Latinx Community and its mass incarceration in The United States throughout the past decades

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Research Problem

The main idea of the research is to compare the incarceration of Latinx community in the past two decades. This has been done previously but very little literature has been done with the 2020 census. Furthermore, the social causes, and reasons for imprisonment will be analyzed to determine if the discrepancy among other races and Latinx incarcerated. That is, if the percentage of mass incarceration of Latinx has reduced. The analysis will be done using data from the past two decades and currently from the new US Census and the most up to date statistics from Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Background & Context

As it has been the case with African Americans, the Latinx community has been the target of discrimination. Some of the factors for mass incarceration are the war on drugs, stereotypes, media depiction, police tactics, biases and immigration status. (Morín, 2016) Also, mass imprisonment has increased in the United States more than in any other part of the world. However, The Bureau of Justice of Statistics mentions that " Hispanics are the fastest growing group being imprisoned" (Morín, 2016) as quoted by Morin

Theoretical Issues or Methodology

The theoretical issues that arise in this study is the flaws in the justice system , police tactics and media depictions which are the one that affect the view held by the public of the Latinx community. In theory, and the systemic bias towards Latinos/as, we would expect the rate of imprisonment to continue at an all time high. Victor M. Rios in his chapter on the book entitled, " Racializing Justice, Disenfranchasing Lives" argues that "black and Latino youth are further stigmatized and "hypercriminalized" on entering the juvenile justice system even when the majority are arrested for nonviolent offenses." (Manning Marable & Middlemass, 2007)

Literature Review

The Literature Review consist of various books and articles on Latinx mass incarceration. Additionally, data will be gather from the US census, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The following are some of the literature found until now:

- Latinos and Criminal Justice by Jose Luis Morin (Morín, 2016)

- Racializing Justice, Disenfranchising Lives by Manning Marable (Manning Marable & Middlemass, 2007)

- The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander (Alexander, 2010)

- Invisible No More by Andrea J. Ritchie (Ritchie & Davis, 2017)

- Latinos/as in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems (Urbina, 2007)

- Hispanics in the U.S Criminal Justice System by Martin Urbina et al. (Urbina & Álvarez, 2018)

- Ethnicity and Criminal Justice in the Era of Mass Incarceration. (Urbina & Alvarez, 2017)

- Mass Imprisonment: Social Causes and Consequences by David Garland (Garland, 2001)

Research Questions

The following are the research questions this study will be answering:

- Has the percentage of Latinx prisoners increased relative to the total population increase?

- Has the percentage of Latinx prisoners increased in the prison system ?

- Has the incarceration for non violent crimes increased for Latinx community

- How has the imprisonment rates compare in the last five decades for latino\as

- Is there a systemic bias against latinos\as ? This will be answered in the case of first hand interviewing as detailed on the research plan.

General Research Plan

Outline

This research will be conducted in the following manner:

- ***Qualitative Research***

  - In order to answer the research questions, we will gather data from various sources listed below. We will then clean the data, remove any missing or incoherent information, and perform statistical inference with the programming languages R , and python. The following are the sources for the data

    * Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS): https://www.bjs.gov/

    * U.S. Census Bureau: https://www.census.gov/

    * Vera Institute of Justice: https://www.vera.org/

    * Pew Research Center: https://www.pewresearch.org/

    * American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU): https://www.aclu.org/

    * Survey data from various sources.

    * Survey data created by the researcher and given out to Latino\as : may it be to John Jay Students or to randomized people through the internet, social media or in the street.

  The idea behind these data sources is to find the population numbers for Latinx from the US Census, and compare it to the imprisonment numbers by the Bureau of Justice Statistics to find the ratio between imprisoned Latinos\as and total Latinos\as in the US. Also, with the help of python, to visualize the data from each state, and compare between states the number of total Latinos\as and

the total number of imprisoned Latino\as. Additionally, a great idea would be
to obtain data from a survey created by me to serve a primary source. This
could be created in such a way to reduce bias, and make it so that randomized
people are able to take it. Still more thought needs to go into this because of the
nature of the research. Would it matter if only Latino \as take the survey, or
whites? Would it imply bias? or would it be adequate for the research I'm
conducting. However, proper measures will be taken into place to make sure
data is of good quality, reduced bias, and fulfills are statistical requirements.

– *Qualitative Data*

Given the nature of the research, including qualitative data as well would be a
great idea to give the research the all the support and credibility it requires.
Some of the qualitative data from secondary sources are:

∗ Interviews

∗ focus groups

∗ Observation from recorded material in correction facilities , jails and more

Additionally, since this topic is not exactly well studied in New York, I believe
obtaining qualitative data from primary sources would be novel and ideal. Thus,
after speaking with Yudith Franco, A forensic Accountant with minor in Law
from John Jay, who is currently pursuing a masters in Accounting and working
as a paralegal at a law firm. We believe we could work together on gathering
good quality data with the following:

∗ Interviews: Going to a prison in New York and interviewing Latinx
    Immates. Yudith also has experience interviewing inmates in Colombian
    Prisons which would make it ideal to probe the right questions to obtain the
    necessary information allowing freedom for each individual. This has to be
    discuss with faculty at John jay to see how feasible it is, the required

paperwork, and permits. This would be done in a semi-structured format to somewhat compare certain specific parts of the interview more concretely to other individuals

* Focus groups: This could be done by social media advertisement, community board advertisement and John Jay students.

* Observation: This is another step with other collaborators. We could gather video recording of inmates (After all required permits are obtained) and also by observing Latinx behavior directly in NY prisons.

Anticipated Difficulties and Pitfalls

Some of the pitfalls in this project are :

- Quality of data: Due to the vastness of the project, data gather from different sources may under-represent or over-represent certain groups. To make sure it is adequate data of high quality, we will perform data cleaning, and make sure we are collecting data from reliable sources or if it's from a primary source we will use the principles of statistics to make sure it is of high quality.

- Qualitative data: Due to the nature of this kind of data , it might be difficult to gather data, thus, as soon as the project is accepted, and after the structure of the research is approved, we will start requiring all the right paperwork to access prisons and perform interviews and observations. The downfall would be the time constrain and the rejection or delay of the permits.

- Logistical Hurdles: Managing, storing, and obtaining right equipment for the interviews and the vastness amount of data will definitely have to manage closely to follow regulations for the equipment allowed in prisons and that data is treated carefully to avoid any tampering.

Importance of the Project

   The important of this research is vast. Primarily, Latinx is not extremely researched, and as such the whole Latinx Community would benefit from this research. This would also propel future research on Latinx's mass incarceration and systemic unfairness and thus propel a change in the justice system.

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