How is Racial Disparity in Drug Sentencing Distributed Across the United States? How does race shape sentencing for drug-related crimes (possession, distribution, use, etc.)? What are the differences in intensity and duration of incarceration rates between white males and men of color on drug possession? How do state level political institutions shape racial disparities in drug-related sentencing? General Research Question - In what ways does the American judicial system handle sentencing: What are the differences in the intensity and duration of incarceration rates between white males and men of color (black/Hispanic) on crimes like drug possession? Overall Incarceration Rates by Race: According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in 2013 black males accounted for 37% of the total male prison population, white males 32%, and Hispanic males 22%. (But White females comprised 49% of the prison population in comparison to black females who accounted for 22% of the female population.) What is the context forming this racial disparity? Partisanship and ideology are part of public opinion - someone is passing these policies and they are getting enough support What are the interest groups, what kind of language is used (in state laws, how are legislatures talking about it - like dog whistler words like "high crime neighborhoods" or "gangbangers" - in order to justify racial targeting/patrolling of minorities. Turn this into a political science research question rather than just gathering data on these issues. Steps: establish that there is a racial disparity (show through data and statistics, in general to drug related crimes incarceration rates), show it throughout the nation, propose a solution and how to get there. How to approach this paper: - Audience: someone who is not in this class, or someone who may not agree or even agree with my points - Engage in a persuasive manner - Convince the audience that my concern is valid, approach is valid, my method is valid, etc. - Literature in itself is a persuasive point because you need to prove that you are standing on something valid --- Look at what these people are talking about --- Establish it and then try to push it forward to how it applies to you specifically Sources: (text) 1. Michelle Alexander - The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness The New Jim Crow 2. Michael Omi and Howard Winant - Racial Formation in the United States, Third Edition 3. Ian Haney Lopez - White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race Possible Sources: 1. The NAACP Criminal Justice Fact Sheet (could be better if looking at incarceration rates for drugs) https://www.naacp.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/ 2. National Survey on Drug Use and Health 3. Gap between the number of blacks and whites in prison is shrinking (April 30, 2019) Could be a refute?? https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/30/shrinking-gap-between-number-of-blacks-and-whites-in-prison/