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Racial profiling keeps and hate alive in our country. Not only is it unethical but is against the law. There are many reasons why our society and individuals are racist and chose to racial profile. Many of these reasons have to do with our family, where we grew up, or our perceptions of other races in the media. There may be some positives of racial profiling but the negatives outweigh the positives without question. Even with the tragic events of September eleventh our country is still taking steps toward a non-biased nation.

### Racial Profiling

Racial profiling is a disease that has plagued our country since the beginning of time. In the United States this has occurred since the time of the first settlers, people have treated humans of different races differently. This different treatment created slavery, hatred, and discrimination throughout our country. Imagine this; you are sitting at a restaurant with probably ten friends you are white and they are all African American and one Latino male. You have ordered your meals and it has been probably an hour since you have ordered, you notice that people whom arrived after you and are parties of all whites have received their meals. Your group keeps waiting patiently and after many other tables of people have received their meals and almost two hours have went by, you finally receive your meals in which most of the orders are messed up somehow. This happened to me probably two months ago in a dinner not far from Crookston. Some may have blown this experience off and thought nothing of it but I think of it as racial profiling.

The history of racial profiling dates back to the beginning of time, and for the United States it has been around since our country was founded. People not only use the color of one's skin to racially profile but also if the person is noticeably different than the profiled Christian "norm" then that could also qualify them as a victim of racial profiling. Racism is the root and main factor in racial profiling. As we have all been taught in our history classes racism did not end after slavery was abolished, it continued throughout the nineteenth hundreds, and still continues today. In the early nineteenth hundreds the days of slavery were not forgot. Whites still thought that they were the superior race in this

country and continued the hatred of other races through segregation, refusal to serve in places of business, and in many other ways.

Later in the 1900's our country has gotten somewhat better with racism by creating laws that made segregation and similar acts illegal. One law that was put into action by George W. Bush was the Hate Crime Statistic Act, which made hate crimes a federal offense. This new law was a very big step towards stopping hate crimes but in 1994 the act was amended by the Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which stated that all hate type crimes must be reported and compiled along with other Type 1 Index crimes (Anderson, 2002). For example some other Index crimes would include manslaughter, robbery, and forcible rape (Anderson, 2002). The definition of a hate crime was sketchy so congress defined it to make the new laws more understandable. Hate crimes were defined as actions against a person where the defendant's conduct was motivated by hatred, bias, or prejudice toward an individual or group solely because of his or her race, <https://assignbuster.com/free-papers-free-sample-sociology-term-paper-racial-racism-segregation/>

color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender or orientation (Anderson, 2002).

Where does all this hate come from? The basis of racial profiling is hate and racism. All of this hate has come from many different places. This way of thinking is a learned behavior; people are not born being racist. The main place that people have learned this behavior and way of thinking is from their family (Anderson, 2002). If people are raised in a family that is racist or discriminatory against people they are very likely to have a similar way of thinking. This way of thinking usually sticks with people throughout their life and they pass it on to their children unless they gain experiences with people of other backgrounds and change their views on other people.

If a person is brought up in a place that is predominantly one race, such as rural or secluded environments the person may not have any experience with other races apart from what they see on television. So being in a secluded and non-diverse environment can severely affects a person's opinion on people of other races. In many of these small rural areas the majority of the inhabitants may be racist because they have grown up in the area. Being in a community that the majority may be racist can also cause a person to develop this way of thinking even if their parents did not teach them to be prejudice. It can almost be like peer pressure in a way that the populous is pressing their beliefs and thoughts upon a person that may have not been raised to be racist.

Another place that people may have learned this type of behavior, racial profiling, is from television (Prosise, 2004). There are many police type

shows and talk shows that depict some races in certain ways. These types of shows usually only show the negative stereotypes of certain races. Such as talk shows like Maury, this show usually only shows African Americans as having many problems in their lives and making a lot of noise. Many Maury episodes also show African American women as promiscuous and not knowing who the father of their children is and such things like that. Police type shows such as Cops shows many African Americans and Latin Americans as trouble makers and trashy. People who watch these television shows and don't get much experience with other races many only get their knowledge of other races through these types of shows. Therefore the only knowledge that they retain of different races would be negative. Countless stereotypes are not correct for the majority of the populous of any race.

Racial Profiling comes in many different forms. The main way that people think of racial profiling is in police work. In a 1999 nation wide poll forty-two percent of African Americans felt as if they were stopped by the police because of their race. Seventy-seven percent of African Americans believe racial profiling is a widespread problem and eighty-seven percent believe that the practice is wrong and disapprove (Institute on Race & Poverty, 2001). This belief that the police target people because of their race has lead to the mistrust of the police officers whom we are supposed to trust with the security of our society. It is not only wrong but it is an inefficient method of policing (Institute on Race & Poverty, 2001).

The reality is that people of color are arrested for drug offenses in connection with vehicle stops at a high rate because they are targeted at a high rate, not because they are more likely than whites to have drugs in their

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cars. Studies have even shown that even when people of color are searched at higher rates, they are no more likely than whites to be found with contraband (Institute on Race & Poverty, 2001). Proof of this statement is that in a study of stops made by police officers the percentage of contraband that was found was the same for both white Americans and African Americans; twenty-eight percent (Gabbidon, 2007). Another example of how this racial profiling in policing is incorrect is that in New York the attorney general reported that in the “stop in frisk” incidents in 1998 and 1999 the arrest rates were twelve point six for whites, eleven point three percent for Latinos, and ten point five percent for African American. Also another study that proves that racial profiling is incorrect is in 1998 the US customs service reported similar numbers for stops and searches in airports nationwide. The hit rate percentages were as follows; six point seven percent for whites, six point three percent for African Americans, and two point eight percent for Latinos.

Personally I have talked to people that have taken criminal justice classes. They explained to me about some of what they taught about police work in their classes. They were taught what to look out for while patrolling and what to look for in someone to pull over. The person I talked to said that they were disturbed because one day in this class the professor started to talk about what to look for in a criminal. They were disturbed because some of what the teacher said seemed very odd and almost racist.

Some of what was taught to them was to look out for African American and Latino men driving and them driving during the night and people that dressed in urban style clothing. This example is proof of racial profiling and <https://assignbuster.com/free-papers-free-sample-sociology-term-paper-racial-racism-segregation/>

that police officers are taught to look out for certain races. My mother works for the Minnesota Department of Corrections and she has also talked to police officers about racial profiling and they have said they do but my mother and all of them support it and believe it is something that helps stop crime. Everyone is supposed to be equal in the eyes of the law and innocent until proven guilty, but this seems almost impossible. This almost seems impossible because the eyes of the law are human eyes and humans can be prejudice, especially when they are taught to discriminate.

Another form of racial profiling is when employers, teachers, or people giving services discriminate against ethnic and racial minorities. For the consumer racial profiling, where the people giving services are racial profiling, it usually takes on two forms. The first form is where ethnic or racial minorities are given bad or no service at

all. The second form is where the ethnic or racial minorities are treated as if they are suspected shoplifters and then receive discriminatory attention. In a 1999 poll of African Americans the majority revealed concerns about discrimination in retail settings. The polled said that they felt that they were treated less fairly than whites in stores and malls. There was another poll conducted five years later in 2004 that surveyed a larger group of people of different racial background. Over half of the people felt that racial profiling in retail settings was a widespread problem. When the people taking the survey were asked if they felt that racial profiling was ever justified even when trying to prevent theft in a retail store only twenty five percent said yes the rest said no (Gabbidon, 2007).

Some people believe that there may be some positives to racial profiling, which may be correct. But I firmly believe that there are many more negatives to this racist act. One positive in the police racial profiling may be for cops to look out for certain young men with urban style clothing that are wearing gang colors or gang types of clothing. That may be one positive because gang violence and crime is a big problem in our most populated cities of the United States and by watching out for these certain styles and clothing, not at race, than our police officers may become more successful in profiling. They may be able to stop crimes before they happen. Another thing that may be a positive in the retail store type of profiling is watching certain age groups and behaviors of people whom are proven to steal at a higher rate, not just race, and this may help reduce theft in retail stores.

But like I said the negative outweigh the positives. One big negative is that racial profiling makes people hate and not trust police officers. Citizens are supposed to look to

police officers as our protectors and as a positive thing to have around, but as people feel that they have been discriminated against they learn to dislike the people that are supposed to be protecting us and the law. Also many people showed in a 2002 study that they believe that it is our government's responsibility to make sure that everyone is treated equally as stated in our great Constitution (Weitzer, 2005). If the people of our country do not believe that our government is doing their job in they will lose faith in our government, which is a huge negative.



Another negative is that if people feel as if they are being discriminated against and that they are going to get pulled over or searched not matter if they are following the law or not, they will probably start to not care about or respect the law. One negative that I truly believe has been happening since the birth of our country is that racial profiling keeps a line and division between races (Yancey, 2007). We as a country are supposed to be the great land of the free and everyone is treated equal, but with racial profiling it just influences people to keep barriers up and lets people think that hatred and discrimination is okay. And that behavior is not okay.

Our country has continually been taking steps forward in ending and showing all the wrongs of racial profiling and racism. Some of these steps include attempts to generate diversity awareness and racial tolerance. These attempts are not only made in classrooms and law enforcement settings but now churches congregations and religious groups are making special efforts to address this major societal problem. For example the National Black Evangelical Association and the National Association of Evangelicals sponsored the Racial Reconciliation Initiative to help Christians to understand the many

sources of conflicts and hardships between races (Anderson, 2002). The main goal of this organization is racial and cultural tolerance. It is hoped that if it is taught in a religious setting and place that people will think about it more seriously and it will become a reality instead of learning about racial tolerance in theory through the media.

Another step being taken is more serious punishments for groups, retail stores, and restaurants that engage in discriminatory behavior or actions. In one case between a family of a man whom was severely beaten and lynched in Alabama and the Alabama Klan, a jury decided for seven million dollars against the Klan. Also in South Carolina a jury ordered the Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, its state leader, and others to pay thirty-seven million dollars for their role in a conspiracy to burn a black church (Anderson, 2002). Also when restaurants and retail stores get charged with crimes of discrimination and racial profiling, the jury has been trying to sought out the maximum punishment possible such as the infamous Denny's and Cracker Barrel Cases (Gabbidon, 2007).

More steps being taken to purify our country of this hatred is legislation addressing racial profiling. Some of the states that are included in the legislations and bills are California, Connecticut, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Washington. Missouri law is the strongest legislation out of those I listed. Bills dealing with racial profiling have also been introduced in Minnesota. The bills make data collection by all state and local law enforcement agencies mandatory. Analysis of the data collected is made to help eliminate racial profiling through the percentages of traffic stops and other interactions of police officers and citizens (Institute on Race & Poverty, 2001). The new legislations also state how racial profiling in law enforcement is unacceptable because it is an issue that affects a person's civil rights (Institute on Race & Poverty, 2001). Some laws take actions against police officers that are showing inappropriate behaviors. A Missouri law requires each police station

to have procedures of determining whether any officers have a pattern of stopping certain races more than others. Many law enforcement agencies will take disciplinary actions against officers whom engage in racial profiling such as additional training or suspension (Institute on Race & Poverty, 2001). With all of this action taken against racial profiling mayhap we will see a future with a greatly reduced number of incidents of racial profiling.

After the terrorist attacks of nine eleven we have taken a step back in creating a more ethical and non-biased country. Racial profiling has become much more predominant after nine eleven. Immediately after the attacks on our twin towers law enforcement officials focused special investigations and efforts on foreign nationals from the Middle Eastern countries, so many Arab underwent extensive interrogations and questioning (Ramirez, 2003) Also, there have been laws taken into legislation that have made using race to arrest permissible under certain circumstances. For example if someone called in to the police and said that a certain number of Arab men (or whatever other race) will be attempting to bomb the Minneapolis Midwest Airlines Airport, the officers may use race as a reason to stop, search, or hold a person until they have all the information they need (Siggins, 2002). However this does not make it okay for any and every police officer to stop anyone without a specific reason just because they, for example, are a young black male. The police officers still need a specific reason to use race as a reason to investigate anyone.

The graph below indicates the percentage of people who get search and are found with some sort of contraband. It is sorted out by racial groups, where it took place, and what year the search took place in. It also shows the total  
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number of people searched and included in the data. This graph supports that it is not in any way justified to racial profile people when searching because in almost every incident the percentages of people found with contraband are very close to the same percent.

This graph is very good evidence that most incidences of racial profiling is unjustified and unethical. Not only are the percentages close but in some incidents white are the ones that had a higher rate of being found with contraband. In conclusion not only is it unethical to racial profile, but there are laws made against it to stop it. In order to make our society equal and in accordance to our constitutional rights we need to keep on taking steps to move towards an unbiased society. Our future for this country is looking brighter, even the upcoming elections show how our country is taking large steps toward an unprejudiced society. We can only educate people about this disease called racism and continue to make laws against it and hope for a bright future.

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