

# Racial profiling

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



Carla Watts Professor Huttner- Eng 101 Research Paper 03/27/2012 Racial Profiling Racial Profiling exists in today's society. It has become a serious issue within communities. Racial Profiling can be defined as the practice of subjecting citizens to increased surveillance or scrutiny based on racial or ethnic factors rather than "reasonable suspicion". Over the years, police and other law enforcement officials have come under fire for using this practice. The issue of racial profiling is determining whether it helps with preventing crime or does it just violate citizens and their rights. Despite what officials may think racial profiling doesn't help fight crime it only contributes to the racial tension among police and citizens. It creates inequality for certain citizens. Situations between police and the public are very stressful and highly contested events. A strong reason for law enforcement officers to target minorities, particularly Black and Hispanic motorists, is the common belief that they are more likely to be violating laws, particularly drug laws. (Jost) With this perception, minority communities are feeling targeted and harassed by police officers. It is clear that given the power and discretion available to police, the experience of being subject to racial profiling can lead both to a feeling of being harassed and to a sense of alienation from the legal system and the wider society. (Chan) For example, when a police officer stops a black motorist, they are likely to be stopped and their car searched. While White motorist are just simply stopped and let go. This is because police have such wide discretion. They randomly stop any vehicle, at any time, for any reason or no reason at all. These situations are very drastic for the citizens. Over a long period of time, negative experience such as racial profiling can lead to specific ethnic groups' losing confidence in the

police (Chan). The police are suppose to protect and to serve, when they use racial profiling it effects citizens negatively. Individuals are less likely to cooperate with people they do not trust, and may develop questions regarding all aspects of the criminal justice system (Warren). Citizens may also respond to the law inappropriately, with the perception that they are going to be harmed or unfairly targeted by law officials. They may also retaliate for injustices that happen in the past. On the other hand, law officials that use the practice of racial profiling may go into a situation with a higher degree of force and cause the situation to escalate. This mistrust for the criminal justice system can lead to riots and excessive violence. The law governing racial profiling has grown considerably. This growth has resulted in numerous significant developments in various areas of law, all of which touch on the need for ongoing vigilance regarding police practices and law enforcement (MacAlister). But the practice of racial profiling is hard to prove. You have to prove whether the officer is being racially prejudiced or is it the result of organizational practices. The solution to this would simply be to do more research. Assessment of the issue would be costly and time consuming, but “ You can’t manage what you don’t measure”. (MacAlister) with that being said, if the government and law officials don’t accurately assess the issue then they won’t have a solution. Officials have to educate themselves on race relations and they have to be sure that racial profiling is actually occurring in the community. Officials will also have to show some type of commitment in addressing the issue to the community and police officers. It is also important for officials to set new organizational practices that have no tolerance for racial profiling. The media needs t be involved, so

that citizens are ensured that policing practices are not always accepted and that hope for change is escalated and something is done about Racial Profiling. Works Cited MacAlister, David. " The Law Governing Racial Profiling: Implications of Alternative Definitions of the Situation." *Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice* 53. 1 (2011): 95-103. Academic Search Premier. Web. 26 Mar. 2012. Chan, Janet. " Racial Profiling And Police Subculture." *Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice* 53. 1 (2011): 75-78. Academic Search Premier. Web. 26 Mar. 2012. Warren, Patricia Y. " The Continuing Significance of Race: An Analysis Across Two Levels of Policing." *Social Science Quarterly* (Blackwell Publishing Limited) 91. 4 (2010): 1025-1042. Academic Search Premier. Web. 26 Mar. 2012. Jost, Kenneth. " Policing the Police." *CQ Researcher* 17 Mar. 2000: 209-40. Web. 26 Mar. 2012. Lippert-Rasmussen, Kasper. " Racial Profiling Versus Community." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 23. 2 (2006): 191-205. Academic Search Premier. Web. 26 Mar. 2012.