

Introduction

The hypercriminalization of young Latino and Black men is sometimes a booming gesture, enthusing to display how racial inequality deep down plays its role as the key factor shaping American institutions. "*Punished*" is a specimen that portrays how the colored youths from Oakland are confined with criminal suspicion in every aspect of their life. Regardless of their schools, streets, and community programs, they are judged at every stage of their life. He raises his voice through his book to argue against this criminalisation, the "school-to-prison pipeline". Additionally, he discusses more far-reaching controls that are challenging for youngsters to adopt. This elaborated notion not only outlines the school's, as well as the teacher's, authority, but also the intricate roles of police officers, social workers, probation departments, community organisations, and even families. Awareness of these groups is important because, instead of the potential handling of students through the school authority, these groups can still see and treat a student as a criminal, though they are not.

Through this essay, the analysis of the strategies of hypercriminalization, and the procedure to produce "suspect class", racial progression through America's claim of justice and equal rights would be carried on, in the light of Rios (2011) and some other potential empirical research that shows the interweaving between policing, racism, and social control, inducing the marginalised criminalisation.

Understanding Hypercriminalization

Hypercriminalization is the process in which the youngsters of colour, especially the black boys and the Latinos, are repeatedly and apparently picked as criminals daily, though the criminalisation is not always valid (Rios, 2011). Mostly, the adults react according to the

stereotypes they are influenced by, like their bodily appearances, their sense of dressing, language, and their origin. Principally, standard teenage behaviours are classified as untrustworthy, deviant, and threatening in the case of teenagers of colour. For example, when a youngster of colour shows normal anger, wears a hoodie, or walks along with some other teenagers, maybe towards a basketball court or a market, their inner fun can be considered as a gang activity or violence by society in America. Due to this constant absurd mistrust, youngsters might get traumatised, and thus they can understand that society is portraying them as threats, even though they do not get much opportunity to prove themselves clean-handed (Rios, 2011).

Not only Rios, but also some potent researchers from the domain of racialization and immigration have found similar motifs where Latino immigrants, for no cause, are referred to as criminals by nature. The image already set in people's minds is that the immigrant body is already doing something illegal; thus, the interwoven concept of illegal activities and Latino existence is inseparable (De Genova, 2024). Hypercriminalization has an identical similarity with this viewpoint as it refers to the manner in which the racialised surveillance of the marginalised youth is not just that they are treated as threats, but also that they are not regarded as individuals.

Schools as Sentinels of Criminalised Identity

More often, the school plays its role as a firm spot where Black and Latino children are vulnerable to hypercriminalization. The school should first be sensitive about the well-being of the students and create a benevolent academic environment. Though, as a matter of fact, many schools work as a miniature criminal justice system on their own. Schools like that employ police with guns and ordinances, make some zero-tolerance policies, and make a different

uniform code for students from different racial identities. These schools mostly rely on punishment to keep up their disciplinary policy.

There are so many situations in practice for decades where boys of different races were punished for standard misdeeds. Wearing certain clothes, loudly laughing, or interrupting someone while talking can be some real-world examples of those situations (Rios, 2011). Mostly in the white schools, such behaviour induces small talks, the manner in which the teachers make their students understand why they should not take part in such activities. The students do not need to get suspended or any police involvement in white schools. Though in Oakland, where most of the students are of colour, similar conducts by students are regarded as disrespect or gang involvement and is taken action against (Rios, 2011).

The conclusion drawn by Rios was indeed empirical, as the studies suggest, mostly the Black boys are suspended for their behaviours, where police need to mediate. The police mediation ratio is three times higher than that of white boys (Darling-Hammond, 2024). Not only do black boys and Latino boys undergo the same pattern, where the disciplinary actions against them are unreasonable and dissimilar to those against white boys. Mostly, the schools that deploy armed police for school discipline, these kinds of disproportionate practices take place (Nance & Heise, 2022).

These issues are not limited to draconian punishment, but also fall within the parameters of criminalised pedagogy. The schools instill in their students the idea that Black and Latino boys can easily end up being criminals. The youngsters need to receive disciplined lessons for all time, whereas they take up such recognitions for literally nothing, which further makes them unwilling to go to school (Del Toro & Wang, 2023, p.37). These lessons work like a dominant

reflection for the youngsters. The youth, who have once been labelled as a threat or a troublemaker, are always seen through the same dimension for every firm move (Rios, 2011).

Police Surveillance and Criminalisation

Schools mostly equip the students with the power of law, though the police magnify such lessons. In multiple instances, Boys of Oakland are stopped by police repeatedly, even when they have not even started their adolescence (Rios, 2011). The key idea behind these stops was mostly the perception that the police officers had that these boys could be members of certain gangs. Their neighbourhood and dressing sense work as the key factors behind the perception. As a consequence, the innocent boys, maybe some going straight back home from school, or not showing themselves in public, also become victims of this mistrust.

Studies on racial profiling spill the beans on such patterns. The evidence-based ratios discover that Black and Latino men are more vulnerable than white men in the case of stop-and-frisk, though the latter group has a greater output in examples of conquering stop-and-frisk (Colon, 2025). The logic behind this is the mindset of the police that leads them to judge people through criminal vision for their racial appearance. Thus, every moment the police officer implies such thoughts, their justification of intervention remains the same.

On a similar note, police officers misjudge the Latinos, too. They perceive immigrant Latino people in a “crimmigration” character. This system amalgamates criminal enforcement and immigration control and leads to lingering scepticism (De Genova, 2024). Hypercriminalization is no longer confined to criminal justice, but also in the zone of immigration policing, where it construes an intense structure of observation with converging layers.

From the overall state of affairs, the persuasion comes to the youth that they are criminals for no reason, or for everything they do. Some of them start to recognise themselves with the “street” through defiance, which is then deciphered as further evidence of criminal nature (Rios, 2011). The perceived revolution of the youth supports the system of their criminalisation rather than the deterrence of crime.

Storylines of Media in Making “Suspect Class”

Media institutions have an instrumental role in breeding criminal identities. From the news coverage, it can be represented that the Black and Latino youths are mostly dangerous, violent, and have an alignment with gang activities. Most of the violent crime instances show the characteristics of minority suspects, contradicting the racial crime patterns (Meacham, Kleider-Offutt & Funk, 2024). The media mostly leans on storylines where a Latino individual is considered a villain. The media takes the responsibility to represent all the sides of the trouble it can cause, starting from the cultural dimension to the laws and public safety. Mostly, the stories are allegorical to defend the punitive policies of the U.S. (Viladrich, 2023). Audiences, if they get convinced again and again through these villainous stories of the Latinos, obviously would start perceiving the Black and Latino men as deep-rooted problems.

The entertainment media augments these discriminatory stereotypes rather than making unbiased news. The shows like Law and Order, Cops, and Gangland, which strongly refer to Black and Latino characters as criminals. With the help of these, the meaning of “suspect class” can be delineated. “Suspect class” is a racial unit that gets targeted due to the social presumption of guilt and undergoes perpetual surveillance (Rios, 2011). These cultural illustration causes dread and anxiety that reassures people about the uncontrollability of the crime, even in situations when the crime rate is actually a little (Meacham, Kleider-Offutt & Funk, 2024). This

dread props up the school punishment, severe policing, and immigration enforcement, bracing the contradictory nature of youth control.

The Mirage of Equality and the Reality of Racialised Control

The continual representation of America as a society extends equal opportunities, fair treatment, and neutrality to all people. Notwithstanding anything, hypercriminalization showcases that these principles are only applied to different zones in different places. Here, the teachers teach the students to be biased out of racial assumptions of deviance and danger. Police also patrol depending on the same, and considering these facets, the media decides which stories they would cover and from which dimension. Not only that, courts also use the same ideas for processing their defendants.

For instance, the boys from Oakland were mostly punished for doing similar activities that white and rich children are accustomed to (Rios, 2011). Structural racism has a great influence on the criminalisation, which is stacked up in poor neighbourhoods of people of colour. Even when institutions assert that they are even-handed, the consequences still exist to be a part of social stratification.

According to the empirical studies, the immigrant enforcement is a protraction of the racial system that refers to the illegalities of Latino immigrants and their nature of being vicious according to nature (Vildarich, 2023). Over and above the hypercriminalization, this phenomenon induces the hyperbole of layers of observation and scepticism.

Conclusion

Hypercriminalization is not a subtle aftermath of individual discrimination. It is an in-depth institutionalised manner that relies on Rio's description of schools, police, media, and community organisations. Also, it produces a "suspect class" for Black and Latino youth, pointing to their criminalisation. These agencies destroy the societal treatment of youngsters and

their perceived identity. From various empirical studies, it is proven that hypercriminalization is a systemic racism of control. To develop closer to real equality, institutions have to make some dynamic changes from holding punitive discipline to the benevolent one, more humane techniques that appreciate the dignity, potential, and conviction of young people rather than considering them as troublesome and threatening creatures.

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