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Racial Profiling

Introduction

One of the moral problems in the United States is racial profiling. It refers to acts that indicate suspecting or targeting an individual or group based on beliefs about their race or ethnic group. It is said that the US has reached a post-racial period, but I feel it is still a big challenge in society. Racial profiling is there every day in the cities, rural areas where both the law enforcement and private entities aim the people of color for intimidation, discrimination, and searches with no tangible reasons because of their race, ethnic groups, place of origin, and religion among others. Besides being a moral problem, it is also illegal as it violates the United States Constitution's leading values on equal protection and avoidance of unreasonable searches. For that reason, it needs to be resolved because it has made many people experience mental and psychological problems. In the following paragraphs, the racial profiling moral problem is discussed and the suitable solutions that need to be implemented.

Racial profiling is a severe problem that needs to be addressed in American society. The issue has been there in the past, and as time goes, it is deteriorating. Statistics by reliable law enforcement agencies claim that African Americans in California were ²more likely to be stopped by police officers in 2018 more than any other race. Moreover, the officers used force against them with no reliable reasons for it. The same thing was realized in Los Angeles, where in 2018, 28% of the individuals stopped were blacks (Bowling 626). Notably, blacks consist of only 9% of the total population in the region. Comparing the total population and the number stopped by the police, I feel that race plays a huge role. Besides,

San Francisco's African American population is 5%, but 26% of all stops were the blacks (Miller, 170). Apart from being stopped, the blacks are more likely to be pointed at with firearms by the police, detained, handcuffed, or searched.

A question that arises from the increased searches of black people is how many of them are found with dangerous weapons and other signs of crimes. From existing data, when the police officers investigate people of color, finding weapons is lower than when the whites are searched. The information was given by a study done in California in 2018, involving over 1.8 million individuals stopped by the police (Bowling 628). It sounds unfair that black people are more searched than whites, yet the latter is more likely to be found with weapons. With that, the blacks live in a society with fear of being harassed even when innocent. They cannot conduct their day to day activities peacefully, as in most times, they are either detained, searched, or intimidated by the law enforcers. Thus, the practice has made the public believe that black people are criminals, while studies indicate otherwise. The law enforcers need to apply the Constitutional values in their work other than prejudicing the people of color.

Racial profiling is a moral problem because principles on non-maleficence and beneficence, among others, are violated. Martha Nussbaum is one of the famous American philosophers who recently wrote about political emotions, especially compassion. Her discussion is mostly on what people feel when others are in dangerous situations. She does not say it directly, but I think the piece touches a lot about racism in American society. Consequently, the text describes four conditions that must be met for one to say that compassion is exercised.

A seriousness thought needs to be there, in that the person having the emotions understands that another person is going through pain in a way that needs not be there (Wilkinson 212). Another sign of compassion believes that the person undergoing pain is not

based on one's choices, but they are a victim of circumstances. Also, a compassionate individual accepts that the other person is similar to them in a certain way. Finally, compassion is where one understands that the people suffering could contribute to their wellness in some manner and therefore need to be assisted.

Showing compassion is one way to be morally right because other people are not harmed, and we are not selfish. When racial profiling occurs, the above conditions are not attained. They are all violated because blacks are treated as fewer humans. In some of the racist speeches made in the country, animalistic language is notable. People in the privileged positions dismiss the matter concerning discrimination because they do not feel with the affected thus lack compassion. In this case, it means the seriousness aspect explained above lacks. Moreover, instead of coming up with solutions, the victims are blamed for being lazy, making them prefer crime over hard work. Sadly, American society believes that African Americans are not needed for development because they lag the nation behind. As a result, the blacks are mentally and psychologically affected, pushing most of them to suicide. I feel bad that in the 21st century, racial profiling is a thing highly practiced in society. At the same time, our forefathers passed laws decades ago, claiming that we should treat all equally and protect each other.

To end the practice in the United States, I feel media has a huge role to play. The Opportunity Agenda researched in 2011 examined how the black are perceived by the media (Miller 171). It is a reliable source because it has a literature review, uses meta-analysis to determine the public's opinion, and the results are based on the data collected. The organization found out that the media over-represents the African Americans in the news about violence, criminal behavior, and low social, economic status (Georgiou 2380). Additionally, crucial aspects of men, such as fatherhood and work, are ignored and the systematic barriers they encounter while seeking services and employment. The study

concluded that media feeds the public with distorted information leading to negative attitudes towards the blacks, convincing the society that racial disparities should be tolerated instead of fighting. As a result, it has made African Americans accept that they are inferior, which has led to low self-esteem.

The media should improve its communication about blacks to make society see the need to be compassionate and respect the Constitution. Millions of American citizens rely on the media, so taking the right actions would end the problem. Instead of basing the news on positive and negative coverage, the media needs to cover full and accurate information. Again, values to be prioritized in this process should be truthfulness, fairness, accuracy, and accountability. For example, if the police officers handle a person brutally, the news needs to discuss the brutality and the need to end it other than focusing on the victim's race. Also, the media should extend its coverage while condemning the spread of distorted information. Doing so would raise the public's concern to realize the effects of covering up problems such as racism and therefore employ reliable solutions.

Sharing data based on factual evidence that dissociates races from common discrimination is the other way to solve it (Aspinall 87). For example, when condemning the practice, media and other people trusted by the public need to rely on data more than personal opinions to persuade the public. For example, the aforementioned research by the Opportunity Agenda would inform the public that blacks need a peaceful living as the whites and should be supported to boost their social, economic status other than treating them as fewer humans. Here, the aim is not to cover up for the crimes done by the blacks. Instead, it is to adjust the public's mind that it is not always about crime and poverty when blacks are mentioned. Generally, they deserve human decency and respect given to the whites. I believe that doing this would end the racial profiling moral problem in the country.

Conclusion

Having discussed the racial profiling moral problem and the suitable solutions that need to be implemented, it is clear that racial profiling in America is a moral issue that ought to be prioritized. The law enforcers do not respect the Constitution because they harm blacks because of prejudice. As covered in the paper, African Americans are more likely to be searched, detained, harassed, and intimidated by the police, yet they are less likely to be found with weapons. The practice is immoral as it does not show compassion and makes the victims encounter mental and psychological issues. As described above, the media would solve the problem by improving its communication. Again, instead of relying on negative and positive news, they should offer accurate and truthful information. Besides, they should incorporate factual information other than personal opinions. By doing this, the society at large will be able to deal with the menace in the best way possible making America great again. Nevertheless, it is arguable to claim that the aspect of racial profiling has been dealt with to some extent although there is a long way to go in eliminating the menace once and for all.

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