

# Mass incarceration and the rights of african americans

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



Mass incarceration is something that goes on most countries especially countries in highly regressive regimes like Russian, China, Iran, Germany, and many more countries. However, the United States is known to now have the highest rate of incarceration in the world. This is due to the fact that in the United States, most of the black men are usually sentenced or admitted to prison on drug charges than the white man although statistics have shown that most young men are more inclined to engage in drugs than young black men. As of today, an extraordinary amount of blacks is not able to vote since nearly in every state, convicted felons are barred from voting. From my own point of view, I do not support the idea of mass incarceration because this form of imprisonment has its own way of making sure that most of the African American men are the ones who end up in jail which then takes away their right to vote even after being released from prison since that prisoner may still not be entitled to all of his rights.

I agree to the fact that mass incarceration stipe African Americans of their rights because according to Alexander (2012), the new Jim Crow was born to “ unfairly target African Americans by law enforcement on the behalf of the federal government interested in stoking racial flames in order to win elections”. Also, “ although the Civil Rights Amendments and reconstruction eradicated Slavery and brought about positive change, it did not last as the racial system has now evolved with new rules meant to target the African Americans specifically and thereby making them look like criminals”.

To fully understand the history and concept of Jim Crow, Alexander explained that the name, Jim Crow was a racial caste system which operated primarily

between 1877 and the mid- 1960s. It consisted of a series of anti-black laws. These laws consisted of relegated African Americans as second-class citizen. For example, under Jim Crows era, African Americans were called names such as “ dogs, and Negros”. Also, in places where they had water fountains, there were signs indicating which ones belonged to the white man and which one belonged to the black man.

Alexander also goes on to say that once an African American man is labeled a felon, it automatically leads to some form of discrimination. This is because even after a person is released from prison, they are faced with “ employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of their rights to vote, denial of food stamps, exclusion from jury service, denial of educational opportunity, and other public benefits. Because of the dilemma that they go through, many people, especially the African Americans who are often released from prison ends up back in prison with the first three years.

Lastly, families had to lie to their fellow friends and to other families just to protect their status since the same of being labeled as a felon was often seen to bring about more shame to a household than other crimes.

I agree with Alexander that the United Stated Prison System operates as a new Jim Crow system because Firstly, being in prison usually labels them as having a criminal record and the stigma of having a criminal record discriminates these African Americans from the rest of the world since they have difficulty in finding a job or even better housing. Sometimes, if care is not taken, these same African American individuals who were released end

up in prison due to the struggles they face outside prison. Also, under Jim Crow system, African Americans were given the status of second class citizens. This status, criminalize and demonize these black men and as a result, turns the black community against itself.

Secondly, The Civil Rights Movements was criticized and in the Southern Scheme, the African Americans were labeled as “ lazy”, “ cheats”, and even “ criminals”. Owing to this, the only way to bring anger to the blacks was for the white man to come up with speeches that encouraged aggressions amongst the blacks in an attempt to win votes from white man. This was very successful especially during Reagan’s campaigns as he “ echoed white frustration in race-neutral terms through implicit racial appeals”.

Thirdly, the United States Prison System operates as a new Jim Crow system because although drugs are often sold by both the blacks and the whites, the blacks are purposefully targeted and imprisoned more than the whites

Lastly, I believe that the United States prison operates as a new Jim Crow because when the compromise of the 1877 took over, black gains began to fade which led to black convicts having no legal rights and essentially making them slaves to the states. The prison population also began to rise since blacks were the main target.

Although “ the passing of the fourteenth amendments encouraged African Americans engaging in their society, they could not defend themselves and the threats of violence kept many of them out of the public life”.

I agree that “ mass incarceration operates as a tightly networked system of laws, policies, customs, and institutions” that locks black Americans, particularly black males, into an under caste because the high levels of incarceration especially in African American males have become an unprecedented complex problem. According to Alexander, although poverty and joblessness is a leading problem of research has also shown that the war on drugs is a major poverty and crimes. Because of the extreme levels of imprisonment especially in most urban communities, the felon label itself poses a greater threat than the crime itself due to the fact that it brings about discrimination in every aspect of their lives. Also, even as of today, when comparing the white and the African American man, white criminal who has been freed from prison has more rights than an African American black male living “ free” at the height of Jim Crow.

Although the majority or illegal drug users and dealers nationwide are white, three-fourth of all people imprisoned on drugs offenses have been blacks. This type of doing reinforces the dominant racial narratives about crimes which dates back to slavery”. Fellow felons who were released and also had the right to vote were told that they cannot vote due to the level of their crime. Because these individuals did not want to make their case public, they never tried to follow up on it and have lived in the country with their rights to vote taken away from them. There is also the issue of African American men who are been targeted just because they live in “ ghettos” and are often treated as criminals because of their level of poverty. The same goes for the stop-and -frisk rule that allows police to stop and frisk if they have any

suspicion of criminal activities. Although the court upheld that rule and argued that people can refused to be searched, most people are too afraid to deny the police officers request especially in a situation where the individual is an African American man, he might be afraid of being shot with the excuse of him trying to resist the police

To conclude, I agree that “ mass incarceration operates as a tightly networked system of laws, policies, customs, and institutions” that locks black Americans, particularly black males, into an under caste because purposefully target African Americans portraying them as criminals that need to be locked away. Also, the United States Prison System operates as a new Jim Crow system because once an African American is arrested and convicted, they are forever labeled as a felon which discriminates them from the rest of the world even after they are released.