

Capstone Project Title



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Kellogg Honors College Capstone 2012



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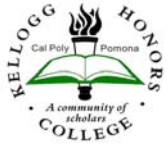
Posters Due Thursday, April 19, 2012

Should Law Enforcement Be Permitted to Use Racial Profiling?

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Kellogg Honors College Capstone 2012



Abstract

Although there are numerous discussions on how to effectively prevent crime, one debate focuses on racial profiling, a government activity directed at a suspect or group based solely on race. Proponents believe that racial profiling enables law enforcement to serve and protect communities, while opponents contend that racial profiling undermines the legitimacy of the criminal justice system. The objective of this project is to determine whether or not law enforcement should be permitted to use racial profiling as a means to deter crime. Research and interviews recognize that racial profiling reduces crime, but it does so at the expense of Americans' civil rights. There are alternatives in place, including gang injunctions, government oversight, and information sharing that prevent crime without violating the United States Constitution. They demonstrate why law enforcement should not use racial profiling.

Reasons Why Racial Profiling Should Not Be Used

Racial profiling is unconstitutional.

Racially based detentions violate the Fourth Amendment because they lack warrants or probable cause.

Racial profiling influences communities' distrust of law enforcement.

Unfair scrutiny forces minorities to be cynical of the police:
"The police are supposed ... to protect and to serve, but ...being black and being male, you've got two strikes against you. ...do not run... they will shoot you in your back" (Harris 104).

Research concludes that racial profiling is impractical.

Racial profiling uses an idealistic model that cannot account for all the factors related to deterring crimes.

Conclusion

There is no one way how to deter crime, but racial profiling should not be one of techniques used to do so.

Alternatives are in place and can be used in lieu of racial profiling. The existence of these alternatives: government oversight, gang injunctions, and information sharing demonstrate why law enforcement should not use the unconstitutional practice.

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Why Racial Profiling Is Commonplace

Police use stereotypes and generalizations.

Law enforcement personnel use generalizations and stereotypes to help them perform their duties. Stereotypes are an essential survival tool. **Figure 1** depicts this notion with a law enforcement personnel handcuffing a suspect.

The U.S. Supreme Court has not ruled against racial profiling.

Consideration of race is permissible in questioning suspects so long as it is one facet of the generalized approach.

Racial profiling can be beneficial in deterring crime.

In the 1990s, Mayor Giuliani implemented a "zero tolerance" policy, which targeted New York's poor, majorly nonwhite neighborhoods. Crime rates dropped 44% and the city's murder rate decreased by 70%.

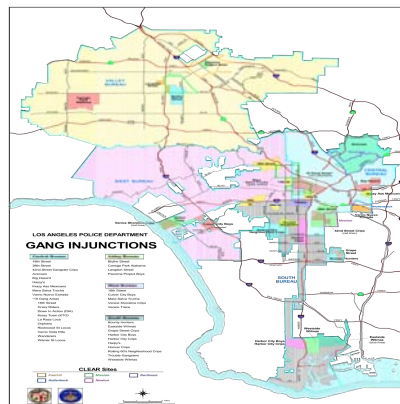


Figure 2: Gang Injunctions in Los Angeles

Alternatives to Racial Profiling

Government intervention holds law enforcement accountable.

Giuliani's policies lessened in severity after the U.S Commission on Civil Rights released a detailed report on the New York Police Department's racial profiling tactics.

The collaboration between research analysts and police prevents crime.

Data collection systems transmit information to law enforcement on how to prevent crime, while not violating citizens' rights.

Municipalities implement policies to deter crime.

Los Angeles' gang injunctions prevent gang members from associating with one another publically in high-crime areas. **Figure 2** is a map of Los Angeles' gang injunctions. The injunctions have decreased criminal activity.



Figure 1: Officer Handcuffing a Suspect.