Stop And Frisk: Stop The Injustice

Carl Moore

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Prof. Covert

Thesis : The officers enforcing the stop and frisk policy are specifically targeting members of the “minority” and/or colored population.

The “stop and frisk policy is a current controversial practice carried out by the New York City Police Department as well as other State Law enforcement agencies. The policy and its procedures stem from a Supreme Court case in the late 1960’s pertaining to constitutional rights versus legal/justified police practice. The main objective(s) of the policy is to prevent and reduce crime. The guidelines of the policy are to detain, question and or search individuals deemed to be suspicious, suspected to have committed a crime or is assumed to be in the process of committing one. The officers that carry out these orders have stirred an uproar due to multiple cases of individuals who were completely innocent being deprived of their constitutional rights. Time and time again officers have been abusing their authority and specifically targeting men of “color” or the “minority” population due to discrimination and racism. In their own defense the police department and its officers claim that’s not the case and in fact their aim is reducing crime and only targeting those they find suspicious regardless of race.

Individuals of the minority population, being African American or Latino have been the main targets of the stop and frisk policy. Statistics have provided data that shows most of the individuals that were deemed “suspicious” turned out to be completely innocent. For example Judge Shira Scheindlin pointed out that between 2004 and 2009 for every sixty-nine people that were stopped due to suspicion of having a weapon, only one actually had a weapon (Sullum). The amount of encounters between individuals in New York City and the police was around 700,000 with a ratio of only .033 guns being confiscated (Sullum). From the public’s view as well as mine there would appear to be no correlation between these two statistics but the Mayor of NYC at the time, Michael Bloomberg, thought otherwise. His opinion was that the program was being effective stating that “the whole idea is not to catch people with guns; it's to prevent people from carrying guns”. This statement by the mayor appears to be an attempt to justify random searches of individuals whether or not they are suspicious in a plot to seize as much weapons or scare people from carrying guns. This ideology seems to be pointless because data shows it’s not being effective of reducing guns on the street, but only making people not carry them. In the end the individuals still possess the guns whether or not they are in the streets; which does not eradicate the threat.