**Quantitative Research Proposal**

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Quantitative research is utilized to acquire enhanced knowledge and a deeper understanding of the social world. It is intended to collect numerical data for measuring various variables. Quantitative research serves diverse purposes, including making observations about unknown phenomena, formulating hypotheses to explain the observed data, predicting outcomes based on specific hypotheses, collecting and processing acquired data, and ensuring the verification of results. There are four main types of quantitative research: Descriptive research, which focuses on the "what" question; Correlational Research, used to examine relationships between factors; Experimental Class Research, used to establish cause-and-effect relationships between research variables; and Comparative Research, which primarily emphasizes comparisons.

Capital punishment is an important topic to research for various reasons. When examining its impact on victims and their families, as well as the racial and socioeconomic disparities, crime deterrence analysis, and human rights concerns, it becomes clear why this is a widely debated issue. When considering the victims and their families, it is crucial to assess the toll of witnessing a loved one face the death penalty. When studying racial and socioeconomic disparities, it is essential to analyze the patterns and trends surrounding the sentencing of certain individuals to death. When conducting crime deterrence analysis, the focus is on determining the efficacy of capital punishment. When addressing human rights concerns, it is necessary to better understand how this practice aligns with international human rights standards.

I explored five pieces of literature on capital punishment, beginning with an in-depth analysis of 'Does Fairness Matter? The Role of Fairness in Support of the Death Penalty' by Gregg R. Murray. This article dives into public attitudes towards the death penalty and the pivotal role of perceptions of fairness. Murray, an assistant professor of government at the University of Texas at Brownsville, addresses the lack of research on the fairness aspect of capital punishment and poses critical questions about its influence on public support. This investigation focuses on Murray's research methodology, key findings, and the implications of fairness in shaping attitudes towards the death penalty.

Murray's research involved a nationwide telephone survey conducted in the late 2000s. The article opens by referencing Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who asserted that even staunch supporters of the death penalty would 'condemn death as a sanction.' The evidence presented highlights the frequent execution of innocent people before their innocence is proven, illustrating the detrimental impact of the death penalty on the entire criminal justice system.

While public support for the death penalty has been extensively discussed, Murray emphasizes the underexplored dimension of fairness in capital punishment. The author dives into public judgments about the death penalty and observes widespread support. Social context is revealed to have a significant influence on people's attitudes toward capital punishment, with the presence of a state death penalty law legitimizing the practice for its residents. Moreover, patterns of victimization are linked to support for the death penalty (Murray, 2005).

The article proceeds to discuss the data and measurement aspects, detailing a total of 1,669 interviews and a survey instrument comprising over 30 questions regarding capital punishment. The results imply that people's support for the death penalty is largely influenced by fairness. Respondents who are worried about wrongful executions are less inclined to support the death penalty than those who think it has a deterrent impact. Additionally, disparities based on race and gender are noted, with black respondents and females showing less support. States with laws allowing capital punishment are also found to have higher support. In conclusion, Murray's research underscores the significance of fairness in shaping public attitudes toward the death penalty (Murray, 2005).

After exploring Gregg R. Murray’s insights into fairness and public support for the death penalty, we turn our attention to another facet of the American death penalty debate. Mark D. Ramirez, based at the School of Politics and Global Studies at Arizona State, delves into the complex interplay of race in the context of capital punishment. Unlike Murray's focus on fairness, Ramirez's research aims to unmask how race influences perceptions of deservingness within the death penalty discourse (Ramirez, 2021).

Ramirez's study, conducted through a conjoint experiment involving 500 U.S. adults, takes a nuanced approach to examining race. While previous research has established a correlation between racial animus and support for the death penalty, Ramirez seeks to uncover the extent to which race matters in determining who the public deems deserving of capital punishment. Notably, his research expands beyond race, scrutinizing various factors—gang affiliations, gender, type of offense, age, and prior convictions—involved in shaping opinions on who should receive the death penalty (Ramirez, 2021).

The conjoint experiment, a methodical exploration of how individuals make decisions about capital punishment, utilized an online survey that took approximately 8 minutes to complete. Ensuring the reliability of responses, all participants had to pass an attention-check to complete the survey. The survey's structure involved presenting respondents with pairs of criminal offenders, each with detailed information, and asking them to determine who was more deserving of receiving capital punishment (Ramirez, 2021).

Contrary to expectations, the study's results challenge the assumption that race significantly impacts perceptions of deservingness for the death penalty, as the answer to the question 'Does race impact who is seen as deserving of capital punishment?' was 'No.' Instead, the research highlights other influential factors such as gang affiliations, past convictions, and a history of mental illness as crucial determinants in shaping public attitudes toward who deserves the death penalty (Ramirez, 2021).

Ramirez’s study shed light on the intricate dynamics of race in the American death penalty. The next piece of literature broadens the scope, examining mental illness and efforts toward abolition in the United States. Richard J. Wilson, affiliated with the American University Washington College of Law, undertook an investigation into different cases and conducted research on issues related to mental illness and the death penalty that remained unresolved at higher levels in the United States, despite the Supreme Court addressing the topic before.

This article delves into international human rights law, placing a significant focus on advocating for the abolition of capital punishment in cases involving individuals with mental health conditions. When a defendant is found incompetent due to mental illness, they will not have to stand trial; instead, they must receive treatment and can only return to trial if they regain competence. In the early 1960s, the United States decided that if people are deemed insane, they cannot be punished (Wilson, 2016).

According to Wilson, one of the most significant international cases on capital punishment was handled by the IACHR. It involved the application of the death penalty in the United States. The commission consolidated sixteen different defendants, and of those sixteen, six were executed despite the commission's request for the United States to take precautionary measures (Wilson, 2016). Wilson then mentions that international human rights bodies and national courts addressed questions of mental illness in death row prisoners. The results necessitated a call for the elimination of the death sentence (Wilson, 2016).

Wilson’s work looked deeply into the intersection of mental illness and capital punishment. However, you can’t investigate capital punishment without examining whether it works or not. This is where Daniel Nagin comes into play; he is the author of the next piece of literature which talks about deterrence and the death penalty.

Nagin points out in the literature that the most frequently made claims assert that the death penalty deters murders. However, according to the National Research Council, all statistics done in the past generation on this matter should be ignored. Nagin then delves into two types of studies that seem ineffective: panel data studies and time series studies. The reason these studies don’t work is that the geographic unit is too small, often showing only short-term changes in homicide rates (Nagin, 2014).

Nagin then discusses potential murderers and their perceptions and responses to capital punishment. The paragraph notes that since 1976, only 15% of people sentenced to the death penalty have been executed, and many death sentences get reversed. The next thing analyzed is three recommendations for research. The first recommendation is for research on other offenses, not just homicide. The next is research on sanction risk perceptions, greatly expanding it. The third recommendation concerns the use of methods that will not only increase the evidentiary value of research findings but also better communicate the uncertainty about that value (Nagin, 2014).

The article concludes by stating that the evidence on deterrents is too weak to guide decisions, which means people should have no views on capital punishment (Nagin, 2014).

D​aniel Nagin went very in depth about the deterrence of capital punishment. The last piece of literature being looked at was written by Jeffrey Fagan and Valerie West. This piece of work goes in-depth about the decline of juveniles getting the death penalty.

F​agan and West stated that the Atkins court ruled that capital punishment was unconstitutionally cruel and unusual punishment. The Supreme Court investigated juvenile death penalty following 2003 when it needed to review the Simmons v. Roper case. The court stated that immaturity and consequent reduced culpability of juvenile offenders. cases (Fagan & West, 2005).

The article then speaks on the reason juvenile death penalty has lowered so much is because the juvenile homicide rate has drastically decreased. It also goes in-depth on how the decline of juvenile offenders being sentenced to the death penalty could be because of societal norms changing against capital punishment on juvenile offenders. Changes were made in the death penalty once the United States started, and the challenges came along from higher rates of errors being made from the death penalty; these errors lead to the reversals of over 100 cases (Fagan & West, 2005).

This article concluded by talking about how the growing number of states have enacted legislation barring the juvenile death penalty. Other factors that factored into this were the jury’s choice to ever inflict this punishment; many judges never wanted to give this punishment to a juvenile. The biggest thing the authors found was that adults were charged higher for lower offenses than juveniles were for higher offenses cases (Fagan & West, 2005).

The research that I am looking to explore is the public attitudes when it comes to capital punishment. I will be doing an experiment in Downtown Durham, North Carolina, the DPAC (Durham Performing Arts Center) will be my sampling site for the experiment. I chose to use this location because it is a central position for many different diverse participants, some of the participants that I spoke with during the experiment were students, businessman and women, professional athletes, and people from all different age groups. I decided to make the sample random I was going to approach every tenth person that walked by DPAC. To make sure the experiment was random I used a systematic random sample.

Once every tenth person has been identified I will get an informed consent making sure that the participants know this survey is optional and voluntary. The survey will then be administered as a questionnaire which will cover the personal beliefs, demographics, and the different factors that influencing the way they feel about capital punishment. To make sure that the sample is as random as possible I will have every tenth individual pull a number out of a hat and if the number picked isn’t a 2,4,6,8 then they will not be asked to participate in the survey this will be used to make sure the experiment is unpredictable, but it still maintains the systematic random process.

Surveys will be done during the peak hours of the day which will be during lunch hours when people are walking around downtown. I will ensure that the ethical considerations are taken into place by making sure I receive consent and emphasize that everything will be confidential and anonymous. By combining convenience sampling and systematic random sampling, this experiment will aim to provide insights on attitudes towards capital punishment. This study looks to be able to cautiously generalize the population of Downtown Durham, while also seeing the limitations of specific characteristics of individuals.

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