

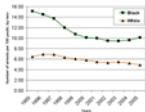
Black Justice: Disparities between White and Black Youth within the Juvenile Justice System by Ariana LaBarrie: University of Michigan-Ann Arbor Urban Institute Summer Fellow 2008

African Americans are underrepresented in many different aspects of society, such as leadership positions in business and government, and people attaining higher education. Although the entire African American population is a minority within the United States, they are overrepresented within the justice system, with about 1 in 3 African American males serving time in jail at one point in their life. This disparity of African American is also apparent within the juvenile justice system. Termed as disproportionate minority contact, black youth are overrepresented at each step of the juvenile justice system. This differential treatment can lead to differential outcomes once outside of the system, such as higher recidivism rates.

Methods:

- Review literature on disproportionate minority contact (DMC) and disparities in case processing.
- Analyze national data on juvenile justice population and juvenile court case processing for all offenses and drug offenses using the National Disproportionate Minority Contact Databook between the years 1995-2005.
- Consider factors and solutions to DMC and implications for minority youth.

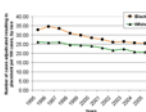
Disparities in Arrests-All Offenses



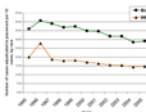
Disparities in Arrests-Drug Offenses



Disparities in Placement-All Offenses



Disparities in Placement-Drug Offenses



The differential treatment that black youth receive in the juvenile justice system can potential lead to reactivity at a higher rate.

- The number of referrals a juvenile has determines whether they will be referred again. Since black youth are more likely to be referred to court, they are more likely to continue to delve within the system.
- Theory of labeling. This theory states that "labeling young people as "delinquents" or "criminals" by processing them through the justice system increases the likelihood that they will think of themselves as offenders and thus continue to commit illegal crimes (Jeffrey A. Butts, Janeen Buck, Mark B. Coggeshall). Since black youth are more likely to be processed heavily throughout the juvenile justice system and be labeled as a delinquent or criminal, they are more likely to play this role that is prescribed to them in society.

