Abstract

Over the past decade, many arguments over racial disparity have become the center of worldwide media attention. While many studies have gathered and revealed a consensus of the existence of racial inequality in mass incarceration rates and the criminal justice system, few have investigated the role that race plays in determining severity of punishment. Utilizing Waves 1, 3 and 4 of the Add-Health cross-sectional data set, this paper will estimate and examine the effect being in a minority has on judicial decisions in criminal court. Unsurprisingly, previous studies have found that African-American males serve as much as 2 times the sentence amount in comparison to a White male. In addition, I found that race does have an impact on judicial verdicts and punishments.