

# Ethnic profiling is defined as the use by police criminology essay

[Law](#), [Criminology](#)



Ethnic Profiling can be defined as the practice of exposing citizens to improved surveillance or inspection founded on racial or ethnic features rather than rational suspicion. Over the years, police and other law enforcement officials have come under scrutiny for using this practice. The concern with racial profiling is defining whether it aids with crime prevention or whether it merely violates the rights of citizens. Despite of what officials might consider of racial profiling, racial profiling may not prevent crime and instead may only exacerbate the racial tension between the police and citizens by generating sentiments of inequality amongst citizens. Ethnic profiling has therefore been extensively criticised when it comes to determining what methods are available for crime prevention. The foundation of ethnic profiling is the supposition that people of a certain race or ethnic background are more likely to commit certain crimes than others. This type of categorization occurs due to crimes frequently being committed by that race or ethnic group or a major event pointing to a certain race or ethnic group as being the main perpetrators. An example is the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in the United States following which the U. S authorities used ethnic profiling assumptions to inspect foreign nationals of Middle Eastern origin. These assumptions were regarded as conclusive even if there were no additional factors that justified investigation of these individuals (Crystal, 2012). In several countries, ethnic profiling is illegal. Like London, Paris. However, this does not mean that it does not exist. There are many occurrences when people of certain racial or ethnic groups are being routinely suspected of crimes based on their race. Unfortunately, ethnic profiling regularly has false expectations about people of certain races or

ethnic groups. For example, it might be anticipated that black people are more likely to be involved in the use and sale of illicit drugs based on past crimes committed by this type of race; however, it is not a sufficient reason nor a justifiable reason for a police officer to regularly pull over black drives merely because of their race. In the UK a stop and search Occurs when an individual is questioned and asked to explain their actions or movements for examination purposes. According to Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, an officer does not have the right to stop and search a person or vehicle or whatever in or on a vehicle unless he has realistic grounds for doubting that stolen possessions or forbidden objects are being carried. In 2002/2003, there were 869, 164 stops and searches under this regulation (Home Office). Amongst them, 118, 548 were Black people (14%), 58, 831 were Asian people (7%) and 11, 468 were of other minority ethnic origins (1%) despite Black and minority ethnics representing merely around 7% of the entire population, wich means that officers are using ethnic profiling to stop a person rather focusing on a suspicious behavior (European network against racism, 2009). A good example of why ethnic profiling does not help prevent crime is a case occurring in 1998, involving Sergeant First Class Rossano V. Geraldwas with his 12 year old son Gregory. Rossano, who was driving through the Oklahoma border He was stopped twice by police officers and was, searched once (Trende, 2000: 331). According to the accusers, Gerald and his son were forced to sit down in a sweltering squad car whilst the officers ransacked their vehicle for two hours. " The plaintiffs further maintained that this stop and search occurred simply because Gerald and his son are black" (Trende, 2000: 331-332). The offenders maintained

that throughout their stop, the state troopers had preserved rational suspicion that the driver was trying to transport drugs into the state, which justified the stop and the search. The situation of Gerald is not unique, in fact this is one of numerous cases that had claims on officers using race as part of a choice to stop or detain a suspect. An additional example of police ethnic profiling involved Robert Wilkins, an African American Harvard Law School graduate and community protector for the District of Columbia (Trende, 2000: 338). Robert Wilkins was pulled over on I-68 near Cumberland, Maryland. The officer who stopped him demanded approval to search the car. Wilkins's cousin who was driving the car declined and Wilkins cited a case law to demonstrate the illegality of the search. "The police officers ignored both of the rejection and the notice, and ordered Wilkins and his family to stand in the rain while a drug dog sniffed their car" (Trende, 2000: 338). When the search produced no drug possession, the officer issued Wilkins's cousin a traffic citation and freed both of them. Both examples previously mentioned produced no conclusive evidence by the authorities which would in turn help prevent crime which infers that racial and ethnic profiling does not in fact help prevent crime. Conversely, when suspects are arrested based on actual suspicions rather than race, police tend to capture more suspects and prevent crime. A 2005 report by the Missouri attorney general is a testament to the ineffectiveness of racial and ethnic profiling. The report showed that white drivers who were pulled over and searched based on their suspicious behavior, were found to have drugs or other illegal material 24% of the time. On the other hand, black drivers pulled over or searched in a way that reproduced a pattern of ethnic profiling, were found

to have drugs or other illegal material 19% of the time (Harris, 1999).

Therefore, the efficiency of searches, in Missouri and everywhere else, is reduced and is not improved by ethnic profiling since officers end up wasting their restricted time on guiltless suspects. Racial and ethnic profiling are not only inefficient but also send out negative and misleading messages to society. Law enforcement agencies are in charge, or normally seen as being in charge, for defending law-abiding citizens from criminals. Once a law enforcement agency performs ethnic profiling, it sends the message that whites are expected to be law-abiding citizens while blacks, Muslims and Latinos are presumed to be criminals. Ethnic profiling rules set up law enforcement agencies as rivals of entire communities that tend to be unreasonably affected by crime when law enforcement agencies should be in the business of guarding crime victims and assisting them to find justice. Ethnic profiling tends to distance black and Muslim communities from other communities and so decreasing the ability of law enforcement agencies to inspect crime in these communities. For example, if the police are regarded and perceived as the rivals of low-income black neighborhoods, and if there is no confidence or mutual understanding between police and inhabitants, then community policing can not work. Ethnic profiling damages community policing, and offers little or no benefits to a community which has been pigeonholed as a crime prone community due to racial and ethnic profiling. Ethnic profiling therefore promotes the internal segregation of suspects inside the minds of police officers generating a second-class citizenship for individuals who come from certain racial and ethnic backgrounds. To conclude ethnic profiling harms people exposed to it since they experience

terror, anxiety, injustice, anger, and cynicism when they are unjustifiably treated as lawless suspects. Ethnic profiling harms law enforcement and the criminal justice system by undermining public confidence and faith in the police, the courts, and the criminal law (Carter, 2004: 23). People who are exposed to ethnic profiling feel unethically singled out because they are part of a majority group, not because there is a valid reason for suspicion. " This whole categorization of all members of a certain race happens only when racial minorities are involved" (Carter, 2004: 24). It is unusual when the same technique is used on the dominant population. Generally this occurs because " we think of white criminal as an individual deviant, a bad actor" (Carter, 2004: 24). The second form of injury triggered by ethnic profiling includes the feeling of victimization or hopelessness, " both during the racially motivated encounter of and while seeking redress" (Carter, 2004: 24). Ethnic and racial profiling is therefore not effective and results only in promoting feelings of animosity and violation amongst targeted races and ethnicities and is not an effective nor a justifiable method to prevent crime.