

Incarceration rates of minorities in the us



With law enforcement poised to eliminate crime and the people who commit it, the building of new jails and prison seem to be the likeliest answer to the problem. Throughout American history, minorities have always been portrayed as dark and evil to name a couple of stereotypes. With the help of television and other means of media the focus has been set to create a mental consciousness to presume every black, Hispanic, and anyone closely related as armed and extremely dangerous. This has cause an unfair disadvantage for people of color, but has left the perception of the white race crystal clean. Just as there are bad people everywhere, there are bad cops, judges, and politicians in every police department, court house, and legislative branch that forge evidence to meet arrest quotas that the system needs to have in place; setup by the elitist to fund their need to have slave labor for their manufacturing companies. Some minorities have been falsely accused and persuaded by police brutality in order to coerce false confessions, and the judges fall in their place to announce the sentencing. Throughout years of focusing on media events that always place blacks and other minorities in a position of being the bad guy. Today the jail and prison population is primarily made up of blacks. Although there are Hispanics, as well whites, the main overcrowding comes from blacks being locked up on frivolous charges. But there's a deeper reason behind why this injustice is happening to blacks, and it all stems from the system's need of the incarceration of minorities.

To test the influence of local county politics on minority incarceration rates, data are collected at the county level in most states to create a pooled cross-sectional data set. OLS regression models predicting black, Hispanic, and

white incarceration rates in state prison are used in the analysis. Counties' ideological orientations and racial and ethnic contextual characteristics significantly impact minority incarceration rates. Greater ideological conservatism within counties is associated with higher rates as a proportion of their population of both black and Hispanic incarceration. Consistent with racial threat theory, results show counties with greater racial and ethnic diversity are more likely to incarcerate blacks and Hispanics. Tests for interaction effects indicate that greater county diversity decreases the punitive effects of ideological conservatism on minority incarceration. Political forces nested within states systematically shape how state government incarceration power is distributed across different racial and ethnic groups.

(Bridges and Crutchfield, 1988; Greenberg and West, 2001; Western, 2006; Yates, 1997), The punitive paradigm that has characterized U. S. crime policy over the past three decades has led to important concerns about the distribution of one of government's most intrusive powers; the ability to deprive citizen of their liberty through imprisonment across different racial and ethnic groups. It has been well documented that blacks are six to eight times more likely to be incarcerated relative to whites. (Western, 2006). Hispanics are over three and one-half times more likely to be incarcerated than whites.

Blacks and Hispanics, together, account for nearly two-thirds of the state prison population. Disparities such as these within the criminal justice system have long engendered heated debate about principles of equality and civil rights. Imprisonment rates between the states are shown to be a

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function of a variety of state-level political and legal factors. From this research, there is clear evidence that political forces cause states to incarcerate at widely different rates, with minorities living in a particular state either more or less likely to be imprisoned, depending in part, on the politics within. Yet, while these studies have significantly advanced our understanding of the politics of incarceration, state-level studies often mask the fact that a state's "use" of incarceration is largely a byproduct of political processes found at the local (county) level of government. When analyzing the politics of incarceration from the bottom up, top-down political forces like the partisan control of state-level institutions or state sentencing laws effectively become standardized, suggesting that local politics retains significant leverage over how a state's imprisonment powers are allocated. Given this, however, we know little about the extent to which incarceration rates are systematically tied to local environments and whether local politics systematically shape the imprisonment rates of racial and ethnic minority groups. Two primary questions motivate this research: Do political forces shaped by the local ideological and racial and ethnic environment affect incarceration rates in ways that are disproportionately detrimental to racial and ethnic minorities? Second, to what extent does the racial and ethnic context interact with localized

Ideological orientations to affect minority incarceration rates? Or, put another way, can diversity levels in a given jurisdiction work to strengthen or weaken the propensity of those who might, because of their ideological beliefs, be already more inclined to incarcerate minorities? Conservatives tend to view criminal activity as a matter of personal choice and focus on

deterrence and incapacitation based policy responses. Beckett and Western (2001). Conservatives have been more likely to use incapacitation as a means to control a marginalized “underclass” of citizens that threatens the economic and political interests of elites. (Scheingold, 1984), In contrast, ideological liberals tend to view crime as a function of structural impediments to success and place more emphasis on crime prevention policies rather than punishment after the fact. Beckett, and Sasson (2004). If ideological conservatives are more inclined to incarcerate, these orientations might also be expected to influence the target of those policies with racial minorities more likely to be targeted relative to whites. (Edsall and Edsall, 1992; Weaver, 2007), Republicans used crime and punishment as an effective tool to realign the political electorate by pursuing law and order policies that linked financially secure fiscal conservatives and middle to lower class conservatives who had little else in common, while blaming street crime and other social ills on a racial (black) underclass, conservative. Republicans made veiled appeals to anti minority hostilities among some lower income conservative whites by enacting punitive crime policies that were implemented in ways that put more blacks in prison, but invoked greater support at the ballot box. Insofar as these political pressures retain their influence on criminal justice policy making at the local level of government, as well as to minorities other than blacks (i. e., Hispanics), it can be predicted that more conservative counties will be more likely to incarcerate blacks and Hispanics (as a proportion of their respective population) in state prisons than are more liberal counties. Racial politics shaped by the local racial and ethnic contextual environment are also expected to influence minority incarceration rates. In racial politics literature, <https://assignbuster.com/incarceration-rates-of-minorities-in-the-us/>

significant attention has been paid to social conflict or “ racial threat” theory, which offers a “ contextual” explanation for minority imprisonment. Dating back to the work of Key (1949), the main idea behind the theory is that when a minority population is small, it represents a relatively minor threat to the interests of the majority. However, as the number of minorities grows, they begin to threaten the economic and political interests of the majority population, increasing hostile attitudes toward minority populations among majority group members. Blalock (1967) argued that a majority group’s repression of a minority group’s interests was based on two types of perceived threats those motivated by economic competition and those driven by competition over political power. A growing body of research has found evidence of a racial threat effect across a variety of institutional settings. (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997). If racial hostilities increase in more diverse environments, there are more reasons to predict that these hostilities will spill over to influence criminal justice policy making. “ Old-fashioned” white racism often concentrated on a perceived genetic inferiority of blacks to whites. Today, more common white stereotypes involve the perception of blacks as a violent, criminal underclass. These stereotypes, along with the assumption that objective demographic data which show blacks to be disproportionately linked to the U. S. penal system permeates the public’s consciousness to believe that most blacks are violent than whites.

To a meaningful degree, likely increase the probability that whites associate crime and the criminal justice system with race. In conclusion; this research provides convincing evidence of “ racialized” crime policy in the United

States. The tendency among some whites to connect race with crime has important implications for state punitiveness and imprisonment of blacks more specifically. Whites who view blacks as violent have been shown to be more supportive of punitive policies like the death penalty and longer prison sentences. Following arguments associated with the racial threat idea, a more racially diverse environment is likely to trigger more negative stereotypes among whites living there, who, as a result, may be more apt to support punitive crime policies, particularly if there is the perception that the target population is black. However, existing tests of the racial threat hypothesis on black incarceration rates have brought mixed results. In some state-level studies, once black arrest rates and other socioeconomic conditions are controlled, the racial threat hypothesis provides little predictive power (Bridges and Crutchfield, 1988; Yates, 1997). Others have found the proportion of blacks in a state does matter, but in the opposite direction predicted by the racial threat idea black imprisonment rates decreased in states with a greater black population (Yates and Fording, 2005). This mixed set of findings brings the possibility that a more appropriate test of a racial threat effect on imprisonment should be conducted at the local level. Measuring the influence of state racial composition on imprisonment has proven useful because it allows comparisons across jurisdictions; however, these efforts often gloss over the fact that state imprisonment rates are a function of decisions made by county law enforcement officials. If, indeed, incarceration rates are influenced by racial politics, it might be expected that county prosecutors, judges, or public defenders those with authority over prosecuting, sentencing, or defending offenders to/from state prison are most likely to be

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subject to racial “ effects.” Assessing the influence of a racial threat on minority incarceration can also be advanced by considering whether political forces resulting from whites’ exposure to a variety of ethnic and racial minorities, rather than simply their exposure to larger black populations, affects minority imprisonment rates.

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