



The RHI's
Ambassadors Series

**Red Hook Initiative
Report Community
Residents For Safe
Neighborhoods and
Against Stop and Frisk:
Revisited**



10 Years Ago, RHI Partnered with other Civic Action groups like the ACLU, NYCLU, and Vocal NY to examine the impacts of Stop and Frisk policing tactics. A survey was distributed to over 700 Red Hook residents and

The City of New York, decided on August 12, 2013, to outlaw Stop and Frisk policing. US District Court Judge Shira Scheindlin ruled that stop-and-frisk had been used in an unconstitutional manner. This at the time seemed to be a major win for heavily policed, black and brown communities. Unfortunately, we would soon learn that Stop and Frisk was not outlawed, just renamed.

Broken Windows Policing and Neighborhood Safety teams are a return to those policing practices.

A review of the NYPD's stops-related data shows that in 2020, the number of reported stops was at its lowest ever — 9,544, down from 13,459 in 2019 and 11,008 in 2018. Despite the drop, the racial disparity remained as stark as ever, with New Yorkers of color making up 91 percent of those stopped, roughly the same as in the two years prior.

Black New Yorkers, who account for 24 percent of the city's population, accounted for 56 percent of those stopped last year.

We asked RHI's Public Safety Organizers to write their opinions on Broken Windows policing, in comparison to the data given in the Original Stop and Frisk report.

Before though. We asked for a comment from one of the Individuals most involved with the planning and execution of this study, Dr. Anna Ortega Williams.

We wanted to know what inspired RHI to support this initiative.

Youth in Red Hook deserve to live, feel free, laugh with depth, and have enough room in their days to be their whole creative and most expressed selves.

Racial profiling by police halts this freedom. It invades space for connection and disrupts ease. Police profiling in public housing is a persistently violent state of being that has intergenerational impact. Youth are resilient in the face of this harm, but they shouldn't have to be. The energy that they expend, looking over their shoulders worrying about being harmed and if they'll make it home can be spent in countless other ways-- on their passions, love, desires for the present and future. We owe that to them. The adults who are shaping and enacting policies and procedures, who stand by and don't interrupt this violence against Black, Latine, and Asian youth in Red Hook, owe it to them to consider their needs and fight for social change. They are carrying the gaps in our imagination. May this research project where they amplified their own voices continue to resonate in our ears as we create different possibilities alongside them.



Red Hook initiative report

Community Residents For Safe Neighborhoods and Against Stop and Frisk

Our Concerns about Stop and Frisk

According to the latest full annual data collected by the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) in 2011, “New Yorkers were stopped by the police 685,724 times. 605,328 were totally innocent (88 percent). 350,743 were Black (53 percent). 223,740 were Latino (34 percent). 61,805 were White (9 percent). 341,581 were aged 14-24 (51 percent)”. Additionally, the NYCLU discovered in first quarter of 2012 that New Yorkers were stopped by the police 203,500 times already, and the statistics remain consistent: 181,457 were totally innocent (89 percent). 108,097 were Black (54 percent). 69,043 were Latino (33 percent). 18,387 were White (9 percent). (Source: <http://www.nyclu.org/issues/racial-justice/stop-and-frisk-practices>).

If 87% of people stopped and frisked in all of New York City by the NYPD are Black and/or Latino, and 51% are youth between 14 and 24 years old, how many people would that lead to in a neighborhood that is predominantly of that racial/ethnic identity and age? In the NYCHA Red Hook Houses, in which the population has 99% Black and Latino residents, with 35% under the age of 24, “stop and frisk” encounters are concentrated, as are the ramifications.

RHI

Background Historical Information on Stop and Frisk

The Red Hook Initiative (RHI), is a community center located in Red Hook, Brooklyn that is run primarily by Red Hook residents to serve their community. At RHI we believe that social change to overcome systemic inequities begins with empowered youth. In partnership with community adults, we nurture young people in Red Hook to be inspired, resilient, healthy and to envision themselves as co-creators of their lives, community and society. Therefore, it was a natural fit for RHI to join the local neighborhood effort, lead by Occupy Red Hook, to hold the NYPD responsible for biased policing tactics. Occupy Red Hook is an alliance of Red Hook neighbors committed to social justice in the community. The formed through the inspiration of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

RHI chose to stand in solidarity with groups like NYCLU, VOCAL, ACLU, and Occupy Red Hook to demand justice. We began with an effort to better understand the scope of “stop and frisk” in Red Hook, Brooklyn. RHI’s Community Change Workers (CCWs), who are RHI’s organizing and media team, consisting of young adults and mentors, set out to collect the stories of encounters with police in and around the NYCHA Red Hook Houses.

It is vital that biased policing is confronted and addressed in Red Hook, citywide, and nationally. It is of the greatest urgency for those who live in publicly funded low-income housing because of the impact. The connection is related to the historic roots of Stop and Frisk and its relation to drug use and sale.

Stop and Frisk was legally sanctioned in 1968 under the federal Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act. The practice was key to what Richard Nixon coined the War on Drugs in 1969. Marijuana arrests are the most common offense associated with stop and frisk. According to the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA), over 50,000 arrests were made in 2010 for marijuana possession, “more than for any other offense” in New York City (Source: DPA, March 2011 report).

If someone is arrested for marijuana possession and lives in public housing, according to the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 and the One Strike and You’re Out Initiative launched under President Clinton, they could be evicted. Entire families could be legally homeless whether they knowingly or not, allowed any criminal activity to occur within their apartment or anywhere in the vicinity (Alexander, 2012). The DPA white students who are middle and upper class report higher usage of marijuana. They are underrepresented in arrests, public housing, and stop and frisk encounters. Therefore, Blacks and Latinos are subjected to harsher consequences for the same offenses.

According to Western and Wildeman (2009), the hyper-focus of the government upon crime, is in avoidance of the social and economic needs in low-income communities.

Surveillance, arrest, and mass incarceration, is more well funded than the Summer Youth Employment Program, and other needed resources in education, health, and housing (Alexander, 2012).

It is the stand of the Red Hook Initiative that this is intricately related to systemic inequities in our society.

We will therefore continue our work on the local and citywide level to confront this injustice and promote community and youth empowerment.

Process and Methodology

RHI's organizers conducted a survey, utilizing Participatory Action Research methods. The team, all of whom are Red Hook residents, designed and distributed the survey to collect their data.

Additionally, the team learned interview techniques and basic video production skills to capture the stories and images of the those subjected to "stop and frisk".

The team collected surveys from 761 respondents from February through June 2012.

Additionally, the team decided that documenting the abuses related by residents was not enough. They attended five 76th Precinct meetings to share with the Police Captain their concerns regarding "stop and frisk" in Red Hook. Our RHI community organizers conducted outreach for the meetings alongside Occupy Red Hook members. Oftentimes, because of their effort, the meetings were almost double the regular attendance.

The organizers connected the local occurrence to the citywide outcry regarding biased policing. They attended monthly planning meetings and attended two rallies with Voices Of Community Advocates & Leaders (VOCAL-NY) to denounce "stop and frisk" practices and the mass incarceration of Black and Latino youth. The organizers collected surveys and footage while door knocking, talking to neighbors at bus stops, health clinic, and other populated public places within the community.

Findings

The 761 respondents were representative of the Red Hook community, including both New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents, private homeowners, and private renters. Demographically, 414 were Black (54%), 181 Latino (23%), 91 White (12%), 56% male, 40% female. Of these respondents, 53% were stopped and frisked. 50% said force was used and 89% said the NYPD was not courteous, professional, or respectful. 26% said that they were arrested and 26% were given a summons. In the 76th Precinct 81% of stops were Black and Latino (Source: Center for Constitutional Rights <https://stopandfrisk.org/stop-and-frisk-map-nyc>). Trends of places where people were stopped and frisked included major streets and intersections in the neighborhood, such as Lorraine Street, West 9th and Columbia Streets, Bush Street, and Dwight Street. Coffey Park was also identified as a place where people have been stopped and frisked, however according to those that responded, lobbies and staircases were also notable. All of the streets listed most repeatedly surround public housing.

In terms of racial and ethnic correlates for being stopped and frisked, Red Hook was different from the city average. In NYC in 2011, 9% of Whites were stopped. In Red Hook, 40% of White respondents had been stopped. Similarly, the statistics were higher in Red Hook for Blacks and Latinos. As mentioned earlier in this report, according to the NYCLU in 2011, 54% and 33% of those stopped and frisked were Blacks and Latinos, respectively. In Red Hook, of those surveyed, 65% were Black and 70% Latino were stopped. Respondents cited “fitting the description” and “suspicious conduct” as primary reasons for being stopped. Many were unsure of the reason. Fear and distrust of police was identified as common repercussions of “stop and frisk” encounters. A common request from respondents was that the NYPD apologize to them after an unjustified stop and frisk.

Next Steps

- Meet with the new captain to see what efforts officers can do to ensure just treatment of all community residents.
 - Join NYCLU campaign.
 - Develop our own phone app and train users to document police brutality and biased policing.
 - Continue collaborating with citywide/national campaigns.
- Have local legal clinic with Know Your Rights training.
 - Encourage residents to use CCRB procedure.

References

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**What do the young
adults in our
community have to
say about these
policing procedures?**

**HOLD THE POLICE
DEPARTMENTS
ACCOUNTABLE FOR
STOP AND FRISK TACTIC**

publication by: Ann Doc, Public Safety Organizer

According to the NYCLU, New Yorkers have been stopped and frisked over 5 million times since 2002. In 2021 alone, 8,947 stops were recorded and 61% were innocent. To begin, like many other civilians, I am against being stopped and frisked simply because we should be able to step outside and feel safe without having to feel like we are the targets of our broken system. A system that allows police officers to racially profile people of color without consequences.

Furthermore, police officers are using their authority to stop and frisk civilians based on their social class and their environment. They're most likely to heavily enforce the stop and frisk tactic in black communities and less likely to enforce it in a white neighborhood. I

am against Stop and Frisk because it gives police officers the power to antagonize and terrorize Blacks and Latinos. I've never witnessed a police officer stop and frisk a white man before, ever. Lastly, I strongly feel that the court system is looking past the aftermath of being stopped and frisked, for instance, the effects this tactic has on the black and brown communities whether it's mental or emotional. Especially when the majority of police encounters with the black community are negative and end with petty arrests.

The community already lacks trust and respect for police officers and I believe allowing them to stop and frisk is making it worse. Nobody should have the power to approach someone and frisk them without any visible reasons.

The Struggles of youth

publication by: Dylana Bourne, Public Safety Organizer

Living in low income communities of color is not an easy thing to do. There are so many obstacles people have to endure. Firstly, particularly in Red Hook, Brooklyn I have been living here for over 15 years and there have not been many healthy changes over the years. Red Hook has been a part of Brooklyn that has often been forgotten about. The residents of this neighborhood have been exposed to so much inadequate policing and unfair treatments. Specifically the young adults living in the neighborhood. With so much violence and gun violence it has spread to be somewhat “normal” to be a bystander, victim, or even some people are praised for being the one to actually do it. For starters let me just say I do agree with some things police officers may have to do to keep people safe. However, it’s inadequate policing and I don’t agree with that because these laws and directions that the NYPD has are mainly affecting black and brown communities because all of the policing procedures are being heavily enforced only in certain communities. Furthermore, a lot of times a young person may not fully know their rights so if a police officer does just happen to try to ask for identification or try to stop and frisk that young person now may react in a way that they can get locked up for and that’s all the police officer is looking for at times. Growing up in Red Hook has shown me what reality looks like for a lot of individuals. Especially people in my age range. I was fortunate enough to come from a family that valued education and pushed me to achieve what is most important in my life. However, many of my peers did not have that. A lot of my friends had parents who suffered from alcoholism and substance abuse, domestic violence in the home, sexual abuse from relatives and all kinds of other unfortunate situations. All that along with not having adequate housing, not having access to healthy food options, not having access to adequate education. Then I think back and all I can say is what are the odds of my friends making it out the “hood”? Some don’t even see themselves as being anything more than what they already are. It’s heartbreaking that people who are so young can feel as if they have so little to live for. There needs to be more resources in place to limit these experiences that communities of color and youth go through. Systematic oppression also has a big part to play in all of these traumas and outcomes. The mind is pure when we are first born but the ways we learn and grow molds a huge part of who you are growing up and when you become an adult. Policing in low income communities is a way to keep people in poverty and in prison. It affects my neighborhood so much because everyone is walking on eggshells and having to think about whether they will fall victim to inadequate policing.

The NYC Shake down report

publication by: Christian rose, Public Safety Organizer

In New York City as a young black man there's a very high chance you would either have experienced or been informed about Stop and Frisk encounters with the NYPD. I have been harassed by the police multiple times but the one time it really changed my mindset was a plain clothes police encounter. This happened one summer night at the age of 16 I was with a group of other young black men going home from a party in Bed-stuy then stopped by four officers in a black vehicle. Just our luck we were walking in a high crime area and based on their perception of us they started to physically harass us by doing a pat down & asking for information we know nothing about. This was violating our human rights without saying a reason. I feel like police target the youth in any negative way they see fit all the time which takes an emotional and mental toll on us as a whole. "New Yorkers were stopped by the police 685,754 times. 605,328 were totally innocent (88 percent). 305,743 were black (53 percent)." According to the latest annual data collected by the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) in 2011. The Red Hook Initiative (RHI), a community center located in Red Hook, Brooklyn NY, gained data from biased policing in the low-income housing neighborhood. Due to retaliations of drug use and sales it became a target of stop and frisk. This shows that innocent people are mainly targeted in neighborhoods of low income and they're being racial profiled in these areas.

The Criminalization of Black and Latinx People Through Policing.

publication by: Ashley Craig, Public Safety Organizer

After the case of Terry v. Ohio, the supreme court determined police officers were allowed to stop and frisk a citizen based on “reasonable suspicion” that a crime has been, is being, or will be committed by the person being searched. This law aimed to decrease crimes such as burglary, petit larceny, vandalism, marijuana possession, and possession of other drugs. It is also meant to warrant safety for officers who believe their suspect may be armed and dangerous. While this legislation’s objective was to decrease crime, studies have shown that it has made no difference. This is because the majority of stops are not based on probable cause. Stop and frisks are a discriminatory law used to further criminalize black and latinx people in New York City and they create a psychological issue for those victim to it.

Police officers having so much leeway to create a suspicion, or excuse, to stop and search someone’s persons creates a mental dilemma for those subject to that kind of discrimination. As a black or latinx person who is aware of the power dynamic between them and cops, this law being in effect changes how people live their lives day-to-day, from not wanting to spend time outside in their neighborhoods, to not trusting the police to protect and serve as they were “meant” to do. In 2016, a young queer man was stopped and while being searched the officer found condoms in his bookbag, accused him of being a sex worker, and he unfortunately spent the night in jail. This story alone shows the amount of elbow room officers have to shift their own biases into “reasonable suspicion”. Stop and frisk laws should be amended to be more strict in order to decrease the amount of freedom officers have to excuse their discrimination or even removed to stop the disparity between who is being impacted by them.

Are Police Here For The Safety Of Us ?

publication by: Jamel Evans, Public Safety Organizer

After learning more about policing and seeing with my own eyes how the justice system works, and how they go about their procedures that they use, I believe that cops are not here to protect and serve my community and with that being said I don't feel safe around police any more.

The Criminal justice system uses procedures like “Stop and Frisk” or “Broken windows” to target people of color in poor, underserved neighborhoods. They would look at you and stop you just because of either suspicion or just because of what you are doing, your color, or just who you hang around they will stop you. That's a form of microaggressions. You could be so innocent and they arrest you. So what happens after? It's on your record, now you can't get a job because of a random suspicion of you having possession of something illegal or you being part of criminal activity.

Within policing, cops will also try to scare people by Harassing them or following people around the neighborhood. That's physical harassment. And for them to boost the budget of the NYPD more than any other system in the world to me is crazy.

Many people may feel differently and happy about that policing because they never came from or grew up in an environment where there are limited resources. We are forced to either hustle your way out the hood or figure out how to survive and hustle in the street. Where it feels like you're in jail but really not. Cops on every block like security. Just hoping something happens. So do I believe the police are here for the safety of us? No i do not.

Stop and Frisk Doesn't Make Us Feel Safe

publication by: Karla Osorno, Public Safety Organizer

Stop and frisk is a procedure where police officers search people that are perceived as suspicious, a threat, or resembling a wanted criminal. People of color are most likely to be targeted for stop and frisk searches by the police. It is unfair for people of color to be searched solely based on the way they look, or the area that they are located in. It is dehumanizing and humiliating for people. As a woman of color, I don't want to be afraid of the police searching me at any random time just because of my identity. I've heard stories of women who have been stopped and frisked and many would agree that male police officers take advantage of their authority to grope women. In the article "For Women in Street Stops, Deeper Humiliation", a few women recount their experiences of being stopped and frisked and talked about how humiliating and uncomfortable it was. One woman had her purse searched where the police found her underwear and birth control pills. Another woman spoke about being unfairly searched when the police were looking for a male suspect. I also remember hearing of a story of a muslim woman who was groped by the officers and had her hijab removed when the officers searched her. These are the types of negative experiences I am afraid of encountering. I think that it is unfair that the police officers who are supposed to protect us and bring us justice, are the ones who make us feel unsafe and discriminate against us. I think actions like this are disgusting and disrespectful. We should feel safe by our officers.

Are We Really Safe?

publication by: Endiya Beard, Public Safety Organizer

In New York City some police officers believe they are doing good policing and some others would disagree. Microaggressions have increased in the police force, to where they can't understand the toxic actions that they put out. Most citizens would agree that some officers don't manage how they treat those they encounter, just for the fact that they have a badge and the jurisdiction on their side. Looking into our neighborhoods there are multiple cases where someone got harassed by a cop or arrested for completely nothing. As a citizen I believe the body cameras should not be taken lightly and should be regularly checked for the agency to know what happens out on the field. There are so many times where a stop and frisk has gone wrong and how many more cases or people it's going to take for the government to realize. Racial profiling, for a cop to not have the intelligence and to stop someone without any evidence based off a look or race it's getting out of control and people need to realize that. The NYPD is here for our safety when the output is violence. There's a lot of women and black young men out here who are tired of looking over their shoulder, tired of wondering if it could be them next and they're tired of losing family because of the NYPD. A new set of guidelines need to be in place because we don't feel safe and they don't get paid to see everything from our point of view or perspective.. We are the ones with the consequences and the ripple effect that happens all because a cop stops and suspects something just because I am me, if it's viewed as a threat to them then how could we ever be safe?

Suspicious

publication by: Faith Anderson, Public Safety Organizer

“You fit the description”, said those of us harassed by the police in the guise of keeping the peace called stop and frisk. See the concept of stop and frisk is “fair” but the NYPD has a history of targeting black and brown people. With stop and frisk (54%) of black people were stopped on the street compared to our white counterparts (9%). According to the Study and Review based upon RHI 2011 Stop and Frisk Report. The fact of the matter is that stop and frisk is a break of privacy and personal space and well-being. Not being able to go outside without the fear of being harassed and groped up by the police going through your whole body. I think of the black women who get stopped and frisked and groped up and felt on by creepy police, who don't respect women's bodies. I get scared by the thought of that happening to me, so I can only imagine how the other women felt, how all the black men felt getting stripped down in broad daylight. I thought that was in the corner of Brooklyn. Redhook wouldn't be affected by this because I never thought Redhook to be a crazy place. On the contrary, stop and frisk was a problem here as well. The findings of the Study and Review are based on the RHI 2011 Stop and Frisk Report. Surveying all of the residents of red hook including NYCHA residents a those who don't live in public housing. Demographically, 414 were Black (54%), 181 were Latino (23%), 91 were White (12%), and 56% were male, and 40% Female. Of these respondents, 53% were stopped and frisked. Shocking but I'm not surprised. I just hope that in the future the NYPD will work towards more ethical ways of serving justice.

"IT NEVER WORKED!"

publication by: Knowledge Westbrooks , Public Safety Organizer

In 1968 stop and frisk was made legal when federal omnibus crime control accepted the safe streets act. By definition, Stop and Frisk means the following; the policing practice of stopping a person briefly in order to search them for weapons or prohibited items. In theory this allows law enforcement to apply preventive measures towards potential threats. However , the data collected overtime shows incorporating stops and searches has negatively impacted the nation. Based on RHI's Stop and Frisk research of 2011, minority peoples were the main focus of the entire "criminal cleanup" operation.

The data of RHI's Stop and Frisk Report proves many concerns in New York's policy. A policy that allowed for the stopping of innocent people. law enforcement using aggressive mannerisms they already use towards perceived criminals during work each day. These stops heightened criminalization of drug possession. Weed arrests were the most common arrests following a stop and frisk. If a person is arrested for weed possession , their tenancy may be terminated. Many times this left people displaced or homeless, all because a cop decided to enter their day.

Blacks and Latinos were given harsher punishments following stop and frisk run-ins. This isolation caused these marginalized groups of people to not trust or feel safe around police. In 2011 the New York Civil Liberties Union proved almost 90% of New Yorkers stopped were innocent! It never worked!

INVADING SPACE

publication by: Kiara Turner , Public Safety Organizer

Stop and frisk has been a big issue in the community for a very long time. Stop and frisk is honestly the cause of a lot of the things that happen with our people and our community. Stop and frisk is something that I don't think is fair to people and their rights. No one should be able to just stop someone and search them. Stop and frisk causes distrust in the police department because of how they invade someone's privacy. In my opinion, I don't think stop and frisk keeps the community safer. I say this because when you are so used to being violated by getting stopped and patted down for no reason it will eventually make a person want to act out. This is why a lot of people resist arrest or struggle when they are being stopped because they are already traumatized from being stopped for no reason. It is a certain type of respect one should have for another no matter how much authority you have. What makes stop and frisk worse than what it originally is supposed to be are the police department. They don't care how things are supposed to be done and they also don't care how much force they use against people. If the police department were more respectful of others or followed the rules of stop and frisk it might make it easier for the community to trust them. In my opinion, they don't care about stop and frisk because it allows them to abuse their power. Any little thing that gives a police officer the right to do certain things they will take and abuse it. It doesn't feel good to be thrown around or patted out of the blue. If the police department was held more accountable for the way they executed stop and frisk the community might feel more secure and trusting of the police department.

Stop that frisk

publication by: Raysha Vassal , Public Safety Organizer

Stop and Frisk has been something affecting black and latina people for too many years. According to my research, black and latina people in New York were nine times more likely to be stopped by police compared to the white residents of New York. From 2002 until 2020 the stop n frisk rate on black people alone was ridiculous! Not to mention almost 100% of the people were innocent.

Here is some data from NYCLU

In 2020, 9,544 stops were recorded.

5,791 were innocent (61 percent).

5,367 were Black (56 percent).

2,879 were Latinx (30 percent).

856 were white (9 percent).

219 were Asian / Pacific Islander (2 percent)

132 were Middle Eastern/Southwest Asian (1.4 percent)

In 2019, 13,459 stops were recorded.

8,867 were innocent (66 percent).

7,981 were Black (59 percent).

3,869 were Latinx (29 percent).

1,215 were white (9 percent).

In 2018, 11,008 NYPD stops were recorded.

7,645 were innocent (70 percent).

6,241 were Black (57 percent).

3,389 were Latinx (31 percent).

1,074 were white (10 percent).

In 2017, 11,629 NYPD stops were recorded.

7,833 were innocent (67 percent).

6,595 were Black (57 percent).

3,567 were Latinx (31 percent).

977 were white (8 percent).

In 2016, 12,404 NYPD stops were recorded.

9,394 were innocent (76 percent).

6,498 were Black (52 percent).

3,626 were Latinx (29 percent).

1,270 were white (10 percent).

See a trend?

I have been a victim of stop and frisk since when I was about 11 years old. Around that time my friend group was between the ages of 11-15 years old. The police would stop us for anything we would do! For example, we would be coming from the store and then would be stopped and searched. We would ask why? Their response is "we may have guns in our school bags" Honestly I feel that they stop and frisk us because they can do it regardless of us looking suspicious or not.

Living in public housing areas Like Brownsville, Red Hook, Fort Greene, Canarsie, The Bronx and the list continues; We are bound to be targeted by police and the gang violence. How can anyone feel protected in their neighborhood or any neighborhood if the police can't keep us safe from gang violence? Police should Stop and frisking the neighborhood to harass the community kids and actually help save the kids and change the generation.



And this is only the beginning! Please stay tuned for the Auto-Ethnography project, soon to be published by our Public Safety Organizers. The projects allow each of the organizers to explore their own identity intersections that influence their perceptions of safety.

