



Research In the News

Questions
About
the Article ?

FERGUSON POLICE AND RACIAL BIAS

This article reports the finding from a U.S. Justice Department study that investigated the arrest trends by the Ferguson Police Department after the Ferguson, Missouri, police killing of Michael Brown. After analyzing police records for the years 2012 through 2014, the report concluded that blacks were more likely to be stopped and arrested for many offenses. For example, a black motorist who was pulled over was twice as likely to be searched compared to a white motorist, despite the fact that searches of white drivers were more likely to uncover drugs or other contraband. The report concluded that Brown's death was not the cause of the racial unrest in the city, it was simply the "spark that ignited years of pent-up tension and animosity in the area."

1. The reaction of a former mayor of Ferguson was highlighted in the news article as noting that the Justice Department's report was based on incomplete data because it did not take into account the number of people from surrounding towns who visit Ferguson to shop. How could this issue be controlled in the analysis of the police data?
2. If you were a researcher, how would you measure citizens of Ferguson's degree of trust in the police? What hypothesis would you state regarding the variables of race and trust in police?