Police stops and racial profiling
Evidence from the SVR Integration Barometer

Summary

This policy brief examines police stops in connection with visible physical features that are often perceived in Central Europe as markers of "foreignness". Since there are no (administrative) data available in Germany on this connection, information on phenotypic *difference* on the one hand and police stops on the other were drawn from the SVR's 2022 Integration Barometer, a representative survey of people in Germany with and without a migration background. It is the first analysis based on a representative set of data to establish that **people whose (physical) features suggest foreign origin – such as a dark complexion or headscarf – are stopped more frequently by the police than people whose appearance does not set them apart from the "white German" norm.**

The analysis of data in the 2022 Integration Barometer shows that 8.3 per cent of people who state that they are perceived as foreign owing to their appearance are stopped by the police, that is twice as frequently as people who are not perceived as foreign (4.4%). Adolescents and (young) men between the ages of 15 and 34 who report being perceived as phenotypically different are stopped by the police statistically significantly more frequently than their male peers without such physical features. The probability that young men between the ages of 15 and 34 who report being perceived as phenotypically different will be stopped is 18.4 per cent – significantly higher than for their peers without those features (11.9%). The probability of women in the 15 to 34 age group who are perceived as phenotypically different being stopped by the police is also higher, though at lower rates overall than for their male peers. **The findings from the SVR Integration Barometer thus indicate that racial profiling is an empirical reality in Germany.** Nevertheless, it is not possible to firmly establish whether this discrimination against those who do not conform to the "white German" norm is only down to the police's "racist glasses", since other effects and variables of which account could not be taken may also play a role here.