Does stop-question-frisk reduce crime?
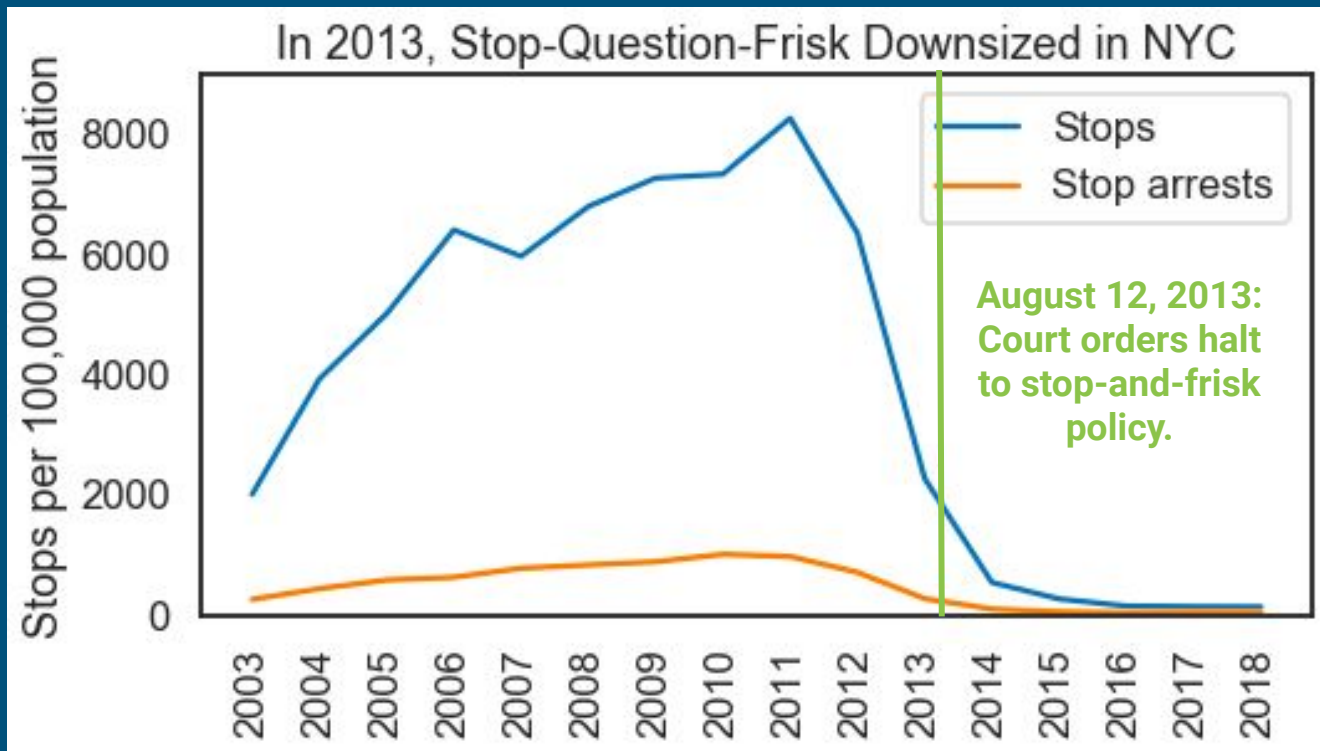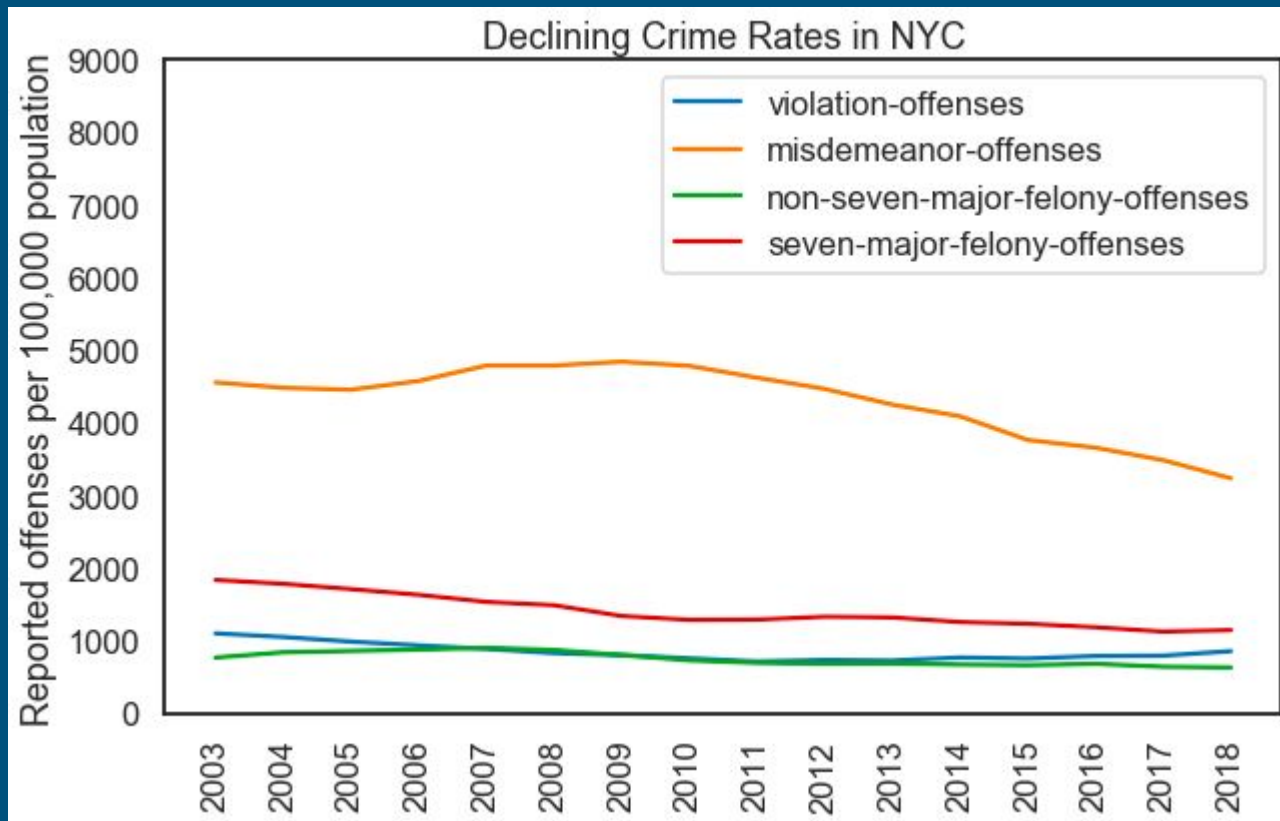
A natural experiment from NYC
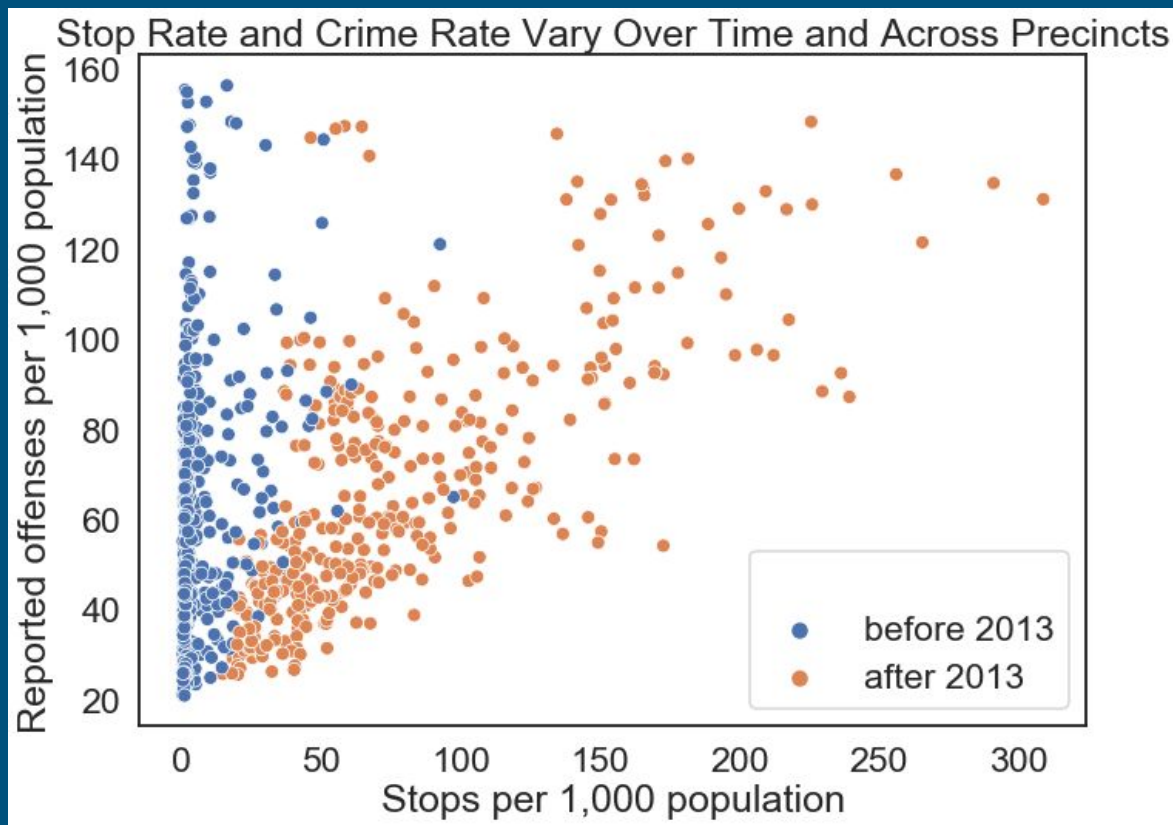
The policy experiment

In 2013, Stop-Question-Frisk Downsized in NYC

August 12, 2013: Court orders halt to stop-and-frisk policy.

NYC Crime Rates Going Down

Declining Crime Rates in NYC

- violation-offenses
- misdemeanor-offenses
- non-seven-major-felony-offenses
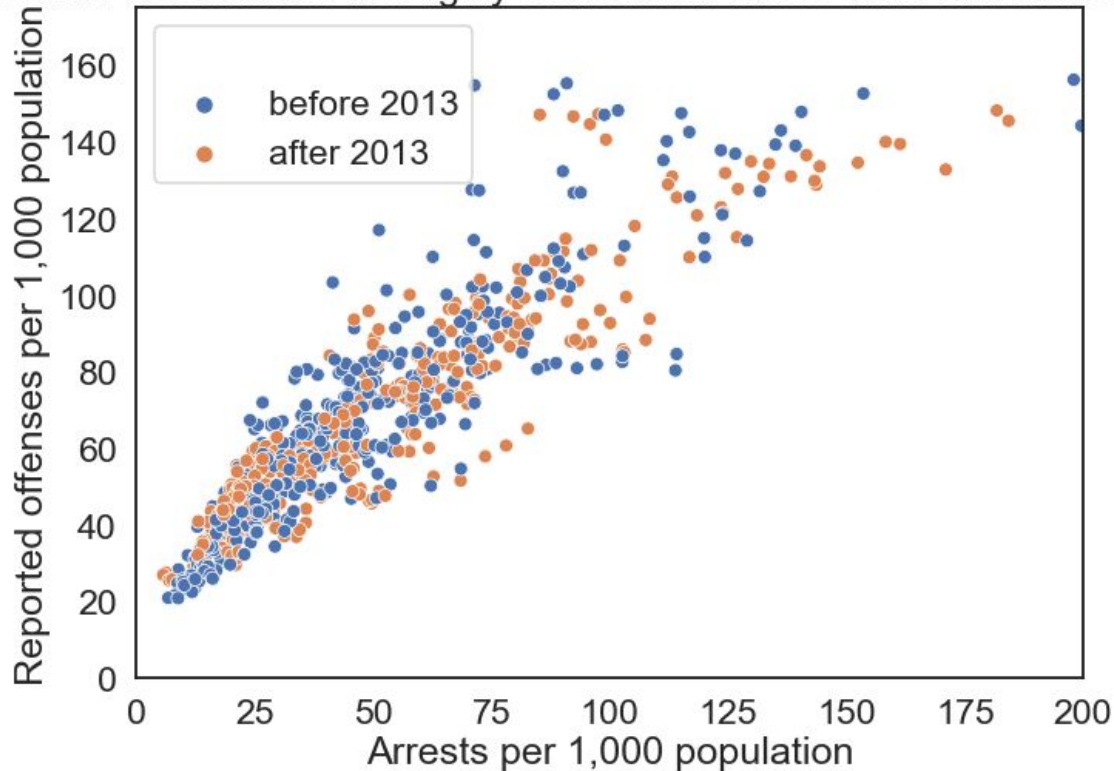- seven-major-felony-offenses
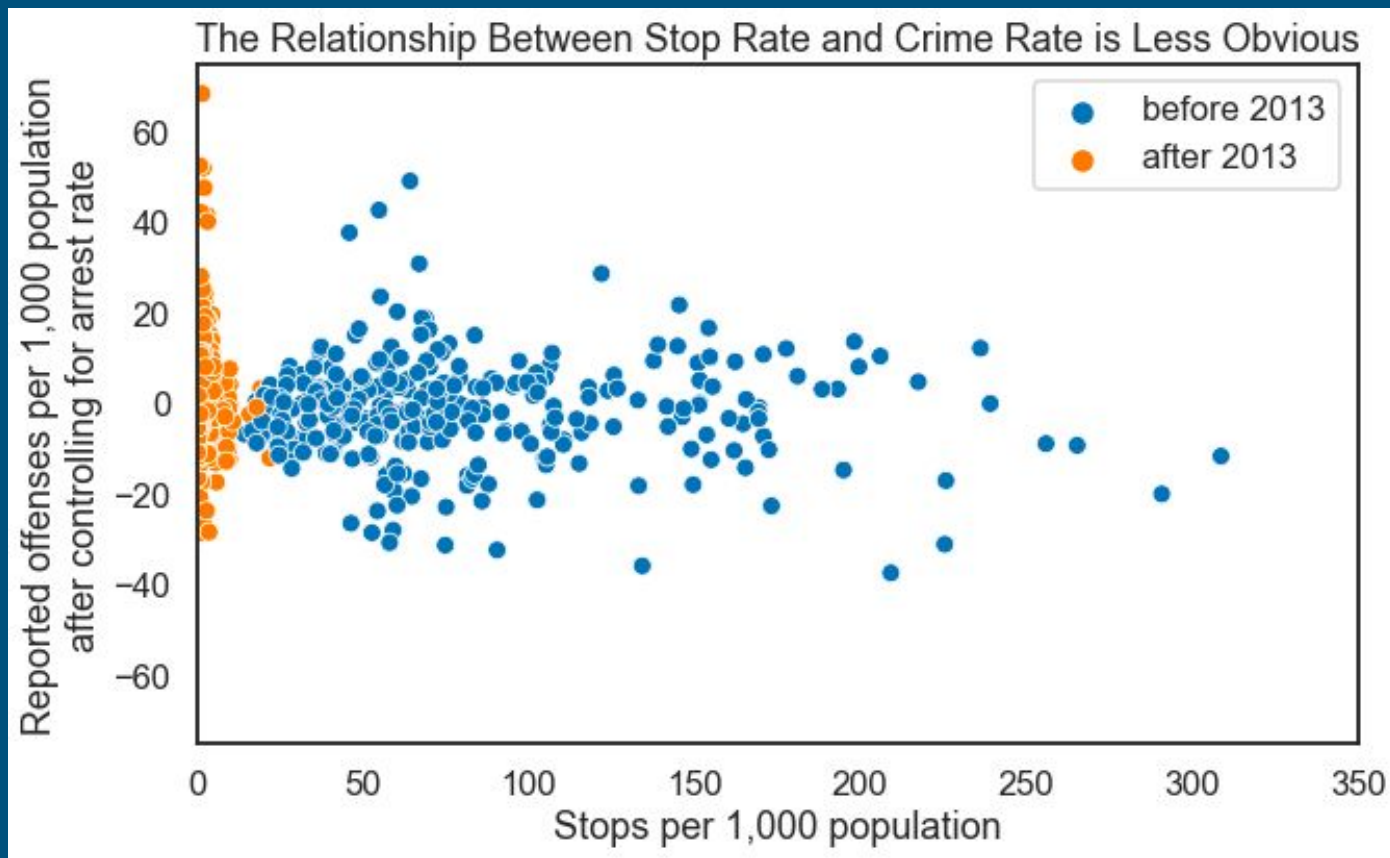
Relationship between crime and stop rates

How to control other factors driving crime?

Crime and Arrest Rates Are Highly Correlated Across Time and Across Precincts

After controlling for arrest rates...

Conclusion

- Based on crime rate, arrest rate, stop rate (stop arrest rate), and policy change data for 77 precincts and 8 years, we failed to see a relationship between stop-question-frisk policy and crime in NYC.
- Considering also the personal costs of stops, we believe scaling-down of the policy was the right decision.

Questions for further research

- How to include other factors underlying the crime rate
- How to address the chicken-and-egg problem between crime and arrests
  - What would be a better model?
  - What would be a better dataset?
- What can we uncover from individual-level data?