Re/Producing Capitalism
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Despite the Civil Rights movement and its subsequent heirs, white society still maintains a monopoly of systemic power in the United States and white capitalist hierarchies have become more expansive. In *The Constraint of Race: Legacies of White Skin Privilege in America*, Linda Williams (2003) summarizes the basis for Critical Race Theory (CRT), informing the ways that capitalist structures position the racist views of America. Because capitalism creates social classes, CRT helps to illumine race and racial segregation as social constructions embedded in and vital to American capitalist structure.

Within such capitalism, the political strategies of recent decades have further marginalized, criminalized, and enslaved people of color through racially coded legislature that largely affects Black communities. Black women carry the greatest burden of these systemic forces. Through congressional sleight of hand — white supremacist powers have rebranded the institutional oppression of Black women by recasting them as "welfare queens." The stigma of this socio-historical caricature has far reaching implications. Civil Rights era allowances served less to equalize, but rather invite a creative continuance of patriarchal and racist traditions in a country where such acts were now theoretically outlawed. This has been accomplished slyly through what feminist poet and essayist Adrienne Rich (1978) describes as "white solipsism—to think, imagine and speak as if whiteness described the world" (p 299).

Neoliberalist law-making combines with this white solipsist approach, blurring legal and political lines for the policing and place-putting of Black women. As Sociologist and Anthropologist Johanna Bockman defines, "neoliberalism is grounded in the assumption that governments cannot create economic growth or provide social welfare; rather, by trying to help, governments make the world worse for everyone, including the poor" (Bockman, 2013, np). Within this mindset, privatization and unhindered markets are best suited to generate economic growth that inspires and ensures social welfare.

We have now entered a time that Eric Janus, Professor of Law and former Dean and President of William Mitchell College of Law calls the "preventative state." This preventative state claims the right to deprive people of liberty "before criminal action is afoot. Under this approach, it is enough that there is potential for harm, that the individual…poses a grave risk" (Janus, 2006, p 4).   In this paper I intend to explore the ways our governmental and criminal justice systems create and magnify racial disparities,

painting Black women as enemies to society, encouraging the preventative state, and through this process have created a dangerous cycle where Black women provide significant support to the capitalist powers that oppress them. I will build the historical context by first outlining the foundational decisions that allowed these systems to flourish (1960s-1990s), demonstrating how individual and systems-level law enforcement has disproportionately and ineffectively incarcerated people of color for monetary gain, and explore how this incarceration damages economic opportunities for Black women.

Historical Context

In 1965, Assistant Secretary of Labor under Lyndon B. Johnson, Daniel Patrick Moynihan authored *The Negro Family: The Case for Nation Action,* a political recommendation dubbed The Moynihan Report. This report was compiled as part of Johnson's "war on poverty", which sought to explain the widening gap in economic success between White and Black citizens despite recent Civil Rights demands and victories. Touching on the social and political climate, Moynihan comments, "Their organizations have been in some ways better disciplined and better led than any in our history" (Geary, 2015, np). Unfortunately, Moynihan's report ultimately serves to criticize the family structure of Black America, essentially accusing Black women of usurping men's rightful roles by acting as heads-of-household. He feared this destructive trend would continue unless Black men were given ample job opportunities.

The United States patriarchal culture differentiates women from men while privileging the latter. Similarly, racism differentiates people of color from whites while privileging whiteness. "These processes are distinct but intertwined. Like any structuring of power, the racializing of gender is a process" which constantly undergoes renegotiation (Rousseau, 2013, p 2). Rather than seeing the deterioration of once-bustling manufacturing trades due to nation-state foreign markets as the probable cause of diminished employment possibility, Moynihan mistakenly placed the onus on Black family structure. He blames Black women in particular for weakening the assumed natural, normative structure of Black families and the Black community overall.

Feminist perspectives place families as the location of "gendered socialization" and the distribution of power across generations (Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2015). As Katherine Allen and Ana Jaramillo-Sierra summarize in their paper *Feminist Theory and Research on Family Relationships: Pluralism and Complexity*

(2015), "feminist perspectives on families are not neutral; feminism problematizes gender and its intersections with other social locations and says, despite all the personal, academic, and political obstacles, we can, and should, try to do it better" (p 94). They go on to say that "gender happens, influences, and interacts at multiple social levels –that is, both at the micro-contexts where individuals make choices in daily life about themselves and their significant relationships, and at the macro-contexts where institutions, politics, and economics set limits to relationships and individuals" (Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2015, p 94).

Through such a feminist framework, Ronald Reagan's legacy of moving America to the political conservative right illuminates this macro-context. This shift was so pronounced that Black America seemingly embraced later president Bill Clinton despite his promotion of programs, criminal justice, and welfare policies that would have been considered racist and reactionary under Reagan. This time period marked a switch toward neoliberal capitalism, nearly eliminating all social arrangements for welfare safety nets. Personal responsibility and choice were accentuated due to this political reform, which often focused on "reducing costs, strengthening disincentives" and minimizing or discharging folks from the welfare rolls (Alfred & Chlup, 2009, p 197).

The result of this shift included new legislative efforts to regulate and control those who historically have needed social financial support: the lower classes. This transformation is illuminated by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, a bill that would end the country's commitment to the welfare of (some of) its people.

Social Welfare

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act shifted the obligation of providing poverty relief and assistance to poor and working-class people from the federal to the state level (Davis, 2006). The new program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), introduced new restrictions on how benefits received could be used, required recipients to actively participate in the workforce, and implemented a lifetime maximum limit of 5 years that one may access such emergency funds. This change marks a shift from communally redistributing wealth to help those living in poverty, toward a self-sufficiency model that encouraged a faster exit from governmental programs, often at the

expense of gaining the necessary skills to make a living wage. Because Black women are so often situated as caretakers within their families and communities, the onus of family support falls squarely on them.

In 2010, Windsor, Benoit and Dunlap analyzed large-scale ethnographies to explore qualitative factors of intersectionality in their paper *Dimensions of Oppression in the Lives of Impoverished Black Women Who Use Drugs.* By probing these histories, they were able to empirically derive examples of the welfare system having impossible expectations where Black women "were expected to work, take care of their children, and develop work skills in order to become financially independent" (p 26). However, neoliberalist welfare does not provide "the means to fulfill these expectations, forcing women to go into debt, lose their electricity, engage in illegal activities, and/or play the system in order to survive" (p 26). In this study, every participant reported needing and receiving public assistance at various points in their lives. Financially struggling, they pointed to lack of childcare, a historically feminine role, as the main obstacle to finding and maintaining employment (Windsor, Benoit, & Dunlap, 2010).

Windsor, et al.'s study demonstrates how the demand on welfare recipients to attain economic independence through *any* available work enforces a cycle of poverty. These new rules increased pressure on mothers to find employment by any means necessary to remain eligible for benefits. Because racial discrimination is still an issue in hiring practices, this is yet another area that creates racial disparities for Black women, in addition to the barriers of gender and poverty. "The welfare system reproduces oppressive classist assumptions by presenting work 'opportunities' that remain undeveloped or do not offer meaningful routes to self-sufficiency" (Windsor et al., 2010, p 29). In *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins explains that classic patterns of employment for the Black community have been divided by gender. Black men are better able to find the higher-paying positions with less job security, while Black women have more abundant but lower-paying opportunities for employment. Collins connects "this classic pattern of exploitation, differentiated by gender" (p 59) to the economic vulnerability of Black women. Because Black men's employment lies on shakier ground, Black women become trapped in the plentiful, lower-paying positions in order to provide for themselves and their families. Therefore, when Black women find themselves sanctioned from their welfare benefits due to the five-year lifetime maximum, "with little promise of sustainable work, some women turn to criminal activities as a means of survival" (Alfred &

Chlup, 2009, p 245). Research states that women's criminal activity is typically categorized as either property offense, which is economically motivated due to low socioeconomic status, or non-violent drug offenses (Alfred & Chlup, 2009, p 242). Other survival work Black women engage in may include a service economy of childcare, doing hair, and other such cash transactions, but just as often poverty status may necessitate fast income such as the financial benefit from the sale of drugs.

The War on Drugs

Directing attention toward the ways in which society constructs and reconstructs a vision of the poor makes real an image of moral outcasts who act as enemies to society (Brodkin, 1993). For example, the original welfare program, Aid to Families With Dependent Children, was written to exclude Black families, yet by the 1980s it was beginning to be perceived as a giveaway to Black women specifically. Similarly, modern legislative efforts have criminalized Black specific drug activity, such as the unequal punishment for crack cocaine, where nearly 80 percent of offenders are Black, and powder cocaine where nearly 72 percent of offenders are white. These systems-level decisions show that the resulting incarceration statistics are a product of this legislation and the economic and social factors that produce such activities.

This legislative level is the first and broadest stage where racial disparities are introduced into the criminal justice system. It is here that crimes are defined and classified. Through the legislative process it is decided which conduct to criminalize, and by starting from a behavior and moving outward, it is easier to draw the connection between law-making and criminalization of certain categories of people.

For example, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 included minimum sentencing for drug offenses but also introduced sanctions increasing pressure on the drug user. This "User Accountability' section includes a provision designed to make public housing projects drug-free. Residents that allow their living units to be used for illegal drug activity can be evicted, denied federal benefits, including but not limited to food assistance payments to low-income households, federal Pell grants, Stafford loans, and work-study assistance for college and public housing assistance" (Stephens, 2009, p 178). These potential consequences illustrate how the "war on drugs" has contributed to the policing and shaping of future mobility and opportunity for Black women by creating recourse to criminalize them within the safety of their own homes.

The legislative establishment of "Drug Free Zones" (DFZs) also produces wildly disparate effects. According to Michael T. Risher, staff attorney for California's American Civil Liberties Union, nearly every state has some instance of DFZ policy, where the possession or distribution of drugs in particular areas such as schools, parks, or public housing properties carries enhanced penalties (Risher, 2009). "These laws mean that people who live and commit drug crimes in dense urban areas, where few locations are *not* close to a school or park will be punished more harshly for the same conduct than are their suburban or rural counterparts" (Risher, 2009). Because Black populations cluster in dense urban areas, DFZ policy is highly racialized. Additionally, "71 percent of cases associated with DFZ laws occurred when schools were not in session – weekends, summers, and nights. More than 80 percent of cases involved Blacks" (Stephens, 2009, p 178).

Mass Incarceration

A more preventative state, which includes such laws as DFZ policy, feeds into capitalist racial concepts and profiling that have contributed toward the mass incarceration of the Black community. Highlighting this racial disparity, Michael T. Risher opines,

> The clearest big-picture example of this is the so-called war on drugs, which is largely responsible for filling our prisons with men and women of color over the last thirty years. A war on securities fraud or tax evasion would result in the arrest and prosecution of a very different demographic, namely, white males. But resources for combating these types of crimes have been cut, despite evidence that violations are common and devastating to our society, as evidenced by the current global impacts of finance fraud (Risher, 2009, p 55).

The focus on drug sales only scratches the surface of the direct line into the prison industrial complex, a multi-billion-dollar industry. At a time when "deindustrialization had presented an employment problem for America's poor and working class of all races[,] prison(s) presented a solution: jobs for whites, and warehousing for [B]lacks" (Coates, 2015[2], np).

As political activist and academic scholar Angela Davis recounts, "the economic and political shifts of the 1980s—the globalization of economic markets, the deindustrialization of the U.S. economy, the dismantling of such social service programs as Aid to Families of Dependent Children, and, of course, the

prison construction boom—produced a significant acceleration in the rate of women's imprisonment" (2003, p 65). By combining the factors, and thus the effects, of race and gender, "the nature of these shifts in the prison population is even clearer. The prison incarceration rate for black women today exceeds that for white *men* as recently as 1980" (Davis, 2003, p 73).

For example, private prisons represent the biggest business in the prison industrial complex. Around 18 corporations are charged with more than 10,000 prisoners in 27 states. The two largest private prison corporations control 75% of privatized prisons. These corporations receive a guaranteed amount of money for each prisoner held, independent of the actual cost of maintaining that prisoner (Paleaz, 2014, np).

The mass incarceration by the prison industrial complex is both a motivation and a product of criminalizing behaviors historically common of low-wealth areas and populations. The Human Rights Watch contends, "no functioning democracy has ever governed with such a large percentage of its adults incarcerated" (Stephens, 2009, p 177).

Currently, the U.S. makes up 5 percent of the world's population, and has 25 percent of the world's prisoners (NAACP). In 2014, the imprisonment rate for African American women was more than twice the rate of imprisonment for white women (Carson, 2014) illustrating the effect racialization has on gender. Despite this increase in incarceration, the criminal justice system is not deterring those non-violent crimes discussed above (Smith, 2015). Nor are this incarceration preventing or effecting violent crimes and the violence that often intersects with socioeconomic issues. "Prisons serve to disguise the economic hardships of [these] communities because prisoners are not included in unemployment statistics. They then serve to exacerbate [these] problems within the same communities. In addition, when the state allocates resources by population, they count prisoners as part of the community in which the prison is located, primarily white rural areas. Thus, the imprisonment of mass numbers of people of color leads to the draining of resources from communities of color" (Smith, 2015, p 155). Further economic stresses are placed at the individual-level, as Ta-Nehisi Coates remarks in *The Black Family in the Age of* Incarceration; *"Should the family attempt to stay together through incarceration, the loss of income only increases, as the mother must pay for phone time, travel costs for visits, and legal fees"* (2015[2], np). This creates a new layer of systemic issues, irresponsibly using resources that might interrupt the cycle of poverty that then produces drugs, violence and

crime in communities. Imprisonment also reduces family and community incomes, because criminal records reduce the employability of ex-offenders. This increases the financial burden on Black women, as well as creating a systematically increased probability of illegitimate or illegal activity.

As we look toward solutions, we can affect the success and safety of communities where violence is most prominent, as well as our society as a whole. A restorative justice model—which seeks to avoid the criminal justice system and the additional violence it heaps onto communities—might begin to heal these deep wounds. By redistributing the bloated resources that currently expand the failing prison system for use in engaging communities through this or an alternative restorative justice, we can focus on economic stability and rehabilitation.

Intimate Partner Violence

Because mass incarceration disproportionately affects communities of color, we see the effects of interpersonal and family stress radiating out into communities (Stephens, 2016). This increased "stress of being the object of disobliging racial discrimination… negatively impacts Blacks by adding to other life stressors and causing strain and conflict within intimate relationships (Potter, 2008, p 8). Thus it follows that Black women experience intimate partner violence at a rate 35 percent higher than that of white women, and about 2.5 times the rate of women of other races (Lee, Thompson, & Mechanic, 2002). During the 1970s, there was an accelerating trend toward the criminalization of abusers, and an increase in the assistance afforded to abused women and families. However, research and policies tend to depict all battered women as victims with similar life experiences, neglecting the fact that Black women and other women of color typically have life experiences distinct from those of white women (Potter, 2008). Thus, the majority of social services were designed to assist white women experiencing violence within conventional families, and there is a disconnect in providing services to Black women experiencing violence. This results in Black women experiencing further victimization by institutions aiming to assist them (Potter, 2008).

By delving into the life histories of Black women who have experienced intimate partner violence, Hillary Potter attempts to dissect the assumption that all abused women have similar narratives. She constructs the concept of "dynamic resistance" which considers the numerous forms of domination and discrimination that confront Black women who have experienced intimate partner violence because of their

abusive circumstances, and their intersectional identities due to race, gender, and other social, cultural, and individual circumstances. Dynamic resistance in Black women was characterized by the physical abuse and physical resistance to their abusers, a rejection of the victim label which they saw more befitting of pathetic White women, and the sense of agency derived from being and performing a Strong Black Woman archetype (2008).

This Strong Black Woman archetype can work against Black women, pigeonholing them in stereotypical roles of steadfast caretakers. As 23 year-old Carmen expresses from Windsor et al.'s case study, this role can be cumbersome.

I feel that I was forgotten. I feel that I was? I was expected to do more than

I could. I feel that I was tired of people saying, you're a very strong girl. Like

what is wrong with you? Why I have to be strong? What is that? – Carmen, 23 (Windsor et

al., 2010, p 23).

Along similar lines, Urban Anthropologist Dr. Dana-Ain Davis describes such devaluation and invisibility in *Battered Black Women and Welfare Reform*. "Black women are rarely viewed as victims in violence because historically they have been viewed as virtueless" (2006, p 84). She adds that within the public assistance realm, "those in judgment do not believe Black women can be victimized" (p 85). This idea helps to shed light on why Black women would resist the victim label in relation to domestic or intimate partner violence, as they are rarely afforded this truth. Windsor et al.'s study similarly documents this devaluation as case studies showcase participant mistreatment by "their male relatives, friends, and partners. Its oppression is rooted in the lack of value placed on Black women's welfare as evidenced by sexual exploitation, physical abuse, and inadequate legal protection. For instance, research shows that significantly fewer rapists of Black women are convicted than rapists of White women" (Windsor et al., 2010, p 27). These examples serve to demonstrate the societal belief that Black women's bodies are inherently violable and deserving of such violence.

Touching on this phenomenon, Potter's study shapes the racialized suffering of Black women, as they are highly skeptical of public services, such as police departments. A "history of police racism is oppressive in that it leaves Black people vulnerable to victimization because they see no reason to expect

protection" (Windsor et al., 2010, p 35). Additionally, public aid providers are ill equipped to handle the unique and intersecting struggles of Black women with intersectional, interrelated and inextricable identities. In this way, Black women are frequently marginalized and insulated from community protection (Potter, 2008).

This re-victimization, imbued by race, showcases how social service interactions and practices are choreographed around Black women's status as victims of violence. "Welfare reform policy almost perfectly interprets societal angst about Black women: they can be justifiably be treated with disrespect and caution based on the imagined societal destruction they cause or the fraud they might commit. The very possibility that these transgressions might occur authorizes increased surveillance and deterrence, which may be seen as blurring the line between poverty and criminality" (Davis, 2006, p 88).

Andrea Smith echoes this sentiment in her book *Conquest.* She states, "we must recognize that the criminal justice approach cannot stop domestic violence - it only works at the point of crisis, and it does not prevent abuse from occurring" (p 169). Because "mainstream antiviolence advocates have increasingly demanded longer prison sentences for batterers and sex offenders as a frontline approach to stopping violence against women," we have dedicated much of our resources and intention toward supporting a system that encourages violence (Smith, 2015, p 155). However, in Eric Janus' book, *Failure to Protect,* Nancy Sabine states her concern that "stiffer prison terms and more restrictions can actually backfire and make victims more reluctant to report such crimes because the assailant" is close to them. Not only are we failing to address the root cause of the violence, we are supporting and expanding a system that actively derails victim access. "Despite an exponential increase in the number of men in prisons, women are not any safer, and the rates of sexual assault and domestic violence have not decreased" (Smith, 2015, p 171).

In a fantastic integrative example operating out of Seattle, Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA) began organizing around the issue of prison abolition from an antiviolence perspective. In the program book for a 2002 prison-abolition film festival cosponsored with Critical Resistance, CARA outlined its philosophy:

> Any movement seeking to end violence will fail if its strategy supports and helps sustain the
>
> prison industrial complex. Prisons, policing, the death penalty, the war on terror, and the war

on drugs all increase rape, beatings, isolation, oppression, and death. As an anti-rape organization, we cannot support the funneling of resources into the criminal justice system to punish rapists and batterers, as this does not help end violence. It only supports the same system that views incarcerations as a solution to complex social problems like rape and abuse. As survivors of rape and domestic violence, we will not let the antiviolence movement be further co-opted to support the mass criminalization of young people, the disappearance of immigrants and refugees, and the dehumanization of poor people, people of color, and people with disabilities (Smith, 2015, p 152).

By tracing the history of violence against Black individuals through modern drug laws and the specific legislation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, both enacted by President Bill Clinton, we begin to see how the modern slavery of Black America was shaped.

Conclusion

It may be difficult to understand how President Clinton held the support of Black America while approving legislation that has quietly created greater oppression and reduced opportunity. This approval may be best illustrated by a commentary in a 1998 article for The New Yorker, wherein black feminist author Toni Morrison wrote about Bill Clinton,

African-American men seemed to understand it right away. Years ago, in the middle of the Whitewater investigation, one heard the first murmurs: **white skin notwithstanding,** this is our first black President. Blacker than any actual black person who could ever be elected in our children's lifetime. After all, Clinton displays almost every trope of blackness: single-parent household, born poor, working-class, saxophone-playing, McDonald's-and-junk-food-loving boy from Arkansas. And when virtually all the African-American Clinton appointees began, one by one, to disappear, when the President's body, his privacy, his unpoliced sexuality became the focus of the persecution, when he was metaphorically seized and body-searched, who could gainsay these black men who knew whereof they spoke? The message was clear: "No matter how smart you are, how hard you work, how much coin you earn for us, we will put you in your place or put you out of the place you have somehow,

albeit with our permission, achieved. You will be fired from your job, sent away in disgrace,

and—who knows?—maybe sentenced and jailed to boot. In short, unless you do as we say

(i.e., assimilate at once), your expletives belong to us.

It is clear from her description that Morrison's "Blackness" is characterized by (a) certain powerlessness

against the larger society. Instead of being a reflection of skin color, it is a metaphor for how he is, and thus

Black folks are, more worthy of scrutiny; of being suspected; of having his personal failings justifiably

spotlighted. Morrison also highlights the idea that racial categories are social constructions, not indelible but

instead based on outmoded moral and hierarchical beliefs about the inherent inferiority of particular groups,

especially in stratified societies such as those beholden to capitalism.

As Kevin Rigby Jr. and Hari Ziyad write in their article *White People Have No Place In Black*

Liberation, "whiteness is constructed for no other purpose than to occupy the space of racial superiority."

Utilizing this binary as a spotlight while simultaneously highlighting the reality of racial constructions, the

white solipsism of the last several decades targets Black America under the guise of safety. Drug Free Zone

laws are the new whips. The prison industrial complex is now the chattel.

Capitalist hierarchies have expanded, directly benefitting from welfare reform and legislative filters

leading directly into the prison industrial complex by criminalizing certain activities. As producers through

their labor, Black women also "reproduce significant portions of the wage labor force" that maintain the

success of capitalism (Rousseau, 2013, p 4). Because this labor is necessary for lucrative capitalist structure,

Black women "continue to be an essential element of the success of the capitalist system that oppresses

them" (Rousseau, 2013, p 4). The result is that we again find ourselves in a time where the white dominant

society has exploited people of color and their labor in order to expand markets and increase white privilege

and profits. In order to radically change society, we must move toward building movements that will topple

this capitalist structure to create communities that are not just reactionary to instances of oppression and

violence against the Black community, but to promote a space where such violence would be unthinkable.

Annotated Bibliography

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Pluralism and complexity. *Sex Roles, 73*(3), 93-99. doi:10.1007/s11199-015-0527-4

This paper provides feminist framework for the gendering of family structures. By introducing the process of gendering as beginning in and supported by the make up of one's family, one can build a case for the destructive nature of the Moynihan report which critiques the structure of Black families from a gendered perspective.

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Explores the disparities in drug use vs. drug arrests as well as the patterns and practices that result in an overrepresentation of Black citizens of Seattle being arrested for drug offenses. Findings show that the Seattle Police Department's focus on crack cocaine plays a direct role, which is racially telling given the high estimate of heroin addicted users (and thus assumed heroin dealers) in the population.

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Construction of Poverty: Welfare Reform in America, Joel F. Handler, Yeheskel Hasenfeld]. *Law & Social Inquiry, 18*(4), 647-670.

Theorizing the social construction of opinions of the poor from a moral standpoint. Considered an

exercise in status politics, welfare reform has essentially created deviance out of necessitating help,

framing this as an individual failure rather than a structural failure. Thus poverty is not looked at as a

societal condition, but rather "the poor" are framed as enemies to society.

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2016, from http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/moynihan-mass-incarceration-and-

responsibility/407131/

In response to a critique, Coates argues that Patrick Moynihan did not suffer extensively from the

results of his 1965 report: *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,* but rather went on to

create a career out of misguided attempts to raise up poor Black citizens.

Coates, T. (2015[2], October). The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration. Retrieved April 21, 2016,

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incarceration/403246/

Coates argues for a historical standpoint in the Moynihan Report as substantial to the politics that

have created this "Age of Mass Incarceration." By focusing on the profits to be made from the prison

industrial complex, Coates explains the severity of the benefits to White dominant society by

warehousing Black bodies in this manner, and unearths several structural policies that have lead to

this era.

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that spaces are built with political and authoritative goals, as well as providing a narrative for the

stress that results from these spaces.

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in society based on gender, race, and class. Because of this intersectional oppression, Black women

are uniquely positioned to understand how capitalist structures are oppressive as they receive the full

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have had a profound effect on how drug sentencing, and thus mass incarceration, has affected the

Black population.

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Slavery? Retrieved April 20, 2016, from http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-prison-industry-in-the-

united-states-big-business-or-a-new-form-of-slavery/8289

Provides a rich argument of the [mostly] free labor provided by prisoners in the United States, where

large corporations benefit from the coerced consent to work without any of the pratfalls of ordinary

employees (sick days, benefits, et al.). Additionally this article provides insight into the private

prison business and its practices.

Potter, H. (2008). *Battle cries: Black women and intimate partner abuse*. New York: New York University

Press.

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who have been victims of intimate partner violence. Using interviews from a solicited sample, this

work identifies key themes as well as defining the Strong Black Woman archetype referenced

throughout.

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By explaining the DNA databanking policy in California, Risher sheds light on many other structural

and political policies that increase surveillance of the Black community. Though his main argument

is not used in context of this paper, the idea that anyone arrested on felony charges, not actually

charged with them will have their DNA databanked in an indelible database showcases how

surveillance has moved even further into biological realms.

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This theoretical paper covers Historical Womanist Theory (HWT), Critical Race Theory (CRT) and

several other Black Feminist theoretical frameworks that help to expose the intersecting racialized

and gendered violence against Black women. Specifically in regard to capitalism and the labor

market. Rosseau brilliantly comments on the ways that Black women both produce and reproduce,

cyclically supporting the structure which oppresses them.

Taylor, U. (1998). The historical evolution of black feminist theory and praxis. *Journal of Black Studies,

29*(2), 234-253.

Windsor, L. C., Benoit, E., & Dunlap, E. (2010). Dimensions of oppression in the lives of impoverished

black women who use drugs. *Journal of Black Studies, 41*(1), 21-39.

Utilizing ethnographies of Black female drug users, this paper focuses on the intersecting

oppressions that support this outcome, especially in urban populations. Touching on economic

systems that oppress Black women, they also provide support for the sexual abuse and exploitation

of Black women.

Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Duke University Press, 2015.

Providing a rich historical account of the colonialization of the United States and the violent

persecution of Native Americans, this book also highlights the many ways that colonialization has

affected current relationships with minorities other than Natives. Covering a bevy of women's issues

from rape to reproductive health, this book also touches on conceptions of restorative justice and

reparations that are relatable to discussion on Black citizens.

Stephens, T. (2010). Prison, Crime, and Sexual Health in the United States. In *Black Sexualities: Probing

Powers, Passions, Practices, and Policies*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Through discussing the rates of infectious disease within prison populations, this piece explores the

community risk and outcomes by ignoring sexuality within the prison system. Prior to making this

point, there is a rich factorial construction of reasons for mass incarceration and community effect.

Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 - H.R.3355 - 103rd Congress (1993-1994)

This bill provided more funding for prisons, police officers, and demanded stricter and longer

sentencing procedures in the criminal justice system. These outcomes directly influenced the mass

incarceration of the Black community as argued above, as well as by many scholars.

Allen, K. R., & Jaramillo-Sierra, A. L. (2015). Feminist theory and research on family relationships: Pluralism and complexity. *Sex Roles, 73*(3), 93-99. doi:10.1007/s11199-015-0527-4

Brodkin, E. Z. (1993). The making of an enemy: How welfare policies construct the poor. [The Moral Construction of Poverty: Welfare Reform in America, Joel F. Handler, Yeheskel Hasenfeld]. *Law & Social Inquiry, 18*(4), 647-670.

Risher, M. T. (2009). Racial disparities in databanking of DNA profiles. *Genewatch, 22*(3-4).

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