

# Prison data

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According to the information obtained from the United States of Bureau Statistics, thirty nine percent of the prison population comprised of the non Hispanic African Americans, while Hispanics accounted for around sixteen percent. The report further stated that the incarceration prevalence for the blacks was the highest compared to other races. Young African Americans had the highest likelihood of being convicted; the percentage was found to be about seven times that of the whites. The number of freed black inmates stood at around twenty two percent.

Many theories have been advanced to explain the disparities which exist in crime rates across different racial groups. Such theories have given an in depth analysis of the racial justice system and explained the origins of the race-crime relationship. These theories include; sub-cultural theory, police discrimination, hormonal theory, conflict and anomie theory. Theories The sub-cultural theory proclaims violence as means of self defense. It explains that one should use violence whenever attacked or faced with threatening situations.

As such, African Americans are perceived to be more violent compared to other races. This is because their subculture allows them to be aggressive whenever they are wronged or want something. As a result, they form the largest number of convicted criminals in American prisons. The discrepancy in the number of homicide cases between the North and South was widely believed to be as a result of similar subculture of violence shared by the poor Southern whites and blacks. This theory was however perceived to be racist because; the assumption that a violent person automatically became a criminal was wrong.

Alternatively, there was no data collected to show that African Americans were the most violent race. The most common and widely accepted theory is the conflict theory. This theory proclaims that crime is a result of competition between different groups in a society. These groups are based on class, race, education, occupation, ethnicity and religious backgrounds. Crime is viewed as a product of inequality which is a result of competition between different groups of people in the society. Inequality may also arise when there is unequal distribution of goods and services.

In such a case, those with limited access to services and will resort to crime so as to fulfill their demands. This type of conflict is known as economic conflict. Since the colonial era, blacks were generally looked down upon. Their access to basic services such as education was limited. They were required to pay taxes yet their incomes were very small. It is therefore believed that they turned to crime so as to fulfill their needs.

Another type of conflict is the social and cultural conflict. The whites regarded themselves as the superior race. As a result, they established their rule over the African Americans and the American Indians who they considered inferior. The blacks and the American Indians sought to crimes such as murder and theft to free themselves from the whites who enslaved them. The conflict theory has been criticized in recent years because today's world is virtually free of any form of political colonialism. Cases of racial discrimination have gone down to very low levels.

Therefore the foundation which formed the basis of this theory has been eroded (McLaughlin & Eugene, Muncie & John, 2006). Anomie theory has

been in existence since nineteen thirties. Robert K Merton work formed the basis of this theory. It explained that organization of the social structure gave rise to inequalities based on the different social status of the people in a certain society. Those with higher social status opted to rule over those with lower social status. They restricted access to basic commodities so as to impose their authority over the rest of the society.

The people with lower social status turned to crime to fulfill whatever needs they were deprived of. A different version of the theory has been advanced in recent years. This version explains that the need to acquire more wealth has driven people into committing crimes. The powerful acquire resources from the poor at all costs leaving them with nothing. The poor on the other hand, resort to killing and stealing from the powerful and rich in order to fulfill their needs and revenge against the powerful.

Critics however discredit this theory on basis that it fails to explain the existence of crime even among the poor living together. They say the theory assumes that crime only exists between the rich and the poor, which is not the case. This is because different forms of crime have been shown to exist even among slum dwellers. Social disorganization theory explains that high crime rates are as a result of disturbance of the social ecology. It points out to the rising rates of crimes as negative consequence of urbanization. The presence of many minority cultures has served to weaken strong social bonds and ties that exist in poverty-stricken areas of an urban society.

This weakening of bonds has prevented establishment of positive social relationship among neighbors. Theory also links the low prevalence of crimes

in homogenous communities to their stability and the strong bonds which prevent them from committing crimes against each other. Police discrimination has been advanced as a theory to explain the relationship between race and crimes. Police have been found to be partial while discharging their duties for instance; they arrest and convict most of the blacks who deal in crack cocaine while leaving the whites who trade in heroin and powdered cocaine to go scot-free. This is despite the fact that heroin and powdered cocaine account for more deaths than crack cocaine (Holms & Roonald & Maahs & Jeffery & Gennaro, 2007).

Findings My survey took me to different friends, family members, associates and co-workers. I interviewed a total of fifty respondents; Out of these fifty, twenty five were males and twenty five females, five of the females were blacks while three of the males were blacks, the rest were whites. None of my interviewees was a Hispanic. None of those I interviewed was a freed convict, only ten of my correspondents had a family member, an associate or a friend who had at one time been arrested. The results showed that all the blacks who made up sixteen percent of my correspondents believed that a racial criminal justice system did exist and they were the main targets of this racial criminal justice system. Only eighteen of the whites that is; about thirty six percent of the correspondents, agreed that a criminal justice system did exist.

Of the ten who had an experience with the criminal justice system, eight were blacks and the remaining two were whites. The eight blacks and one white agreed that a racial criminal justice system did exist; the remaining white did not accept that it existed. In total, fifty two percent of my

correspondents agreed that a criminal justice system existed. The remaining forty eight percent, who were all whites, disagreed that a racial criminal justice system existed. Conclusion Basing my conclusion on my findings and the researched work, I do agree that a racial criminal justice system does exist. It is a problem and subject that continues to divide our society along racial lines.

It is a ticking time bomb that if not checked and corrected may result in civil wars and other problems in future. All the blacks I interviewed accepted the existence of a racial justice system. This is because they had a personal experience with the justice system. They also cited the statistics mentioned above as a proof of their views. The whites who did not agreed that a racial criminal justice existed; I believe did so because they had no experience with the criminal justice system.

Those who had experience with the criminal justice system believed police and law enforcement agencies followed the due course of the law and were impartial while making arrests. They believed racial criminal justice system was a excuse developed by the blacks and other races to explain high prevalence of crime rates among them. They however accepted that certain disparities did exist but those disparities were so much negligible to raise any concern. The whites who accepted the existence of racial justice system had either a black friend or an associate who had experienced it. All of them did agree that the decision makers in the criminal justice system had to be changed if the confidence level among the citizens was to be improved.