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Living Dead in the United States: Felon Disenfranchisement and White Privilege

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Humanities

Oral

Title: Living Dead in the United States: Felon Disenfranchisement and White Privilege

Presenter: Fletcher, Amber

Faculty Sponsor: Williams, Gregory

Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to re-examine the policy of felon disenfranchisement through an analysis of its historical lineage from the Jim Crow Era to the contemporary era of Black Lives Matter and identify the influence of White Privilege in its development. The disenfranchised population in the United States is disproportionately Black. This research attempts to better understand the role of White Privilege in the policy of felon disenfranchisement. Review of previous research indicates a racial bias in the early implementation of felon disenfranchisement intended to prevent Blacks from exercising the right to vote as well as racial motivations behind the use of the policy until present day. Disenfranchisement prevents the exercise of full citizenship for felon and ex-felons in the United States. Through a constructivist research paradigm, this critical interpretivist study will seek to further identify the socially constructed context surrounding the historic lineage of felon disenfranchisement to better understand the policy as it functions today. Primary and secondary sources that address the social attitudes surrounding race and felon disenfranchisement will be interpreted through the lens of critical race theory to identify White Privilege in the development of felon disenfranchisement. This study provides a new interpretation of historical race relations in the United States and of the racially disproportionate disenfranchisement of Black United States citizens. This research concludes a connection between racial bias and the use of felon disenfranchisement to exclude Blacks throughout the historical lineage of felon disenfranchisement and role of White Privilege in the policy of felon disenfranchisement and how the inaction of White people allows for the perpetuation of policies with racially biased outcomes.