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Racial Profiling and Law Enforcement

Introduction

Over the years racial profiling has become a significant topic especially among law enforcement agencies across the United States. Many cities and states have made a conscious effort to study racial profiling and ascertain how race and ethnicity play a significant role in stopping vehicles by law enforcement in their jurisdictions. Profiling refers to the practice of police that view certain characteristics as indicators of criminal behavior. It is the establishment of law enforcement practices that solves crime and develop prevention strategies against crime. While, racial profiling is the new term for profiling. The change is partially because of the ambiguity that racial profiling has some confusions and controversories. The term racial profiling best describes the situation where police arrests, questions or stops the person on the basis of race (Cleary 5). In regards to the racial profiling, the concern about it is erupting in the entire nation (Harcourt 18). Racial profiling is considered as the use of the individual's ethnicity and race through the law enforcement personnel. In many of the jurisdiction, the practice of such acts is considered as illegal and controversial. United States have decided to work on the issues related to the racial profiling, that how the ethnicity and race play a part in order to stop the injustice through the law enforcement in relevance to their jurisdictions (Welch 282). The term

racial profiling is defined as the discrimination on the basis of the stereotypes (Harcourt 31). The racial profiling is explained in various ways, it has been used in almost every law enforcement agency. The paper aims to discuss the issue of racial profiling and why people dislike police.

Racial Profiling

Racial profiling appears morally wrong and more troubling when the racial group that is being profiled suffers from background injustice. Racial profiling is both unconstitutional and unwise. Racial profiling is not only used by the police, but also by other citizens in the United States (Welch 279). The United States of America is no stranger to incidents where these objectionable incidents are recorded widely and it is not just relegated to poor neighborhoods, but also to other shady areas. One community that has always been constantly repressed is the African American community.

This sort of discrimination is often encouraged by many people that rather disturbingly have a lot of authority and power in making and implementing laws. Their argument is that discriminating and acting against the Black community is a viable way of making sure that crime is kept in check (Schuck 501). Distinguishing between color, creed, religion and race should be resigned to history. The crime prevention agencies such as in the United States, has used the inadequate applications in relevance to the laws in order to harass the marginalized groups. In the 21st century, the selective enforcement was introduced in relevance to the vagrancy and loitering laws, which focused on the homeless, poor and the unemployed. In the year 1968, the supreme court of the United States presented that the police should have the reasonable suspicion in regards to the illegal activity (Schuck 497). This action should be implemented before any of the police officer forcibly stops the person. Furthermore, it is stated that police must also provide

with the indication that the person they are stopped has the weapons. It is clearly stated that the behavior should be based on detaining the person, not on the personal characteristics (Cleary 27). In the year, 1987, this was the time when there was an increasing rate of the criminal activities. In this regard, the Supreme Court has ruled that even the large racial disparities present in the enforcement laws. It includes the use of the frisk and stop; they do not consider it as the violation of the civil rights.

U.S Justice System

In view of the fact that the greater part of slave escape and rebellion campaign were carried out during the night time, southern white people started the initial road watch planned explicitly to manage the actions of both liberated and black slaves (Feder 11). The beginning of the war on drugs in Ronald Reagan's government has a tendency to connect with the rising discrepancy in arresting rates of African-Americans, which furthermore augments doubt of criminality, using ethnic background as a status (Welch 281).

Supporters of racial profiling propose that African-Americans are more inclined to illegal offenses than fair colored individuals, particularly regarding the drug courier profile. The challenge that confronts United States police is how to sustain the historic decline in rates of criminal activity while enhancing police legitimacy in the eyes of the communities they serve. Appropriately addressing allegations of racial profiling is central to this mission. These supporters of racial profiling furthermore point out that ethnic minority groups commit more crimes, because of their elevated contact with societal facets that present openings and reasons for unlawful actions. African Americans are extremely over-symbolized in detainment rates and incarceration, even though white people still make the majority of criminals imprisoned.

Racial Profiling as an Issue

Even in what appears to be much more broadminded or freethinking time in the United States, it is evident that the law enforcement officers such as police still create a stable observance of stopping, detaining, or distressing minority groups, especially African-American people. The most important elucidation for racial profiling is that it is helpful in stopping street crimes (Harcourt 9). There are differentiations in the disproportion of the kinds of drugs being traded and the penalty by the law. To stop the trafficking of illegal drugs in the United States, making use of the drug-courier profile has become an admired way of eliminating transporters of illegal imports.

However, when this drug-courier profile called indirect attention to minority groups as executors, this could lead to racial profiling. The reasons as to why racial profiling is receiving attention. Firstly, in the past couple of years, African-Americans have achieved a societal and economic position in divisions where they are not so easily disregarded or overlooked (Amnesty International 19). Secondly, the reported proof of incidences of ill-treatment and abuse towards African American by law officers even though not traffic profiling cases, widens the outlook of law enforcement action to take account of profiling entailed by traffic impediment. Thirdly, a lot of African American people are registering their complaints and taking pestering cases to senior establishment such as the courts. Fourthly, more wealthy and high class African American individuals are claiming that they have been stopped only because of ethnic background and skin color (Amnesty International 17).

African Americans have received worse treatment dating back to the times when slavery was first abolished (Harcourt 14). This sustained attack on the African American community is not only limited to law-enforcement agencies. Rather, they have to face negative stereotypes in

almost every occupation. For example, a black janitor working at a school in the United States will always be viewed with suspicion by the parents of children at the school. It has turned in to a situation where this sort of suspicion has been hard wired in to all residents in the United States (Harcourt 17). The media takes a lot of blame for this in my opinion. Their constant barrage of negativity towards the African American community has turned the entire country against the African American community.

Police and Law Enforcement

The police officer and law enforcement role in society today is to protect, honor and serve the public. The police officers responsibility is to solve crimes, protect the lives and the property of American citizens. Conditions are created in which people can live and pursue their own affairs without interference from lucid criminals (Feder 11). When crimes or criminal activity take place police officers or patrol officers are known as first responders and they are generally the first on the scene. The police department and its officers work for the court system to protect all members of American society. The uniformed police officer's duties are to stay alert for suspicious activities and to remain vigilant for criminal activity.

A good police officer will have a positive effect on a community by using proper procedures. Police officers who follow proper procedures of the law will gain the respect of the community by allowing due process of the fifth, sixth and fourteenth amendment of the U.S; constitution, which describes the community respect with consideration to a citizen right along with ensuring public safety. Police brutality within a community will cause citizens to resist authority (Feder 25). This will potentially lead to rioting in cases such as the Rodney King case of Los Angeles California. Poor policing can have a major impact on the community in cases

where policemen may have improper information for arrest from illegal search and seizures, or the improper identification of a criminal as well as making unnecessary traffic stops. Police officers who employ illegal behavior and misconduct create grounds for criminals to walk free, which will ensure public unrest and lack of safety (Cleary 21). On the flip side good police officers who make the right law enforcement decisions, will keep the community safe and they will have a positive effect on the community.

Conclusion

Racial profiling is unethical, humiliating and it violates human rights. It was highlighted that racial profiling is wrong when law enforcement uses racial profiling with a racist attitude, when law enforcement agencies assumes that the racial group is less able to comply with the law. Profiling is extremely unethical when it is done in a harassing manner and lastly when it done only to one group and not to another racial group. In conclusion, racism cannot be entirely stamped out from any society, but racial profiling can. This is because certain check and balances can be kept to make sure that people of a certain community continue to enjoy equal opportunities in life, but the difference in appearance, language and heritage will always remain and would mean that some people will continue to think according to those lines. Analyzing the studies, it could be concluded that poor policing can have a major impact on the community in cases where policemen may have improper information for arrest from illegal search and seizures or the improper identification of a criminal as well as making unnecessary traffic stops. Police officers who employ illegal behavior and misconduct create grounds for criminals to walk free, which will ensure public unrest and lack of safety. On the other hand good police officers, who make the right law enforcement decisions, will keep the community safe and they will have

a positive effect on the community. American society will not survive without police because cities, towns, countries and communities large and small would experience re-occurring chaos from crime. A police presence is vital part of law and order. A society without laws will create a society of lawlessness and increase anarchy. More importantly, less police would result in fewer opportunities for incarcerating criminals.

Measures

African Americans have been always viewed in suspicion since the time they arrived in America, but recent indications make it plain to see that the possibilities and opportunities exist that can guide the larger public towards better understanding that will ultimately benefit them and future generations. Society needs to dispel this image as a whole but first; it has to be acknowledged that part of the blame of racial profiling does lie with African Americans as well. It is important for the particular community leaders of African Americans to take necessary steps that encourage education and try and remove illegal activities altogether from areas dominated by African Americans. Responsible alternatives must be sought in order to maintain racial equality among all and Kennedy suggests hiring more police officers and closer surveillance on everyone and not just minorities.

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