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Police culture

Introduction

The present paper aims at identifying the police culture of America and its impacts on the community. Brutality and racial profiling are two prominent features of the American police culture. The assessment of the police attitude towards blacks depicts discrimination and bias. The brutal encounters of officers with the citizens have adverse physical and psychological impacts. Racial profiling and racial discrimination came into light in 2014 that focused on public consciousness of Americans. High profile killing of the African-Americans raised concerns for evaluating the credibility of law enforcement. Police killed many adolescent unarmed black guys. Some popular cases include the NYPD officers shooting Eric Garner, a 43 years old black man, Michael Brown, an 18 years old boy in 2014 and Freddie Gray dying from fatal injuries after police chase in 2015 (English, Bowleg, Río-González, Tschann, Agans, & Malebranched, 2017). The increasing number of deaths reflects the prevalence of racial profiling and police discrimination. The present study includes a review of the cases between 2011 to 2016 that confirms the existence of brutality and violence in police culture.

Research question

Does the police culture of America contribute to racial profiling and brutal killings of blacks?

Literature

Police brutality has a long history in America that had negative impacts on African-American youth. The African-Americans stood in the 1960s and 1970s was to address the issue of police brutality. Black activism was prominent in the entire movement fighting for their rights. The black people served as slaves to the whites throughout American history. The blacks demanded equality and police discrimination was recognized at the national level. The historical facts depict that the majority of the officers adopted harsh treatment against blacks. Media also highlighted the brutality of the police and raised awareness among citizens. The connection between prejudice and ethnicity depicts that it leads to substantial damage to the people belonging to minority groups. The United States experienced challenges in defining the multidimensional cultural and racial identity of the people. Several studies used mixed-method studies to determine the racial-ethnic centralities prevailing among black, Latin and Asian populations. Racial identity depicts its relevance with responses to prejudice and racism. The literature argues that race is distinct from ethnicity due to contemporary racial hegemony when related to privilege and power. Studies depict that irrespective of the differences racial and ethnic elements continually interacts and affects individuals in various aspects of social life. The actual meaning of ethnicities and racial identities relies on how individuals assess people with multiracial characteristics (Angus & Crichlow, 2018).

Evidence suggests that police target African-Americans more in searches and shootings. Racial profiling is a prominent feature of police culture in America. Most of the searches conducted lack any serious reason that depicts discriminating attitudes of the police. The behavior of police towards the black population also reflects the policing tactic. The increase in the percentage of ethnic minorities indicates the prevalence of racial profiling in the justice system. The attitudes of the police reflect that they are influenced by their perceptions. Most of the police officers associate crimes with African-Americans that influence their decision of targeting blacks. The race is more useful in identifying the power and indexes of the past where one group manages to impose authority over another group. The race is also used in explaining the differences between groups and the reasons for those differences. Racial groups represent differences in power relationships also causing dispute as few groups attempts to prove their superiority. Ethnicity focuses more on the meaning, practices, and values of groups. Cultural differences motivate people to behave differently. In many respects, race and ethnicity are the same concepts as they transmit similar meanings. (English, Bowleg, Río-González, Tschann, Agans, & Malebranched, 2017).

Literature suggests that black male stigma is prevalent in law enforcement. This convinces the officers and the policymakers to adopt strict measures against the blacks. such attitudes undermine the safety and protection of black males. Blacks driving on the streets are stopped more by the police officers irrespective of any sound reason. Many blacks are shot even when they are unarmed just because they run from police. The allegations of bias are also existent in the justice system of America. The intentions of police to target blacks more exhibits racial disparities. Racial stereotypes automatically activate the powerful behaviors that generate consequences for the group that holds it and the other group that experiences it. Findings of the literature indicate that racial identities and ethnicities represent an overlap as they work in similar manners. Race and ethnicities are not same as they highlight some striking differences. Sociologists identify some differences between race and ethnicities as a position such as pride, identity, and motivation that unite people. The differences between race and ethnicities are also negative as it divides the population into two groups; prejudiced and evaluated. To recognize the similarities between race and ethnicities it is important to understand the differences in stereotypes and the role that they play in defining individual behaviors. Research studies on ethnicity and cultures depict differences in the generation of stereotypical attitudes (Wilson, Wilson, & Thou, 2015).

The black activists launched the campaign zero to address the injustices faced by the black people and created resistance against the federal policies. The main focus of the activists was to raise voices against police violence and brutality. The police's indulgence in racial profiling influence motivated the black population to stand against racial violence (Npr, 2015). The comprehensive policy platform united the black people to enter into peaceful protests and bring to light racial discrimination. They demanded the elimination of racial disparities in the criminal system of the United States. The black community claimed that the police treats black suspects unfairly and often adopt brutal practices such as violence, house searches and streets arrest. The concept of justice provoked many black Americans’ to protests. Launching campaign zero used social media and websites to promote the issues of black racism. The campaign demanded to end the broken window policy, limiting the use of force and weapons over the black community, avoidance of police shootings and demilitarization. The famous black activists such as Du- Bois used the literary platform and encouraged the people through their writings against black violence. Fair policing was the main concern of the campaign (Lopez, 2015).

Methodology

The paper utilizes the Critical Race Theory to assess the prevalence of discrimination in law enforcement. The Critical Race Theory (CRT) is effective for understanding how relationships transform under influences of race and power. To analyze the prevalence of racism and social inequalities the theory emphasizes on issues of civil rights and ethnic discourses. It is helpful in understanding how real-life events contributed to racism and discrimination. CRT theory focuses on equality theory and legal reasoning that highlights the causes of racism. The theory is effective in understanding the social situations and political factors contributing to the promotion of racism. CTR emerged in the mid-1970s when the scholars attempted to study the impacts of social factors on race and black-white relationships. Popular writers on racism including Frederick Douglas and W.E.B Du Bois also incorporated critical rate theory to criticize the existence of racial inequalities and discrimination in American culture. The theory is effective in explaining how society constructs the social roles of blacks and whites. It highlights the notions leading to group powers and oppression. In the present study, CRT allows assessment of police culture and how it contributes to discrimination. The theory is used for determining the relationship between blacks and white officers (Angus & Crichlow, 2018).

The prevalence of race in police culture of the twenty-first century exhibits that the problem of race remains visible in the American culture. “The American society has become addicted to violence. The relationship between African American and law enforcement has become not only increasingly brutal but back-breaking" (Angus & Crichlow, 2018). The theory suggests a deeper connection between racism, white supremacist and violence. The cases used for the analysis of police culture include; Davon Mullins, Alfred Olango, Tamir Rice and Anthony Robinson.

Discussion

The discussion of the popular cases of police brutality provides understandings that contribute to the solution for ending violence and discrimination. The cases used for the study reflects similar patterns as all victims were unarmed. This indicates difficulty for identifying situations where police have contributed to the wrongful deaths of the black men. The cases reveal that the police killed the unarmed black men but the charges were cleared later. This is because, law enforcement officers are protected from, "violating constitutional principles that they could not have a reasonably known at the time of the violation" (Deerose, 2016). The case involved two assessments; first if the officers have violated the constitutional right or not. The second include officers familiarity with the right established at the time of the incident. The Supreme Court states that the standard of the Fourth Amendment must be adopted for identifying if the officer is scrutinized. This requires careful examination of the incident and quality of intrusion. The interpretation of the law indicates that the officer will be acquitted when objective reason is proved.

The cases of Davon Mullins, Alfred Olango, Tamir Rice and Anthony Robinson depicts that all black males were unarmed when police killed them. this reflects the prevalence of racial disparities. Empirical evidence suggests that "1 in 3 black people killed by police were considered unarmed and at least twice-a-week a hundred and two (minimum) unarmed black people are killed by law enforcement" (Angus & Crichlow, 2018). The officers are motivated by the immunity clause that protects them against using coercive practices over the blacks.

The qualified immunity for the reason provides increased protection to the officers and law enforcement officials. When an officer issued for the compensatory damages qualified immunity protects him and minimizes the possibilities of facing the charge against inappropriate conduct. This ruling has a significant impact on the police culture and officers are inclined to use their right to immunity whenever they shoot unarmed black men. In each case, the officer can be charged only when he knows that the action established was not self-defence but excessive force. The principle states that it is not possible to accuse the law enforcement personnel or police officer under the clause of qualified immunity. The purpose of the clause is to give adequate protection to the officers against harassment when they have performed their duty legally.

Mapping police violence in America depicts that deadly shootings against the armed officers increased consistently. Evidence suggests that “young black males between ages fifteen to nineteen were killed at a rate of 31.17 per million, compared to 1.47 per million white males died at the hands of police” (Angus & Crichlow, 2018). This reflects that black youth is more vulnerable to police shootings that confirms the prevalence of racial attitude of officers towards black youth. It also confirms that black males are five times more likely to be killed by the police. Police target blacks more compared to whites.

With time the role of racism did not vanish from the society that encouraged authors to write about the social issues and recognizing it as a threat to society. The comparison is also useful in learning if the meaning of race changed with time and did the conditions of black people improved in the modern world. The purpose of including fictions on race from different periods is to assess if Africans continue to suffer the consequences of race as represented by the authors of the nineteenth century. It also uncovers if American society supports racial discrimination by adopting different behaviors against blacks and whites or they rely on the concepts of equality and justice. The theory also involves investigations of the policies that are prevalent in the police culture and contributes to brutality against the blacks (Lopez, 2015). The facts confirm that blacks remain the victims of racial profiling and police coercion. Racial disparities are thus evident between blacks and whites. Officers are well aware that they must hold a reasonable suspicion before stopping the citizens but they neglect the law during their encounter with the blacks.

Implications

The current study reflects the need for formulating strategies for minimizing the brutal encounter of police with black Americans. Perceptions of officers about blacks have undermined the concept of justice and fairness. The prevalence of coercive practices threatens the lives of the African-Americans. Absence of reasonable suspicion encourages officers to target blacks. Immunity and clause for establishing force also act in favor of the police (Angus & Crichlow, 2018). This reflects the need for police recruitment and training for choosing unbiased officers. Punishing officers for wrong killings will also minimize the role of racial disparities.

Conclusion

Racial profiling and racial discrimination came into light in 2014 that focused on public consciousness of Americans. High profile killing of the African-Americans raised concerns for evaluating the credibility of law enforcement. The analysis of the literature and empirical evidence suggests the prevalence of racial profiling in the police culture. The officers are inclined to target black males and adopt brutal attitudes that reflect discriminatory attitudes. The race also used in explaining the differences between groups and the reasons for those differences. Racial groups represent differences in power relationships also causing dispute as few groups attempts to prove their superiority. CRT allows assessment of police culture and how it contributes to discrimination. The theory is used for determining the relationship between blacks and white officers. The differences between race and ethnicities are also negative as it divides the population into two groups; prejudiced and evaluated.

The literary database reveals that the reasons for searching blacks are racial attitudes of officers. Blacks face challenges of more searches and ruthless shootings. Ethnicity focuses more on the meaning, practices, and values of groups. Cultural differences motivate people to behave differently. In many respects, race and ethnicity are the same concepts as they transmit similar meanings. The Supreme Court states that the standard of the Fourth Amendment must be adopted for identifying if the officer is scrutinized. This requires careful examination of the incident and quality of intrusion. The overall analysis of the police culture depicts that the laws favor the officers that encourage them to adopt aggressive investigation techniques on blacks. Absence of reasonable suspicion encourages officers to target blacks.

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