

ABSTRACT

This study aims to put in a historical and social context to the data about marijuana possession arrests in Brooklyn's 71st and 78th precincts in 2010. The project uses 2010 Census data on racial demographics in Brooklyn and New York City to reinterpret the NYPD Arrest Data on marijuana possession arrests and the race of perpetrators. Whereas the 2010 Census shows that Brooklyn and New York City had "White alone" as the largest group in the "Race and Hispanic Origin," "Blacks" account for the highest percentage of marijuana possession arrests in both precincts. The differences in the number of marijuana possession arrests between the 71st and 78th precinct demonstrate that physically connected spaces produce different statistical data because these neighborhoods were policed differently. In 2010, the 78th precinct (Park Slope) was mostly white and super-gentrified with a total of 86 marijuana possession arrests. The 71st precinct (cross-section of Crown Heights, Wingate, and Prospect Lefferts Gardens) was mostly black, with one in five residents living below the poverty line and a total of 962 marijuana possession arrests. The project takes into account historical and social contexts—the history of drug use, policing, and gentrification—to provide a new interpretation of the statistical information in an effort to understand why racial disparities in policing persist.