

# Good example of essay on racial profiling

[Law](#), [Security](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [Abstract](#) \n \t
2. [Introduction](#) \n \t
3. [Security and safety impacts](#) \n \t
4. [Psychological effects of racial profiling](#) \n \t
5. [Family, social, and political effects of racial profiling](#) \n \t
6. [Physical effects](#) \n \t
7. [Economic impact](#) \n \t
8. [Conclusion](#) \n \t
9. [Works cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

## **Abstract**

Racial and ethnic stereotyping often links individuals and certain groups of persons from the public with suspicious activities most of which are criminal related. Hence, there will be profiling of individuals linked to such activities. For example, after the September 11 terrorist bombing in the United States, there was profiling of virtually all the Arabs and Muslims living, working, and immigrating to America. This is because the suspects were of Muslim and Arab origin (Bjerk; American Civil Liberties Union).

Persons and institutions charged with the responsibility of ensuring public security and safety mostly do racial profiling. However, as (Welch) indicates, racial profiling is a discriminatory action by law enforcing agencies. This is because persons from the law enforcement agency base their assumption

and stereotyping to incriminate someone because they belong to a specific race, religion, or ethnicity. For example, a Forex bureau staff refuses to attend to a client and seeks clearance from the security department because the first name starts with “ Hassan.” Racial profiling has been regarded as a counter terrorism and anti-criminal practice. However, in some regions it is unconstitutional and socially disturbing. This practice has led to both direct and indirect effects that have long lasting impact on the lives of the suspects (Kohli and Gardner II).

## **Introduction**

Ontario Human Rights Commission [OHRC] defines the term racial profiling as an act that takes into account the details of individuals because of their ethnicity, race, religion, and/or ancestry for security and safety reasons. (Bjerk) defines racial profiling as an action of law enforcement groups to subject certain individuals to regular probes and scrutiny based on their ethnicity, ancestry, or race. It may further involve distinct handling, prohibition, exclusion, and even confinement because of racial and ethnic identities.

Racial profiling may have both positive and negative impacts. It can lead to improved surveillance and monitoring of illegal sects, which has an affirmative impact on public safety and security (Ontario Human Rights Commission). However, racial profiling can lead to ethnic bias and discriminatory activities that often deny members of a certain race justice and human rights. It has been considered as an inexcusable practice that violates human rights (Kohli and Gardner II).

## **Security and safety impacts**

Despite being termed as a form of racial and ethnic stereotyping, racial profiling has been associated with increased public safety and security. For example, it has helped to monitor terror and drug trafficking groups with similar racial and ethnic attributes to ensure public protection. Hence improved police efficiency (Bjerk). However, groups that are anti-profiling have criticized this. Profiling has also helped the police to understand ethnic behavior and thus develop better policing policies. This enables the police to be proactive in fending off potential criminal activities that may endanger the public wellbeing. The police may engage in some form of racial policing to curb criminal activity (Welch). However, the biggest challenge has been to maintain the legitimacy of such practice in the society. This is because more than 80% of Americans feel racial profiling is pervasive and destabilizes social harmony (Gallup poll). (American Civil Liberties Union) indicates that Muslims and descendants of the Arab world are treated with utmost suspicion and often denied room for virtuousness and equal protection.

## **Psychological effects of racial profiling**

Ontario Human Rights Commission [OHRC] indicates that racial profiling has a myriad of physical, psychological, emotional, and even financial effects on the victim.

OHRC indicates that racial profiling is annoying and traumatizing to the individuals and groups of persons that are treated as suspects to criminal activities (Kohli and Gardner II). This act often treats individuals as a collection instead of isolating the vice and profiling them as single entities. This often leads to frustration.

(Welch) reports that the ethnic or racial group that have been stereotyped often suffer stress related disorders, especially when they are involved in situations where they are suspected of serious crimes and offenses. On the other hand, (Rivera) states that racial profiling generates profound feelings of powerlessness and discrimination among racial minorities. This in turn limits the sociability and sense of freedom of an individual. One may also feel anger and guilty of being a member of the race, religion, or ethnic group under suspicion.

### **Family, social, and political effects of racial profiling**

Racial profiling affects the quality of relationships one has with family members, relatives, and friends. This action disenfranchises members of the suspect group. This makes them limits their participation in public affairs like voting, advocacy, and politics. Moreover, victims are often denied access to public resources. Lack of participation in public agenda and denial of community resources can lead to alienation and marginalization of some races and ethnic groups. Victims of racial profiling have a weakened spirit of citizenship and normally feel as strangers in the society (Bjerk). There is often a feeling of dehumanization, injustice, and treatment as “ animal from another planet.”

Racial profiling creates a situation of mistrust in the social institutions. Such institutions are viewed as systems that deny racial and ethnic minority group's democracy, justice, and equity (American Civil Liberties Union). Treating some races with suspicion destroys the relationships such members have with other races and ethnic groups. Thus, leading to reduced harmony and cooperation in society activities like community policing. Racial profiling

takes away the confidence and trust one has in the political, social, and economic systems. For example, can lose confidence and trust in the judiciary system to deliver a fair judgment in case a criminalized race is brought to trial (Hudson).

Treating members of a certain race, religion, and ethnicity has long lasting effects on the youth and future generation. For example, children born of such populations may suffer discrimination from other children and members of the society. For example, other students and teachers call children with names that associate them to terrorist activities. Such children and youth are often associated with conflicts, peace disturbing activities, and even institutional problems like poor performance. This can lead to lower self-esteem, negative self-image, and poor performance. In the end, affected children may be denied of education opportunities and promote anti-social conduct (American Civil Liberties Union). Criminalization of children from specific races, ethnicity, and religion has unpleasant psychological effects and often shuts the child's ambitions and future. For example, some children cannot express interest in pursuing careers in the police force.

(Rivera) argues that racial criminalization is based on racial and ethnic stereotyping that violates amendments of the constitution. However, other scholars argue in the contrary that racial profiling practice has been derived from provisions of the same constitution and the legal system. Considering some nationalities, religion, and races as having tendencies towards criminal activities than others not only disrupts relations among the races but also leads to humiliation and fear among the suspects (Hudson).

## **Physical effects**

Victims of racial profiling have reported situations where they have been forced to strip naked of officers of both sexes for the purposes of body search and frisking. Such actions violate one's privacy, right to autonomy, and diminish human dignity (Hudson). Some people are forced to undergo excruciating conditions like cold weather as their profiles are being worked on especially at the ports before entry or exit. Some victims have recounted episodes where they have been caught in serious confrontation and manhandling with perpetrators of racial and ethnic discrimination (Rivera). Profiling has also lead to physical assault and serious injuries to victims. OHRC indicates that some victims have ended up suffering from illnesses like hypertension, respiratory disease, and depression. There are reports that suggest that Asian and Latin women are often apprehended at stop points for profiling. However, the allegation put forward for their arrest is commercial sex. These women are also sexually harassed and assaulted by police officers during their profiling.

## **Economic impact**

Racial profiling has both indirect and direct implications on the finances and business operations of individuals. (Hudson) indicates that there is a tendency of customers and clients to boycott transacting in enterprises managed by individuals of a certain race, religion, or ancestry. Similarly, some businesses engaging in racial profiling of clients and thus, they have denied such customers goods and services.

Racial profiling affects recruitment and deployment of human personnel. This is because some racial minorities and religious affiliations are associated

with criminal and anti-social behaviors. Thus, despite being qualified and competent to perform required tasks, persons would be denied opportunities to offer their skills and services in an organization that is involved in racial profiling (Hudson). Victims of racial profiling continue to be discriminated and their rights violated in the transport, trade, communication, sports and entertainment industries. For example, there has been an increased racial profiling of immigrants and non-citizens through the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, which has led to increased harassment and inhumane treatment of immigrants especially from Latin America (American Civil Liberties Union).

## **Conclusion**

It is obvious that racial profiling is a discriminatory practice that violates the rights of individuals. Racial profiling not only disrupts interracial relations but also impairs social relations. The practice leads to emotional, mental, and psychological harm not to mention the physical trauma that is inflicted by the perpetrators of racial profiling.

It is therefore important to implement legislative and executive actions to curb the effects of racial profiling. One of the initiatives is the enactment of laws that end racial profiling in all government agencies and departments (Rivera). Secondly, the state should revamp measures that ensure civil rights are protected by all arms of the government. Departments and agencies that conduct racial profiling should equally be refurbished to ensure there is protection of all racial and ethnic groups including immigrants and non-citizens (Hudson). Lastly, affirmative action and initiatives that condemn



racial intolerance while promoting racial understanding should be encouraged and supported.

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