the encounter and action.

Neighborhood Disparities: Boston Police-Civilian Encounters from 2007 – 2010, in the Three Most-Targeted and Three Least-Targeted Districts

