Racism in the American Political and Criminal Justice System

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**Introduction**

Racism in the United States Political System and Criminal Justice System, presents the unique experiences and discrepancies in the country in regard to policing, accusing or ensuring civil rights to the various race groups. At the same time, the outcomes are also different for different racial groups, in sentencing and imprisoning the offenders in the United States criminal justice system. However, different factors are highlighted that have led to these gaps in the political and criminal justice system of the United States. There are so many powerful examples of racial division in criminality and punishment in the US from centuries and continue today. The initial years of the century reflect on bigotries in execution, chain-gang style penal practices and prosecutorial in the criminal justice system more particularly in the Southern region. In the whole country, the courtrooms and juries are run by White in the majority. There are many cases that show how trials were ruled out against individuals from minority racial groups. As a result, African Americans and other minority racial groups view the law and criminal justice systems as less legitimate (Rocque, 2011). Likewise, most of the minor ethnic groups especially African Americans have more negative views of the law enforcing agencies and courts systems in the United States.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this paper is to identify the discrepancies in political and criminal justice systems of the United States against the different racial groups. It highlights the connection between racial discrimination in the political and Criminal Justice Systems in the United States. It will use different sources to support the argument that racial discrimination exists in the US Political and Criminal Justice System. A lot of examples from the history that show how legitimacy varies for different racial groups.

**Racial Disparity in the US Political System**

From Slavery, reconstruction to the Civil rights movements, African Americans have faced racism, social injustice, and oppression throughout history. However, the US has made so much progress, African Americans still encounter restrained and blatant social exclusion. Race-based oppression is continued today but in a different form. There are two political parties in the United States that compete with each other to form a government in the country. Both of the parties shape district elections, choose candidates for elections and also select the issues that are shown to the general public to get their attention. Both of the parties; Democrats and Republicans have been harmful to the minority groups in the United States for several years. Although the minority groups have representation in both parties, they have little influence in the party control and political mobility. There is no political independence for African Americans and other minority racial groups. However, people are independent to vote and they vote based on the candidate, not just based on the party. Many of the White Leadership of the US government have been examples of their controversial behavior against different races in the country. The white superiority even reflects in the U.S Constitution that presents the attitude of the founding fathers of the country who claimed African American Americans as the property of white people. At the same time, the different laws and regulations against immigrants from various races are also based on racial disparities and presented white as a dominant race. Later on, when European immigrants came to America, they were able to access the system due to their skin color. The former slaves and other minor racial Americans were unable to get access.

Likewise, the racial disparity was incorporated into politics at initial days in the United States and it is reflected till today. Although the African Americans have been connected with the Democratic Party for so long, they still face political disparities. Both of the American political parties are founded at the times when African Americans were enslaved. They went through civil war and centuries of hardships, persistent struggle and sacrifices helped them to get civil rights and the right to citizenship. Despite their loyalty to their ideal political parties, they have been the victims of inequality. Throughout the history Republicans and Democrats like Richard Nixon, Reagan and Clinton used the anti-African American laws and orders to attract the white community during the elections (Aiken, Salmon& Hanges, 2013). However, the election results of 2008 gave hope to the minorities. In 2008, Barack Obama won the Presidential elections in the US and it gave a hope to the African Americans and other minority communities that the country is going in a new political direction.

All the young members of minor communities expect an Independent political identification but this journey is not that easy. Regardless of their influence in the US political transformation throughout history like slavery abolition and civil right movements, African Americans do not get any recognition. Racial prejudice still exists in the country in a new form. White nationalism is still dominant that refers to the feeling of solidarity and favoritism towards the white community in the United States. It is a protective feeling for those who are like them in terms of racial empathy. Therefore, there is more likeness for the European in comparison to other ethnic groups in the United States. Nowadays, people of white identity do not necessarily show any negative attitude towards other minor racial groups but they are more into protecting white privileges and supremacy. However, they are doing this at the expense of other ethnic and racial communities.

Many of the people from the white community think of themselves as pro-whites but not anti-black. According to them, they deserve certain privileges and they have the right to own them. They are not ready to give them up. It existed many years back and it still exists. There is not much difference between the immigration policies of the 1920s and the current immigration policies. White people still feel that their privileges are under attack in the form of provision of rights to other racial groups. White force in American Politics arises with the insecurities of the white community. It arises when the white community feels that their status is being confronted. As a result, they target the minor ethnic and racial groups in different forms. Sometimes, they challenge them in the judiciary and social justice systems. People who are obsessed with the white identity used to oppose immigration. People who oppose immigration have arguments like none-white people are changing the culture and replacing the white community. Understanding the weakness of the people, Trump used the white identity politics to appeal more to the community. His anti-immigration policies got much attention. Again, the non-white community becomes the racial disparities in the political system of the United States.

Therefore, the minority racial and ethnic groups need some innovative approaches to get equal access to all the public goods like education, health care, police-community interactions and much more. They all deserve a real opportunity to become part of the mainstream development of the country. Undoing structural racism needs political independence where the minor communities could represent the moral conscience and leadership linked to their community. Such initiatives can transform the democratic system of the United States and overcome the concept of a two-party system. At the same time, it will also overcome the insecurities of minority racial groups towards the political system of the country.

**Criminal Justice System of the US shows Racial Disparities**

The American criminal justice system is the largest system throughout the world. According to the Report to the United Nations (2018), more than 6.7 million people went through correctional control in the US during 2015. Likewise, 2.2 million were imprisoned in different federal, state and local jails in the United States (Carson, 2018). Therefore, the US is a leading country for the rates of incarceration and detentions in the country. At the same time, the statistics from the same report show that there is a racial difference that infuses the US criminal justice system, and the blacks particularly. The Black Americans and other minorities deal with the crimes and the criminal justice system more than the white community. The rise in crime rates shows that prisons in the US are going overcrowded and facing a lot of economic and operational problems intensifying racial problems. In the United States, African Americans are more likely to get arrested in comparison to white Americans; once arrested, more likely to be sentenced and those sentences are lengthy in the period (Rehavi & Starr, 2014). In the United States, African Americans are incarcerated 5.9 times more than white people while Hispanics are imprisoned 3.1 times more than whites (Carson, 2018). Racial discrimination is more common for males in comparison to females. Therefore, men from minorities are more likely to become the victims of disparities of the criminal justice system in the United States. At the same time, another disparity that operates the criminal justice system is based on wealth. It has different procedures for wealthy people and different for the poor. People who have wealth can have access to the strong adversary system aligned with the constitutional protection for the offenders. Still the poor and minority suspects in the criminal justice system lacks the opportunity due to a number of factors and those factors over-represent those individuals in the court.

**The US Criminal Justice System and African Americans**

When the criminal justice system of the United States is reflected, the claims of racism end with civil rights in the United States is nullified. The long tradition of racism still exists for African Americans and the other minor groups living in the United States. The long roots of slavery and segregations are still influential in US society at different levels. Currently, a number of African Americans are excessively imprisoned under biased drug laws. They have little access to the economic and educational benefits that are given to the white American. Lack of proper education has led these communities to get into alternative ways to survive. At the same time, the US criminal justice system is not safe from the influence of discrimination and it is the current direct tool of racism in the United States. There are such situations in the country that cause a number of African American men to go to prison. Only 13% of the US population consists of African Americans but they make 34% of the arrested individuals for drug usage in the US and more than half of the percent individuals are thrown into the jail for drug-related crimes ("Section of Civil Rights", 2019). It depicts that African American drug users are more likely to end up in jail than white drug addicted individuals. It is evident that there are biases in ways the criminal justice system treats minor drug users and white drug users.

**The US Criminal Justice System and Latinos**

According to the estimates Latino community in the United States is growing rapidly. It is already evident that political and criminal justice systems in the United States manipulate the minorities and Latinos are one of them. The idea of crime and punishment primarily focuses the minorities. The Latino culture was flourishing in the United States from ancient times but this community is emotionally, politically and economically broken in the US. Latino men are displaced from society at very young ages by encounters with the criminal justice system (Wilkinson, 2018). It does not mean that Latinos are committing more crimes in comparison to white. However, evidence shows that Latinos are convicted for very minor offenses whereas whites are less likely to be arrested for drug-related offenses. Alike the other minority groups Latinos in the United States are considered as the outsiders. Anti-Latino behavior of the criminal justice systems can be clearly observed. The political system instead of focusing on the social problems faced by the minorities, more focus on strict laws and penalties for minor crimes. Regardless of their country of origin Latinos are continuously mistreated by the border security and other law enforcement agencies. They are facing poverty, unemployment and lack of quality education across the country but that is unnoticeable. The criminal justice system only sees the drug-related crimes and imprison the men of this community in the name of drug laws. It makes them more vulnerable and it is the reason these communities are unable to make progress even living in a developed country of the world. The real progress for these communities is impossible without the proper address of racist banishment on all levels.

**The US Criminal Justice System and Native Americans**

Native American like other minorities is also overrepresented as offenders by the criminal justice system of the United States (Janisch, 2014). Like other minorities, Native Americans also lack communitarian infrastructure that can be shown to lessen the crime rates in the community. They are also living underprivileged lives in the United States. At the same time, the criminal justice system is targeting these communities. This racial disparity is becoming problematic for the community and it is influencing the work, education and accommodation prospects of the racial group.

**Policing in the US**

According to the UN Report (2018), black youth makes 35% of youth arrests in the United States despite of the fact that the Black community makes 15% of the US Youth population for the year 2016. Although it is linked to race and crime, not linked to poverty in the urban areas that are more common for the African American community. The crime rates for minorities may be higher but that is due to insecure life. Due to the lack of proper protection, African Americans are getting involved in violence and crimes. At the same time, this involvement is overestimated by White Americans when African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans commit a crime. Likewise, law enforcement agencies also perceive that minorities are more involved in criminal activities. The crime reduction policies impose a greater cost on the people of color. The policymakers and law enforcement agencies introduce discriminatory policies and they do not present any justification for such policies. The current evidence reflects that black drivers are more likely to be stopped, searched and arrested by the police in comparison to whites (Brunson & Weitzer, 2009).

**Pre-trials in the US Criminal Justice System**

The disparities are not limited to policing but these are also compounded at the stages of processing in the courts. According to the UN Report (2018), more than 65% of the people were detained in prisons without any trial going against the pretrial detention. The Pretrial detention plays a key role in the US justice system but that is also used as a driving force for the disparities in the prison. Pretrial detentions represent the results for an increase in conviction. Minority group individuals who are incarcerated prior to trials are tend to get the least satisfactory pleas and they are sentenced for a longer time period. In the United States, about 75% of the pretrial discharges require money and it is difficult for low-income offenders. Therefore, people of color mostly become the victims of the Pretrial detentions in the United States (Harris, 2012). At the same time, minorities are denied for bails, also get more charges as a penalty and they are imprisoned mostly because they cannot afford the bail amount. People from lower economic groups and minority racial groups are more likely to experience social injustices due to their low economic position.

**Racial Disparities in Sentencing and Post Sentencing**

The racial discrimination in policing and pretrial described earlier results in discretionary decisions in sentencing the people of color because of their race. It is not limited to sentencing but it continues after sentencing practices. African American and other racial groups are entered into prisons for a longer time period in comparison to whites. At the same time, many studies also show that the race of a defendant also influences the death penalty in the United States. In the federal Criminal Justice System, there are more than of the African American is detained with any arrest offense and these offenders have records of file charges for minimum sentences (Rehavi & Starr, 2014).

All of the pieces of evidence and facts support that the criminal justice system in the United States is not functioning according to the order of civil rights provision. The policies and laws are modified for the people on the basis of their racial group. Likewise, the people who are considered as minority racial and ethnic groups are endangered by the laws and orders that are supposed to protect them. The United States has abolished the practices of slavery but could not remove its long-lasting influences on the people of the country. Civil rights of the minorities were provided to them but these rights are not protected equally for all citizens. Racial profiling has weakened the young generations of minority racial groups. The way law enforcement agencies treat minority groups, they get hatred in return from these communities.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, racism in the United States Political System and Criminal Justice System presents the sole experiences and discrepancies in the country in regard to different law enforcement processes. People are not treated equally instead they are presented according to the racial group they belong to. Racial discrimination is not removed from the United States. It is seen in the political as well as in the criminal justice system in the United States. Evidence reflect that both of the Political parties; Democrats and Republicans somehow show biases to the minority groups in the United States throughout history. Regardless of the representation in both parties, minorities have little influence in the party control and political suppleness. The long tradition of racism still exists for African Americans and the other minor groups living in the United States. The political system will show a true democracy when minorities are able to have independent political representation in US politics. Likewise, the racial discrimination in Criminal Justice Systems in processes like policing, pretrial and sentencing also show racial discrimination against the people of color. Policies and laws are modified on the basis of race and ethnic group in the United States.

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