

Abstract

Racial Inequalities in the U.S. Criminal Justice System: Situating the Impact of Drug Courts on Minority Communities

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Drug courts were established in the United States to rectify some of the social injustices stemming from the war on drugs. Mass incarceration is plaguing the nation as a repercussion of drug war policies, which disproportionately target people of color. Accordingly, drug courts were created to provide drug offenders with an alternative to the traditional punitive system. This study analyzes the relationship between drug courts and race. Furthermore, it explores to what extent drug courts ameliorate the issue of racialized mass incarceration and the human rights abuses as a result of the drug war. It is conducted utilizing the methodology of a scoping review to identify what the existing literature reveals on the topic under study. The findings indicate that unwarranted racial disparities continue to prevail within drug courts and may even be exacerbating the inequalities emanating from the war on drugs.